

# Quite the character

**Laura French rounds up the best cartoon-inspired attractions across the globe**

@laurafrench121

**A**nybody who says they don't love a cartoon is probably lying; ditto a theme park. Combine the two and you have escapism at its best – which is probably why there are so many cartoon character-inspired attractions popping up all over the world.

With new additions such as Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi and, prior to that, Motiongate Dubai and IMG Worlds of Adventure, alongside old

favourites, there has never been a better time to sell a commissionable theme park break, and give your clients another excuse to embrace all things fantasy for a few days. We've rounded up some of the best to get you started.

## ► THE SIMPSONS RIDE, UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

Universal Orlando excels in its cutting-edge simulators, and among the standouts is the

indoor coaster themed around The Simpsons, which combines a 24-metre-high virtual reality screen with an immersive queue and plenty of comic quotes. Guests soar through Krustyland – Krusty the Clown's low-budget theme park – encountering everyone's favourite jaundiced characters along the way, with cameo appearances from all of Springfield's finest. Expect plenty of laughs – from the adults as much as the kids. ➔





## DESTINATIONS THEME PARKS



ABOVE: Smurfs Village, Motiongate Dubai

➔ **Book it:** Funway Holidays offers a week room-only in a Poolside Room at Universal's Cabana Bay from £740 per person, based on two adults and two under-10s travelling on October 20, with United Airlines flights from Heathrow. [funway4agents.co.uk](http://funway4agents.co.uk)

### ▶ TOM AND JERRY: SWISS CHEESE SPIN, WARNER BROS WORLD ABU DHABI

Does it get more classic than Tom and Jerry? The iconic cat-and-mouse duo have been defining childhood memories since the 1940s and they're immortalised in this all-new thrill ride at Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi, the indoor theme park that opened on Yas Island in July.

The family-friendly attraction sees riders sit in car-sized wedges of cheese as they swerve and spin their way around, ducking into mouse holes and dodging giant obstacles designed to make you feel like you're the size of a tiny rodent.

It's found in Cartoon Junction, which brings together classics including Scooby-Doo, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Tweety. Other themed areas in the park include Gotham City, inspired by Batman, and Bedrock, where The Flintstones take centre stage.

**Book it:** If Only offers a five-night package including a day ticket to Warner Bros World and accommodation in a Marina Room at the Yas Hotel Abu Dhabi with daily breakfast, private



**Riders sit in car-sized wedges of cheese as they swerve and spin around, ducking into mouse holes**

transfers and Etihad Airways flights from Heathrow, from £899 per person. Price valid for travel between September 1 and October 31, and based on two sharing. [ifonly.net](http://ifonly.net)

### ▶ SMURFS VILLAGE, MOTIONGATE DUBAI

Dubai is all about taking things up that extra notch and its theme parks are no exception. At the animation-themed Motiongate (part of Dubai Parks and Resorts) you'll find not just an attraction, but an entire village dedicated to the Smurfs, with colourful mushroom-capped houses, picturesque forests and themed shops and cafes filling its film set-style streets.

Among the area's five main lures, there's an interactive show, a rollercoaster for the little 'uns and a studio-themed ride taking guests behind the scenes, plus indoor and outdoor play areas with Smurf characters strolling around in between. It's one of several areas in the DreamWorks section, where Kung Fu Panda, ➔



## Be Cool in Abu Dhabi

Walk in the cool shade of some of the most iconic buildings in the UAE, have a splashing time at the region's biggest waterpark or feel the wind in your hair on the world's fastest roller coaster! Combine all this with our hand-selected resorts to make Abu Dhabi the perfect place to relax and recharge.

Visit Abu Dhabi's latest attraction, the stunning Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi on Yas Island, with its six themed regions ranging from the bedlam of Bedrock to broody Gotham City! It'll bring out the big kid in everyone!



