



The Journal



10 things I know are true about food that people don't want to believe



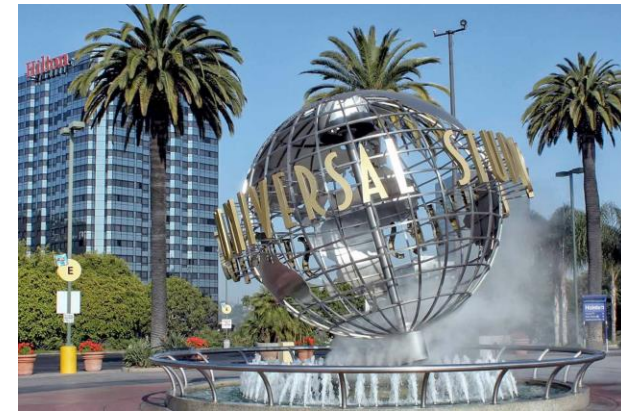
\$7.1 billion Universal Studios theme park coming to Canada at West Edmonton Mall.

November 1st, 2023 West Edmonton Mall is turning a real new page to secure its future as a preeminent global shopping, entertainment, and theme park destination, with the massive addition of a Universal Studios theme park.

In a press conference this morning, Universal Parks & Resorts announced its expansion into the Canadian market with its complete takeover of the experiences found at West Edmonton Mall, in partnership with mall owner Triple Five Group.

This will be a 100% indoor theme park featuring a combination of adopting attractions and experiences found at other Universal Parks elsewhere in the world, and brand new experiences made possible by the unique 100% controlled indoor environment — a first for Universal.

“We see the fantastic potential from taking part in the evolution of West Edmonton Mall and its storied history for being the world’s pioneer in immersive retail center experiences,” said Carl Dintenfass, the president of new ventures for Universal Destinations & Experiences, which is the new name of a division previously known as Universal Parks & Resorts.



Oscartek GEM display installed at FL and CA Universal Studio locations shown below



“Alberta is the perfect place to bring this new indoor theme park concept as part of our strategy to broaden the horizons of our universe, and bring Universal’s renowned themed entertainment attractions to new markets.”

The overall reinvestment on the 62-acre West Edmonton Mall is CA\$7.1 billion (US\$5.2 billion), which includes the brand new purpose-built indoor theme park, along with the most intensive renovation ever to the portion of the mall building that will be retained, two new hotels, and supporting infrastructure and utilities upgrades.

To achieve the new indoor theme park, the eastern half of the mall will be completely demolished. Everything between the iconic Ice Palace ice rink and 170 Street NW will be torn down to build the theme park from scratch.

Conceptual preliminary artistic rendering of the redevelopment of West Edmonton Mall into Universal Studios Canada theme park and Universal CityWalk Canada mall. Not the final design. (Universal Destinations & Experiences) The eastern half of the mall beyond the ice rink is currently a highly under-utilized dead zone that only attracts a trickle of foot traffic, compared to the much busier western half of the mall. This is also the oldest part of the mall, also known as the Phase I and Phase II sections.

This includes the complete demolition of the existing “Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro” amusement park, which recently saw some upgrades as part of its partnership with Hasbro, as well as the removal of Hudson’s Bay, Starlight Casino, Winners/HomeSense, Marshalls, The Rec Room, and the former Sears space (The Brick/Toyota dealership).

All of the parking lot facilities on the east side of the mall will be removed, and replacement parking capacity will be built elsewhere.

Universal Studios Canada, the name of the theme park, will use a footprint of 45 acres, which is more than five times the size of the nine-acre Galaxyland. It will be the smallest Universal Studios theme park in existence, but comparable to the 49 acres of Universal Studios Singapore. There will be a total of 23 themed attractions and rides, including three roller coasters, plus 27 restaurants, food kiosks, and food carts, and over 20 retail stores.

Universal Studios Canada will be arranged into eight themed zones, including Hollywood North Square, which forms the first impression of the theme park after the entrance gates, as well as The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley, Jurassic World Isla Nublar, Transformers: Metrobase, Kung Fu Panda Land of Awesomeness, Super Nintendo World, The Dark Universe, and Gotta Catch ‘Em All in the Pokemon World.

