

Five Hidden Treasures at Disneyland: Cool Stuff at Disneyland You May Not Know About

by Ginger Jabour, PassPorter Guidebook Co-Author

So, you're a veteran of multiple trips to the Disneyland parks and you've seen it all a dozen times, or you're fairly new to the California parks and want to look beyond the obvious attractions. What can you do?

☐ One idea is to look for the hidden gems that may not even be listed on your park map. Here are several that I found on my most recent trip, and an old favorite:

1. See the five-ton petrified redwood tree. Located in Frontierland beside the Rivers of America, not far from the Golden Horseshoe, this piece bears a brass plaque proclaiming it as a gift from Mrs. Walt Disney in 1957. Walt himself bought the tree and had it delivered to Disneyland, but he joked that he gave it to his wife as an anniversary present, but she was not amused and sent it to the park. Over time, the story came to be regarded as fact but is, instead, a myth.

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You can read all about this at the Disney History Institute's [website](#). Disney History Institute is not affiliated with The Walt Disney Company, but has rafts of interesting articles about all things Disney.

☐ 2. Listen to Harry Houdini. The Main Street Magic Shop is a tiny hole-in-the-wall store that you can easily miss if you're not looking for it. Located on the right as you enter the park, it's a couple of doors before you hit Main Street Cinema. Inside this tiny, jam-packed emporium you'll find gag gifts, practical jokes, and "magic"-related paraphernalia, such as a tube of ointment claimed to make smoke rise when you rub it between your fingers.

☐ On the wall to the left is a reproduction of an old-style wooden telephone box, with the tube-shaped listening piece and hand crank. A plaque above it advises that it came from David Copperfield. Lift the listening piece to your ear and you'll hear Harry Houdini himself, introducing one of his acts! Hint: look around the displays for a Hidden Mickey!

3. Check out the Disneyland Fire Department. Move directly to the left after passing under the Main Street train station and you'll see the Main Street Fire Station. Wander in and check out the vintage horse-drawn fire truck and other old firefighting equipment. It's worth a brief stop just to see this, especially if you have firefighter-loving children in your group.

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□ On your way out, look at the window directly over the fire station's door -- this is where Walt Disney's private apartment is located. After he died, the story has it that a lamp was kept lit in the window in his memory -- keep an eye out for it! During my December visit, I saw a Christmas tree but no lamp in that window.

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□ 4. Look at the walk-through Sleeping Beauty Castle. Cinderella's Castle in Walt Disney World has nothing like this, so many visitors walk right past this without realizing it. After entering the park and going through the passage beneath the castle proper, look for the sign on your left. Enter there, and you'll climb up and through the castle's interior, as you read Sleeping Beauty's story and see dioramas with scenes from the original movie. Tip: Because of the climbing, this walk-through is not accessible to guests in wheelchairs. However, you can contact a cast member and ask to see the video version on the ground floor.

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□ 5. Don't miss the Main Street Enchanted Windows on Main Street, USA. Reintroduced and updated with new technology for the Diamond Celebration, these amazing windows are little dioramas from six movies: Frozen, Toy Story, Cinderella, Peter Pan, The Princess and the Frog, and Aladdin. The dioramas are gorgeous, but they're only half the story: stick around a little while, and you'll see it transform. I won't give them all away, but in the Toy Story window, Andy's hand reaches into the room! The windows are on the left-hand side as you enter the park.

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□ A couple of my favorite hidden gems at Disney's California Adventure are, alas, no longer there.

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□ For a short period of time, beginning in June 2012, you could watch Maestro Goofy conducting classical music with the fountains in Paradise Bay. Dressed in black tie and tails, Goofy waved his baton and directed his invisible symphony orchestra in the afternoons, on a special dais in the preferred viewing area for World of Color. This attraction began with little promotion and, apparently, sank without a trace a couple of years later. I was lucky enough to see it (and take lots of pictures) one afternoon in September 2012, but never managed to catch it again.

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□ Another favorite was the Toy Story Zoetrope in the Art of Animation Building. It's been removed to make way for Anna and Elsa's Royal Welcome. This three-D spinning animated display is truly amazing, as well as difficult to describe.

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□ Basically, it consists of a huge disc-shaped platform, on which are three-D models of many characters from Toy Story, in different

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positions -- like the pages of a flip-book animation. The platform begins to spin; when it reaches cruising speed, a strobe light flashes 18 times per second in perfect synchronization, and the characters come to life. The toy soldiers parachute from the top, while Woody rides Bullseye and Jessie twirls her lariat. Buzz Lightyear, Mr. Squeaky and the aliens are also on board. You can find videos of this on YouTube, but keep an eye out for the real deal if (when!) it returns.

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□ Enjoy your next visit to Disneyland, and keep your eyes open for off-the-beaten track gems.

About The Author: Ginger Jabour is a PassPorter guide and co-author of the upcoming revised Disneyland PassPorter. She's also a retired Air Force colonel, a tutor, and assistant Scoutmaster. She has two sons: Matt, a recent graduate of Purdue University, and Mark, who is a high school senior.

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