



# Forces of Nature

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# Welcome!

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Thank you for making a reservation to participate in Forces of Nature! For over two decades Busch Gardens has been committed to delivering high quality, standards-based programs. We look forward to helping you meet your educational goals, while introducing your students to wildlife and wild places.

Please read through the following confirmation materials ***thoroughly*** to familiarize yourself with our program policies and procedures. These materials contain all of the information you need to ensure you are prepared for your upcoming field trip.

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## Program Description

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Experience the world of science, through the eyes of nature. How does the physical environment around us impact the biodiversity of the planet? What adaptations do predators have to make them successful? What role does natural selection play to ensure the survival of a species? Students can explore these topics and more, as our Busch Gardens educators help students discover how they can become a positive force for nature.

This three-hour, guided program is designed for students 6th – 8th grades. Forces of Nature connects with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, and includes an educational guide, an animal encounter, and pre/post field trip material.

**Standards:** SC.6.L.15.1, SC.6.L.14.5, SC.6.E.7.8, SC.6.E.7.4, SC.6.E.7.8  
SC.7.E.6.6, SC.7.L.15.2, SC.7.L.15.3, SC.7.L.16.1, SC.7.L.17.1, SC.7.L.17.2,  
SC.7.L.17.3

***Please Note: Due to the educational nature of this program, Forces of Nature does NOT include access to rides and/or entertainment shows.***

## Price & Payment

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### Price

Student Rate is \$20.00 per student.

Groups must have a minimum of 20 paid participants to reserve this program.

You will receive one free chaperone for every 10 paid students. Any additional chaperones are permitted at the student rate, NOT TO EXCEED a 1:4 chaperone:student ratio. Special Education groups may bring one free adult chaperone for every one student.

Price is for the program fee only. **Park admission is not included or required to participate in this program.**

### Payment

Upon making a reservation, the Group Leader will receive an invoice. Please review the invoice to see your balance due. If any of the information needs to be updated, please call us at **(813) 987-5808** to speak to a member of our education team. Payment is accepted up to and including the date of your program, however, we **highly recommend** paying for your program at least one month in advance. Groups may not enter the park until final payment has been received.

## Price & Payment, continued

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When paying in advance, please pay with one check, money order, or credit card. **NO CASH PLEASE**. Checks (school checks preferred) or money orders should be made payable to Busch Gardens Tampa and sent to:

Busch Gardens Tampa  
Education Reservations  
P.O. Box 9157  
Tampa, FL 33674

If a personal check or personal credit card is used, tax will be applied to the payment. The state of Florida does not allow exceptions.

Annual Passes, discounts, or other offers **CANNOT** be applied toward the Animal Expeditions program fee.

## Changes, Refunds, & Cancellations

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For your convenience, we have not implemented fees to change the number of participants or to cancel a reservation. We ask to be notified as soon as possible regarding changes to your reservation or need to cancel.

Group Leaders can receive a refund for participants who were unable to attend the program. Groups must still meet the 20 paid participant minimum to run the program.

Program elements are subject to change and/or cancellation. Busch Gardens education programs run “rain or shine.” Please be prepared to be outside for the duration of your visit.

### Severe Weather

The safety and welfare of all park guests is of the utmost importance. When severe weather is near, our park observes strict weather protocols. When lightning has been spotted within 3 miles of our park, for everyone’s safety, guests and team members are required to seek shelter. Once the weather passes, the program may resume. Partial refunds can be offered if over 50% of the program has been impacted due to inclement weather.

## Guided Program Final Checklist

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Once a reservation is made, the Group Leader will be sent an electronic form to fill out called the Guided Program Final Checklist. This will help us ensure we have all necessary information for your group. This Final Checklist will also provide reminders of important information Group Leaders should share with their groups to ensure everyone has an understanding of our Forces of Nature program.

We ask that this electronic form be filled out three weeks before your program date.

***Please Note: If we have not received the final checklist three weeks prior to the program date, the group may forfeit their reservation.***

## Chaperones

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Chaperones attending must stay for the entire program. Chaperones are expected to assist our Education staff with managing student behavior and ensuring students are adhering to all safety guidelines. Any guests or siblings (older or younger) of participants attending the program will be included as a participant and will be charged the full program fee.

