

# Planning a Trip to Disney Theme Parks in Asia: A Disney Parks Planning Article

by Carolyn Brooke-Millward, PassPorter Guest Contributor

So, there we were at Walt Disney World in November 2014, watching the Festival of Fantasy parade pass by. We were with some online friends of ours from Texas whom we had just met up with in person with for the first time.

□The parade was wonderful and we hugged our friends goodbye, as they were leaving for home in the morning - then they threw one final comment over their shoulders to us as they left. "We should all go to Tokyo Disneyland in 2016!" they said, all offhand and casual. We laughed, waved to them, and then turned to each other with a thoughtful look &hellip;

Fast forward to January 2016, when several conversations with our friends via social media meant that we were now pricing up air-fares, hotels, and beginning to plan itineraries!

□Having decided that our trip would take place towards the end of this year, my husband and I had decided that as we were flying all that way, we may as well extend the trip and visit Hong Kong Disneyland too, followed by a few days in Singapore to catch up with more friends, and also visit the new Universal Studios park on Sentosa Island. Our USA friends were going to stay in Japan for 2 weeks, but we would only be there for 8 days, so we had to plan this carefully.

□The first thing to do once we had the dates set was to book the flights. I looked online at some options, and the best I could come up with was flying from London to Tokyo, then Tokyo to Hong Kong, and then on to Singapore, before returning to a different airport in London. This wasn't ideal as we live some 250 miles from London, the airports there are miles away from each other and would be a nuisance to get between (as we would have to probably leave our car at the one we departed from), and would mean either an overnight stay at the airport before we flew out, or at the very least an extremely early start from home. There was also the cost -- it was coming in at over &pound;3,000 (\$4,200) EACH for four flights!

Luckily, we happened to pop into a flight specialist travel agents in our nearby city centre &#39;just to see what they had&#39; one weekend, and they were able to book all 4 flights for us, flying from the airport nearest to us and not London at all, at times that were really convenient,

for a total cost of just over £pound;2,000 (\$2850) IN TOTAL, just over a third of the cost I had managed to find it for! Amazing, so we booked it there and then.

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□We went home and excitedly messaged our friends to tell them the trip was on! Next up was working out the itinerary before finding hotels. We worked out that we would have 8 days in Tokyo, (we lose a day in travelling), 6 days in Hong Kong, and 6 days in Singapore. DH was keen to visit Hiroshima while in Japan, there is a memorial garden there which can be reached by bullet train from Tokyo, and that was something else we wanted to do -- ride the famous bullet train. Our friends messaged us some details that they had found, and we booked this -- it is an overnight package travelling from Tokyo to Hiroshima, with an overnight stay, and a visit to the memorial garden. Plus there is a boat ride that can be taken across to the Torii Gate that has it's model twin in Epcot, so we want to see that too. We also obviously needed to plan for 4 days in Tokyo Disneyland, (2 days per park), and then 2 days in Hong Kong Disneyland the next week.

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□I began to look up hotels, although this wasn't easy -- I had no idea where to start, so I began with the official Disney hotels, which looked lovely but were SHOCKINGLY expensive, compared to USA prices. I found a Disney Good Neighbour hotel called the Sheraton Grande Tokyo Bay, which had a free loyalty system (called Starwood) that I could sign up to which would give us things like free Wi-Fi, early online check-in, etc., so I signed up for that and then booked this hotel for our first 5 days. We can't get our tickets to Tokyo Disneyland for quite some time yet, and as this is a good neighbour hotel we can actually buy our tickets from the hotel on arrival, which will guarantee us entry to the parks, so I think we may leave it till then to get them -- the Disney park ticket booking for this resort is somewhat complicated! Basically, tickets can only be bought 2 months in advance, and if you want a 4-day park ticket, which is going to be our choice, we have to decide which park we visit on our first and second days, (no park hopping at that point), and then we are free to visit either park or park hop for the next two days.

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□After that we move to the Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku (in the Starwood group) for 2 nights, which is very close to the central train station in Tokyo, and gives us a full day to explore the city centre. We then catch the bullet train at stupid o'clock in the morning to Hiroshima, stay overnight in another hotel, returning to the Sunroute for one last night before flying to Hong Kong.

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□Looking for somewhere to stay in Hong Kong was my next step. The Disney Hollywood Hotel didn't look too expensive, so I booked that

for 4 nights including park tickets. We can get there from the airport either by a version of the Magical Express, or by catching a train which will take us straight to a station at Disney.

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□ We then move to another Starwood group hotel, the Sheraton Hong Kong, for 3 nights, which gives us time to explore some of Hong Kong and is based closer to Kowloon.

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□ Next up was finding us somewhere to stay in Singapore. I looked at a couple of hotels we have stayed in on previous visits there, but eventually settled on the Sheraton Towers, which is pretty centrally based for the areas we want to visit -- Universal Studios on Sentosa, Singapore Zoo and Night Safari, the new River Cruise at the Zoo (which has pandas!), and oh yes - catching up with friends!

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□ I have also been checking historical weather reports for the 3 countries for the month of November, and it looks like it will be mild and dry for Tokyo and Hong Kong, with temperatures in the mid to high 60s, and then much hotter in Singapore, being nearer to 80 degrees. This means my packing list will have to include lots of layers, I think, although hopefully we shouldn't need anything too heavy or warm.

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□ Planning for this adventure has been a real challenge, and is not over yet -- I have still to finalise our day trips in Singapore, and also our travel to and from each airport to each hotel. Six hotels in 3 weeks is some going!

*About The Author: Carolyn is a life-long Disney fan from the UK, and lives for trips to Disney!*

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