

How to Catch a Deal at Disney: Tips from the Travel Girl

by Justine Fellows, PassPorter Guest Contributor and Host of Travel Girl podcasts

As you know staying at Disney is not exactly a cheap vacation. If you're reading this you are most likely pretty web savvy. You've already jumped from Orbitz to Priceline to DisneyWorld.com without much luck getting a great deal. Well, you're not alone and obviously Disney does this for a reason. They are in tight control of their room inventory and only cut deals on occasion. So let's talk about some secret tricks for Disney deals. First, get yourself signed up for the Mousesavers.com e-newsletter. The writers of this little treasure will keep you updated on deals that tend to go unnoticed by the general public. Next, think about the time of year you are visiting. Travel in late August, the fall, the last two weeks in January, May, and early June may get you some significant price cuts. Always keep in mind that packages from Disney may not be the cheapest way to go. It depends a lot on how much you plan to eat, how many parks you plan to go to, and the time of year that you book. Always ask for the package price and then the room price only, then carefully weigh the benefits of the package versus buying park tickets separately and not getting the dining plan.

When considering where to stay, make sure to choose the category level based on your budget, then, when you call, have them compare hotels within this level. Sometimes you'll catch a deal at less-booked resorts or it may be less than you think to upgrade, for example, from Pop Century to Caribbean Beach. I recommend using Disneyworld.com to get some basic price ideas and call when you are ready to ask detailed questions. First, ask for room only, Disney does not offer discounts on packages. Ask for AAA, military, or government discounts. (Swan and Dolphin- which you need to book through Starwood, not Disney, also offers government and teacher discounts!) If you are in the military, you may want to look into Shades of Green, the onsite hotel especially for military families. Also, ask about special deals for Florida residents, if you happen to be one, and annual passholder discounts if you happen to have one. If you don't have an annual pass and you are thinking of going to Disney for more than 10 days in one year, the discounts and saving on tickets may be well worth the cost.

Next trick: stick with the Garden View. While it's hard to avoid fantasizing about the perfect view of the castle, I've never found it worth the cost. You can always walk outside, and usually when you are in the room you're ready to sleep, not ready to look out the window.

Keep an eye on the deals that might not be related to the hotel. For instance, Disney often offers a free dining package for those arriving in late August and September. This can save upwards of \$500 for a family of four on a six-night stay.

So let's review:

Tip # 1 - Sign up for the amazing e-newsletter at <http://www.mousesavers.com>

Tip # 2 - Think about when you can travel. Off season will get you less crowds with less cost.

Tip # 3 - Always compare the package to breaking out the room, dining and tickets separately.

Tip #4 - Ask for discounts -- they won't tell you unless you ask! AAA, seniors, military, teacher, Florida resident, annual passholder -- it's worth a shot!

Tip #5 - Stick to the Garden View

Tip #6 - Keep your eye out for special offers, such as free dining packages, that will offset the cost of your hotel room.

Please don't fall for scams, if it seems too good to be true- it most likely is.

And my TOP TIP for Disney: Find yourself a travel agent who knows Disney inside and out to help book your vacation.

Good luck!

About The Author: Justine, the author of [PassPorter's Disney Speed Planner: The Easy Ten-Step Program](#), works in education in Connecticut. She is also the host of [Travel Girl's™ Tips for Disney World](#) podcasts.

Article last updated: 10/2/2008

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