

Chessington World of Adventures Guide

Overview

One of three theme parks located in Greater London that are operated by Merlin Entertainments Group, Chessington World of Adventures combines a host of rides and shows with a world-class zoo. Whereas nearby LEGOLAND Windsor is aimed at families with kids aged 2-12, and Thorpe Park caters for teens and young adults, Chessington offers something for just about every age group. In addition to the theme park and zoo, the site is also home to the Holiday Inn Chessington, a safari-themed hotel that overlooks the Wanyama Village & Reserve area.

History

The origins of Chessington World of Adventures can be traced back to 1931, when a new zoo was established in the grounds of a fourteenth century country mansion by entrepreneur Reginald Goddard. The zoo was eventually acquired by the Pearsons Group in 1978, which subsequently merged with the Madame Tussauds chain to form The Tussauds Group. The newly-formed company embarked on an ambitious £12 million project to build a theme park on the site, and Chessington World of Adventures opened to the public in 1987.

Attractions

Africa

Penguins of Madagascar Live: Operation Cheezy Dibbles

User rating: ★★★★★ (3 votes)

Type: Live show **Opening date:** Mar 23, 2012

A new Madagascar-themed show set to open in 2015 to celebrate the "Year of the Penguins"

Penguins of Madagascar Mission: Treetop Hoppers

User rating: ★★★★★ (2 votes)

Type: Drop tower **Height:** 20 feet **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Jumpin' Star **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches
Opening date: 2001

Penguins of Madagascar Mission: Treetop Hoppers is a child-friendly take on the classic drop tower attraction. Guests are pulled up to the top of a 20-foot-tall tower, before dropping part of the way down and then bouncing up and down. The ride originally featured Ribena theming, but this has since been removed.

Toadie's Crazy Cars

User rating: ★★★★★ (4 votes)

Type: Circuit ride **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Convoy **Opening date:** Jun 7, 1987

Known as Old Crock's Rally until 2001, Toadie's Crazy Cars sees guests boarding powered cars for a tour around several scenes featuring characters from "The Wind and the Willows". Toadie himself puts in an appearance towards the end.

Forbidden Kingdom

Rameses Revenge

User rating: ★★★★★ (21 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Height:** 59 feet **Manufacturer:** Huss Park Attractions GmbH **Model:** Top Spin **Minimum rider height:** 55 inches **Maximum rider height:** 77 inches **Opening date:** 1995

One of few genuine thrill rides remaining in Chessington World of Adventure's line-up, Rameses Revenge is a HUSS Top Spin ride. Very similar to [Ripsaw](#) at sister park Alton Towers, it sees guests boarding a 20-seat gondola. This is attached to two rotating arms, and can also pivot to send riders rotating head-over-heels.

The ride features heavy theming, and is surrounded by elements that are designed to evoke both ancient Egyptian architecture and traditional Islamic elements. A pool of water sits at its base, and jets are used to soak riders as they are lowered towards it at various points during the ride cycle.

Tomb Blaster

User rating: ★★★★★ (10 votes)

Type: Laser gun ride **Opening date:** 2002

One of Chessington's most heavily-themed rides, Tomb Blaster started life as Fifth Dimension, a dark ride created by world-renowned designer John Wardley. In 1994, it was transformed into Terror Tomb, before receiving a second major overhaul to take its current form in 2002.

Tomb Blaster is an interactive laser gun ride, which still employs the original Fifth Dimension ride system (which, crucially, enables the ride's vehicles to face in different directions depending on the current scene). It sees guests battling their through an ancient Egyptian tomb, with points on offer for hitting as many of the undead as possible.

The ride features some significant set-piece theming elements, including an enormous statue of Anubis. The queue-line decoration is also extensive, with guests queuing around the exterior and interior of the "tomb".

Land of the Dragons

Canopy Capers

User rating: ★★★★★ (2 votes)

Type: Playground **Maximum rider height:** 55 inches **Opening date:** 2004

One of the largest playgrounds at Chessington, Canopy Capers features a number of climbing frames and bridges. The structures are heavily-themed to fit in with the surrounding Land of the Dragons area.

