

There's an App For That - Part 1: Walt Disney World Planning Advice

by Valerie Hofer, PassPorter Guest Contributor

We've all heard it before. Whenever y're looking for a restaurant menu or movie time someone, usually someone much younger pipes up with "You know, there's an app for that."

And in 99% of cases there usually are a few. In the case of Walt Disney World there are a lot more than a few.

While this series will review a lot of apps, it won't be able to cover all of them. And while there are some apps that are clearly better than others, it is really a matter of personal choice -- some app formats are just going to be more appealing to you than others. And in a lot of cases the only differences between one app and another is layout.

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□ Given the large number of Walt Disney World apps out there I'm breaking the reviews down between planning and fun apps. Planning apps are those you might use beforehand to review menus and plan park days. The fun apps are ones you might be more inclined to use to pass time while in line and keep notes or capture memories. Almost all the apps have free and paid versions. I'll try to give an overview of the difference between the two versions as well.

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□ Planning Apps

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□ Disney's first venture into the world of apps was pretty much universally disappointing. But with the advent of Fast Pass + they stepped up their game. And it's perfectly possible to go on your vacation just using My Disney Experience, which is free. Although My Disney Experience is fairly extensive, it does lack a few things I found surprising. For example, it doesn't include all the menus and the menus it does include do not have meal descriptions. I have to admit I was kind of surprised by that. It does include wait times (which match those listed in the park pretty well), interactive maps, and the ever-useful restroom map. However, you cannot submit wait time updates. It's also very easy to share plans by adding friends and family to the app. I did find that the left menu of options on the app was narrow and depending on finger size and manual dexterity, difficult to manage. On the whole it covers the basics and can be all you need for a trip. But since when do PassPorters rely on the "bear" necessities to enjoy Walt Disney World?

Mouse Memo -- A Walt Disney World Trip Organizer is a \$.99 planning app. There is no free version. It is a convenient place to store all your

reservations for dining, lodging, and travel. It links to menus posted on allears.net and allows you to add off-site hotel and restaurant reservations. It does have a few drawbacks. It has not been updated with recent Fantasyland expansion information, including Be Our Guest. You can enter the info, but instead of using a drop down list you would have to enter it as a unique restaurant as though it were off-site. It is also missing some newer rides. There are reviews complaining of information either being jumbled or deleted after saving. Until it's updated there are better alternatives.

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☐Weather Plus for Disney Parks is a \$1.99 planning app. There is no free version. If you're married to a weather fanatic like I am, this is the perfect app. For one price you get both Walt Disney World and Disneyland information. It includes air temperature, dew point, wind speed and direction, and the heat index, as well as other information. It does include a 5-day forecast. There is even a page for weather alerts. For those who want to watch the afternoon rain come in, there is a radar page displaying most of central Florida. I do think the app could benefit from long-term weather forecasts for those preparing to pack for their trip, but for monitoring weather while there, it's a very good app.

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☐The next installment will include Disney World Magic Guide, Disney World Notecast, Family Finder for Walt Disney World and more.

About The Author: Valerie is both a professional quilter and attorney who loves visiting her happy place. She's counting the days until her October 2014 trip.

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