## Parking

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### Bus Parking

Forces of Nature Bus passes are sent electronically to the Group Leader's email address. These bus passes will direct you to the bus loading/unloading zone for Busch Gardens. Here you will meet a member of our education team. Please have your pass clearly displayed in the bus window to allow our staff to easily recognize your group.

After the buses have unloaded, buses will be directed to park across the street in our main parking lot. If buses are not staying at Busch Gardens, we recommend that the Group Leader confirm what time the bus drivers will return at this time.

### Personal Vehicle Parking

All chaperones are strongly encouraged to ride on the buses with students, as there is no chaperone parking. Any personal vehicles will be **required to pay** for general parking. From the parking lot, participants will ride the tram to the front entrance, and meet their group before the program begins.

## Arrival

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Programs begin promptly at 10:00 AM. Check-in for your program is 15 minutes prior to the designated start time. Please plan to arrive on time as checking in may take a few minutes. If your group will be late, please call and notify the Busch Gardens Educator on Duty at (813)-600-0178.

***Please Note: Program components may be altered, abbreviated, or omitted due to any late arrivals.***

## What You Can Expect

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### Group Size

Our ideal structure for this program is one guide for each class (20-25 students). For groups with class sizes that are smaller or larger than average (20-25 students) we may ask to reconfigure the classes to be closer to this ideal group size.

### Program Theme

Group Leaders have a chance to select one of the following overarching themes on their Guided Program Final Checklist:

Physiology & Adaptations Natural  
Selection & Biodiversity

Our educators will incorporate the selected theme as they guide students through two different animal exhibits. While at each exhibit, guides will facilitate a grade-appropriate activity that helps to reinforce the selected theme.

Each group will also receive an animal encounter. Animal encounters are different every time, but typically include meeting a small reptile, bird, or mammal. Due to the varying needs of our animal collection, we are not able to tell groups ahead of time what animal they may get to meet. We will be sure that this animal encounter will continue to reinforce the theme the Group Leader selected.

***Please Note: Due to varying program logistics or animal needs, the habitats visited and the animal experienced in the encounter may be different between classes.***

## What You Can Expect, continued

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### Program Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the group leader to share the following information with all members of their group:

- To assure all participants have an equal opportunity to benefit from the program, we require participants to use appropriate behavior while visiting our park. Busch Gardens reserves the right to remove participants who are exhibiting inappropriate behavior.
- Please dress appropriately for the outdoors and forecasted weather. All education programs spend time outdoors and involve a considerable amount of walking. ***It is highly recommended that you bring water bottles for your group so that they will have water throughout the program.*** There will be opportunity during the program to visit water fountains to refill bottles. (Please do not bring drinks with straws).
- For security measures, guests and bags are subject to inspection when entering the park.

## Lunch Option

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At the group's request, we can incorporate up to 30 minutes for a lunch break into your program at no additional charge. Group Leaders must select that they want to include time for lunch into their program itinerary on the Guided Program Final Checklist.

***Please Note: Time for lunch will be built into the three hour time frame allotted. Program components will be adjusted to accommodate up to 30 minutes for lunch.***

If a group has decided to bring their lunch, lunches should be in **SEALED** boxes or coolers, labeled with your school name. Busch Gardens educators will collect them at the drop-off area and transport them to a designated lunch location. For larger groups, we do recommend lunches be separated by classroom, with the teacher's name clearly labeled. For the safety of our animals, please do not bring glass containers or straws. The guide for the program will let each group know when their lunch has been scheduled and escort groups to their lunch location. After lunch, the education staff will move your coolers back to the drop-off location to be loaded into your vehicles.

***Please Note: Small coolers on wheels are preferred. Any cooler that requires more than one person to lift (large sized coolers or extremely heavy coolers) is discouraged.***

## Stay & Play Admission Tickets

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Stay & Play Admission can be added onto your educational program for an additional fee. These tickets will allow you enjoy all park attractions and shows after dismissal from your educational program. Please note that Stay & Play Admission is purchased separately from your educational program through the group sales department. For questions, or to obtain the form to purchase Stay & Play Admission, please call **(813) 987-5808** to speak to a member of our education team or send an email to **Education@BuschGardens.com** . If you have purchased Stay & Play Admission tickets, then please follow the arrival and departure information listed below.