The Gotta Catch ‘Em All in the Pokemon World will be Universal’s first-ever themed attraction entirely dedicated to Pokemon, featuring two flagship ride attractions.

It will have an interactive 3D safari ride that takes “Pokemon trainers” into the landscapes of the Pokemon World to catch as many Pokemon as possible, with the ride narrated by Ryan Reynolds, who will reprise his role as Detective Pikachu. Another ride will be a motion-based simulator, where Ash Ketchum and Pikachu’s battle in the Pokemon Stadium goes sideways from Mewtwo’s party

crashing attempt to free Pokemon from their trainers.



The Pokemon-themed zone transitions into the Super Nintendo World zone, which recently opened at Universal Studios Japan and Universal Studios Hollywood. Its flagship ride attraction will be Mario Kart: Koopa's Challenge, which is an interactive dark ride based on the Mario Kart 8 game. The Dark Universe will be a horror-themed zone based on Universal Studios' popular Halloween Horror Nights, except that it will be a permanent experience instead of only as a seasonal offering. This will be Universal's first permanent horror-themed zone at its theme parks, but its second permanent horror-themed experience following its upcoming out-of-park attraction in Las Vegas. The Dark Universe will thrill and scare visitors by bringing to life Universal's vast library of classic horror films, including The Mummy, Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Wolf Man.

Kung Fu Panda Land of Awesomeness will replicate the indoor zone of the same name at the new Universal Studios Beijing. The zone immerses visitors into dreamy Ancient China landscapes of karst mountains, and brings to life Po's illuminated lantern village and the Jade Palace. A multimedia boat ride through the "Valley of Peace" and a family steel indoor roller coaster will be its flagship ride attractions.

Earth needs saving in the Transformers: Metrobase zone, which will feature a dark, high-speed launch roller coaster in which the Autobots attempt to protect the AllSpark from the Decepticons. This roller coaster for adrenaline thrill seekers will be similar to Disney Parks' Space Mountain or the new Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind.

A motion-based ride called Jurassic World Adventure will be the flagship ride attraction of the Jurassic World Isla Nublar zone, with animatronic dinosaurs and multimedia bringing to life the John Hammond's dream of a dinosaur theme park off the coast of Costa Rica — until the dinosaurs get loose and start eating the tourists, again.

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley brings to life the secret wizarding alley and shopping area in London. Its flagship attraction is a 3D motion-based steel roller coaster dark ride with a storyline based on escaping Gringotts Bank, which is the wizarding bank in Diagon Alley. This ride will be similar to the ride of the same name at Universal Studios Florida's Island Of Adventure.

While most of the reinvestment into West Edmonton Mall will go towards its east side, there will also be major reinvestments into the west side, known as Phase III, which is the only section of the existing mall building that will be retained. This is also the newest section of the mall. Universal CityWalk is the name of the entertainment and retail districts found outside the entrance into Universal Studios theme parks around the world. As such, West Edmonton Mall's only retained section, Phase III, will also be renamed to Universal CityWalk Canada, following the branding standards.

Extensive renovations will be made to the existing Phase III section of the mall, including a complete recalibration of its retail offerings to international brands and luxury retail chains, and new emphasis on world-class culinary experiences. Nearly all of the existing

retailers and services will be replaced with brand new retailers and businesses that align with the Universal CityWalk brand and concept.

Major theming enhancements will also be made to the mall's existing Europa Boulevard within Phase III, while the existing indoor lake for Deep Sea Adventures will be completely rethemed into a WaterWorld-themed space, inspired after Universal Studios' WaterWorld stunt show. The existing World Waterpark — North America's second largest indoor waterpark — will receive an extensive mid-life renovation that also provides it with an extensive retheming after the Minions from Illuminations' Despicable Me franchise. It will be renamed as Minions Paradise Waterpark.

The existing 355-suite Fantasyland Hotel in the mall will see some upgrades, along with a renaming to Universal's Adventure Hotel. It will complement two new additional on-site hotels — the 620-suite Universal Studios Grand Hotel within a new 40-storey landmark tower, and the 233-suite Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Both new hotels will be attached to a new convention centre with 180,000 sq ft of ballroom and meeting spaces, while the casino floor within the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino will replace the mall's existing Starlight Casino and Caesar's Bingo attractions. The new replacement casino will have a floor area of 160,000 sq ft, featuring over 1,000 slots and 40 tables.

