

Are we
there
yet?



FAMILY FUN

Full Scream Ahead

Kings Dominion provides a quality haunted experience you will never forget!

In the fun-filled days of summer, Kings Dominion serves as a popular destination devoted to entertaining families and creating lifelong memories. During crisp fall nights, however, it's a completely different story. As Virginia's first theme park— it was opened in 1975— Kings Dominion has established itself as more than a vacation spot chock-full of roller coasters, stomach-turning rides and water park amenities. In less than a decade, it has become home to one of the most petrifying attractions on the East Coast.

For the past eight years, the 400-acre park has hosted a Halloween-oriented event so bloodcurdling it's expected that you bring an extra pair of underwear. Halloween Haunt, until 2007 called FearFest, is a chilling attraction known for its elaborate staging, unfiltered creativity and jump-out-of-your-skin spookiness.

"This is the largest and scariest Halloween attraction in the Mid-Atlantic and is directed to the teenage and adult guests," said John Pagel, Kings Dominion's marketing manager. "To put it simply, you can expect blood, guts and gore."

The PG-13 event, which is not intended for young children, will be held from September 26 to October 3, and will take place on Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays when darkness settles on the park. The fear-inducing show and its attractions are free with general park admission or with a season pass, and costumes are not permitted. Every year, when the park is turned into a giant haunted house, the Kings Dominion staff increases the scare tactics in order to provide visitors with memories that will haunt them for decades.

"Here at Kings Dominion, we're always striving to make our park experience better," said John. "This year we look forward to an even scarier Halloween Haunt. We have included several new attractions, such as the Slaughterhouse Maze, Medieval Macabre and Feary Tales."

Complete with nine mazes and five scare zones, the thrilling attraction is sure to test one's bravery. Some of the mazes include Uncle Bob's Famous BBQ— "Fresh off the Bone," Alien Outpost, a sick and twisted setting filled with blood-thirsty aliens, and Big Top Terror in 3D, a deeply dis-

turbing domain where clowns and freaks frighten with delight. And you can't forget the Blue Ridge Bloodbath, an antique car ride that takes you through a forest filled with the remains of an evil doctor's gruesome experiments. Zombies and half-human/half-monster creatures roam freely, forcing you to scream like a little girl until your lungs give out.

Apart from these frightening mazes, there are several stomach-turning scare zones populated by demons, monsters and every kind of creature that goes bump in the night. At the Central Stalkway, ghosts and spirits hide behind mausoleums, stalk behind trees and rise from the cemetery grounds. For those with coulrophobia— a fear of clowns—you will be tested at the CarnEvil, a hair-raising zone filled with evil laughter, frightening grins and clowns eager to make you laugh until you croak. If you prefer a more interactive setting, look to the Graveyard Shift and Freakshow Deluxe, or check out Skaraoke, where you'll be singing as though your life depended on it. Don't forget Elvira's Superstition, where the mistress of the dark takes you for the ride of your afterlife.

Though this ghastly attraction is geared for adults and older kids, parents interested in taking the whole family to Halloween Haunt need not worry. During daylight hours beginning October 3, parents can accompany their children to KidZville and Nick Central, where young ones can meet and greet the Nicktoons Spooktacular, explore Witches' Cave, hang out with Patch the Talking Pumpkin, have fun in the foam pit and experience other age-appropriate activities.

This year, welcome the fall season by visiting one of the most haunting attractions Virginia has ever seen. Whether it's fun for the kids or fear for adults, Kings Dominion's Halloween Haunt offers something delightfully devilish for the entire family— just remember to bring that underwear.

— Nicholas Addison Thomas

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