

8 Magical Things We Saw at Diagon Alley

July 8, 2014 | By [Kristin Luna](#)

The new Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley debuted at 8 a.m. to throngs of Potter fans at [Universal Studios](#) in Orlando, Florida. [According to the *Orlando Sentinel*](#), crowds began forming at 4 a.m. It's set to be a popular destination this summer, even if it's a tad bit hotter than Hogwarts.

We were lucky enough to nab a sneak peek of the theme park. Here's what we found.

1. Interactive Wands



Photo: Kristin Luna

While Wizarding World of Harry Potter already boasted an Ollivanders, you'll find two wand shops in the new expansion: a second Ollivanders and its rival Gregorovitch (whose owner, you may recall, once possessed the Elder Wand). If you aren't too keen to drop \$50 on what you might perceive as a toy, consider this: The new interactive wands have are outfitted with sensors that allow you to follow a map, visit stations emblazoned with bronze medallions throughout

Diagon Alley, and test out your best spells and incantations—from *Alohomora* to *Descendo*. (Spoiler alert: If you're a true wizard, your subjects will actually move.)

2. Beyond Butterbeer



Photo: Kristin Luna

That tried-and-true favorite, the butterbeer—both frozen and regular—has some heavy competition with the addition of new Potter-themed drinks like the Gillywater and Fishy Green Ale (all non-alcoholic). For those in need of something stronger, there are also beers on tap (e.g. Wizard's Brew, Dragon Scale).

3. All Aboard the Hogwarts Express!



Photo: Kristin Luna

If your life's fulfillment has always depended on stepping through Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, you're about to get your wish: When you enter King's Cross station at Diagon Alley, you pass through the famed wall en route to boarding the Hogwarts Express. You'll then load into your assigned cabin and ride the train to Hogsmeade, where you'll disembark inside Universal Studios' Islands of Adventure. Insider tip: Be sure and take the train each way, as there are different video scenes depicted out the window depending on the direction you're heading. (Note: You must have the park-to-park pass to ride.)

4. Escape to Gringotts



Photo: Kristin Luna

You can open a bank account with the goblins if you dare, but you'd be better off merely observing the bank tellers at work before popping on a pair of 3-D glasses and racing through the labyrinth-like vaults as you try to escape the dastardly Bellatrix Lestrange and her poisonous wand. You can even pay in Gringotts bank notes, which can be purchased in Wizarding World or Diagon Alley—at the Gringotts Money Exchange, of course—in increments of \$10 and \$20.

5. A Fire-Breathing Dragon



Photo: Kristin Luna

The 60-foot Ukrainian Ironbelly who sits atop Gringotts Wizarding Bank erupts in an angry frenzy of flames approximately every five minutes. When you see the light in his mouth start to flicker, prepare your camera—and your kids—for his fiery wrath.

6. Cool Treats



Photo: Kristin Luna

The gourmet ice creamery features a bevy of British-inspired flavors like clotted cream and sticky toffee pudding, but true Potterheads will go to Floean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlor for one thing and one thing only: the butterbeer soft serve.

7. More Jokes



Photo: Kristin Luna

Those rascally, redheaded brothers Fred and George have opened a Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes in Diagon Alley that's full of even more mischief than Zonko's Joke Shop over at Wizarding World. So load up on those Puking Pastilles, Extendable Ears, Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans, Bombtastic Boms and other disastrous delights before you call it a day.

8. Dinner at the Leaky Cauldron



Photo: Kristin Luna

Try Harry's favorite treats—from treacle tarts to cottage pie—at the brand new Leaky Cauldron, chock full of hearty, traditional British fare.