Dragon's Fury

User rating: ★★★★★ (47 votes)

Type: Roller coaster **Height:** 51 feet **Length:** 1706 feet **Manufacturer:** Maurer Sohne **Model:** Spinning Coaster
Minimum rider height: 47 inches **Maximum rider height:** 77 inches **Opening date:** Mar 27, 2004

A custom-built spinning roller coaster, Dragon's Fury sees guests boarding cars that can hold up to four riders. Its circuit dominates the Land of the Dragons area of Chessington World of Adventures, with riders being challenged to survive the wrath of the dragon (seen at the ride's entrance).

As with most Maurer Söhne spinning coasters, Dragon's Fury appears to defy the laws of physics. The vehicles traverse some truly bizarre-looking elements, including a vertical Immelman turn. The level of rotation of the cars depends on the distribution of the weight of the riders on-board. As Chessington usually operates a limit of 3 adults per car, this often results in spinning-aplenty.

Dragon's Playhouse

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Playground **Maximum rider height:** 55 inches **Opening date:** 2004

Let the little ones bounce off the walls, literally, in this soft playhouse. Children must be accompanied but adults cannot use the equipment.

Griffin's Galleon

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (1 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Zierer **Model:** Rockin' Tug **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches **Opening date:** 2004

Griffin's Galleon is a Zamperla Rockin' Tug attraction, similar to those seen at several other theme parks in the UK. It is designed to recreate the experience of being caught in a seastorm, and is aimed at younger guests. Riders are seated in a mock ship, which rotates in a circle as it moves from one end to the other of a short, inclined track.

Sea Dragons

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (1 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Zierer **Model:** Dragon Boats **Opening date:** 2004

Suitable only for very small children, Sea Dragons sees toddlers boarding Viking boats that turn in a slow circle.

Market Square

Carousel

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (3 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Bertazzon **Model:** Venitian Carousel **Opening date:** 1996

As its name suggests, Chessington's Carousel is a classic merry-go-round attraction. The current version was installed in 1996, and features a number of horses and carriages for riders to sit on as it rotates in a gentle circle.

Hocus Pocus Hall

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (8 votes)

Type: Walkthrough **Opening date:** 2003

Back in 1931, Chessington Zoo was built in the grounds of a fourteenth century mansion. That mansion still stands, and it now hosts the goblin-filled Hocus Pocus Hall walkthrough attraction.

Guests don 3D glasses and watch a short pre-show before exploring the colourful interior of the hall. A number of effects are used to bring the goblins to life, while guests must escape a mirror maze in order to reach the exit.

Unusually, adults must be accompanied by a child at all times of year except for during the Halloween Hocus Pocus event.

Tiny Truckers

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (3 votes)

Type: Circuit ride **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Convoy **Opening date:** 1993

Tiny Truckers lets tiny people "drive" tiny trucks. In reality, the powered trucks are guided by a rail, so there's no danger of young joy riders speeding off into the distance. The rear seats aren't covered so adults can still fit in with the tiny drivers.

Mexicana

Rattlesnake

User rating: ★★☆☆☆ (9 votes)

Type: Roller coaster **Height:** 49 feet **Length:** 1214 feet **Maximum speed:** 28 mph **Manufacturer:** Maurer Sohne **Model:** Wild Mouse **Minimum rider height:** 55 inches **Maximum rider height:** 77 inches **Opening date:** 1998

Partially located below ground-level in order to overcome height restrictions placed on Chessington, Rattlesnake is a classic "wild mouse"-style roller coaster. Up to 4 riders board mine cart-themed vehicles, with the circuit weaving in and out of the surrounding buildings and support structure.

As with most rides of its type, Rattlesnake features a relatively low top-speed of just 28 miles per hour, and a compact 1,213-foot-long circuit. The focus is on tight turns and short, sharp drops, which cause riders to bounce and slide around in its vehicles.

