

Accessibility Guide for Houston Zoo



Houston Zoo's Commitment to Being a Zoo for All

At the Houston Zoo, we believe that everyone deserves to feel welcome, included, and supported. We strive to create an environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can safely explore and connect with wildlife.

This guide is designed to help you plan your visit by outlining the accommodations, services, and resources available for guests with disabilities and other access needs. From mobility support to sensory-friendly tools, we are here to make your experience as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

Because accessibility is always evolving, we welcome your questions, suggestions, and special requests.

713-533-6500

inquiries@houstonzoo.org

We look forward to welcoming you to the Houston Zoo!

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Accessibility and Accommodations

For accessibility needs not addressed here, please reach out at least 24 hours prior to your visit using inquiries@houstonzoo.org or by calling 713-533-6500. Our Guest Services Office, just to the right of the Membership booth, is here to assist you when you arrive.

Attendant Pass

If a guest with a disability needs the help of a professional caregiver during their visit, a complimentary attendant pass is available at the Guest Services office. This pass is intended for licensed or paid support professionals. Please have any necessary credentials or documentation available upon request.

Mobility Needs

Please note that some areas of the Zoo have inclines, uneven terrain, and boardwalk-style pathways, which may be challenging for guests with limited mobility.

We are actively working to make the Houston Zoo as accessible as possible for all guests. A variety of mobility support options are available for rent, including strollers, wagons, manual wheelchairs, and motorized scooters. Scooters are for individual use only, and guests must be at least 18 years of age to operate them.

For more information on mobility rentals, please visit our [Guest Services](#) page.

For guest safety, bicycles, tricycles, scooters, skates, skateboards, and rollerblades are not permitted. If you have any questions about a required mobility device, please visit our Guest Services office or call 713-533-6500.

Sensory Needs

As part of our commitment to being a *Zoo for All*, the Houston Zoo is proud to be designated as a Certified Autism Center™ by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). This certification means that all staff and volunteers have completed autism-specific training, and the Zoo has undergone an on-site review from IBCCES professionals.

The Zoo can be busy – especially on weekends and holidays. For a calmer experience, we recommend planning your visit for either first thing in the morning or after 2:00 p.m. on weekdays.

Sensory Bags

Sensory bags are available for checkout at the Guest Services office. These bags include items designed to support guests with sensory sensitivities during their visit.

Sensory Guides

Our [sensory guides](#) offer information about noise levels, crowd density, and other sensory factors across different areas of the Zoo. These guides can help you plan your visit based on your individual needs and preferences.

Social Story

A downloadable social story for the Houston Zoo is coming soon to help prepare guests for what to expect during their visit. Stay tuned!

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome at the Zoo! When you arrive, please check in at the Safety & Security Window. A team member will review the Zoo's service animal guidelines with you so that you and your animal can enjoy your visit safely.

Please note that emotional support or companion animals are not permitted in the Zoo. If you are unsure whether your animal qualifies as a service animal, please call us at 713-533-6501 before your visit.

Policies and Procedures

We want your time at the Zoo to be fun, safe, and stress-free for everyone – guests and animals alike. For the latest information on Zoo rules, policies, available mobility items, lost and found, and frequently asked questions, please visit our [Guest Services](#) page.

Staff and volunteers are available to assist you during your visit. You can identify many of them and their role through the type of uniform they wear as well as the presence of a nametag. Below are examples of the uniforms you might see around the Zoo.



Zoo Staff
Navy Blue



Ranger (Safety & Security)
Red



Zoo Volunteer
Dark Green



Camp Zoofari Staff
Aquamarine



Food and Retail Staff
Black, Gray, and Maroon



Zoo Crew (Teens)
Light Green

Preparing For Your Visit

The Houston Zoo does not sell tickets onsite. Tickets need to be purchased online before you can enter the Zoo. There are Admissions staff available to assist you with navigating the website on your device.

Please visit our [Events](#) page which has all of our upcoming events, Meet the Keeper Chat schedule, and any updates you might need to know before selecting which date you would like to visit.

Our [Zoo Hours](#) page lets you know when we are open, any planned early closures we might have, and construction updates so you know before you get here what you can expect. The busiest days for the Zoo are Free Day (the first Tuesday of every month), holidays, and weekends.

Purchasing Your Tickets

So now you are ready to reserve your tickets! The Houston Zoo has flex pricing, which means you can select the date and time that best fits your schedule and budget.

Discounted tickets are available. Please visit our [website](#) to see what discounts you might qualify for and to purchase your tickets.

You can also consider a [membership](#). Members do not have to make reservations, enjoy free daytime admission for an entire year, and experience additional benefits such as early entry on the first Saturday of every month.

Once you purchase your tickets, you can add them to your Apple Wallet or take a screenshot so you can easily display them when it's time to visit the Zoo.

On the Day of Your Visit

Parking

The Houston Zoo is located at 6200 Hermann Park Drive. The Zoo does not have its own parking lot; however, free parking is available in Hermann Park. On holidays and days when the weather is particularly nice, these lots can fill up fast, so make a plan before you get here. Please visit our [Parking](#) page for more information on where to park and other transportation options.

Restrooms

- You can find restroom locations on your [Zoo Map](#).
- All Zoo restrooms are wheelchair accessible.
- Family/gender neutral restrooms are located next to Birds of the World.
- Adult changing tables are located in the restrooms at Jack's Café.

Nursing Rooms

You are welcome to nurse your infant in any public area where you feel at ease. For added comfort or privacy, nursing rooms are available at Jack's Café and Cypress Circle Café.

Food and Beverages

Guests are welcome to bring their own food and beverages into the Houston Zoo.

