

# Birthday Party FAQ

## Pricing Tables:

Rental type	Party Packages
<b>Morning Private Rental</b> 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Open Ocean \$600</b> <i>Full, private access to the aquarium, take home craft, story time, + Zero-waste package</i>
	<b>Ocean Discovery \$700</b> <i>Full, private access to the aquarium, take home craft, story time, one 15 minute animal presentation + Zero-waste package</i>
	<b>Ocean Adventure \$800</b> <i>Full, private access to the aquarium, take home craft, story time, one 15 minute animal presentation, special encounter with our sharks + Zero-waste package</i>
	<b>Ocean ReSEArch \$1,200</b> <i>Full, private access to the aquarium, take home craft, story time, one 15 minute animal presentation, use of our small Remote Operated Underwater Vehicle (ROV) + Zero-waste package</i>
<b>Afternoon Partial Rental</b> 2 hr rental - Start time flexible	<b>Open Ocean \$400</b> <i>Includes private party room with shared access to the main gallery, take home craft, story time + Zero-waste package</i>
	<b>Ocean Discovery \$500</b> <i>Includes private party room with shared access to the main gallery, take home craft, story time, one 15 minute animal presentation + Zero-waste package</i>
	<b>Ocean Adventure \$600</b> <i>Includes private party room with shared access to the main gallery, take home craft, story time, one 15 minute animal presentation, special encounter with our moon jellies + Zero-waste package</i>

## What is the difference between a private and partial rental?

With the morning private rental, you have the whole Aquarium to yourself, including the main Gallery, Green Room, Patio and Science Lab. Private rentals also provide a choice of having your food set up either [inside](#) the Green Room or [outside](#) on the Patio (weather depending). With the partial rental, we have a dedicated party space for you and your guests in our Green Room. The tables, chairs, and food will all be set up in that space, as the main Gallery will be open to the public. We do request that you keep all food and drink inside of the party space, as public visitors are not allowed to eat in the aquarium.

### How many guests are allowed?

For our morning private rentals, we have a 60-individual limit (this includes your family). For our afternoon partial rentals, we have a 40-individual limit. For any additional guests beyond the limit, there is a guest-overflow fee of \$5 per person, as a larger party will require more staff resources. We strongly recommend that afternoon partial rentals are kept closer to the 40-guest limit, as space is more limited in the dedicated party space. Infants that cannot walk on their own are not counted in this total.

### What happens if I have more guests than the limit?

Please let us know as soon as possible so we can prepare. We will keep track of the number of guests arriving, and check-in with you before the end of the rental to go over the final number of guests in attendance. We will not charge you for any additional guests until after the party.

### What is provided?

We provide six 6' x 30" tables, up to 50 chairs (at least 26 for the food tables), reusable tableware (plates, cake plates, forks, knives, spoons, cups), cloth napkins, and some serving utensils. We can also provide pitchers of filtered water on request.

### Do I have to use the zero-waste tableware?

No, you are welcome to bring your own tableware if you prefer. With our move to zero-waste rentals, we do request that you try to choose the most environmentally sustainable option (i.e. paper or glass rather than plastic).

### Do you provide ice?

We do not provide ice. If you forget ice on the day of the party, there is a [Vons](#) located in Santa Monica. For location and directions to Vons please visit: <https://bit.ly/2oCxN8m>

### Can we bring our own food and drink?

Yes, you are more than welcome to bring your own food, drink, and cake. We do not provide any food or drinks other than water. Please keep in mind that we do not allow single-use water bottles. We do realize that it can be difficult to go completely plastic-free, but we greatly appreciate any effort to help reduce our plastic consumption.

### Can I bring an ice cream cake?

We strongly discourage bringing ice cream cakes. While we do have a freezer/fridge, we cannot guarantee that there will be enough space, as the freezer is used by other departments at the Aquarium. We suggest bringing a cooler with ice or dry ice.

### Can I bring water bottles?

Unfortunately, we do not allow single-use water bottles at the aquarium. We can provide pitchers of filtered water for your party upon request. We also understand that it can be

difficult to go 100% plastic-free, so juice and soda in plastic bottles are allowed, but glass or aluminum bottles are preferred.