Scorpion Express

User rating: ★★★★★ (7 votes)

Type: Roller coaster **Height:** 16 feet **Manufacturer:** Mack Rides **Model:** Blauer Enzian **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches **Maximum rider height:** 77 inches **Opening date:** Jun 7, 1987

John Wardley's famous Runaway Train roller coaster will receive a makeover for the 2014 season, re-emerging as Scorpion Express.

Mystic East

Dragon Falls

User rating: ★★★★★ (31 votes)

Type: Water flume ride **Height:** 45 feet **Manufacturer:** Mack Rides **Model:** Log Flume **Minimum rider height:** 47 inches **Opening date:** Jun 7, 1987

Dominating the Mystic East area of Chessington World of Adventures is Dragon Falls, a large log flume water ride. Up to 5 guests can board one of its boats, which float around a circuit that features two drops (the second standing at 45-foot-tall).

As with the park's other attractions, Dragon Falls features extensive theming. The first drop leads into the mouth of a dragon, while the second passes through a gap between two large Angkor Wat-style stone faces. Look out for a cheeky elephant at the end of the ride, who sprays riders with water.

Peeking Heights

User rating: ★★★★★ (5 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Height:** 79 feet **Manufacturer:** Fabbri **Model:** Ferris Wheel **Opening date:** 2005

Peeking Heights was originally installed at Thorpe Park in 2003, where it was named Eclipse. It proved to be very unpopular, and moved across to sister park Chessington World of Adventures in 2005. Thrill ride Samurai moved in the other direction, in a decision that angered fans of both parks.

The ride is essentially a classic Ferris Wheel, and offers views across the Mystic East area and beyond. Standing at some 79-foot-tall, it is the tallest ride at the park.

Pirate's Cove

Black Buccaneer

User rating: ★★★★★ (5 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Height:** 57 feet **Manufacturer:** Huss Park Attractions GmbH **Model:** Pirate Boat **Minimum rider height:** 39 inches **Opening date:** 1988

A classic HUSS swinging ship ride, Black Buccaneer is the headline attraction of the Pirate's Cove area. Guests sit in rows on either side of the ship, which slowly builds momentum as it swings from end-to-end.

Seastorm

User rating: ★★★★★ (5 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Mack Rides **Model:** Sea Storm Ride **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches **Opening date:** 1995

Seastorm is similar in designed to classic "caterpillar" rides, but its chief innovation is that riders are seated in miniature "boats" (though no water is actually involved). These rotate around a centre column, rising up and down

slightly as they go. The boats spin to face each other, so be sure to put on your best pirate face.

Sea Life

Sea Life

User rating: ★★★★★ (7 votes)

Type: Walkthrough **Opening date:** 2008

Chessington World of Adventure's owner, Merlin Entertainments Group, also owns the Sea Life brand. In 2008, it opened a small Sea Life aquarium at the park to complement its existing zoo.

Among the creatures housed in the Sea Life attraction are Blacktip Reef Sharks, several different species of ray and a host of jellyfish. Guests also have the chance to have their hands "cleaned" by live shrimp.

In 2011, the park renamed the aquarium's underwater tunnel area as Azteca, adding a backstory based around a plane that crashes into a mystical lost underwater city.

Transylvania

Bubbleworks

User rating: ★★★★★ (23 votes)

Type: Boat ride **Height:** 15 feet **Manufacturer:** Mack Rides GmbH **Model:** Free Flow Boat Ride **Opening date:** 1990

Indoor water rides are something of a rarity in the UK, and Chessington's Bubbleworks is one of the leading examples. Originally opened as Professor Burp's Bubbleworks in 1990, it takes guests on a scenic tour of a "bubble factory".

After queueing through indoor and outdoor sections, guests board circular boats and float around a series of scenes. These show "Bubbleworkers" hard at work, with comical elements such as floating cows playing a major role. While guests do not get very wet, a short 15-foot drop and a section in which fountains "leap" over the boats can cause some minor dampness.

