

Starting Your Vacation in Style: A Vacation Planning Article

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

We all look forward to vacations, and they're great fun when we get there, but sometimes it's really fun to start those vacations in style.

Perhaps it's because we're so far from our happy place in Walt Disney World (or Disneyland for that matter!) that we like to start our vacation at the earliest possible opportunity. However, some of it is also to do with not wanting anything to go wrong with our vacation plans, and that's why we often book a hotel at the airport the night before we travel.

We're only 40 minutes' drive from the airport we usually fly from, but as our flights are usually in the morning, and rush hour can easily double that time, or worse if there's an accident, we never take the risk of getting stuck in traffic. We've heard horror stories from friends who thought they'd left enough time, only to find themselves racing to check-in, clear security, and then catch their flight.

□ If you are looking at an airport hotel, it all comes down to location. Some airports will have a hotel on-site, meaning you're just a short walk away from the terminal. Examples include our very own London Gatwick, Orlando, which is home to the Hyatt, and we also enjoyed our stay at the Fairmont at Vancouver after our Alaskan cruise. It makes for a much more relaxed start to the day, if your destination is just a short stroll away.

□ Sadly, many airports don't offer that option, and in those cases, it's worth checking out what the situation is with shuttle buses to get you to the airport. Some will offer them, while at others you may need to take a taxi. It's also worth checking whether the shuttle buses are complimentary, or if they make a charge. Many of the hotels around London Heathrow, for example, are served by a shuttle service that's operated by an external company and, as a result, there's a charge made for it.

Something else you might want to consider is parking if you're driving to the airport. If you're staying at an airport hotel, they may offer packages that include airport parking for a certain number of days. It's worth looking into these, as we've scored some real bargains in the past. I've never forgotten seeing the rack rate at the London Gatwick Hilton, and realizing I'd actually paid less than that price, and that included 15 days' worth of parking!

□

□ Another option which works well if you're just driving straight to the airport, or is worth looking at for off-site airport hotels is meet and greet or valet parking. After one vacation, where we had to go to a long term parking lot to drop the car off, then drag our cases on to a bus to the terminal, and repeat the whole process when we returned home, we'd had enough. There had to be an easier way, and there was.

□ Admittedly, you need to be careful with such companies, as there are some rogue ones out there, so always check for customer reviews before booking, but they can really help the start and end of your vacation to be as smooth as possible. There is nothing better than driving up, and being met at the terminal building, leaving your car in safe hands, and heading off. It really is a relaxing way to start things off.

□ Talking of relaxing, it's also worth exploring whether your airport has a lounge that's available to the paying public. Airlines often have lounges for their business or first class passengers, but these days, more airports are adding in lounges that you anyone can enjoy -- for the right price of course! As with many other things, it's worth doing your research, as some will include food and drink in the price, and you may even be able to indulge in an adult beverage without having to pay extra.

□ Aside from that, it's often worth it for the relative peace and quiet you'll find in a lounge. They tend to offer comfortable seating, power points for any electrical devices that may need topping up before your flight, and some may also have other amenities. This can include showers, special areas for children and/or teenagers, and maybe even a games area. In one lounge, we've come across a billiards table before. You do need to check when you enter however what the arrangements are with boarding calls, as it still remains your responsibility to get to your gate on time. Sometimes they ask you which flight you're on, and reception staff may come to you, but you can't rely on that. We usually try to grab a seat with an easy view of the departure boards, so that we're always kept updated.

□ There's no doubt that if you're starting your vacation at an airport, it can be stressful, with luggage check-in, security checks, and most importantly, making your flight. However, we've found over the years that a combination of airport hotels, valet parking and airport lounges can help to take the stress away, and ensure you start your vacation in a relaxed mood before you jet off to wherever is your 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!](#)

Article last updated: 06-16-2016

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/starting-vacation-in-style.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>