

Discovering the Magic: Top 10 Tips

by Jennifer Marx, Author of [PassPorter Travel Guidebooks](#)

Magic. That elusive, special-something we've all heard is in abundance at Walt Disney World. Fellow vacationers rave about it, advertisements tout it, and you seek it. Magic isn't something to be taken lightly or disregarded. A little magic can make the whole world sparkle, brighten your outlook, and change your life completely. I have first-hand experience with the powerful effects of magic at Walt Disney World -- it encouraged me to follow my dreams of travel writing, transforming my life into one with its own brand of magic.

Defining magic is difficult. Everyone encounters it in a slightly different manner, finding it in their own unique way. Magic for me may be a twilight stroll around the World Showcase Lagoon, deep in conversation with my best friend. Or it could be a hearty belly laugh at Monsters Inc. Laugh Floor. Readers of PassPorter have found magic in last-minute trips, cross-country drives, fireworks, souvenirs, family time, childhood memories, family photos, polka dances, proposals, and costumes. (We document some of our readers' magical memories in PassPorter -- check the last page of each chapter for their stories.)

Magic lurks everywhere. You just have to know how to find it ... and recognize it. To help you design and experience a magic-filled vacation, we present our top ten magical tips:

- 1. Plan ahead** I know you've heard this one before, but it works. Planning ahead works out the majority of the kinks, leaving opportunities for magic to happen. Let's face it -- no one is going to feel magical when they're standing in the middle of Main Street at 2:00 pm on a blistering hot day, figuring out where to get a good meal in a cool place. And it's hard to appreciate magic when you're worried about money or time. Plan the basics, take care of the essentials, and leave room for the magic.
- 2. Don't overplan** If you plan every moment of your day, you'll limit your opportunities for magic. Some of the best magic is spontaneous and unexpected -- all the richer because you weren't anticipating it. It's for this reason that we don't generally use touring plans in the parks -- we find they are too restrictive and don't allow us the opportunity to explore and follow the magic.
- 3. Seek out magical places** This is a tricky one. You could plan a visit to the World Showcase at dusk based on my magical experiences there. After all, if I found magic there, perhaps you would too. You may very

well find it, but there's no guarantee, either. Nonetheless, there are some places within the World that seem a bit more conducive to magic-making. The best ways to find out about these are to talk to other vacationers, read their trip reports, and keep your eyes open. Some places have a special glow about them, as if they've been enchanted by Tinkerbell's wand. Here are a few of my favorites: - Beside the fountain inside the Mexico pavilion at World Showcase in Epcot - On a bench near the hedge maze in the back of the United Kingdom pavilion at World Showcase in Epcot - Adventureland on a sultry day in the Magic Kingdom - At a table beside Discovery River in Asia at Disney's Animal Kingdom - In a hammock on the beach at the Polynesian Resort - Strolling Port Orleans French Quarter Resort at night, when the "gas" lamps are lit. - Swimming in an empty, heated pool late at night. - Snuggled in front of a small fireplace overlooking the lobby of the Wilderness Lodge Resort. - Virtually any place after dark, but particularly the World Showcase in Epcot and Disney's Animal Kingdom (on those few nights when it's open).

4. Be friendly Smile, chat, and be kind to others -- family, friends, vacationers and cast members alike. Reach out to others -- everyone has magic to offer. Many vacationers report making new friends at the park, and we ourselves have had the good fortune to make friends with many, many people over the years. And our experiences with these people are some of our fondest memories.

5. Think outside the park Many of my magical memories took place outside of a theme park -- while I was traveling to and from Florida, staying at a resort, dining at a restaurant, or just moving about the World on a bus or boat. I have a particular fondness for Epcot buses, in fact. So plan some time out of the parks and explore the rest of the World.

6. Time together, time alone Magic is often found in new company. If you're used to being alone or with a small family, invite a group or plan a family reunion at Walt Disney World. My first group trip of 35 produced many, many magical memories that I cherish today. On the other hand, if you're always with other people, take some time to be alone -- with someone you love or on your own.

7. Remove fear Fear protects us from dangerous situations... and also from magical situations. Forever guarding yourself and your feelings erects a wall around you that magic can't penetrate. Release your fears ... volunteer to go on stage, say hi to someone you don't know, dance with Mickey Mouse. As a generally fearful person, I've found that those times I'm able to overcome my fears produce the most amazing, magical results.

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8. Avoid too much anticipation If you go to Walt Disney World anticipating a magical event every hour or so, you'll be sadly disappointed. Real magic happens much less often, and is all the more special because of it. In particular, I urge you not to expect cast members to go out of their way to do something special for you. This is a rare happening, and hoping for it almost always leads to disappointment, as we've seen over and over again in letters from our readers. We ourselves never expect special treatment from cast members, so when it happens we're always delighted and a little awestruck.

9. Let it happen, and make it happen Some magic happens spontaneously... you just need to be in the right place at the right time and in the right frame of mind. Encourage this sort of magic by leaving yourself open to new experiences. More often, magic happens because of something YOU do... a gift you give to someone, a person you take the time to meet, an event you arrange. This is the best kind of magic, because it wouldn't have happened without your efforts and talents. All of the magical memories we share in PassPorter are of this type of magic -- we applaud everyone who creates their own magic!

10. Remember the magic. This tip has two parts. The first is to document and record the magic you discover on your trip. Why? Because research has shown that if you write it down or take a picture of it, you're significantly more likely to remember the event later. Remembering is paramount -- if you don't recall what happened, the magic will be short-lived and may as well not even have happened. A good part of magic is remembering it fondly in the years to come.

The second aspect of remembering the magic is to recall those special magical moments from past visits and re-visit them on future trips. You may not encounter the same level or brand of magic, but the association with a special place from your past has a magic all its own. I still get a little misty-eyed when I wait for a bus at the Settlement Depot bus stop in the Fort Wilderness Resort, where I shared a special, very magical moment with two people whom I love.

As you can see, magic -- that special something that warms our hearts and makes us smile for years to come -- is something you can encourage. And in the end, you may learn how to bring that magic home to live in your everyday life... as we have.

Dave adds: Magic is a very elusive thing. The harder you seek it, the harder it is to find. It's like leaving cookies and milk for Santa Claus. No matter how long you hide in wait, he never arrives until you're fast asleep.

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I love maneuvering a group of friends or family into an enchanted place at an enchanted time. I don't make any promises, I may not even drop any hints, and I definitely don't tell them everything that may happen. I just sit back, smile, tell them to enjoy the moment, and the magic unfolds. The less I promise, the more magic I see reflected in my loved ones eyes.

Things To Do: If you have a magical memory from a Walt Disney World trip that you'd like to share with us, send it to us at <http://www.passporter.com/customs/tipsandstories.asp>. We're always looking for new stories for our next edition of PassPorter!

About The Author: Jennifer is the co-founder and co-author of PassPorter travel guidebooks with well over 50 books under her belt.

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