



Guests are currently required to wear a mask during the African Penguin Backstage Encounter.

African Penguin Backstage Encounter

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.

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.

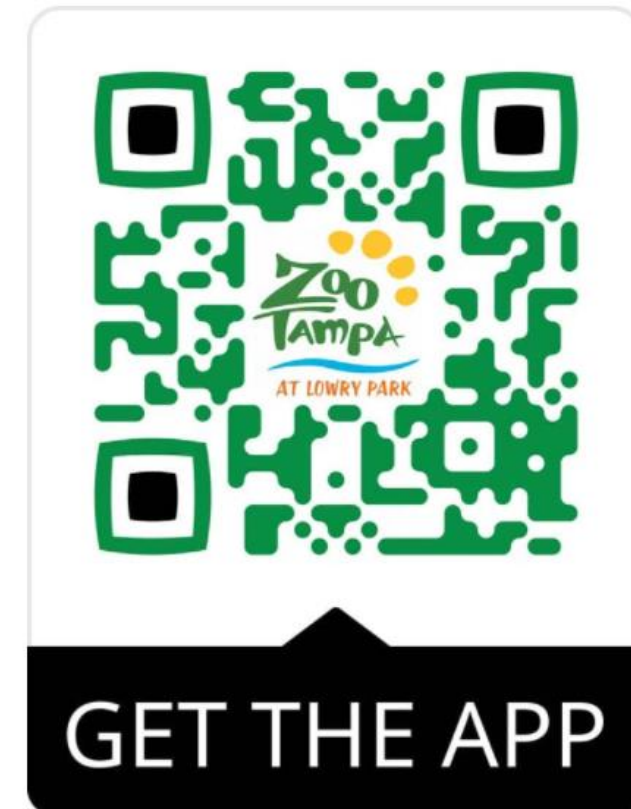


There might be a strong smell in places where I see this. I can hold my nose or cover my nose with something that smells good.



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 can find the African penguin habitat by using ZooTampa app or map.



Before we can go into the penguin encounter space, an employee of ZooTampa will ask my name.

Next, they will look at a piece of paper to make sure I am at the correct encounter.

Then I will sign my name on a piece of paper.

While I wait, I can put my face masks on. Face masks help keep people and animals safe.



When it is time to begin the encounter, an employee of ZooTampa will let me through a gate. Then I will follow the sidewalk back to the encounter space.





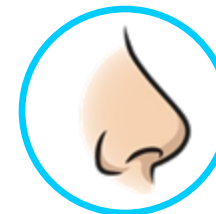
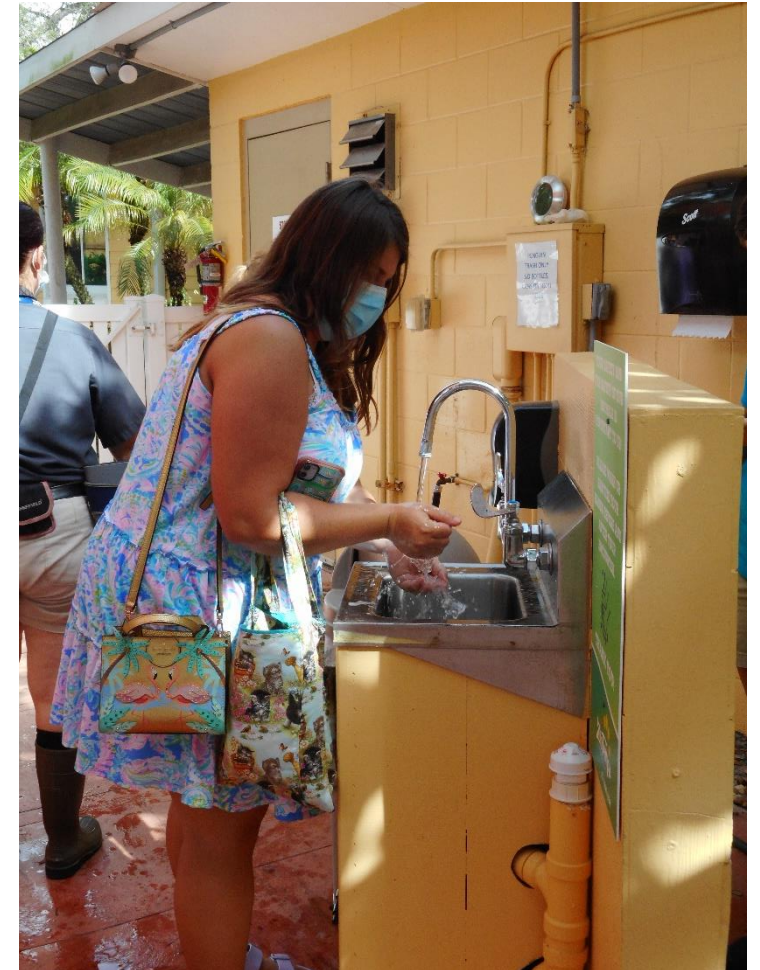
We will meet up with the Animal Care employee in the encounter space.

