

How to Have a Sense-Ational Day at Disneyland: A Disneyland Park Review

by Dee Leone, PassPorter Guest Contributor

The world is full of magic things patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper. ― W.B. Yeats

At Disneyland -- the most magical realm of all -- tantalizing tastes, sweet scents, a symphony of sounds, a kaleidoscope of colors, and numerous hands-on opportunities await. So emerge yourself from your surroundings and allow your senses to be awakened to everything the theme park has to offer.

First, put on your mouse ears. They may not amplify your hearing much, but they're sure to amp up the fun. They come in a variety of colors and styles certain to please any pirate, princess, or animal-lover in the group. Mickey ears can be purchased at stores throughout the park, including the Emporium on Main Street, the Gag Factory in Toontown, and Pooh Corner in Critter Country.

Whether or not you choose to don an extra set of ears, you'll soon be tuned into the hand-clapping, finger-snapping, toe-tapping songs reverberating throughout the park. At the Alice in Wonderland ride, hop aboard a giant caterpillar and make your way down a rabbit hole where you'll be serenaded with the words of "The Unbirthday Song." You'll find it appropriate 364 days a year. However, if it is your actual birthday, be sure to get a large button to wear in honor of the special occasion. Free badges for just about anything you're celebrating can be acquired at City Hall or from store cashiers.

With Fantasyland songs like "Hi-Diddle-Dee-Dee" and "It's a Small World" ringing happily in your ears, head to the Royal Theatre to listen to the tale of Frozen. You'll enjoy the humorous re-telling. Then gather early along the parade route to catch a glimpse of Queen Elsa, Princess Anna, and Olaf on their own frozen fractal float. It glisters and glides past cheering crowds about ten minutes before Mickey's Soundsational Parade, so don't "let it go" by without you.

The main event begins with the great mouse himself beating the drums within a giant set of ears, giving new meaning to the term, eardrums. A symphony of sound follows as fabulous floats rock on by with songs from Aladdin, The Lion King, and several other Disney films. A medley of princess-themed melodies will be music to your ears.

□ As soundwaves from The Little Mermaid's "Under the Sea" linger on after the parade, it's time to concentrate on your sense of sight. Particularly "see" worthy, and seaworthy, are the Sailing Ship Columbia and Mark Twain Riverboat. As you journey on one of them around Tom Sawyer Island, try to spy a moose, a skunk, and an osprey. Then keep your eyes peeled for exotic plants and dangerous animals as you embark on a perilous journey aboard the Jungle Cruise. Many explorers miss tiny details like piranha leaping out of the water, so make a special effort to be on the lookout for them.

□ Now hop aboard a Pirates of the Caribbean barge. There's more here than meets the "eyes," fellow scallywags. The fire in the looted marketplace, for example, isn't real. It's produced with cleverly placed cloths, fans, and lights. Next, visit Tomorrowland for a submarine expedition where finding Nemo has never been so much fun. Can anyone in your party see anemones on their underwater voyage?

□ It's time to sharpen your ice sight on a bobsled trip through the snowy Matterhorn Mountain as you try to spot the Abominable Snowman. Then visit The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh. During this virtual 3D storybook ride, Heffalumps and Woozles appear in dazzling hues, and honey scenes are a feast for the eyes.

□ At the tent on Big Thunder Trail, be sure to secure a FASTPASS early in the day to attend Fantasmic later. The nighttime spectacle is a pyrotechnic extravaganza awash in visuals projected onto a water screen. Lasers, special effects, and brightly lit water floats are combined to create a spectacular show saturated with every color of the rainbow. Watch as good battles evil, then stick around to view the fabulous fireworks. The accompanying music is sure to touch your heart.

□ Speaking of touch ... Disneyland is full of hands-on excitement. On the Dumbo ride or Astro Orbiter, push or pull a lever to go up and down. On the Mad Tea Party attraction, spin a wheel to make your teacup go round and round. Then, perhaps a little dizzily, head to the Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters where you can travel "to infinity and beyond." Laser gun in hand, aim at enemy targets and have a blast trying to outscore the rest of your party.

□ Zip or "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" your way to Splash Mountain and feel the water spray against your skin as you drop down a five-story chute. The "wonderful feeling" is sure to be a big splash with most log riders. Next, feel the wind against your face as you whip past rock formations and a waterfall on Big Thunder Mountain Railroad.

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□ For a gentler experience, mosey on over to Big Thunder Ranch, where you can reach out and touch goats, sheep, and a few other farm animals. This petting zoo is always a hit with the younger crowd. In addition, check your map and your schedule to discover when and where the Disney cast members are appearing. It's always fun to hug your favorite characters.

□ As you scurry about trying to squeeze in as many experiences as possible, remember to take some time to smell the flowers. The park is full of lush landscaping, just the antidote for lowering your pulse after a wild ride on Star Tours. When the spicy aroma of Cajun food, the enticing scent of barbecued ribs, or the sweet smell of baked goods goes wafting through the air, follow your nose to a nearby restaurant, cafe, or food stand.

□ You've been satisfying your taste for adventure, but you'll need to satisfy your taste buds as well. Many visitors like to squeeze in as many activities as possible and prefer quick meals. That doesn't mean sacrificing flavor. Market House offers tasty inexpensive breakfast sandwiches and pastries, mostly under \$5. During lunchtime, Jolly Holiday Bakery Cafe has several sandwiches and salads from which to choose for about \$10 each. For dinner or a hearty midday meal Plaza Inn has home-style offerings. The fried chicken tastes even more scrumptious with honey drizzled over it. No wonder Pooh loves that golden syrup! For a late-night snack, try a funnel cake from the Stage Door Cafe. Choose your favorite topping. It's all a matter of taste.

□ Disneyland is a treat for your five senses, but in this Extra Special Park, don't be surprised if you develop a sixth sense as well. Your extrasensory perception (ESP) is sure to come alive at the Haunted Mansion. There, you'll experience plenty of chills as your Doom Buggy takes you on a tour of the creepy abode. Watch a seance in session and view a roomful of ghosts having a ball. You'll feel an uncanny connection to the phantoms that materialize out of nowhere and try to hitch a ride with you.

□ So get in the spirit, keep yourself open to adventure, and embrace the magic. If you do, you're sure to have a sense-sational day at Disneyland.

*About The Author: Dee Leone is married and has two daughters. She is a fan of all things Disney and collects their snow globes, lithographs, bags, and more. She has written twenty reproducible books and is the author of *Bizz & Buzz Make Honey Buns* (Grosset & Dunlap/Penguin, 2014).*

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