

Lessons Learned at Walt Disney World: A Walt Disney World Resort Review

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

After each Disney trip, I take the opportunity to look back and think about what I've learned from it.

I believe there's always something we can learn from, and improve on for next time. In the first part of this series, I'm going to look at the Walt Disney World section of our vacation, which was actually split into two.

We headed to Walt Disney World for five days to enjoy the Food and Wine Festival, and take in the last Halloween party of the year. After that, we flew to Hawaii, then we headed back to Walt Disney World for just over two days, to break up the journey before returning to the UK. That last is where I'll start, as that's the first thing I learned from this trip. It was my husband's idea to come back to Orlando to break up the travelling. After all, from Hawai'i to the UK is a total of ten hours' time difference, and that's a lot of jet lag. While it was a good idea, we needed longer to really adjust. I felt I was just starting to adjust to Eastern Standard Time by the time we had to fly home, and two red-eye flights in the space of 72 hours was definitely not a good plan!

□ Backtracking to the beginning of our trip, I learned that if you want to try and take a hot air balloon trip, then you really need to allocate two or three days to do it. We had it set for our first morning in the States, which seemed a good plan, as with the jet lag, we're always awake hideously early. This trip was no exception, but this time we had the balloon flight to look forward to; or so we thought! We made it out as far as the launching ground, but then the rain came in, and our flight was cancelled. Really, I should've known better, as we've tried to do this before, and hadn't managed it. I should've allocated the next couple of mornings to try again, but I didn't. We figured we might give it another go when we got back from Hawai'i, but we were too exhausted, so now we're saving that up for our next trip.

□ I applied some learning from previous trips to our choice of night to go to Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party, and it was spot on. We went for the very final night, which was actually 1 November, and it was wise choice, as we didn't find it that busy. We've been on 30 October, which was sold out, and found it to be fine, but we've always avoided Halloween itself, which works for us.

I also knew that the Food and Wine Festival at Epcot wasn't a particularly pleasant place to be on Friday and Saturday nights. We'd

done that before, found the lines for every booth to be insane, and had witnessed some un-Disney-like behavior, shall we say. Instead, we opted to head to Epcot as early as we could on a Sunday. It was interesting to see how busy the park was, although not entirely surprising, given how popular this event is with locals. As a result, the lines at the booths were longer than I'd have liked, which is something for us to bear in mind for future visits to the Festival.

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□ On the return leg of our trip, we went to Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, and this is where I did learn something. On our previous visit at this time of year, we had seen Christmas decorations being put up in the parks and resorts from 31 October onwards. What we hadn't realized is that some decorations would be up, but not all of them. It was quite disappointing to only see bits and pieces, particularly at the Magic Kingdom, where we were enjoying the Christmas party. It felt as if things were only half complete, and I wished I'd realized that beforehand, as I had high expectations, and sadly Disney didn't quite deliver on that front for me.

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□ At least the Osborne Lights were there 100%, even if the decorations in the rest of Disney's Hollywood Studios weren't. They were beautiful to see, and it was well worth stopping off in Disney to see those and go to the Christmas party, as it certainly helped to start getting us into the holiday spirit.

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□ Something else I learned this trip is that you can pack too much into one vacation. I knew that before, but this time it really struck home. I'd purchased tickets for both SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Tampa, as we love both parks. However, with seven and a bit days in total in Orlando, we just couldn't fit either of them in, no matter how hard we tried. It would have been too much, so it's worth keeping that in mind. What can you realistically fit in, without exhausting yourselves? It is a vacation after all!

□ A positive was that I learned that I absolutely adore the new Grand Floridian Villas. We were lucky enough to spend a night there in a one-bedroom villa, just a week after it opened. Wow, what a spacious villa it was! We were both blown away by it, and much more impressed than we expected to be. I think it just goes to show that every time Disney comes up with something new, be it a park or a resort, they always manage to take things to the next level. I can't wait to see what they do with the new Disney Vacation Club resort at the Polynesian.

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□ So, once again, despite the fact that this was just the latest in a long line of visits to Walt Disney World, I still found plenty of learning points to apply to future vacations. Coming up next, I'll look at what I learned from our first visit to Aulani, A Disney Resort and Spa at Ko Olina in

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Hawai'i.

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!](#)

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