We will walk across a shallow black footbath with a liquid sanitizing solution in it.

The solution washes your shoes to keep the germs away from the penguins while inside the encounter space.



First, I will wash my hands before I meet the penguins. There is a handwashing station inside the encounter space.



Next, I will sit on the black bench.

I will need to wait while the people participating in the encounter wash their hands.

The Animal Care Professional will go over the expectations of the encounter.



The Animal Care Professional will open a door, and the penguins have a choice to walk into the encounter space or stay inside.

We might see one penguin, or we might see several, but the penguins get to choose who will come out today.



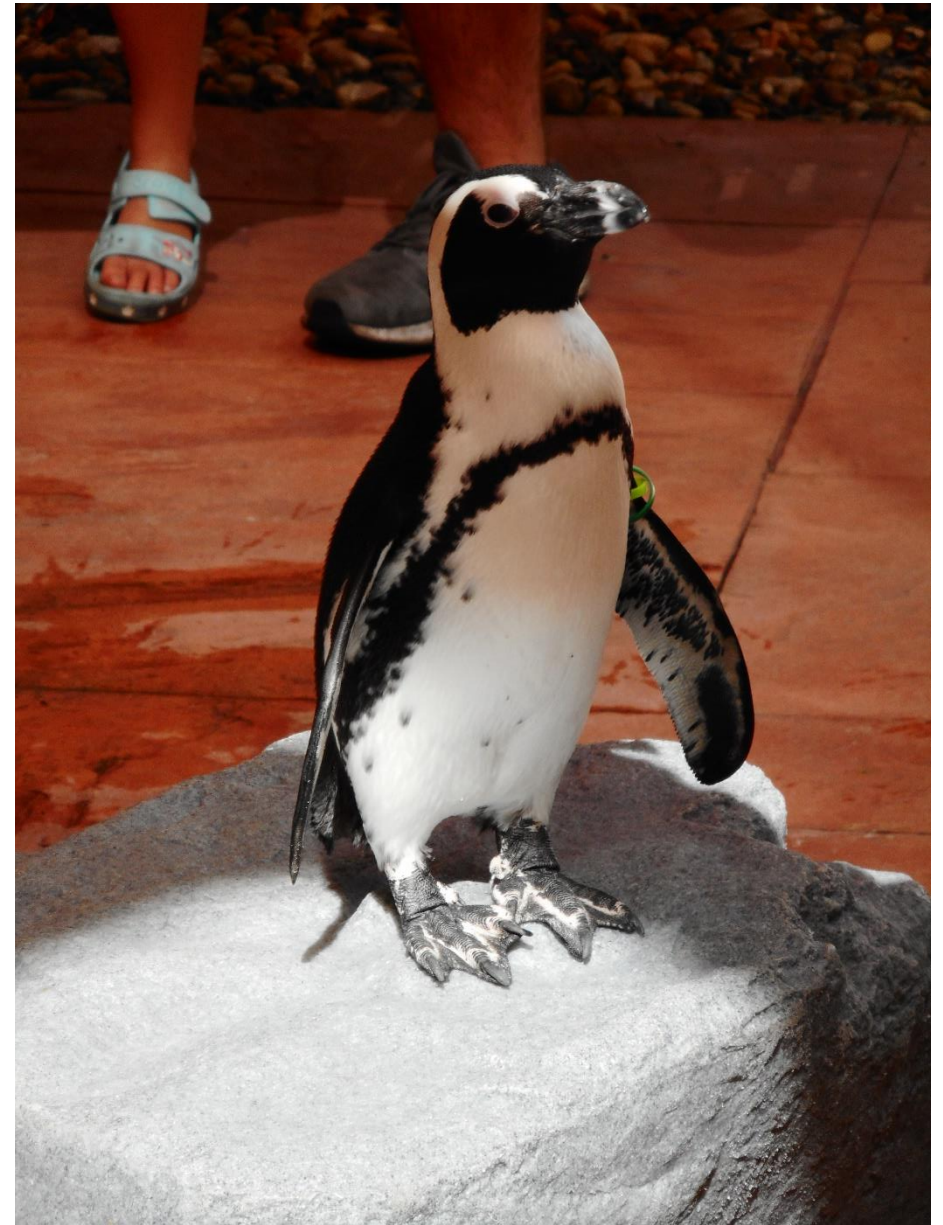
Encounter Expectations:

