

President Proclaims Sword Swallower's Day 2017

*Sword Swallowers celebrate by swallowing together
at Ripley's Believe It or Not locations worldwide!*

SSAI, Tampa, FL – The **Sword Swallowers Association International (SSAI)** reports that there are less than a few dozen full-time professional sword swallowers actively performing around the world today.

On **World Sword Swallower's Day, Saturday, February 25, 2017**, the world will have the rare opportunity to witness them defy death and do what they do best -- doing the impossible and swallowing swords -- all at once!

Sword Swallowers Association International president Dan Meyer announces the 10th annual **World Sword Swallower's Day** to raise awareness about the art of sword swallowing worldwide. Founded by SSAI and co-sponsored by Ripley Entertainment, World Sword Swallower's Day 2017 will be celebrated February 25th, 2017 in conjunction with February as National Swallowing Disorders Month.

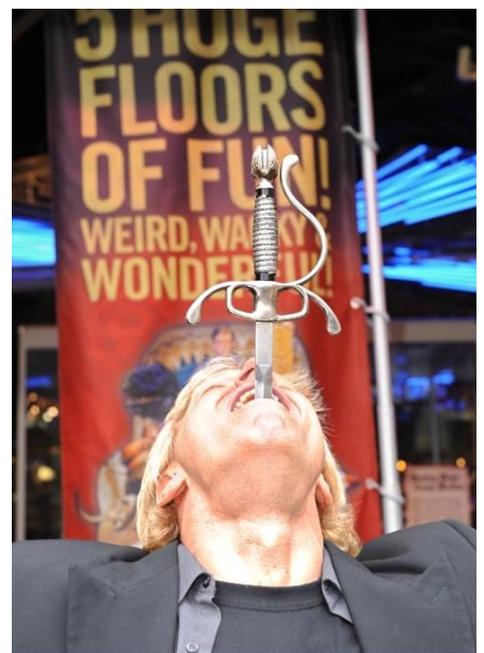
"Last year on World Sword Swallower's Day 2016, a total of 55 sword swallowers swallowed 145 swords at Ripley's museums around the US." Meyer said. "This year we're expecting a record turnout of over 60 sword swallowers performing incredible stunts, setting record numbers, and swallowing over 150 swords at 15 Ripley's attractions around the world!"

Why Celebrate World Sword Swallower's Day?

"We sword swallowers have been risking our lives to perform sword swallowing for over 4000 years," explains Meyer. "But many people either don't believe what we do is real, or they think the art has died out."

"In 2007, I realized we had national holidays for Mother's Day, Father's Day, President's Day, Secretary's Day, Magician's Day, and others, but there were no holidays to honor the daring sword swallowers who risk their lives to entertain and inspire people!" Meyer explained. "Very few people realize that sword swallowing is real and that we sword swallowers are still performing today."

"So in 2007, I established World Sword Swallower's Day to honor and celebrate the courageous performers who risk their lives to entertain audiences, to promote this ancient art still carried on by a few dozen daring performers, to honor veteran performers, to raise awareness of the medical contributions sword swallowers have made in the fields of medicine and science, and to raise funds for esophageal cancer research and the Injured Sword Swallower's Relief Fund." Meyer explains.



"Most of all, we do it because we love the art -- we love to dispel myths and educate the public and medical professionals by doing free demonstrations for audiences around the world on World Sword Swallower's Day."

"Many of us have been performing for years and we love entertaining audiences!" explains Meyer, a 39-time world record holding sword swallower who performs at Ripley's Believe It or Not museums and does TED talks on sword swallowing as a global TEDx speaker, corporate, science, medical and youth events in 40 countries around the world. "World Sword Swallower's Day is our chance to really show the world on a grand scale what we really do and how we do it!"

How is sword swallowing tied to science and medicine?

Sword swallowers have been prodded and examined by doctors and scientists in the name of science for the past 150 years, often without being recognized for their contributions.

"We want to change that. That's one of the reasons we celebrate World Sword Swallower's Day." Meyer explains.

"Most people don't appreciate the risks and dangers involved in sword swallowing, or the contributions sword swallowers have made in the fields of science and medicine over the past 150 years." Meyer explains. In 1868, a sword swallower was used by Dr. Adolf Kussmaul in Freiburg Germany to help develop the first rigid endoscope. In 1906 a sword swallower underwent the first esophageal electrocardiogram in Wales.