As well, the existing Scotiabank Theatre will be replaced with a new six-auditorium Cineplex VIP Cinemas attached to a new replacement The Rec Room.

Universal CityWalk Canada (retained and upgraded Phase III of existing mall) and Universal Studios Canada theme park will be joined together by a two-acre signature indoor Epic Plaza, which also serves as the main entrance plaza and security check area into the theme park and mall. This brand new indoor plaza inside a seven-storey high glass dome, replacing the existing ice rink, will feature Universal Studios' iconic giant "Universal" spinning globe. All on-site vehicle parking will be located within the western half of the mall site. The redevelopment will completely redesign all parking lots, including the reconstruction of all surface parking lots into multi-level parkades with as many as five underground levels and up to six aboveground levels. The existing surface vehicle parking lot used for overflow parking, located north of 90 Avenue NW, will be turned into a five-storey parkade. The multi-level parkades provide not only a net gain in parking capacity, but they will also replace the removed parking capacity from the eastern half of the mall for the theme park's footprint.

The total vehicle parking capacity to accommodate Universal Studios Canada, Universal CityWalk Canada, and the new hotels, casino, and convention centre will reach 40,000 stalls — a net gain of 10,000 stalls compared to what currently exists. A transportation centre will be built to the south of the site next to the future Valley Line LRT station serving the mall. This includes dedicated taxi and ridehailing zones, along with a significant bus loop for public transit buses and coach buses, including shuttle bus services linking to Edmonton International Airport. An enclosed walkway will provide a direct pedestrian connection between the transportation centre and Epic Plaza. A segment of 90 Avenue NW just north of the mall will be closed and consolidated with the new redevelopments.

The east wing of the new indoor theme park complex will have an expansive programmable LED lighting system for its outdoor facade,

providing Edmonton with a new dynamic visual landmark. About three million LEDs will be embedded into the intricate exterior cladding system of ETFE panels. The footprints of the indoor theme park and new parkades, there will be a site-wide geexchange system, with nearly 1,300 km of underground piping — reaching depths of up to 250 metres. The length of piping will be more than long enough than the drive from Edmonton to Vancouver. It will be Canada’s largest geexchange system, and amongst the largest in the world. Using mechanical systems, the geexchange will bury heat in the summer for use in the cold winter. Conversely, in the winter, the geexchange will extract the warmer ground temperature below Edmonton’s frost line of 2.4 metres. This will significantly reduce the heating and cooling costs of the vast indoor areas of Universal Studios and Universal CityWalk, and prevent 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being released annually.

Additionally, the vast rooftop of the 45-acre indoor theme park will be covered with nearly 29,000 solar panels, with a total electricity generating capacity of about 12 megawatts — enough to power the equivalent of almost 6,000 homes in Alberta. This power will further reduce the complex’s energy costs and emissions. The partnership to achieve this project is a licensing agreement by intellectual property owner NBCUniversal with mall owner Triple Five Group, with the destination jointly operated by Triple Five Group and Universal Destinations & Experiences.

An application will be submitted to the municipal government in June 2023, and if all goes as planned major construction could begin in late 2025. There would be phased completions of the redevelopment, with the new parkades on the west side of the property opening in early 2028, the renovated mall with new hotel and entertainment opening between the middle of 2028 and late 2029, and the opening of Universal Studios by early 2030. All of this comes just ahead of the 50th anniversary of West Edmonton Mall, which saw its first wing open in 1981. “I am thrilled to welcome Universal Studios to our city and see the potential economic boom it will bring to our community,” said Edmonton mayor Amarjeet Sohi.

“Not only will this theme park create numerous job opportunities, but it will also attract visitors from around the world, solidifying Edmonton’s place on the global tourism map. As the Mayor of Edmonton, I am proud to be a part of this exciting new chapter for our city.” Universal Studios is expected to see over three million visitors in its first full year of operations in 2031, growing to almost six million by 2041. The indoor theme park’s capacity will be about 30,000 visitors per day. The annual visitation and daily capacity will be similar to Universal Studios Singapore.

