



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What time is the sleepover?

Check-in begins at 7:30 p.m. The sleepover takes place from Saturday at 8 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. the next morning.

2. Where do we park?

Overnight parking will be in the parking lot behind the Natural History Museum. You can enter from Constitution Avenue on the west side, between 10th and 12th streets. You must enter the museum on Constitution Avenue. Cars cannot be left on the street overnight. Your name will be left with the security officer at the parking booth. Please limit the number of vehicles as spaces are limited. There is no additional charge for parking.

A pass will be given to you when you arrive which should be placed in the window of your car.

The parking lot will open to participants at 7 p.m. Guests must remove their car from parking by 9 a.m. or they will be subject to being towed or a fine.

3. How do we check in?

Check-in is from 7:30 p.m.-7:55 p.m. at the Constitution Ave. entrance of the Natural History Museum. Everyone who attends a sleepover needs to check in at "will call" at the Constitution Ave. entrance of the museum. Families who have pre-registered will be listed on our roster and will need to give the name under which the reservation was made.

YOU MUST BRING YOUR SIGNED RELEASE FORM WHEN YOU CHECK IN.

Each member of the party will receive a wristband that must be worn throughout the time at the museum as part of this program.

You will be escorted to Ocean Hall (storage area) to put down your overnight gear and wait for orientation. All participants must attend orientation, which will start promptly at 8 p.m.

We strongly discourage guests from arriving after 8 p.m.

If a participant needs to leave between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., please contact a staff person during the sleepover. Children must be in the company of an adult throughout the entire sleepover. If an adult must leave and no other adult from the group is present, the entire party may be asked to leave.

This is a handicapped-accessible entrance.

4. What types of food will be served at the sleepover?

Overnight guests are strongly encouraged to eat dinner before arriving to check in for the program. An evening snack may include cookies, fruit, animal crackers, juice, coffee, and tea. Breakfast will include fresh fruit, bagels and cream cheese, milk,

muffins, yogurt, coffee, tea, and juice. This is not a complete list and not every item listed above will be available at every sleepover--this is merely a sample of the kinds of things offered. Under no circumstances can the food provided at an overnight be taken outside of the designated eating areas.

5. Can we bring our own food and beverages into the museum?

No outside food or beverages will be allowed into the museum, except as provided below.

Outside food is allowed only:

If a guest has severe food allergies or specific dietary needs. In such cases, he/she is allowed to bring in an outside snack/ breakfast under the following conditions:

- i. It must be sealed in a heavy-duty plastic container (in Tupperware, not in a Ziploc bag), labeled with the guest's name.
- ii. Items must be non-perishable, as overnight staff will not have access to refrigerate guests' food.
- iii. We can't guarantee the safety of the food brought into the museum, nor can we take responsibility for it if it is lost or taken.

Any food not meeting these criteria or that is found in an exhibition hall will be immediately confiscated.

Any guests needing to bring in outside food should notify registration when ordering the tickets and also the overnight staff immediately upon arrival.

6. Where do we sleep?

Guests will sleep on the marble floor in Ocean Hall (with Phoenix the Whale).

7. Can we increase the number of participants in our group?

Space is very limited for the sleepovers. If you want to increase your group size or make changes to your reservation, you must call 202-633-3030 from Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If spaces are available you must pay immediately over the phone. Places are provided strictly on a first-come, first-served basis.

8. What if someone cancels in our group?

There are no refunds for the sleepovers.

9. How many people can attend a sleepover?

The sleepover can accommodate up to 100 people.

10. What if someone gets sick?

Notify a sleepover staff member if anyone in your group gets sick or hurt. Appropriate action will be taken.

11. Can we leave early from the overnight?

Yes, participants may leave early if needed. However, all participants from the group must leave unless another adult from the party remains with the children. No children may be left without an adult chaperone.

12. When will gift shops be open during the sleepover?

The gift shops will be open until 8 p.m. on Saturday night and will reopen on 10 a.m. on Sunday morning.

13. Are the exhibits and programs handicapped accessible?

Yes. All sleepover activities are fully handicapped-accessible.

14. How many chaperones are required to participate with a group?

Each group will be required to maintain a ratio of one adult supervisor for three child participants.

15. Where do we change into our sleeping clothes?

Restroom facilities are available on the lower level as well as on the same level as Ocean Hall, adjacent to sleeping area.

16. When do I receive confirmation for the sleepover?

You will receive an email confirmation immediately after you register for the sleepover. Please print out your email and bring it to check-in on the date of your event along with your completed participant release forms.

17. Are younger and older siblings allowed to participate during the sleepovers?

Younger and older siblings are not permitted to attend the Sleepovers if they are not between the ages of 8 and 12 years old. We receive many requests for people to bring children to the overnights that are outside our designated age range of 8-12 years old. For many reasons, we are unable to approve these requests. In the interest of fairness, we can't make an exception for some participants while refusing it for others.

18. How old must a chaperone be?

A chaperone must be at least 21 years old.

19. Can I bring a birthday cake or cupcakes to celebrate my child's birthday at a sleepover?

No. At this time we are not equipped to handle this activity.

20. Refunds and exchanges

There are no refunds for these special events.

21. Security and Emergencies

The Smithsonian Protection Services department has staff members inside the building 24 hours a day.

We highly recommend keeping your valuables on your person at all times. The Smithsonian does not take responsibility for any lost or stolen items.

22. The next day

Participants are welcome to explore the museum after 10 a.m. in the morning. If you want to stay, please put your sleeping bags and other gear into your cars before returning to the museum and move your vehicle to the street.