### What else can I not bring?

We do not allow hand sanitizer as it is toxic to our touch tank animals. We would greatly appreciate it if you let your guests know as well. We have sinks with soap available in our restrooms. Single-use plastic straws are not allowed (however they are ok if they are attached to juice boxes, we understand that it can be difficult to avoid). The list of banned items also includes glitter, confetti, piñatas, balloons, bubbles and Styrofoam products. Also, please be environmentally conscious when selecting party favors and decorations – no live animals, dried sea stars, shells or other dried ocean artifacts.

### Can I see pictures of the decorations?

Check out our photo albums [here](#).

### Can we bring our own decorations?

Yes! You are more than welcome to bring your own decorations. Even if you select one of our decoration packages, you are welcome to add more of your own as well. Please be environmentally conscious when selecting party favors and decorations – no live animals, dried sea stars, shells or other dried ocean artifacts.

### Can we play music?

Yes, we have speakers that can be plugged into a computer or a Bluetooth sound system throughout the gallery space for private rentals. If you have a partial afternoon rental, only the computer-enabled speakers can be used. During partial rentals, please be mindful that we are open to the public in our Main Gallery. If you have a playlist on your phone that is not accessible through the internet, we would recommend that you bring your own Bluetooth speakers. Please note, the speakers in the Green Room and the Main Gallery are separate systems.

### Which animal species are part of the animal presentation?

If you select the Ocean Discovery, Ocean Adventure, or Ocean reSEArch package, there will be a 20-15 minute animal presentation on **one** of our tide pool animals. This could be a bat star, sea cucumber or sea urchin (may depend on animal accessibility). We talk about the animal's adaptations, where and how it lives, and some fun facts. Your guests will then have a chance to interact with and touch the animal up close.

### What is the special animal encounter?

With the Ocean Adventure Package, you and your guests will get up close and personal with one of our animals that the public doesn't usually get to interact with. We will talk about the animal, their adaptations, and some fun facts about them before we get to touch the animals.

During private rentals, this is usually our sharks and rays. For our partial rentals, it is our moon jellies (we cannot allow shark touching during public hours).

#### Is alcohol allowed for the adults?

If you would like to bring alcohol for the adult guests, you may do so ONLY if it is served by a licensed bartender who is not a guest. Licenses and permits must be submitted for review to the Aquarium at least two weeks before the party date. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

#### Can I bring in other entertainment?

You are more than welcome to bring in third-party entertainment. Please just let us know at least 48 hours in advance so we can set up the space accordingly. Please note that balloon and bubble artists are not allowed due to environmental concerns.

#### Can my party be longer than 2 hours?

Depending on your rental type there may be options to have a longer party. Please email [birthday@healthebay.org](mailto:birthday@healthebay.org) if you would be interested in discussing the options.

#### Can I bring in my own craft?

Yes, you are more than welcome to bring in another craft. Please just keep in mind that we do not allow glitter, confetti, seashells, or other dried ocean artifacts. If you bring in a craft that requires materials like paint, glue, etc. please note that you are responsible for cleaning up the craft materials by the end of the party.

#### What if I don't want story time?

If you would prefer not to have story time, you are welcome to opt-out. Please inform the staff before or at the start of the rental, so they can plan out the party schedule accordingly.

#### What is the Aquadoption birthday special?

For the \$50 birthday special, you get one activity packet with a personalized adoption certificate, one plush toy of your chosen animal, and 25 free family admission passes to give out to your guests. On the [form](#), please select the animal you would like to adopt and include the date of the party in the comments. We will have the packet, plush toy, and 25 family passes available for you on the day of the party. For questions, email [birthday@healthebay.org](mailto:birthday@healthebay.org)

#### What about tipping?

Tipping is not required but always appreciated. Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to making your party as much fun as possible.

#### How do I get to the Aquarium?

[Click here for directions to Heal the Bay Aquarium.](#)

### What do I do when I get there?

For the day of the party, please temporarily park in the loading zone located right in front of the Aquarium before the entrance of Lot 1 North, next to the pier at beach level. This lot can be reached from either the PCH or Appian Way. Turn on your hazard lights and ring the doorbell to the right of the Aquarium doors. We will bring out a cart to your car to help you unload your party supplies. After unloading, you can either park in the Lot 1 North or another lot of your choosing. Lot 1 North is the most conveniently located to the aquarium.

### Where do I/my guests park?

There are several options around the pier as well as in Santa Monica. The parking lot next to the pier is the most conveniently located, but there are other lots on top of the pier and next to Hot Dog on a Stick. Check out [Park Me](#) for parking availability.