

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **If my guests have a zoo membership do they still need to be included in my guest count and pay for them?**

Yes, they do need to be included. Zoo memberships do not apply toward private special events such as birthday parties. If you are a current zoo member, you will receive a discount off the party package as a benefit of your membership.

### **Does the Birthday child get in free?**

Sorry, but any guest that is entering the zoo and eating as a guest must be included in your headcount; including the child that is celebrating their birthday.

### **Do I have to pay for parents?**

Everyone 3 years or older MUST be a paying participant. This includes the parents, as well as the children. Wristbands are required to be in the birthday party room and they must be presented to the birthday host upon arrival.

### **Is there a minimum or maximum number of guests for a party?**

Yes; there is a minimum of 10 paid guests required and a 35 person maximum guest capacity. You may have any combination of adults or children to reach the minimum or maximum guest requirements.

### **Why can't I have a birthday party for my 2 year old?**

We do not have any high chairs and the goody bags are not age appropriate. If you feel that you can work around these issues, then we are happy to do your party.

### **Is my deposit refundable?**

Sorry, but deposits are non-refundable if you choose to cancel your scheduled party. You may transfer your party to another date if you wish to reschedule.

### **When is my final payment due?**

Final payment is due on the Tuesday prior to your scheduled party with your final headcount. Credit card information provided at time of booking will be used for remaining balance unless different credit card information is given.

### **What happens if it rains?**

Parties go on rain or shine; however, you may cancel on the scheduled day of your party up to 2 hours prior to your party time. You will need to call 904-757-4463 ext. 109. The \$50.00 deposit and cost of the birthday cup cakes (\$25-\$35) will be charged to you as the cakes are ordered several days in advance. Any later calls or cancelations will not receive a refund.

### **What food is included in the package?**

Both Packages include your choice of Chocolate **or** Vanilla cupcakes w/ buttercream icing that has zoo animals as the design, and we also provide the candles. Individual cups of vanilla ice cream, juice boxes and bottled water are also included in both packages for the number of paid guests. If you choose our "Super Fabulous" package, then you would also have your choice of one of the following bag lunch options: hotdogs, corndogs, pbj crustables, hamburgers or Chicken Nuggets w/ individual bags of chips. (One choice for the entire group)

### **Can we bring in food?**

Sorry the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens does not allow any outside food and/or beverages to be brought into any of our rental facilities or the Zoo. You are more than welcome to bring a picnic lunch and utilize the zoo's picnic area located at the far south end of the parking lot located next to the Education Campus. We do not take reservations for the picnic area; it is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please keep in mind that we do not allow any grilling in the picnic area.

### **What happens if extra people show up?**

Please keep in mind that we have planned and provided food service for your party based on the number of people you have prepaid for and we will not be able to provide any additional food service. Our party host will do their best to stretch the cake to accommodate additional guests, but we can't guarantee that we can serve additional guests. Should you have additional guests show up you will be charged, with the credit card on file, a \$30/35 per person fee.

### **What party decorations are provided?**

The Jacksonville Zoo provides all décor, tablecloths and tableware in a zoo theme. For the safety of our animals, balloons, streamers, piñatas, and confetti are not allowed. No outside decorations are permitted. We pre-decorate, so all you need to think about is the celebration! Your party host will also clean the room after your party, so you can head off to enjoy the zoo worry-free.

### **Do you provide party invitations?**

We do offer complimentary print at home invitations on our website that you are welcome to use. Download a copy of our [birthday party invitations](#)! All you have to do is print them, fold them and fill them out. They can be handed out at school or put in an envelope to be mail.

### **Where will my guest meet?**

If you should want to do the Zoo first, then the party, please advise your guests to meet you at the Main Entrance at the time you designate so you can meet them and pass out admission wristbands. The wristbands will be left at the Guest Relations window in your name. Come on over the Birthday Party space, located next to the Main Camp Train Station Entrance, at your scheduled party time. **Otherwise, our parties are located in the Birthday Yurt, also near the Main Entrance.**

If you should want to do the party first, and then the Zoo, please tell your guests to meet you in the Birthday Yurt, follow the sidewalk to the right of the Main Entrance. It has an entrance from the small parking lot.

Do not come too early to the party, as we do have a very tight schedule of parties on the weekends.

### **Can the party exceed the allotted 90 Minute time slot?**

Sorry but we are unable to extend party times. Our parties are scheduled back to back with a brief cleaning/set-up time in between and because of the quick turn around, you must adhere to the 1&1/2 hour allotted time. It is our experience that this is plenty of time for the private celebration and the children are excited and eager to enter the zoo.

### **Can we schedule a guided tour of the Zoo?**

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens can arrange for exciting Behind the Scenes Tours for those 5 years of age and older. We will be happy to schedule this for you or to give you more information by calling 904-757-4463 ext. 120. Your group is welcome to tour the Zoo at your leisure before or after your scheduled party time. A great tip is to plan your party activities around the regularly scheduled keeper talks that happen daily at the zoo. An up to date schedule is listed on our website. If you plan wisely, your party can feel like one special experience after another, as there's always something to see and do at the Zoo!