# The Hot Tub On The Expressway

Because we had such a wonderful time at Splash Universe, the indoor water park in Shipshewana, Indiana, we decided to take the kids to Splash Bay, another indoor water park, this one in Maumee (Toledo), Ohio. Again, we had a blast! Following is a summary of both parks. To abbreviate, I'm going to call Splash Universe in Indiana "IN" and Splash Bay in Ohio "OH".

Water Slides: LARGE: IN has 2 large water slides that you travel down in inner tubes (though they are essentially the same slide – same design), while OH has 3 large ones and only one of those is for inner tubes. I personally prefer very tame water slides, so my favorites are the tube slides. The other 2 water slides at OH are much bigger, but the blue one pushed me underwater at the end, and the red one is one of those "toilet bowl" ones – the slide opens out into a huge bowl or funnel, and the rider drops down through the middle into a swirling 7.5 foot deep whirlpool – no thanks. Not for me nor my little ones, but my husband and my daughter's teenage friend really liked it, and we enjoyed watching them from the balcony outside the snack bar where you could see into the bowl and watch them drop. MEDIUM SLIDES: IN had many more smaller water slides – kind of like playground slides in water. OH had a few, but more on those in the kids' play area section. SMALL SLIDES: IN had 2 tiny slides in a small baby area, perfect for my 2-5 year olds. OH did not have any baby slides.

Swimming Area: There was not much room for swimming in the IN water park. Off of the lazy river, there is a little pool with a bench around the perimeter for families to sit, but not really anywhere for anyone to swim – something I found quite strange for a water park. At OH, the kids' play area has a bit of extra room for swimming in 2 places, although the depth is only 3 feet – better than no swimming at all though! Neither place has a pool exclusively for swimming, however,

nor my favorite water park element – the wave pool.

Kids' Area: Both parks have a large water playground for kids where they can squirt each other with various contraptions and go down slides and stuff. Both places also have a zero-depth entry pool with a soft floor, which is great for really small kids getting ready to crawl and walk. Both parks also have a Lily Pad Crossing, where kids can use overhead ropes to help them cross a path of stepping stones across a pool – this was really popular with my 9-year-old daughter and her 6-year-old boy cousin. OH also has a really cool "shark" – a piece of playground equipment that is bolted to the floor of a 3-foot pool. The kids can try to climb on the shark, the adults can try to shake them off and even climb on it themselves – the thing was really popular among guests of all ages. OH also has a basketball hoop and floating balls which was a lot of fun for Hubby and me – providing we could get a long enough break from the kids to play a game. Overall, I liked the OH kids' area much better, but my husband liked the IN one better for just one reason – the 500-gallon tipping water bucket!

Lazy River: In an indoor water park, lazy rivers are basically moats that carry an inner tube rider around the room. I really enjoy these, even though indoor ones are slightly less cool than outdoor ones, just because they can't get very long nor travel very fast. The OH one was accessible directly after the water slides, and this was a pretty cool design, but the OH one was not very fast – I really enjoyed the feeling of getting swept down the river in certain parts of the IN lazy river. It was really fun to try to time our trip down the lazy river so that we would meet up with the kids after a trip down the slide.

Hot Tubs: The hot tub at IN is adults only, and we never made it over there. That reminds me, the temperature in the IN water park was always very warm – TOO warm when entering while wearing street clothes. In contrast, the OH park is actually kept kind of chilly for my taste, and the water wouldn't

really warm up until a few hours before the park closed at night.  My kids were often cold in the regular water at OH.  But the OH hot tub was my favorite part of the entire park.  It was incredibly relaxing, and there was even a waterfall you could sit under.  AND, you could swim outside!  The weather was somewhere in the mid-70's, so it was beautiful to sit outside in the hot tub, tucked in kind of a hidden corner just off the expressway where you could watch cars pay their toll and go about their days, but they couldn't see you unless they knew better than to take a peek under the water slides.  And that's another thing – since the water slides go out of the building, you can sit in the hot tub and see water sliders travel  above – we would have our daughters and their friend put their hands against the water slide and wave to us; it was so fun!

In Summary:  For me personally, I preferred the OH  water park over IN, just because I liked the hot tub a lot and even though they only had one tube slide, it was a really great slide!  I liked the more open areas for swimming and the basketball court OH provided, and I loved watching my daughters try to conquer the shark.  IN was fun for other reasons, especially having fun with a larger group of family, but if we're just talking about attractions, then I definitely prefer Splash Bay near Toledo OH.  I don't think I can get an unbiased answer if I ask my kids – what could beat being at an indoor water park with their grandparents, cousin, aunt and uncle and great uncle all at once?

*By the way, don't ask for pictures.  If you think I was going to take our camera into any place with all that water, you must not know about my uncanny ability to lose and/or destroy cameras!*