“The Best Indoor Show On Earth,” the mall’s existing moniker, will see its overall visitation increase by tens of millions of additional visitors each year, when the rejuvenated and expanded mall and new indoor theme park figures are combined. At least 20,000 people are anticipated to use the LRT station serving the complex on a daily basis by 2041.

The entire redevelopment will provide direct on-site employment for over 35,000 people, representing a net gain of 11,000 over existing mall levels, and help support 15,000 indirect jobs across the Edmonton area. It will generate CA\$4 billion (US\$2.96 billion) in tax revenue for all three levels of government and over \$12 billion (US\$8.9 billion) in direct and indirect economic spinoffs to Alberta’s economy over the first decade following full completion, effectively diversifying and expanding the tourism industry of the province. By 2041, nearly one million additional overnight visitors to the Edmonton area will be attributable to Universal Studios and Universal CityWalk.

“The development of a world-class theme park in West Edmonton Mall will not only diversify Alberta’s economy, but it will also create new jobs and generate significant tax revenue over the long term,” said Alberta Premier Danielle Smith. “This exciting venture will also catalyze the growth of new businesses and increase tourism, further bolstering Alberta’s reputation as a top destination for visitors from around the globe. This is one of the largest private sector investments Alberta has ever seen outside of our natural resources sector.”

10 things I know are true about food – that people don’t want to believe



Perspective by Tamar Haspel
Columnist, Food, November 1st, 2023

I started writing this column 10 years ago this month. In that decade(!), I’ve had the great good fortune to learn about the intersection of food and science from some of the world’s leading scientists, doctors and academics. I’ve also learned that in food, as in every other aspect of our modern, complex lives, wrongness has staying power.

Never ask what’s for dinner again. Get one quick recipe in your inbox Monday through Thursday to inspire delicious meals. I’ve been trying to suss out true and false to the best of my inevitably human, imperfect ability, and for my 10th anniversary, I’m going to sum up 10 things I’m persuaded are true. Some are important, a few are trivial and all meet with staunch disagreement every time I air them.

See how many you agree with.

Not that I’m keeping score or anything.

1

Gene editing can be used for good.

My very first column was about genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and I’m happy to say it feels dated now. Back then, the argument was primarily about herbicide-resistant corn and soy (which have undoubtedly given rise to herbicide-resistant weeds). But genetic engineering has been used to create disease-resistant cassava, blight-resistant American chestnut trees, camelina with the long-chain omega-3 fats that are otherwise found almost exclusively in marine sources, disease- and flood-tolerant rice, chickens that produce only female eggs (so 7 billion male chicks don’t have to be put through a grinder every year), a more nutritious purple tomato, blight-resistant potatoes and many more.

Technology is a tool. If I have a hammer, I can fix my neighbor’s roof or I can break his window. It’s the purpose, not the tool, that we need to focus on.

Speaking of which ...

2

Diet soda is fine.

Here's an example of a use of technology that might actually help people. If you like sweet things, but not the calories that come with them, there's a host of artificial versions that can deliver. Unfortunately, the nutrition community hates them and has been telling you, with virtually one voice, not to use them.

Yet, despite decades of trying, critics can't really find a problem with them. So you get studies that show, to take a recent example, that sucralose (used in Splenda) is genotoxic. Scary! But dig in, as epidemiologist Gideon Meyerowitz-Katz did, and you find that the sucralose dosage was the equivalent of 50,000 cans of diet soda.

So, yeah, don't drink 50,000 cans of diet soda, and ask yourself why researchers would design a study using amounts that are orders of magnitude over what a human would consume. One possible reason: They want to show harm.

3

Subsidies didn't create our terrible diets.

Yes, most farm subsidies go to corn and soy, two building blocks of cheap junk food. But economists I've spoken with believe that, at most, subsidies decreased prices of those by about 10 percent. And actual food is only about 15 percent of the cost of junk foods like, say, Twinkies. So we're talking about a 1 to 2 percent price difference, which would be imperceptible to the consumer.