- I keep my hands **away** from the penguin's face
- I am allowed to touch the penguin's back feathers
- I need to stay seated on the bench when the penguins are walking around
- I will wait for a penguin to walk to me

Penguins at ZooTampa are free to walk around inside the encounter space.

If a penguin makes me nervous, I can always ask or signal the Animal Care Professional to move the penguin away from me.

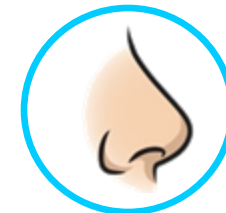
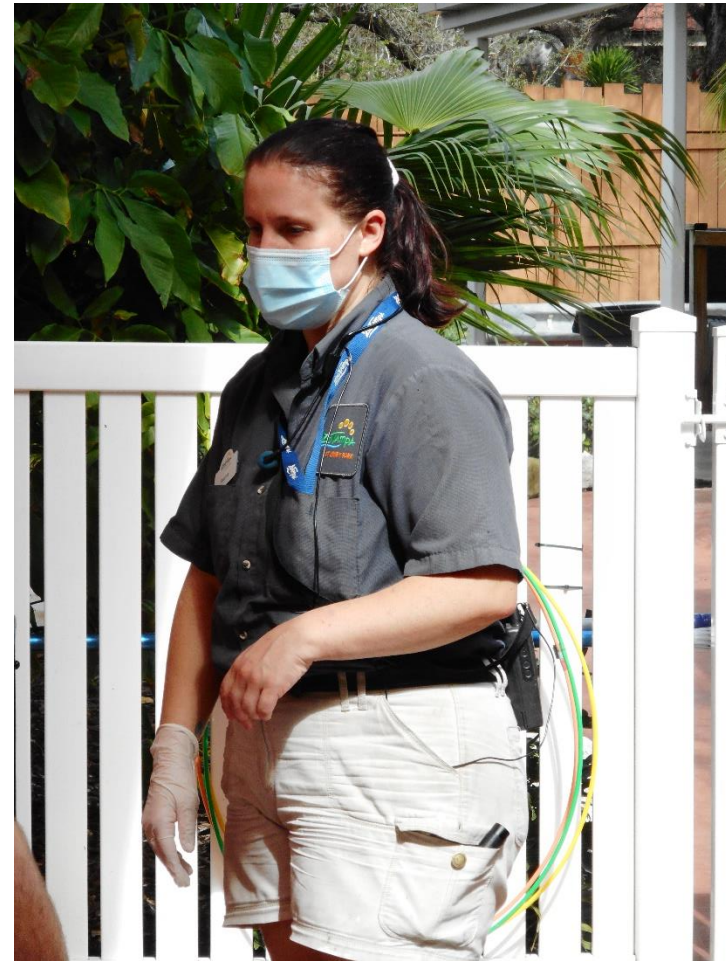
The penguin might walk around my feet or hop onto a rock to get closer. That's okay; the penguin wants to see me better!



