

Is the Deluxe Dining Plan a Good Value: A Walt Disney World Dining Plan Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

"Is the Disney Dining Plan really worth it?"

This is a topic that comes up often in the [Feasting and Eateries forum of the PassPorter message boards](#) -- everyone wants to know about the various dining plans Disney offers, and whether they're still good value for money. In particular, I regularly read comments that the Deluxe Dining Plan is no longer worth getting, as you can't make any savings with it. Let's take a closer look!

For anyone not familiar with the Deluxe Dining Plan, it gives you three credits per person per night you stay on Disney property that can be used on either table service or counter service restaurants. Obviously, if you use these credits for table service restaurants, this will give you much better value for money, as they're much more expensive than grabbing a meal from a counter service outlet. You also get a refillable mug that's good for the length of your stay, along with two snack credits per person per night of your stay.

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□ Now for all that, on our most recent visit to Walt Disney World, we paid the grand sum of \$684.82 for a three night stay for two adults, which came out to just over \$114 per person per night. Bear in mind that we booked this through the Disney Vacation Club, as we're members and we were staying at a Disney Vacation Club resort using our points, so the price may differ from your experience. However, this is what I'll use for my calculations, as it's what we paid.

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□ One way to make the Deluxe Dining Plan work for you, and ensure you don't have too much food to deal with, is to ensure that your vacation allows you to enjoy food on the first day of your stay, and the last day. That may sound obvious, but think about it. If you arrive early on the first day, and leave late on the last day, you actually get two full extra days, as your credits are good until midnight of the day you check out. We started using the Deluxe Dining Plan on a Thursday morning, and we were still enjoying it on the Sunday evening. Imagine the difference if we'd arrived on a Thursday evening and left on a Sunday morning -- a lot less time to cram all that food in!

Another way we make the Deluxe Dining Plan work for us is to have some meals at Signature restaurants, as these take up two credits on

the Dining Plan. That allows us to either have a late breakfast or an early lunch, and then use up the day's remaining two credits on a Signature dinner. That works so much better for us, as trust me, we've tried cramming in three table service meals a day, and it wasn't a pleasant experience, as it was far too much food for us. By the time we got to the next meal slot, we really weren't hungry, and we felt we were eating just for the sake of it -- not something I want to go through again. □

□ Having said all that, how did we use up all our credits on our three night stay? In total, we had nine credits each for counter or table service meals to use up, and we had the following meals at the following values:

- Dinner at Monsieur Paul's in France, Epcot (Signature restaurant) -- using up 2 credits each for food that would have cost \$193.97 out-of-pocket. I know, it's appallingly high isn't it? We were shocked by how expensive this meal was, if I'm honest.

- Lunch at Tokyo Dining in Japan, Epcot -- using up credit 3, meal valued at \$95.00.

- Dinner at Be Our Guest in the Magic Kingdom -- yes, we were lucky enough to snag one of the coveted reservations there for our trip! That used up credit 4, and would have set us back \$108.32.

- Lunch at the Crystal Palace in the Magic Kingdom -- well, I have to see Eeyore at least once each trip… This used up credit 5, and was one of our cheaper meals, valued at \$53.23.

- Dinner at the California Grill in the Contemporary Resort (Signature restaurant), which used up credits 6 and 7, and would have cost \$149.57. Yes, I know Monsieur Paul's was more expensive than this. Had someone asked me beforehand, I'd definitely have put the California Grill as more pricey, but apparently not.

- Breakfast at Akerhaus, using up credit 8, would have been a whopping \$79.98, just for breakfast. I knew this would be good value on the Dining Plan, but I had no idea just how good a value it would prove to be! Admittedly, you do get a photo package included with this, which may help to explain why it costs so much.

- Dinner at Mama Melrose's used up our final credit 9, and would have cost \$85.00.

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□ With all of these meal values, they only take into account what's actually covered on the Deluxe Dining Plan, otherwise it wouldn't be a fair comparison. Essentially that's an appetizer, entree, dessert, and regular soft drink each, with regular sales tax included. You still have to pay for any drinks that aren't regular soft drinks, and gratuities.

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□ Now to round off the price comparison, we need to add in the cost of refillable mugs, which for two for each of us would've been \$35.98. Then there were the snack credits. We got two each per day, so that was 12 in

total. We used these up mainly at the Food and Wine Festival booths, and some of the items we bought using our snack credits would have been \$6 or \$7, so that was superb value. However, I didn't keep a note of every single item we purchased, so in fairness, I decided to opt for a round figure of \$4 per item, which I thought seemed reasonable. That then added another \$48 to the total.

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□Where does that leave us? Well, if you remember, we paid \$684.82 for the Deluxe Dining Plan for a three-night stay. In four days, on our table service meals, snacks, and refillable mugs, we would have paid a grand total of \$849.05, which gave us a total saving of \$229.23.

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□So it's still possible to save money on the Deluxe Dining Plan, and we didn't feel that we over-ate during our stay. It's still something I'd do, but only to dine at Signature restaurants, and only if I knew that we could use the plan for a full day when we arrive, and a full day when we leave, as that's what works best for us, and ensures that we get full value for money from the plan.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 04-03-2014

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