Vegetables are expensive because they're way more expensive to grow than row crops such as corn, soy, oats, chickpeas and barley. A broccoli serving costs 10 times what a corn serving costs to grow. Ten times. Subsidies are a rounding error.

Speaking of vegetables ...

4

Vegetables are a luxury product.

They're expensive to grow and incredibly resource-intensive. They get the highest level of fertilizer and pesticide applications and they deliver nutrients without many calories. In an overweight society, that's a plus, but if you widen the lens to the whole world, where we have to feed 8-plus billion, ideally without expanding agriculture's footprint, crops that deliver nutrition and calories are ideal.



Whole grains, legumes, tubers, tree fruits, nuts. Those are the backbone of a diet good for both people and planet.

5

Organic is not the answer.

I am a longtime supporter of organic agriculture. It's more profitable for farmers, and that margin gives them wiggle room to experiment with lower-input ways of growing food, which I am wildly in favor of.

The problem, though, is the yield penalty. Estimates vary, but it's safe to say that organic yields are about 20 percent lower than conventional, which means we need 25 percent more land to grow the same amount of food. Since land-use changes are a primary driver of climate change, that's a non-starter. (Yes, some studies show that some organic yields match those of conventional, but to make that comparison you have to look at the highest yields in both the organic and conventional sectors, and organic never wins.)

I nevertheless support organic because the price premium makes the sector self-limiting. If too many farmers get into it, that'll drive the price down and it will no longer be viable. So it'll stay a niche. A valuable niche. But it won't feed the world.

6

Food deserts don't cause obesity.

Of all the subjects I've tackled over the years, this is the one where I found the most agreement among experts. When you bring a supermarket into a food desert, there are no meaningful changes in health outcomes.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't bring supermarkets into food deserts! I want everyone to have access to decent food. But it won't solve our obesity problem.

7

All eggs taste the same.

There are two kinds of people on this issue: Those who have done blind taste tests and those who haven't. Every blind taste test that I've ever seen finds that people can't distinguish among white, brown, free-range, organic, and backyard eggs (from chickens, so don't start ducking me). Yet people who haven't done those tests continue to insist that they can.

Speaking of unpopular results from blind taste tests ...

8

Tilapia is good.

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People can't tell it from other kinds of fish. And, if you really can raise fish on poop, it's the most sustainable food ever.

9

We know precious little about nutrition.

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The tools we have to explore the connection between diet and health are severely limited. Studies that follow large groups and track what they eat, and what diseases they get, can't connect the dots between the two, and the controlled trials that try to connect those dots are necessarily small and short-term.

What we know about nutrition is dwarfed by what we don't know. It's like the blind men and the elephant; the one who's feeling the

trunk thinks an elephant is like a snake, and the one feeling the leg thinks an elephant is like a tree. We can't see the whole nutritional elephant, given the tools at our disposal. So just eat a wide variety of whole-ish foods you enjoy, in quantities consistent with the weight you want to be.

And, yeah ...

10

Carbs aren't uniquely fattening.

We have reams and reams of evidence. Low-carb diets outperform other diets by a few pounds in the short term, but all diets are equally ineffective in the long term.

And that's my list.

I write about these issues because I'm trying to change your mind. But I'm also trying to change my own. Humans are terrible at mind-changing; confirmation bias rules our psyche, and it makes all of us lean in to wrong ideas. We're just not wired to assess evidence and come to reasoned conclusions.

Since the column's purpose is to assess evidence and come to reasoned conclusions, that scares the bejeezus out of me, and finding ways to avoid my own rabbit holes has been my top priority. There's no way I can succeed 100 percent, being human and all, but I figure a decent metric of success is whether I ever change my mind.

It's not easy! I've changed my mind about subsidizing fruit and veg (no to yes), whether the Food and Drug Administration should regulate dietary supplements (yes to no), whether low-fat diets work for weight loss (I wrote a whole book about why they do, and it's wrong), and a few other things.

Being persuadable is way harder than being persuasive, and the best tool is engaging with smart people who challenge your point of view. This seems like a good time to thank the many of you who have talked to me for the column, sent interesting studies or made solid arguments that have helped me in that effort.

Thank you. I hope we can continue the conversation.



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