While the penguins are walking around the encounter space, the Animal Care Professional will tell you about the animal.

I will use my listening ears to learn about the animals.

If I have questions, I can raise my hand after the talk and ask my questions.



If I would like, I CAN gently touch the penguin's on their backs when they are near me. I must stay seated on the black bench at all times.

If you have a question, you can ask the Animal Care Professional now.





Sometimes the penguins do not want to be touched and will stay away.

I will stay seated and NOT touch these penguins.

I can touch the other penguins if they come up to me.

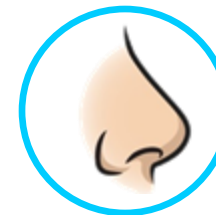
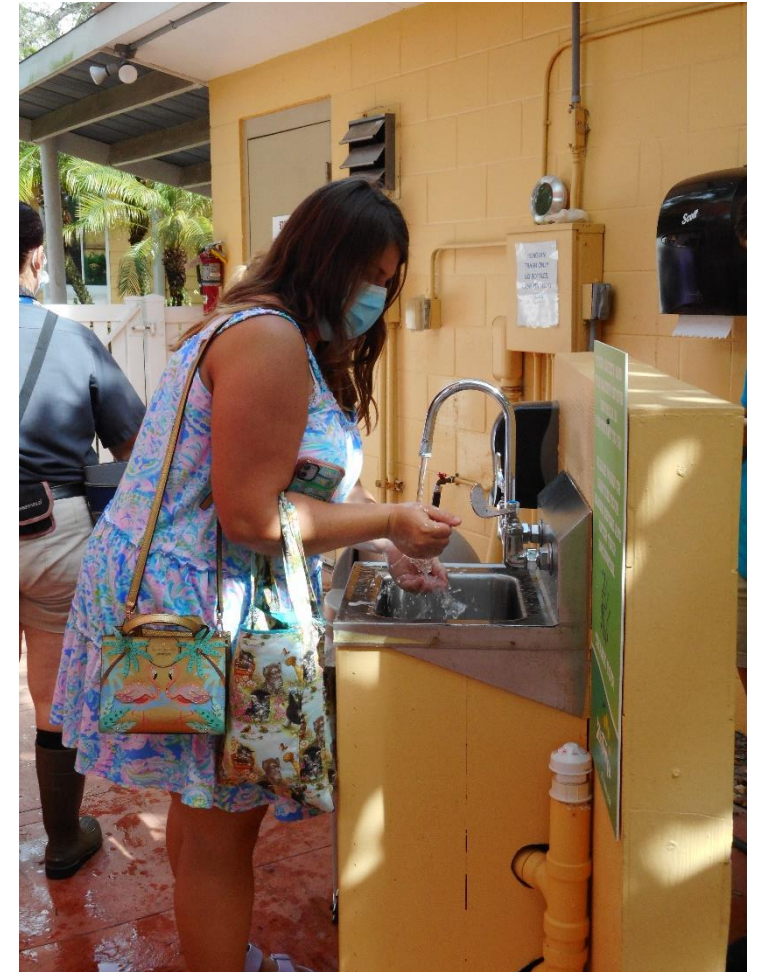


At the end of our encounter, the Animal Care Professional will ask the penguins to walk back inside.

The penguins might take a few minutes to walk through the door.

We will stay safely seated on the bench until all the penguins are inside.

After I meet the penguins, I will wash my hands and exit the penguin encounter space.





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.

