

# The Walt Disney World Annual Pass: A Buyer's Guide

by Amanda Ryals, PassPorter Guest Contributor

The thought of an Annual Pass to Disney World is incredibly tempting, even bewitching at some points.

I recently went through the process of deciding whether or not to invest in an Annual Pass, and I figured it would be helpful to share the experience with you. So if you want to know if an annual pass is a good purchase, you're in the right place!

Ultimately, whether or not an annual pass is a benefit comes down to a series of questions that you need to ask yourself. The first of these questions is: "How long will I be staying at the parks?" A lot of people plan extended trips to Walt Disney World, in some cases for more than two weeks. The 10-Day Theme Park Ticket with the Water Parks and More option is currently \$468.00 (all prices will be listed with sales-tax). An Annual Pass for non-Florida Residents is \$675.21, and \$516.53 for Florida Residents. The Premium Annual Pass is \$803.01 for non-Florida Residents, and \$644.33 for Florida Residents.

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□ Now that we have thrown a few numbers around, let's look at the differences between the Annual Passes. An Annual Pass allows unlimited access during operation hours for one year to the four main theme parks at Walt Disney World. The Premium Annual Pass allows the same access to the four theme parks, but also allows entry to Disney Quest, Blizzard Beach, Typhoon Lagoon, the Oak Trail Golf Course, and the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. Neither of these passes have block-out dates.

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□ The next question to ask yourself is: "Will I be staying on property?" If the answer is "yes," then you can use the Passholder discount on the resorts on property. These discounts vary as the year goes on, and Disney needs to fill different rooms. They will send out a variation on the PIN email that offers room discounts exclusively to Annual Passholders. If the answer to this question is "no," don't fret! You can still use the complimentary parking offered to all Passholders. If you are staying on property, then you already get complimentary parking at all parks and your resort. Discounts are also offered to Passholders at the spas and salons on property.

The third question to ask is: "Will I be dining on property?" If the answer is "yes," then you can use the Passholder Dining Discount at numerous restaurants across all of the theme parks, Downtown Disney, and at

many restaurants within the resorts. This discount ranges from 10% to 20% depending upon the restaurant. Also, Passholders get a \$25 discount on the Tables in Wonderland membership, and a 20% discount will apply with this membership towards selected restaurants. Some of these restaurants overlap with those that give Passholder discounts. However, you cannot combine the two discounts on one check, you have to use one or the other. A complete list of Tables in Wonderland restaurants is available at [www.tablesinwonderland.com](http://www.tablesinwonderland.com). A complete list of restaurants that offer Passholder discounts will be given when an Annual Pass is activated at Guest Services.

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□The fourth question is: "How many souvenirs will I be buying?" If you're planning on buying anything, especially any big-ticket items, you will receive a 10-15% discount at various stores throughout Disney World, including those in the parks, and those at Downtown Disney.

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□Question number five: "Will I be going to any hard-ticketed events?" A certain times in the year, Disney will offer special events and parties (most notable are Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party, and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party at the Magic Kingdom). Annual Passholders will receive discounts on these tickets for certain days of these parties (ie., the November 2014 dates for Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party were \$66 for those 10+, and \$61 for children 3-9. These dates vary every year, as do the discounts. Emails are sent out with the specific discounts every year, akin to those PIN emails mentioned earlier.

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□The next question is: "Will I be going back to Disney World in the next 12 months?" Or maybe the better question is, "Will the Annual Pass give me an excuse to go back in the next 12 months?" When considering this, also consider that you will again be able to use all of the afore-mentioned discounts again!

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□Okay, we're nearing the end of this, I promise. Now is the question of payment. "How will I pay for this?" If you are a Florida Resident, then you are in luck! Disney offers a payment plan of \$34.22/month for the Annual Pass (plus a down payment of \$106.00), and \$44.87/month (plus a down payment of \$106.00). If you're not a Florida Resident, it can be a little bit more daunting to pay for. But, there is still hope! As a non-Florida Resident, you will always have to pay the full amount up front, but it can get a little easier with the Disney Vacation Account. It is simply a savings account that does not accrue interest, and money can be pulled out at any time with no repercussions. However, for every \$1,000.00 that you spend from this count, you will receive a \$20 Disney Gift Card, which can apply to most anything upon which you want to spend money.

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□So, all things considered, which Annual Pass (if any) is right for you?

*About The Author: Amanda is an archaeologist. She lives in Florida - as close to Mickey as she can get!*

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