For the safety and wellbeing of the animals living at the Zoo and the guests visiting, the following are prohibited. Please do not bring:

- Glass bottles
- Alcoholic beverages
- Plastic straws

If you would like to enjoy a meal during your visit, restaurants and food stands are listed below for your convenience. Menus for Jacks Café and Cypress Circle Café are available online, and you can also place an online order from Cypress Circle Café. [[View menus and order online here](#)]

Sit-Down Restaurants (Indoor/Outdoor Seating)

Cypress Circle Café

Location: Next to Katherine G. McGovern Texas Wetlands

Hours: Open during Zoo operating hours

Locally sourced, sustainable fares that change seasonally. Pizzas, burgers, and salads are available year-round

Twiga Café

Location: Located between the rhino and giraffe habitats in African Forest

Hours: Always open during summer months, generally open all other months.

Pizzas, sandwiches, and snacks. Holiday-themed cocktails and mocktails during Zoo Lights season

Sit-Down Restaurants (Outdoor Only Seating)

Jack's Café

Location: Located at the front of the Zoo next to the Reflection Pond

Hours: Open during Zoo operating hours

Sharable snacks, Southern favorites, sandwiches, burgers. Menu changes seasonally. Ice creams and other sweets located at the Ice Cream window on the side closest to the Zoo entrance

Grab-n-Go Food Stands

Flamingo Terrace

Location: Located next to The Fondren Foundation Birds of the World

Hours: Closes during rain

Fine Craft Street Food Truck, seasonal and year-round St. Arnold Brewing Company beer, bar bites, ICEES, and craft tacos

Elephant Stand

Location: Located between McNair Asian Elephant Habitat and the okapi exhibit

Hours: Open hot months and high attendance days, closes during rain

Serves snacks, Dippin Dots, and ICEEs

BBQ Trailer

Location: Located outside the entrance to African Forest

Hours: Closes during summer and during rain

Various BBQ (sandwiches, sausage on a stick, etc.), Dippin Dots, snacks, and beer

Albert & Ethel Herzstein Trading Post

Location: Located inside entrance to African Forest

Hours: Always open during summer months, all other months depending on attendance

Dole Whips and other snacks including cookies, large pretzels, and popcorn. Beverages like soda, juice, St. Arnold beer, and frozen margaritas

Texas Wetlands Food Cart

Location: Located across from Katherine G. McGovern Texas Wetlands

Hours: Open during Zoo operating hours

Sodas, coffee, snacks, ice cream, beer

Children's Zoo Food Cart

Location: Located at the entrance of John P. McGovern Children's Zoo

Hours: Open during Zoo operating hours

ICEES (this is where we have the MOST flavor options!), fresh squeezed lemonade, Dippin Dots, and snacks

Gift Shop

Forget something? Our Zoo Store carries the everyday necessities below as well as souvenirs as a reminder of your visit.

- Sunscreen, lip balm, rain ponchos, umbrellas, hats, etc.

Paid Experiences

Carousel

Carousel tickets can be [purchased](#) as part of your admission package before you enter the Zoo or at the carousel booth using your mobile device. A carousel closure can occur due to inclement weather, including lightning strikes within 10 miles of the Zoo.

- Children over 42" tall may ride alone but can request an accompanying adult if needed.
- Children under 42" tall must be accompanied by an adult
- Accompanying adults do not need to purchase a carousel ticket, but will be required to stand next to the child as they ride for safety

The carousel is not accessible by wheelchair.

Giraffe Feeding

Giraffe feeding opportunities occur daily at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Tickets to feed the giraffes can only be purchased at the Giraffe Feeding kiosk with a credit card. There are no pre-pay or reservations available.

When feeding giraffes, you will purchase your tickets at the booth next to Twiga Café at the giraffe exhibit and then make your way up the ramp to exchange your tickets for

lettuce leaves. Strollers are not allowed on the platform, but wheelchairs and scooters are permitted.

When the staff member calls you forward, you can feed the giraffes their lettuce snacks and take pictures. For safety reasons, we ask you to follow these rules:

- Everyone washes their hands before feeding the giraffes
- While you will be close to the giraffes, they do not like to be petted or have their faces touched
- Face the giraffes and do not turn your back on them, even to take pictures
- One ticket gets you 3 pieces of lettuce. Please do not tear the leaves

First Aid

If you or someone in your group needs first aid during your visit, please let any Zoo staff member or volunteer know. They will quickly contact our Safety & Security team, and a ranger will be on the way to assist.

Lost and Found

Lost something during your visit? Fill out our Lost and Found [form](#), and we will reach out to you if your item is located. You can also check with the staff at the Safety and Security Window at the Zoo entrance to see if it has been turned in. If an item is accidentally dropped into an animal habitat, let any staff member or volunteer know right away or call 713-533-6501 to report it.

Lost Children

- Before your visit begins, we recommend taking a quick photo of everyone in your group. This will help our Safety & Security team locate your child more quickly if needed.
- Coach children in your group to look for a Zoo staff member or volunteer wearing a Zoo nametag. Our team is trained to help and will work to reunite you.
- If a child in your group becomes separated, find the nearest staff member or volunteer right away. They will ask for a description and stay with you until a Safety & Security team member arrives to assist. Staying together helps us reunite you as soon as possible.

Contact Us

If you have an accessibility need that is not covered in this guide, please contact us at least 24 hours before your visit using inquiries@houstonzoo.org or call 713-533-6500 . On the day of your visit, our Guest Services Office can assist with additional support you may need.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Houston Zoo and helping make your visit a safe, comfortable, and memorable experience!

Have feedback about a recent visit to the Zoo? Please complete our [Contact Us](#) form and we will ensure that it reaches the appropriate department.