

Disney Designers Create Colorful Animal Fashions

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Disney’s Animal Kingdom costume designers have created a colorful line of animal-inspired fashions for the park’s 2,500 cast members to help create an atmosphere of fun and high adventure in everything from safari wear to color-bright native dress.

Each of 62 different designs for cast member costumes is all about animals, but in totally different ways. Some, such as caregiver attire, are designed to be worn around animals. For others, the animals are all around the wearer in the form of colorful printed images — pink elephants, yellow alligators, vermilion beetles or bright red geese.

They vary from the tailored, hunter’s green denim worn by animal caregivers and Pangani Forest Exploration Trail guides to authentic African costumes worn in Harambe, to a wild collection of bright-colored caftans, tunics and blousing trousers in fashionable prints covered with animal images. Those are worn in unique and colorful Discovery Island.

According to Patty Dunne, coordinator of costume design for Disney’s Animal Kingdom, they could easily create a whole new trend in fashions which celebrate the world of animals — well beyond popular trends such as “safari” clothing and leopard-spot fabric.

All are loose-fitting and made from fabrics that absorb and evaporate moisture quickly. All are custom-designed by Disney costumers and custom-made by leading suppliers to meet exacting needs for theming, comfort and the special requirements of each cast member role. Costumes are worn by merchandise and operations hosts, restaurant cast, guides and animal caregivers. Scores of designs are worn by performers on stage and in street performances.

Each area of the park is distinguished by a completely different set of costumes. In all there are more than 61,000 items of apparel required. The collection includes:

- **Discovery Island** — The most “artistic” area of the park, centered around The Tree of Life, has animal images everywhere — on the tree and all over the inside and outside of buildings — and colorfully repeated in the fabrics of all the costumes. There’s an “engineered-print” tunic (printed after the garment is cut out) with ombre effect, colors changing gradually from a deep coral to pink, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. Each band of color contains animal figures — turtles, flamingos and fish on one blouse, crabs, frogs and alligators on another, beetles and lady bugs on a third. There’s a pleated skirt that looks like silk, with elephants and hippos parading around. A “reticulated giraffe blouse” has a network of irregular rectangles, each containing images of African aquatic animals.
- **The Tree of Life** — Costumes for The Tree of Life theater attendants are all alike, made of sheer blousy material almost like a pale green camouflage jumpsuit printed with the images of spiders, dragonflies, beetles and other insects, celebrating the 3-D special effects experience — “It’s Tough to be a Bug!”— within the theater.
- **The Oasis and Main Entrance** — Greeters’ costumes here are more tailored, but equally colorful: Maroon trousers or shorts with rose and gold blouses printed with images of giraffes, rhinos, lions, ostriches, warthogs, zebras, tigers, antelope and many other animals.
- **Expedition Everest** — Costumes for this thrilling runaway train adventure are inspired by a Tibetan-style tunic printed in rich earth-tones of ochre, cinnabar and leaf green. Each tunic is embellished with a Himalayan Escapes Tour patch signifying the adventure ahead.
- **Kilimanjaro Safaris** — Sharp-looking safari and game warden attire in bronze/khaki with patch pockets and national-park style emblems sewn on sleeves are made of environmentally friendly lyocell fabric.
- **Harambe** — Inspired by native costumes from all across central Africa from the Ivory Coast to Nigeria to Kenya, the apparel worn here has bright colors, beaded trim and a hint of North African influence in geometric

designs. Both men and women may wear tunic tops with drape-effects sewn into knee-length trousers. Tunics bear greetings in the Swahili language across the front. Most spectacular is a free-flowing bright green caftan made of a silky fabric and printed in an organic leaf-print theme. When arms are raised, the ultra-wide pleated sleeves look almost like butterfly wings. Matching head-scarves and turbans, beaded belts and leather panels add interesting touches to the costumes.

- **DinoLand U.S.A.** — In DINOSAUR, “hi-tech research scientists” wear white duck pants and asymmetrical shirts trimmed with black and yellow diagonal stripes indicating “danger ahead.” Cast members at Chester and Hester’s Dinosaur Treasures funky curio shop wear appropriate kitschy costumes with red dinosaur prints climbing the chartreuse and yellow pant legs of the costume.
- **Camp Minnie-Mickey** — Adirondack summer camp attire with dark green trousers or shorts, and light, striped tops that feature square panels picturing Mickey, Goofy and Pluto.
- **“Festival of the Lion King”** — This stage show includes an aerial performer whose costume looks like a giant chartreuse and yellow bird; colorful monkey costumes which allow for a high-jumping trampoline performance; and an amber headdress, lion-mane cape and leather tunic for the tribal chief who directs the story-telling. Fellow members of the tribe are dressed to portray a gazelle, a snake, a crocodile, a sandy-colored leopard and other animals. All the costumes are inspired by authentic tribal attire with carved wooden heads used for typical ceremonies in Africa. That show alone requires 136 costumes. Nine more costumes have been designed for operational cast members in Asia. Inspired by native fashions of Bhutan, Nepal and India, they feature authentic Batik print patterns in subdued earth tones with typical Nepalese-style tunics and tight-leg, draped pants familiar to “The King and I” fans.

Twenty percent of the cast costumes are made of a natural, environmentally favorable fiber called lyocell, designed to look right and provide comfort and durability in a hot climate. This is the first time the new fabric has been used for this kind of costume or uniform. It is made from wood pulp harvested from trees grown specifically for fabrics and has the natural absorbency of cotton with the strength and versatility of a synthetic fiber.

###

AKDRESS2/rev:6-6-08:lc