Giraffe Encounter

Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park
Sensory Key

There are lots of things to see here. It might be bright or hurt my eyes in places where I see this. I can wear sunglasses or cover my eyes.

There are lots of things to hear here. It might be loud in places where I see this. I can wear headphones or cover my ears if it gets too loud.

When I see this there will be things I can taste here. I do not have to put anything in my mouth if I do not want to.

There might be a strong smell in places where I see this. I can hold my nose or cover my nose with something that smells good.

There are lots of things to touch here. There might be things that I feel uncomfortable touching when I see this. I do not have to touch anything that I do not want to.
We are going to the Giraffe Encounter

The Giraffe Encounter is in Safari Africa. We can get there by following the map and signs. At the Giraffe Encounter we can look at the giraffes. We might even feed the giraffes.
Walking through Safari Africa, we will see an orange sign that says “Giraffe Meet & Greet”. We will wait our turn in line here.
An employee will be selling tickets. We will pay for a ticket if we did not purchase a ticket before we came. I will show them my purple wristband if I have one. They will give us a card to hold.
When it’s time for the encounter to start, we will enter on the left. We will wait our turn in line here.
When it’s our turn, an employee will take our card and take down the rope for us to go up to the feeding platform.
A zookeeper will be waiting for us on the feeding platform. There is a yellow line on the ground. We should only go past the yellow line if a zookeeper tells us to.
Just like us, the giraffes are not always hungry. Sometimes they will be waiting to eat at the platform. Other times, they will be out in their yard. If they are not eating, that is okay. We can look at them in their habitat or come back a different time.
If the giraffes are hungry, a zookeeper may help me feed them. The giraffes are fed lettuce and pellets. Maybe I will feed them with my hands. Maybe the zookeeper will put it in a cup or box for me to hold. If I do not want to hold the food, that is okay. I can ask for the food to be in a cup or box for me to hold.
I will hold out the food for the giraffe to take. I might feel the giraffe’s lips or tongue touch my hand. It is okay. The giraffe is just trying to take the food. I will not pet the giraffe. If I get nervous, I can always take a step back.
When I am done feeding the giraffes, I will use the hand sanitizer by the gate. If I want to wash my hands instead, I can go to the restroom by the Savanna Oasis Restaurant.
We will exit down the ramp on the left. We will walk down the ramp and continue the rest of our day at ZooTampa at Lowry Park.
ZooTampa at Lowry Park has teamed up with the Center For Autism & Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida to provide support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism and related disabilities. Please utilize the resources provided to properly plan for your visit to ZooTampa at Lowry Park.

We also recognize the support of Autism Shifts, The Learning Academy, Autism Speaks and the Diversity Action Coalition and applaud their efforts to promote inclusive experiences.