The original version of the ride was based around a fizzy drinks factory, with an initial design based on a brewery having been dropped at an early stage. It was updated in 2006 following a sponsorship deal with soap-maker Imperial Leather, although this has since expired.

Vampire

User rating: ★★★★★ (61 votes)

Type: Roller coaster **Height:** 65 feet **Length:** 2200 feet **Maximum speed:** 45 mph **Manufacturer:** Arrow Dynamics **Model:** Suspended Coaster **Minimum rider height:** 43 inches **Maximum rider height:** 77 inches **Opening date:** Apr 11, 1990

Vampire is an Arrow suspended swinging roller coaster, and one of Chessington World of Adventure's flagship rides. It is designed to evoke the experience of flying like a vampire bat, and starts in a heavily-themed station complete with a creepy animatronic organist.

The coaster hits a maximum height of 70 feet and a top speed of 45 miles per hour as it weaves around its circuit, which includes two lift hills. Much of the ride takes place in a wooded area, although a short section sees riders soaring over the rest of the Transylvania area.

Originally, the ride featured bat-themed trains suspended from the track, but following numerous maintenance issues these were replaced in 2001 by new Vekoma-built floorless trains.

Wild Asia

Jungle Bus

User rating: ★★★★★ (2 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Height:** 23 feet **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Crazy Bus **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches
Maximum rider height: 77 inches **Opening date:** 2010

The Jungle Bus is a Zamperla Crazy Bus ride, identical to those found at more than 200 other amusement parks worldwide. The bus is attached to two arms, which rotate during its ride cycle to leave guests repeatedly taking to the skies and dropping back down to the ground below. It originally opened at the Bash Street Bus in 2001.

KOBRA

User rating: ★★★★★ (35 votes)

Type: Other **Height:** 52 feet **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Disk'o coaster **Minimum rider height:** 47 inches
Opening date: 2010

Installed in Chessington's new Wild Asia area in 2010, KOBRA was the second Zamperla Mega Disk'O Coaster to open in the UK (the first having been [EDGE](#) at Paultons Park). The ride visually dominates the Wild Asia area, with two enormous cobra statues standing at either end of its circuit.

It sees riders seated in an outwards-facing position on a circular platform. This spins as it traverses a short roller coaster-style track, which features a "camelback" hill to create a floating sensation. Guests sit on motorbike-style seats, with restraints locking onto their backs. This can cause a sharp bump!

Monkey Swinger

User rating: ★★★★★ (6 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Zierer **Model:** Wave Swinger **Minimum rider height:** 47 inches **Opening date:** 2010

One the surface, Monkey Swinger appears to be a classic "Chair-O-Plane" or "Wave Swinger" attraction. Guests sit in seats that are suspended by chains from a central tower, and rotate around it in a gentle circle. The difference at Chessington, though, is that Monkey Swinger is surrounded by water jets that can leave riders soaked.

The ride originally opened in 2000 as Billy's Whizzer, but was updated to its current theme in 2010 when Wild Asia replaced Beanoland.

Temple of Mayhem

User rating: ★★★★★ (3 votes)

Type: Playground **Maximum rider height:** 55 inches **Opening date:** 2010

Originally housed in the Millennium Dome, the Temple of Mayhem is an indoor playground aimed squarely at younger guests. It is dominated by a huge ball-pit, which features a host of "weapons" that enable kids to fire the balls into the air and at each other. It opened as Dennis' Madhouse at Chessington in 2002, following the dome's closure.

Tuk Tuk Turmoil

User rating: ★★★★★ (4 votes)

Type: Other **Manufacturer:** Barbieri **Model:** Dodgems **Minimum rider height:** 35 inches **Opening date:** 2010

Opened as Roger the Dodger's Dodgems in 2000, Tuk Tuk Turmoil is a classic dodgems attraction. Up to 2 guests can board each of its vehicles, before driving around in circles attempting to crash into each other. Unlike many parks, Chessington does not charge extra for the dodgems ride.

