



The David children get wet at Holiday World.

Celebrate a World of Holidays at Holiday World

BY BARBARA LITNER DAVID

Familiar character faces and lots of freebies make this a great place for families.

I slathered free sunscreen on my kids' backs, preparing them to plunge into Splashin' Safari's Bahari wave pool. When everyone was UV protected, I waved goodbye to my husband and older kids and walked with my water-shy youngest to the delightful and dry rides of Holiday World. Along the way, we stopped for free soft drinks at a Pepsi Oasis, where, in addition to the full line of Pepsi products, there's also lemonade and ice cold water.

Free refreshments, parking, sunscreen and inner tube usage add to the fun, but really, Holiday World is just wonderful place. It's a bit of a distance from Cincinnati, located south of I-64 in Santa Claus, Indiana, but it's worth the not-quite three-hour drive, especially when combined with other Southern Indiana attractions.

Something for Everyone

For most of our visit, the family split. My husband had our three oldest, ages 8, 9, and 11. Together they zoomed down waterslides, played in Monsoon Lagoon, relaxed in the Congo River and enjoyed other wet fun in the Splashin' Safari. Meanwhile, I explored rides for the younger set with my 4- and 6-year-olds.

Friendly employees operated the rides in Rudolph's Reindeer Ranch and in the land of Fourth of July. I don't know why, but I vaguely expected the place to have an aged look, marked with chipped paint and a film of dirt. Instead, everything in Holiday World is fresh, bright and clean. The only ride

that shows its age is the park's last original ride from its days as Santa Claus Land — the Freedom Train. The charming ride chugs along a train track, passing 1950s-era statues of Mother Goose and Fairy Tale characters.

My little guys loved sitting on the stage with Santa himself as he read a story and led a sing-along. And the whole family clapped, laughed and gasped in awe during Diveworks 2005, a high dive show.

The family also got together for meals. The food was reasonably priced and exceptionally tasty for amusement park fare, especially the pizza with a delicious crust, great for dipping in extra pizza sauce. The park also offers Mexican food, burgers, hot dogs and salads, satisfying nearly everyone's taste.

Family satisfaction is a priority at Holiday World, perhaps because it's been family owned and operated by the Koch family for more than three generations. There's an area for nursing moms (though women are welcome to feed Baby anywhere in the park); and both the women's and men's restrooms have diaper changing stations. Koch family pride and involvement in Holiday World was obvious everywhere, but one moment I witnessed illustrated it beautifully. When we first arrived at the amusement park, we recognized Pat Koch, Holiday World's spokeswoman, from website and brochure pictures. Holiday World commercials make her a local celebrity, so I wasn't surprised to see her shaking hands, giving hugs and posing for photos at the park entrance. The surprise came later. While enjoying

free lemonade in Kringle's Café, we saw Pat Koch again. She was mopping the floor. The people at the table beside us kept nudging each other and whispering, "Is that her?" When they decided she was the TV celebrity, they approached her with a pen and asked for her autograph. She smiled and signed, talked with them graciously, and then picked up a rag to clean tables, making everything nice for her guests at Holiday World. ☺

Barbara Littner David is a local mother and contributing writer.

Holiday World

452 East Christmas Blvd., Santa Claus, IN
877-Go Family (463-2645) • holidayworld.com

General Admission:

\$33.95

Guests under 54" or over age 60:
\$25.95 (bring Pepsi can for \$2 discount)

Visit the website for detailed driving directions as well as a schedule of hours and operations. (Note: Holiday World operates on Central Standard Time.)

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