

Lions and tigers and tents? Oh, my! San Diego Zoo Sleepovers

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San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park now offer a program that allows participants to experience the zoo on a whole new level-from a tent. That's right, San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park have found an ingenious solution to the zoo blues in the form of sleepovers. Not just for giggling pre-teen girls anymore, these sleepovers offer a unique and educational experience for animal lovers of all ages.

Guests are invited to bring their sleeping bag, pillow and camera to these after-hours adventures that offer activities both fun and educational. Guided walks, campfire activities, food and unique animal experiences are included in all of the programs. Different programs and themed sleepovers are offered at the zoo and at the Wild Animal Park.

At the Wild Animal Park the sleeping arrangements include the option of three types of tents: Premium, Vista and Classic. Premium is the most upscale, featuring hard wood floors, electricity, a queen sized bed and animal themed décor (everything from flamingos to zebra). Vista and Classic tents have hard dirt packed floors, sleeping pads, captain's chairs, storage trunks and different locations. All tents have a maximum occupancy of four.

Featured sleepovers at the Wild Animal Park are the Roar & Snore and Night Owl programs. Roar and Snore offers family, junior, adult-only and Girl Scout sleepovers with themes such as Butterfly Bash, Halloween Pumpkin Party and Adult-only Animal Amore. Butterfly Bash is available for Girl Scouts, family and junior family groups and boasts a focus on bugs, butterflies, plants and pollination with hands-on activities and crafts. The adult themed Animal Amore offers insight into the mating world, a special moonlight journey and an upscale, plated dinner to spark romance between the homo sapiens.

At the San Diego Zoo all sleepovers have special themes including the Safari Sleepover, Spooky Sleepover, and the reality TV Show competition themed Extreme Sleepover for adults. Participants in zoo sleepovers are provided with tents and camp pads for sleeping. The family Safari Sleepover offers a special look at the new elephant exhibit before it opens in the morning, behind the scenes animal visits at night and a meet and greet with Dr. Zoolittle and his animal friends at check-in. The Extreme Sleepover puts teams to the test with activities inspired by Project Runway, Survivor, and The Amazing Race. This sleepover also features animals with unique survival adaptations.

Whether you choose to camp high-class in the Premium Tent with that special someone or take the kids to the ultimate sleepover, every encounter is sure to be one to remember with this fun program and more than enough of an excuse to head west for the weekend.

All sleepovers at both locations start at 4 p.m. and finish the next day around 9 or 9:30 a.m. Reservations are required. 609.718.3000.