Zoo

Chessington Zoo

User rating: ★★★★★ (10 votes)

Type: Other **Opening date:** 1931

A zoo has stood on the site of Chessington World of Adventures since 1931, and it's still going strong today. It is the only part of the park to operate during the winter, when low-cost Zoo Days promotions are frequently on offer.

The western half of the zoo is dominated by the Trail of the Kings, a walkthrough series of exhibits housing tigers, lions, binturong and gorillas. The opposite side hosts smaller enclosures, which house speices such as meerkats and wallabies. Presentations on sea lions are held at Sea Lion Bay several times daily.

The park expanded the zoo in May 2010 with the opening of Wanyama Village & Reserve area in front of the Holiday Inn Chessington. This features a small "savannah", which hosts zebra, antelope and scimitar horned oryx.

Pandamonium

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Animatronic show **Opening date:** Mar 25, 2016

Chessington's new show for 2016, Pandamonium, features life-sized animatronic pandas. The creatures "create chaos on stage and have the whole family roaring with laughter at the mayhem that follows."

Zufari

Flying Jumbos

User rating: ★★★★★ (4 votes)

Type: Flat ride **Manufacturer:** Zamperla **Model:** Mini Jet **Opening date:** Jun 7, 1987

Many parents will be familiar with the Dumbo The Flying Elephant rides at Disneyland, the Magic Kingdom and a host of other Disney parks. Flying Jumbos is essentially a low-cost clone of these, with guests boarding "flying" pink elephants which rotate in a circle, with riders able to control the height of their personal "jumbo". It was relocated to Mexicana in 2012 in order to make room for the new Madagascar Live show.

Zufari: Ride into Africa!

User rating: ★★★★★ (19 votes)

Type: Circuit ride **Opening date:** Mar 27, 2013

Chessington World of Adventures' new ride for 2013 will is a vehicle-based experience dubbed Zufari: Ride into Africa!.

The ride is located in the Wanyama Village & Reserve area of the park, close to the Holiday Inn Chessington hotel. It sees guests boarding "safari truck" vehicles, before travelling around a circuit that takes in rhinos, giraffes and flamingos.

New enclosures have been constructed to house the animals, with water being used in favour of fences wherever possible to separate the species. In addition to viewing the animals, guests pass through a number of "splash zones" before encountering a "water experience" in the cave-based finale.

Restaurants

Africa

The Coffee Hut

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Counter Service **Food type:** Coffee

Formerly a Caffé Nero outlet, The Coffee Hut offers the usual range of sandwiches, coffees, cookies and cakes.

Chessington Azteca Hotel

Temple Restaurant and Bar

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Table service **Food type:** Mixed

An "interactive dining experience" set in an ancient mystical temple, complete with a fountain that explodes into a special effects-laden display every 30 minutes. Serves a mix of Mexican, American, British, South American and Central American dishes.

Chessington Safari Hotel

Zafari Bar & Grill

User rating: ★★★★★ (3 votes)

Type: Table service **Food type:** Grill

The Zafari Bar & Grill is actually situated in the Chessington Safari Hotel, rather than inside the theme park itself. Its open kitchen offers a range of grilled meats and salads, while diners can enjoy views across the Wanyama Village & Reserve area.

Forbidden Kingdom

Forbidden Treats

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Snack location **Food type:** Pancakes

A small outlet serving up fresh pancakes, prepared right in front of your eyes.

Fried Chicken Company

User rating: ★★★★★ (6 votes)

Type: Bar **Food type:** Chicken

Along with Pizza Hut, KFC is on the way out at Merlin's UK theme parks. The replacement is the Merlin-run Fried Chicken Company, which offers very similar fare such as chicken burgers, wraps, goujons and, of course, traditional pieces of fried chicken. Vegetarian options are available, but limited.

Land of the Dragons

Original Sandwich Company

User rating: ★★★★★ (7 votes)

Type: Bar **Food type:** Coffee

Offers a selection of sandwiches, coffees, cookies and cakes.

