

Is Your Smart Phone Ready for Disney?: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Katie Cavendish, PassPorter Guest Contributor

□ Many people will tell you that there are several types of Disney goers.

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□ There is the semi-planned but still spontaneous kind of guys. The completely oblivious who have no idea that there are planning books out there. And then me...the super planner. I will be the first to admit that I have a Disney planning addiction. All of my Amazon recommended products are either travel, Disney planning, or Disney themed, but I highly doubt I'm alone in this. Even with all of the planning that I did on my last trip I still found something that I had overlooked. Something that with the integration of My Disney Experience has become pretty important. I forgot to factor in my phone and if it was as ready for Walt Disney World as I was. So here are some tips to help you not make the same mistake.

□ Let's first concentrate on the outside of your phone. Plain and simple, please get a case! If nothing else your phone is your way of communicating with the other people in your party. Disney is a big place. If you get separated it can be scary and upsetting, even when it's only adults involved. A shattered smart phone is no one's ideal souvenir. I highly recommend at least the drop resistant models when it comes to cases for your phone, I have the drop and water proof one mainly because I'm clumsy, and even though they might be a little more pricey, I feel like they are worth it in the long run. If you don't want your phone to get wet on a water ride and you don't want to pay for a waterproof case, add a ziplock bag to your park bag and put it inside the bag and seal it before riding. Your phone works just fine through the ziploc bag and, as long as there are no holes, there's no water.

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□ Now that we've talked about the outside of your phone, it's time for the inside. If you are like me and plan on using your phone as your camera, make sure you have enough space in your phone's storage. Take some time and transfer all of your old pictures to your computer or upload them to a separate storage location. Also take a look at the apps that you have installed on your phone. If push comes to shove and storage is limited you might want to think about temporarily deleting some of the excess to make room for the apps you will have to

download for your vacation as well as the tons of wonderful candid shots you'll be able to get.

□ There are a huge amount of travel apps out there, and I could probably write another article just for that so I'll try to keep it minimum here. If you've ever been to the Disney website you've seen the new My Disney Experience. The website, and all of the planning tools there, have a corresponding Walt Disney World app that is a must for any smart phone user. It allows you to see when your dining reservations are, make new ones, see character meet and greet times and locations, find restrooms closest to your location as well as allows you to adjust your FP+ selections all on the go. It also has the ability to show the posted wait times at the attractions but I found that feature to be a bit unreliable. I rely on the Touring Plans Lines app for that. On that app users have the ability to submit and time their waits to help keep the posted and expected wait times current and I found it more accurate than the official app and since I use their site to make my touring plans I can see those and update them as we go along.

□ Another must download app would be a weather App of some sort. It is Florida folks...chances are you are going to run into some serious precipitation at some point. Don't let it rain on your Disney spirit though. The rain is usually quick to depart and even if it isn't sometimes a rainy day at a park isn't such a bad alternative. I use the free version of Accuweather to check out the forecast and to keep up to date how long rain is going to be in the area. Finally I would invest in a good game app. There are tons of options out there and if you have little ones make sure you have one on there that will help keep them entertained. I saw lots of folks playing the game Heads Up, in line to help pass the time. Which is basically like 20 questions meets charades. It's a good way to keep the kids and even the adults in the group entertained.

□ Now with all of this happening on your phone chances are at some point you will be suffering from power drainage. There are several ways to help alleviate these problems. First are power packs or extra batteries. There are a variety of kinds that range in price from \$8 to \$30. I personally bought mine for \$10 a piece at Walmart (I bought 3) and wasn't disappointed. What I often did when my phone was dying, was plug my phone into one of my power packs, put it on silent, lock the screen and put it in my park bag. Then I would head to an attraction that had some duration to it like the Hall of Presidents or another show of some sort. When I was out presto change-o...charged phone. Off I went again. However if you don't have these power

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packs have no fear Disney has answered your call.

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□ Make sure you pack your wall charger in your park bag because Disney has added several new phone charging stations to help with the power problems. Though there are only two "official" charging stations in the Magic Kingdom, one near Pete's Silly Side Show and another near It's a Small World, I found that they have set up more throughout the parks you just have to ask the cast member where the nearest place to charge your phone is. I found a super nice place in the back of the gift shop attached to Space Mountain. The whole back wall was lined with outlets and there were even stools to sit on while you charged. It's a nice place to wait if you're doing the child swap thing as well. Also there is an outlet next to the massage chairs there if you want to spend a little me time in those as well. In Epcot they are adding a new lounge area in the old Innovations West building that will include an official charging station but until then I found a super secret spot across from the Kid Cot stop in the UK. There are two large wing-back chairs on the landing there and next to those are two inconspicuous cabinets...with outlets built into them. Plus if you time it right you can actually catch some pretty great rock and roll songs in the garden right outside of the door from the band that plays in the UK. I'm sure there are more but those were the ones that I had found, just don't be afraid to ask a cast member.

About The Author:

□ *Katie is a long time Disney planning fanatic and Disneybouncer. She is a second time guest contributor and is impatiently awaiting her next trip in September 2016.*

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