

# Utica Zoo Birthday Party FAQ

## **\*Booking and Planning Your Party\***

### **How many guests can you accommodate?**

Our Auditorium and Zebra View Pavilion are designed for smaller gatherings, with seating for no more than 30 individuals. For parties or events with more than 30 guests, we recommend contacting our events department for additional rental options: 315-734-0472 ext. 22; or visit our pavilion rentals page for more information – [www.uticazoo.org/rentals](http://www.uticazoo.org/rentals)

### **Does the party include admission into the zoo?**

Yes, all party packages include admission into the zoo for the birthday child, parents/guardians (up to 2), and 30 guests. A headcount will be taken by the party assistant during your party; the birthday child plus (2) parents/guardians are free and not included in the guest count. Extra guests over the allotted 30 will be added to your balance for a fee of \$4.50/adult and \$3.00/child.

### **Do you have any age restrictions for parties?**

The only age restriction that we have pertains to our ambassador animal presentations. Children 2 and under will not be allowed to touch our ambassador animals due to health and safety concerns.

### **Can I hold a date/time without a payment or put down a deposit?**

We require the full payment being placed at the time of booking. Since space is limited, parties are reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis, and should be reserved **at least** one month in advance. However, it is recommended that you book your spring or summer party at least 3 months in advance.

### **Do you have a refund/cancellation policy?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to grant refunds for birthday parties. The only exception would be if the Utica Zoo is closed on the date of your party due to inclement weather. All birthday party reservations are final and cannot be transferred to another date. Birthday parties are held rain or shine; we are unable to schedule rain dates.

### **What should I include on my invitation?**

Be sure to let your party guests know which area of the zoo your party will take place (the *Auditorium* or *Zebra View Pavilion*), and that they do not need to pay to enter the zoo that day. Party guests should also check in with our gift shop attendant upon arrival for your party. Be sure to check out our FREE printable invitations at the bottom of our main birthday party page!

### **What do I need to bring?**

Unfortunately, we do not provide food, eating utensils, or decorations for birthday parties. However, you are welcome to bring any food items you would like, and/or get food delivered or catered. The auditorium room has a refrigerator/freezer and outlets that can be used during your Basic or Nocturnal party. Those having their party in our Zebra View pavilion are welcome to bring in coolers or buckets for their food/drinks.

Decorations such as streamers, wall-decals, banners, and piñatas are allowed. Please avoid bringing the following items: **balloons, noise-makers, confetti, and alcoholic beverages**. We reserve the right to ask you to remove any items that we deem unsafe. We appreciate your cooperation.

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Nicolette Hajdasz

## ***\*During Your Party\****

### **How should I plan my party time?**

All parties are allotted 30 minutes before and after their party to set up/break down. After checking in with the party assistant to discuss the time of your guided exploration or ambassador animal presentation, you can plan your party however best suits your needs.

Guided explorations or ambassador animal presentations may take up to 30 minutes;

- Parties held at 10am-12pm will have their experience by/no later than 11am;
- Parties held at 12pm-2pm (Zebra View Pavilion) will have their experience by/no later than 1pm;
- Parties held at 2:30pm-4:30pm will have their experience by/no later than 3:30pm
- Nocturnal Parties held at 5:30pm-7:30pm will have their experience by/no later than 6:00pm

### **Can I pay for additional party time or arrive earlier to set up?**

As mentioned above, we can only allot up to 30 minutes of set up and break down time for all parties. Keep in mind that other events may be taking place before or after your party, so please plan your time wisely. You are welcome to pay for additional party time for your basic or pavilion party, however, this option is upon availability, and may be removed from your online reservation if additional time is unavailable for your party date. Any parties that go over their allotted time may be charged a fee.

### **Can I pull my vehicle up to the party room (Auditorium) or Zebra View Pavilion?**

Unfortunately, due to safety concerns, we cannot allow any non-zoo vehicles onto zoo grounds. Please be sure to check in with the attendant at the entrance building when you arrive, so that our party assistant can be notified of your arrival. A wagon will be available to bring your supplies into the zoo – our assistant is here to help you as well!

### **Can we explore the zoo before, during or after our party?**

Yes! You and your guests are welcome to tour the zoo at any time on the day of your party, as long as the zoo is open. If your party is scheduled for 2:30pm-4:30pm or 5:30pm-7:30pm, please feel free to let your guests know that they are welcome to visit the zoo before your party. However, keep in mind that you will not have access to the party room until 30 minutes prior to your party start time, as we may have other events taking place before your party. The Utica Zoo is open 10am-4:45pm April-October, and 10am-4pm November-March.

***\*Children 16 years and under must be accompanied by an adult while exploring the zoo's buildings and grounds.***

### **What animals can we see for the presentation?**

Due to the high frequency of programs that our ambassador animals participate in, we cannot accept specific animal requests. The party assistant/educator will greet you when you arrive, to discuss when your presentation will take place, as well as check to make sure the birthday child does not have any fears of particular animals. However, the animals featured at your party are the educator's choice.

Parties choosing to have a guided exploration rather than an ambassador animal presentation, may choose any exhibit animal in the zoo, that the birthday child or family would like to walk to and learn about from the educator. *Keep in mind that some animals may not be viewable during certain times of the year.*

***Please remember that all areas of the Utica Zoo are non-smoking/non-vaping; there is a designated smoking area in the parking lot.***

**Thank you!**