

the sea life

Have a tete-a-tete with ocean life at SeaWorld, San Diego in the US, and get ready for some exhilarating water fun. *by PRITISALIAN*



When I began planning my trip to California with my 10-year-old daughter, Disneyland was on top of my mind. After all, what better gift could I give her than a day or two at the world's most visited theme park for kids? Little did I know then that my research would surprise me with a comparatively lesser known but magical place for kids in California's second largest city, San Diego. The city is known for its world-famous zoo, Legoland amusement park and the SeaWorld park. With just one day to spare, I chose SeaWorld over the rest. So, while we kept our date with Disneyland, we also made sure that we had some time for this wondrous marine and theme park at San Diego!

Our tickets were purchased online in advance, for a quick and easy entry. We were welcomed with a map and a suggested guideline to get the best out of the park in a day. A range of shows, rides and animal encounters lay in front of us that had us confused for a bit. 'But we're here to meet the sea creatures first,' we reminded ourselves and set forth to the Shamu Stadium to view our first show, *One Ocean*.

shamu rocks

For the uninitiated, Shamu is the mainstay

of any SeaWorld park. It is a killer whale that dances through the ocean straight into your heart while soaking you, not only with the nearly 15m splash it creates. My daughter was keen to get drenched so we sat within the soak zone. Shamu was with us for 25 minutes, with its whale companions, enthralling us.

dolphins galore

While we strolled to our next destination, the Dolphin Stadium, we got the company of a turtle who had probably left the turtle reef to take a look around. The next show in line was the *Blue Horizons*, a story of the sea and sky. Spectacularly dressed divers and aerialists played with the dolphins, clothed as colourful birds.

sea lions, aha!

We rushed for the next show so that we could catch the pre-show entertainment by Biff (a human) which had us in splits. What followed was an experience of a lifetime. Clyde and Seamore, SeaWorld's resident sea lion team slid on the wet floor, dived into the water, danced with their trainers and barked and whined. Their friend OP otter accompanied them in their acrobatics. The best part was their occasional visit to the handrail to say hello.

who let the dogs out?

After a brush with the exotic, we turned to the little ones—dogs, cats, pigs, birds, et al. *Pet's Rule* was our next draw. While the animals performed like they do on any TV show, they were an absolute delight to watch live.

a different kind of circus

Cirque de la Mer or the *Circus of the Sea* was the last show we attended before moving on to the rides. It was a circus show that played at the Waterfront Stadium on Mission Bay, at a pace ranging from frantic to graceful. The gag that was planned for a volunteer from the audience added to the fun. Since time was at a premium, the only ride that we tried was Wild Arctic, a no-motion flight simulator which gave the experience of a jet helicopter ride through the Arctic Circle. Though we skipped the rides and various animal encounters, we walked through the park and met the penguins, the polar bears, beluga whales, walruses, all existing together in a habitat created just for them. The aquariums and exhibits were fantastic!

It was evening and a fun-packed day had come to an end. Get info at www.seaworldparks.com. ☘