***Please Note: Groups must purchase a minimum of 15 youth tickets to be eligible for the Stay & Play your rate. Groups will receive one free adult ticket for every 10 paid student tickets, once the 15 minimum student tickets have been met.***

When purchasing Stay & Play Admission, you can either pay in advance and have the tickets mailed to your school or pay upon arrival and pick up your tickets at our main ticket windows. ***To ensure your program starts on time and to minimize any delays, we recommend paying for your Stay & Play Admission in advance and having the tickets mailed to your school.*** If purchasing upon arrival, please make sure to have 2 forms of payment, one for the Stay & Play Admission and one for the educational program.

### **Arrival Information**

During check-in, if you are picking up your Stay & Play Admission tickets, please proceed to the main ticket windows to complete your purchase and obtain your tickets. Please have your final numbers and payment ready, as well as the school tax exempt form (if applicable). To receive tax exemption on your Stay & Play Admission tickets, you must have a completed tax exempt form. The state of Florida does not allow exceptions. If you are tax exempt, please bring your tax exempt form. Without this form, your group's Stay & Play Admission tickets will be taxed.

Please deduct any students with active annual passes or fun cards from your final count of Stay & Play Admission Add-on Tickets. All Stay & Play Admission Add-on tickets, passes, and fun cards will be scanned upon entry. Once your Stay & Play Admission Add-on Tickets are taken care of, the education staff will begin your educational program check-in.

Schools who already have received their Stay & Play Admission Add-on tickets in the mail will begin their education program check-in upon arrival.

### **Departure Information**

School groups that have purchased Stay & Play Admission Add-on are free to enjoy Busch Gardens immediately following their program. Please inform bus drivers to pick up the group at a time decided internally between your group and the bus, at the main Bus Drop-Off and Pick-Up area.

Groups with Stay & Play admission have the additional option of purchasing their lunch in the park instead of bringing their lunch with them. Please be advised that any coolers that your group brought will be given back to you at the completion of your lunch, and will no longer be the responsibility of the Busch Gardens Education Department. We recommend that you bring lunches in clearly marked boxes that can be discarded after use if you are staying in the park.



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### ***Will we have a guide today?***

Forces of Nature is a completely guided experience. During this three hour guided program our expert staff will facilitate a program for the participants.

### ***Can we arrive late?***

Program components may be altered, abbreviated, or omitted to any late arrivals. If you anticipate a delay, please contact the Education Office at **813-987-5808** and notify the staff of your estimated arrival time.

### ***Does this program go behind-the-scenes?***

This program does not go behind-the-scenes of any of our animal habitats.

### ***Will we have an animal encounter during the program?***

**YES**, each group will receive a scheduled time period for an animal encounter. Due to the varying needs of our animal collection, we will not be able to determine which animals your groups will meet until the morning of the program, nor will all groups meet the same animals.

### ***Are rides and the shows included on this program?***

Forces of Nature is a fully guided program that focuses on our animal exhibits. The park attractions, such as the roller coasters, midway games, Safari of Fun, etc. **are not** included with this program. There are two options for groups that want an opportunity to experience park attractions. School groups can reserve our V.I.P. Experience for students, which incorporates park attractions into an educational program. Groups can also add Stay & Play Park Admission tickets to their package and stay to experience all park attractions after the program. We invite groups to visit us online at **[www.buschgardens.com](http://www.buschgardens.com)** for more details on either of these options.

### ***Can I reschedule my group's trip?***

Please be sure to check your school calendar and bus/transportation availability before reserving your field trip to avoid any conflicts with the field trip day you reserve. Rescheduling is subject to availability.

### ***Can my students attend the program on their own?***

Any participant under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult chaperone. For every 10 paid students, groups will receive one free adult chaperone.

### ***Can Stay & Play admission tickets be added to our reservation?***

**YES**, Stay & Play Admission Add-On tickets can be added on to this program for an additional fee. Please review the section titled Stay & Play Admission Tickets for more details.

## Frequently Asked Questions, continued

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### *Can a Serengeti Safari be added to our reservation?*

YES, Serengeti Safari can be added on to this program for an additional fee. Please note that this experience is built into the three-hour time frame allotted for the program. Program components will be adjusted to accommodate adding a Serengeti Safari. Please call us at **813-987-5808** or visit us at **[www.buschgardens.com](http://www.buschgardens.com)** for more details.

### *Can we have lunch at Busch Gardens?*

**YES**, groups have the option to bring their own lunch and have time during their program to eat. Please review the section titled **Lunch Option** if you are interested in having lunch during your program. Time for lunch is built into the three-hour time frame allotted for the program.