

Disneyland Easy Day Trips: A Disneyland Planning Article

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the second of this series of articles, looking at day trips you can enjoy away from the various Disney parks around the world, we head over to Disneyland in California.

□ Located in the urban sprawl that makes up the massive city of Los Angeles, on our first visit to Disneyland, we took the opportunity to explore more of the surrounding area. Think of Los Angeles, and so many famous sights spring to mind -- Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and of course the city's various beaches. We took a guided tour, which we met up with in front of the TCL Chinese Theatre. We opted for a Saturday, as we figured the traffic wouldn't be as bad, and it was fine. I was glad we got there early, as the place certainly gets packed out. Our tour then took us to the Hollywood Bowl, through Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and La Brea Tar Pits, before stopping for lunch at the Farmers' Market, and then visiting downtown LA. Sadly, the exact tour doesn't seem to be offered any longer, but if this sort of tour does interest you, we used [Viator](#) for ours, and they still have full day tours of the city available, albeit with slightly different itineraries.

Somewhere that is now included on some of those itineraries is Griffith Park, home to the famous Hollywood sign. We've made it to Griffith Park on one occasion, although our planning wasn't the greatest. We decided to spend our final couple of hours in the morning at Disneyland, and because we were visiting during Christmas and New Year, by the time we got to Griffith Park, there was no car parking to be found anywhere, which was a huge disappointment, as I was really looking forward to seeing the views, the sign, the carousel that first inspired Walt to build Disneyland, and I fancied exploring the Griffith Observatory. Sadly, it was not to be on that occasion, but it's a day trip I fully intend to still take one day…

□ One trip we were able to take on that vacation was to the California Science Center, and our main reason for visiting was to see Space Shuttle Endeavour. I'll admit that, now having visited Atlantis at the Kennedy Space Center, their presentation is so much better, but it's still a very impressive moment when you first emerge into the hangar where she's located. The size of the Shuttle really does have to be seen to be believed! Timed reservations are required at busy times of the year, and can be made through the center's website or via phone, and best of all, although there's a small service charge, that's it. You don't have to pay a full admission price, which we both thought was a complete bargain.

□ If you have children, the next suggestion may not work for you, but for adults, the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens is a fantastic visit. We went to specifically see the gardens, which cover 120 acres, and they were absolutely stunning. In particular, we loved the Chinese and the Japanese Gardens, both of which were very peaceful, and beautiful.

For those of you who don't mind venturing a bit further afield than Los Angeles, there are many options located in the surrounding areas of southern California. On our first trip to Disneyland, we spent a couple of nights in San Diego first, but it's within easy reach of the park at around an hour and a half's drive. The world famous San Diego Zoo wowed us, and it's the first zoo we'd come across with moving walkways to take you from one level to another. Honestly, you could spend the entire day here! However, there is so much more to see (perhaps in fairness San Diego deserves more than a day trip), and if you want to get a taste of the city, a harbor tour is a good way of doing that, with some superb views of the city. Other places we enjoyed visiting included the Seaport Village, the Midway Aircraft Museum, and the Hotel del Coronado, the model for the Grand Floridian Resort at Walt Disney World.

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□ An hour and a half in another direction is Palm Springs, which literally felt like an oasis in the desert as we approached it. The main draw for me was the city's Aerial Tramway, although here again, we needed to do more planning. It's quite a tough place to find, located some distance from the city along a private road, and we were hoping to get up for sunset, but a lot of people obviously had the same idea as us, as there was an hour's wait for the next tram, by which time it would be dark outside. One day, we'll get back there to finally enjoy the Tramway. We did see the Forever Marilyn statue, and standing nearly three stories high, you can't exactly miss it. It's a bit of a surreal thing to see in the middle of the place, but surreal was a good way to describe Palm Springs. Let's just say it had a unique feeling to it…

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□ We were making our way over to the Joshua Tree National Park, but even that's only a couple of hours' drive, if you go there directly from Disneyland. It's home to some stunning scenery, and like many of America's National Parks, it reminds you just what huge expanses of nature have been preserved for visitors to enjoy. You really feel as if you're a million miles away from daily life, and sometimes the silence is almost overwhelming, as we're not used to such quiet these days. It's a photographer's paradise, so I was in my element here, with the views spreading out some distance in front of you, allowing you to get a complete feel for just how big and beautiful this park is.

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□As you can see, Disneyland certainly has a lot of options for day trips, and they're perhaps the most diverse that you'll find at any Disney park. In the next part of this series of articles, we'll hop across the pond to explore day trips from Disneyland Paris.

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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