Market Square

Adventurer's Chicken Shack

User rating: ★★★★★ (8 votes)

Type: Table service **Food type:** Chicken

The Adventurer's Chicken Shack offers a range of chicken dishes, along with ribs and salads. Formerly known as

the Greedy Goblin, it offers indoor and outdoor seating.

Market Square Donuts

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Snack location **Food type:** Donuts

Fresh donuts made right before your eyes.

Market Square Hot Dogs

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Counter service **Food type:** Hot Dogs

Create your own hot dog with a selection of toppings to choose from.

Market Square Pizza Pasta

User rating: ★★★★★ (14 votes)

Type: Counter Service **Food type:** Pizza

During the past few years, Merlin has worked to phase out Pizza Hut restaurants at its parks, in favour of its own-brand Pizza Pasta restaurants. Chessington's version is broadly identical to the others, and offers an all-you-can-eat buffet menu that includes pizzas, pastas, salads and drinks. Unlike the former Pizza Hut locations, Annual Passholders can use their discount here.

Mexicana

Mexican Cantina

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Counter Service **Food type:** Mexican

Spice up your visit to Mexicana with fajitas, nachos, and tacos, all available as single dishes or as meal deals. A kids menu is available and every adult meal has a vegetarian option.

Mystic East

Mystic Hot Dogs

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Counter service **Food type:** Hot Dogs

Create your own hot dog and choose from a variety of toppings.

Mystics Donuts

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Snack location **Food type:** Donuts

As its name suggests, this small outlet serves up fresh donuts.

Oriental Express

User rating: ★★★★★ (2 votes)

Type: Counter Service **Food type:** Chinese

A small Chinese takeaway, Oriental Express offers a range of snacks, as well as rice with a variety of sauces.

Pirates Cove

Captain's Cod and Chips

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Bar **Food type:** Chips

Fish and sausages can accompany chips, onion rings, beans, or peas. A range of hot and cold drinks are also on offer.

Transylvania

Vampire Bites

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Type: Snack location **Food type:** Hot Dogs

Hot Dogs and drinks available from this small corner of Transylvania. No guarantees that the ketchup isn't actually blood for the little vampires, but it's probably ketchup.

Vampire's Burger Kitchen

User rating: ★★★☆☆ (11 votes)

Type: Bar **Food type:** Burgers

Formerly one of the most unique branches of Burger King in the country, this newly-rebranded outlet features a large, sinister-looking tree in its centre. Other than that, it offers standard fast food fare, including burgers and fries.

Wild Asia

Asian Ices

User rating: ★★★☆☆ (6 votes)

Type: Snack location **Food type:** Ice Creams

Whether you want a big tub of ice cream with sprinkles and flakes, a small single-scoop cone or something in between, you can find it here. Other drinks are available too, including teas and coffees in case of brain freeze.

Noodle Noodle

User rating: ★★★★★ (1 votes)

Type: Counter Service **Food type:** Chinese

Appropriately located in the Wild Asia area of Chessington World of Adventures, Noodle Noodle serves a variety of Chinese dishes. Every dish is served with Amoy noodles, sauces and fresh vegetables, and all are cooked to order.

Hotels

Chessington Azteca Hotel

User rating: ★★★★★ (0 votes)

Opening date: 2014

Opened in 2014, the Chessington Azteca Hotel is a four-star establishment that is themed around an ancient Aztec temple. Each of the three floors is themed to a different level of the temple.

Chessington Safari Hotel

User rating: ★★★☆☆ (11 votes)

Opening date: 2007

Formerly part of the national Holiday Inn chain but now operated by Chessington itself, the Chessington Safari Hotel is located right next to the theme park's Lodge Gate entrance. Prices vary by season.

Some of the hotel's rooms feature a safari theme or a Penguins of Madagascar theme, and it is also possible to get a room overlooking the Wanyama Village and Reserve's savannah, where a number of animals roam during daylight hours (though, of course, you're likely to be in the theme park itself during this period).

The hotel also houses bars, restaurants and a heated indoor swimming pool.