For more information  
call 0141 955 4000  
or visit [ifonly.net](http://ifonly.net)

→ Shrek and the stars of *Madagascar* can be found.

**Book it:** Travel 2 offers three nights' half-board in a Deluxe Twin Room at the five-star Lapita Hotel Dubai, Dubai Parks and Resorts, from £539 per person, including park tickets plus 30% off food, drink and spa treatments, with Emirates flights from Stansted, valid for travel June 4-25, 2019. [travel2.com](http://travel2.com)

## ▶ THOMAS LAND, DRAYTON MANOR

Clients don't have to cross borders to experience some animation-themed action. Drayton Manor lays claim to the toddler-friendly Thomas Land, home to more than 25 rides and attractions themed around Thomas & Friends. They include a stomach-plunging drop tower, a rollercoaster, a themed carousel and a train ride through the park and zoo – plus the new James and the Red Balloon, which whisks guests high up in the air above Thomas Land. **Book it:** Super Break offers a weekend package including one

night in a family room at the Brook Marston Farm Hotel with breakfast and a one-day pass to Drayton Manor, from £198 for a family of four, based on travel in late September. [superbreak.com/agents](http://superbreak.com/agents)

## ▶ HULK EPSILON BASE 3D, IMG WORLDS OF ADVENTURE

The world's biggest indoor theme park is a dream for film fanatics, and among its standouts is the Marvel section, where comic book superheroes such as the Hulk, Iron Man and Thor come together in rollercoasters, restaurants and a string of other thrill rides.

Among its most impressive creations is the Hulk Epsilon Base 3D, a cinema-style attraction where visitors are surrounded by a 360-degree domed screen, with immersive visuals bringing the story of this green giant's fight against his foe to life – one for the whole family to try. **Book it:** Do Something Different offers a one-day ticket to IMG Worlds of Adventure from £51 per person. [dosomethingdifferent.com](http://dosomethingdifferent.com)




ABOVE: Ratatouille: The Adventure, Disneyland Paris

## ▶ RATATOUILLE: THE ADVENTURE, DISNEYLAND PARIS

King of the cartoon world is Disney, and clients not wanting to stray too far afield will find plenty to please in Paris, with everything from Finding Nemo to flying Dumbo rides found here.

It's Ratatouille that takes the crown, though, with 3D screens and extra effects – from splashes of water to the aromas of Gusteau's Parisian restaurant – accompanying you as you twirl and twist in shared, trackless

carts, shrunk to the size of a rat and attempting to escape the clutches of Chef Skinner.

It doesn't end there, either – next door is Ratatouille-themed restaurant Bistrot Chez Rémy, which offers themed dishes and oversized furnishings for those not quite ready to re-enter reality. **Book it:** Attraction World offers a two-day, two-park ticket from £140 for adults and £125 for children, including a FastPass and €5 Earl of Sandwich voucher for use in the Disney Village. [attractionworld.com](http://attractionworld.com) 

## Best of THE REST

### CBEBBIES LAND, ALTON TOWERS

Live shows, challenges, a sensory garden and Postman Pat ride are among the treasures at Alton Towers' CBeebies Land, with 14 attractions to keep tots occupied.



### ANGRY BIRDS WORLD, QATAR

This new theme park features rides inspired by the popular video game. Highlights include freefall ride Blast Bomb, a 106-metre-long zipline, a high ropes course and Red Alert, which sends riders off into a heart-pumping, 360-degree spin.



### SESAME STREET, SEAWORLD ORLANDO

SeaWorld will be adding a new section next spring, featuring rides, Sesame Street characters and themed spots – including Mr Hooper's store, Abby Cadabby's Garden and Big Bird's nest – alongside the park's first parade.



### NICKELODEON UNIVERSE, MALL OF AMERICA

Everyone from Spongebob Squarepants to Dora and Diego are found at this amusement park in Minneapolis. Look out for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Shell Shock, which takes riders 20 metres high at speeds of up to 25mph.

