

## Premium Events at the Magic Kingdom: A Walt Disney World Event Review

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

What I've always loved about Disney is the fact that, while it's pricey, people can save up to enjoy time in a truly magical place.

Some of us are fortunate to be able to go back every year, while others make multiple trips in a year. For some, it's only possible once every few years, and there are people who only get a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enjoy some Disney magic. You can choose to stay in value, moderate, or deluxe resorts, or even off-property, perhaps in a hotel or villa, or if you're like us, and dedicated to Disney trips, you can become a member of the Disney Vacation Club.

However, in recent weeks, some of the latest announcements from Disney have left something of a sour taste in my mouth and have left me questioning whether it really is a park for everyone to enjoy. The first thing I'm thinking of are the premium packages that have been announced for the Magic Kingdom.

□ For many years, Disney resort guests have been able to enjoy additional hours at each of the theme parks, either before or after they open to the general public at no additional cost. Although, so far, there's no indication that perk will be removed, now Disney are charging for both early and late access, but these packages don't appear to offer much, even though they cost a considerable amount of money.

□ Early Morning Magic gives guests access to Fantasyland at 7:45am, allowing them to enjoy just three attractions -- the Seven Dwarves Mine Train, Peter Pan's Flight, and the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh. Breakfast at the Pinocchio Village Haus is also included for a cost of \$69/adults, and \$59/children aged 3-9, plus tax. At present it's offered on selected dates in April, May and June.

Now much as I love that loveable old bear and his donkey friend Eeyore, I really can't see the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh getting that many visitors in the hour and a quarter before the park opens to everyone else, given the wait times during the day are nowhere near as bad as those for the other two attractions. I can see everyone making a beeline for the Seven Dwarves Mine Train, given that's currently the new big thing that people want to ride, although no doubt Peter Pan's Flight, which is consistently mobbed by crowds during the day, will get some traffic too. There's been a lot of speculation about just how many rides people could cram in during just an hour and a quarter, and the

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conclusion most people have come to is that it won't be many, and certainly not enough to justify the hefty price tag.

□ How about the breakfast? The Walt Disney World website just describes it "featuring such scrumptious breakfast fare as", and then goes on to list a range of items, including cheese, cured meats, freshly baked pastries, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausages, waffles, vegetable frittata, and fried potatoes. It doesn't specify, but it looks as if it could be a buffet, which would at least provide some reason for the pricing.

□ It's also worth noting you have to have regular park admission to enjoy the Early Morning Magic package, so it's not even something you can purchase as a one-off.

□ Alongside this, is Disney After Hours, which gives guests three hours in the Magic Kingdom after park closing. This is a much more expensive affair, priced at \$149/person plus tax, with no discount for children, but at least there are more attractions open -- over 25, according to the Walt Disney World website. They don't specify which ones, but as you'd expect, the e-ticket rides are included, such as the Seven Dwarves Mine Train, Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, and Space Mountain.

□ The website makes some bold claims, saying "fewer guests mean less time in line", so I'm guessing that, unlike the Halloween and Christmas parties, Disney will be admitted much lower numbers. Presumably that's why the price tag is so high, because you really will have the park to yourself? Another bonus is that you can check in as early as 7:00pm, and given Disney After Hours starts every evening at 11:00pm (with one exception), although of course for the first four hours, you will be competing with everyone else for park space. The package can also be purchased without regular park admission, and Disney have tried to sweeten the deal (excuse the pun!) by including ice cream novelties and select bottled beverages with the price of the tickets.

□ Even though it feels to me as if Disney have tried to add more into this package, frankly I'm thinking they need to for the \$149 price tag! That is a lot of money, especially for families, on top of regular park admission prices, which were only hiked earlier in the year.

□ Neither of these packages are something we'll be forking out for on future trips, should they continue, and if I'm being honest, I'm surprised Disney have come up with this idea, as I just can't see it being popular. I did wonder if it was just me, so I was fascinated to see the results of a poll about the Disney After Hours package on [WDW Magic](#). At the time of writing this article, 92% had given a resounding thumbs down to the idea of paying for the package, with only 8% saying they would. Those

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results didn't surprise me at all.

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□ I just hope this isn't the start of a slippery slope, with Disney coming up with more and more ideas of how to make money from their visitors, as that's not something I want to associate with my happy place.

*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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