



Southern White Rhino Backstage

ZooTampa has teamed up with the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida to provide support and assistance to optimize the potential of people who are neurodiverse. We also recognize Autism Shifts, The Learning Academy, Autism Speaks, and the Diversity Action Coalition and applaud their efforts to promote inclusive experiences.



Guests are currently required to wear a mask during the White Rhino Encounter.

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.

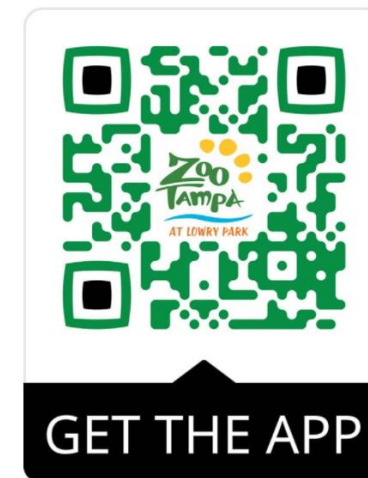


There are lots of things to touch here. There might be things that I feel uncomfortable touching when I see this. I do not have to touch anything that I do not want to.

We are going to the Southern White Rhino Backstage Encounter.



The Southern White Rhino Backstage Encounter meets at the Signature Encounter meeting area at the front of the park. We can get there by following the map or using the ZooTampa app.



Check In

Before we can go meet the rhinos, we will need to check in. At the meeting area there will be an employee who will ask for our name, check us off on their list, then ask us to sign in.



Sometimes there are other people on our tour and we will need to wait for them before we can go meet the rhinos. That's okay. We will all get a chance to meet the rhinos.

While we wait we can put our face masks on. Face masks help keep the people and animals safe.

Once everyone has arrived and is checked in the employee will go over the rules and answer any questions we have.



When we are ready to begin, the employee will lead us to a tram vehicle that will take us to the White Rhino habitat.



The employee will drive the tram to the White Rhino habitat. We may stop along the road to see some of the animals.

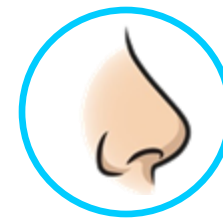


I will keep my hands and feet **inside** the tram vehicle.



I will not exit the vehicle until the employee tells me I can.

The employee will unlock the safety chains for us so we can exit the tram. Before we can meet the rhino we need to sanitize our hands. The employee will have hand sanitizer for us to use when we exit the vehicle.



At the habitat entrance, the Animal Care employee will go over the rules, answer any questions we have, and introduce us to the rhino we will be meeting.

A photographer will be taking pictures of me and the rhino. First we will do a picture with our group. The photographer will let us know when we can take our masks off for the pictures with the rhino.

Sometimes there is a line and we need to wait our turn. That's okay. We will all get a chance to meet the White Rhinos.



While we are in the rhino's night house we will need to stand behind the yellow line on the floor. Rhinos are big and they can reach their head through the fence, so this line will let us know where it is safe to stand while waiting our turn. The Animal Care employee will let us know when we can cross the yellow line and approach the rhino.



We will wait behind the yellow line



Once all the groups have taken a picture, the Animal Care employee will tell us when we can touch the rhino and show us how. When it is my turn, I will use my walking feet to go to the rhino.



While we meet the White Rhino, there will be a talk about rhinos. I will use my listening ears to learn about the animals. If I have questions, I can raise my hand and ask my questions after the talk.



If I would like, I CAN gently touch the rhino on their shoulder, stomach, back, or legs. The Animal Care employee will be nearby to answer any questions I have.



I will keep my hands and feet **away** from the rhino's face.



Touching the rhino's face is against the rules. I will not touch the animal's face.

If I do not want to touch the rhino, that's okay. I can step back and watch the rhino instead.

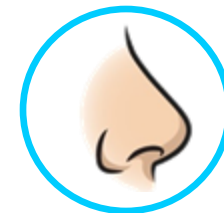


Sometimes the rhino is eating or resting. That's okay. The Animal Care team will see if another rhino wants to come interact with us.



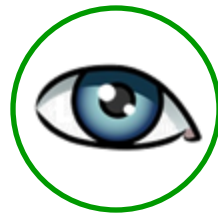
The rhinos are free to walk around. If the rhino makes me nervous, I can always take a step back.

After I am finished meeting the rhinos, I can use hand sanitizer to clean my hands. If I do not want to use the hand sanitizer, that's okay. I can wash my hands in a restroom when we finish the tour.



When we are all done meeting the rhinos, we will get back on the tram. The employee will drive the tram back to the front of the zoo where we started. We may stop along the road to see some of the animals.

After the encounter, I might have more time to enjoy the Zoo or go home. Either way, I had a good day at the ZooTampa.



THANK YOU

We thank our many like-minded partners for their support to produce materials to enhance the experience of guests at ZooTampa.



The Lowry Murphey Family Foundation, Inc.