In 2006, the first comprehensive medical study on sword swallowing, "[Sword Swallowing and its side effects](#)," was published by the prestigious British Medical Journal in its much-anticipated 2006 Christmas issue. Co-authored by Meyer and British radiologist Dr. Brian Witcombe, the historic two-year study was the first comprehensive medical research conducted on sword swallowers in the 4000 year history of the art. The study garnered world-wide attention for sword swallowing and won Meyer and Witcombe the [2007 Ig Nobel Prize in Medicine](#) at Harvard University.

Since some sword swallowers perform charitable work for the medical community to raise awareness of esophageal cancer, dysphagia, GERD, and other upper gastro-intestinal and swallowing disorders, SSAI encourages its members to perform demonstrations at medical facilities throughout the day. Sword swallowers also perform at hospitals, cancer wards, orphanages, and nursing homes for those who would otherwise have difficulty getting to theaters to see live performances.

"Sword swallowers who participate in these activities find it rewarding," explains Meyer. "Many people who have never had the opportunity to see sword swallowing finally get a chance to witness it firsthand!"

"Because sword swallowing is so rare, sword swallowers usually perform solo," Meyer says. "World Sword Swallower's Day gives us a chance to work together to be part of something bigger and show the world what sword swallowing is all about."

Why is Ripley's co-sponsoring World Sword Swallower's Day?

"Because it's great entertainment!" said Tim O'Brien. "Sword swallowers and Ripley's go way back to the very first Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium set up at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. There, three performers, two of whom were ladies, mesmerized the huge crowds. Ripley's has been home to sword swallowers around the world ever since!"

"It's a huge honor for us to carry on the tradition of sword swallowers who have performed at Ripley's Believe It or Not! museums over the past 83 years." Meyer explains.

"As a result, SSAI extends an [open invitation](#) to sword swallowers around the world to join us in celebrating World Sword Swallower's Day by swallowing swords with us at Ripley's Believe It or Not Odditoriums worldwide."

World Sword Swallower's Day 2017 will take place on **Saturday, February 25, 2017** at participating **Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditoriums** with sword swallowers performing free live shows and demonstrations starting at **1:45** and ending with the annual **Big Swallow** at **2:25:17**.

Sword Swallowers

To participate, all sword swallowers must pre-register by **February 25, 2017** at:
www.ripleys.com/sword-swallowers-day

Participating Ripley's properties

- [Ripley's Amsterdam Netherlands](#)
- [Ripley's Atlantic City NJ](#)
- [Ripley's Baltimore Inner Harbor MD](#)
- [Ripley's Branson MO](#)
- [Ripley's Dallas Grand Prairie TX](#)
- [Ripley's Gatlinburg TN](#)
- [Ripley's Key West FL](#)
- [Ripley's Myrtle Beach SC](#)
- [Ripley's Times Square New York NY](#)
- [Ripley's Orlando FL](#)
- [Ripley's Panama City Beach FL](#)
- [Ripley's Fisherman's Wharf San Francisco CA](#)
- [Ripley's St. Augustine FL](#)
- [Ripley's Williamsburg VA](#)
- [Ripley's Wisconsin Dells WI](#)



About Sword Swallowing

The art of sword swallowing originated over 4000 years ago in India and requires the practitioner to use mind-over-matter techniques to repress natural reflexes in order to insert solid steel blades from 15 to 25 inches down the esophagus and into the stomach. There are currently less than a few dozen full-time professional sword swallowers actively performing around the world today, along with a few dozen retired veterans and amateurs.

About the Sword Swallowers Association International

The [Sword Swallowers Association International](http://www.swordswallow.org) (www.swordswallow.org and www.swordswallow.com) is a global fraternal organization of sword swallowers who are dedicated to preserving and promoting the ancient art of sword swallowing around the world. Based in Tampa, Florida, **SSAI** maintains the Internet's most comprehensive website on the art and science of sword swallowing, with general information, history, medical physiology, world records, and the **Sword Swallower's Hall of Fame** at www.swordswallow.com.

About Ripley Entertainment

Ripley's Believe It or Not! (www.ripleys.com) is part of the **Ripley Entertainment Inc.** family of worldwide attractions, the global leader in location-based entertainment. In addition to its 32 Believe It or Not! Odditoriums and 95 attractions in 12 countries around the world, the Orlando-based company has publishing, licensing and broadcast divisions that oversee the syndicated Believe It or Not! television show, best-selling books, and the popular syndicated cartoon strip, Ripley's Believe It or Not!, that runs daily in 42 countries.

MEDIA: LOCAL SWORD SWALLOWERS AVAILABLE for interviews, comments, and medical demonstrations. For more information on [World Sword Swallower's Day](#), or to schedule a sword swallower for an event in your area before February 25th, please [contact us](#).

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