

The Pros and Cons of Disneyland Paris: A Disneyland Park Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

We're fortunate to be located near enough to Disneyland Paris that we can visit just for the day, albeit a very long one! We've made a number of trips there, and over the years, we've come to appreciate the park, although for us, it will never compare to Walt Disney World or even Disneyland in California. On our most recent trip, I couldn't help but wonder why that is. There are a lot of great things about Disneyland Paris, but sadly there are a lot of negatives as well.

□ So what are the pros first?

The Castle: Well, one that's obvious from not long after you enter the Disneyland Park is the castle. I guess over the years I've just grown used to the sight of it, but I know every time first time visitors see it, their mouths drop open, and that's exactly what happened to our eight year old niece on our most recent trip with family. Seeing her reaction reminded me of just how beautiful the castle here is. Oh and of course, there's even a dragon that sleeps beneath the castle, but sssh… because occasionally he wakes up! Now that's something you don't get to experience in California or Florida.

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□ Discoveryland: Staying in the Disneyland Park, Discoveryland is their version of Tomorrowland, and this is a retro version, depicting the future that Jules Verne predicted. As such, it has a wonderful ageless quality, and I just love all the vibrant colours in this part of the park. It makes for some great photos, particularly when you're lucky enough to get a sunny day.

□ Ratatouille: Both parks are home to some superb unique attractions, and I know you can argue that about every Disney park, but what puts Disneyland Paris ahead on this score is the fact it's recently acquired a major E-ticket attraction. Called Ratatouille: the Adventure, this is a 4D experience that takes the latest technology and uses it to superb effect to transport you into scenes from the movie.

The Shows: The Studios are also home to some unique shows. Cinemagique blends movie magic and live action together in a truly unusual way, while also managing to tell a story in both French and English, no easy challenge! Stitch Live gets over the language problem by offering shows in a variety of different languages, all you need to do is get in line for the right one, then you can interact with the mischievous blue alien, using similar technology to Turtle Talk with Crush, but for my money, this is a lot more fun.

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□ Location: While Disneyland in California has exactly the same plus point, Disneyland Paris is definitely way ahead of Walt Disney World when it comes to the locations of the parks. They're literally just a five minute walk away from each other, which makes park hopping very simple. It's even better if you can afford to stay at the Disneyland Hotel, which is right at the entrance to the Disneyland Park. It's always our choice if we have enough Disney Vacation Club points, as otherwise it is an extortionate price!

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□ So what are some of the downsides to Disneyland Paris?

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□ Weather: The first and most obvious one is the weather. If you're fortunate enough to visit on a dry and sunny day in the spring, summer or fall, you may wonder what I'm talking about, but trust me, it's not always like that. Unlike Florida or California, there are some very distinct seasons here, and if rain arrives, it can easily set in for whole days at a time. Snow is a possibility, and we've frozen during some of our winter visits. The wind is also exceptionally biting during the colder months, so you need to come prepared for just about anything; and whatever you do, don't expect it to be good weather, otherwise you may be disappointed.

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□ Food: This next one really surprised me, given the French are so well known for their amazing cuisine, but we've had a lot of disappointments over the years with the restaurants at Disneyland Paris. Don't get me wrong, there are some superb options (Walt's, An American Restaurant in the Disneyland Park, Bistrot Chez Remy in the Walt Disney Studios Park, and the Inventions buffet in the Disneyland Hotel immediately spring to mind), but it's not consistently good. On our most recent visit, we struggled to come up with a list of places we wanted to eat at, which told us a lot.

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□ Attitudes: Sadly, one problem we consistently run into is that Disneyland Paris seems to attract a clientele where a number of people have a less than magical attitude, shall we say? We were shocked at some of the behaviours we witnessed before and during parades and fireworks on our last visit. Something else we also constantly notice is the blatant disregard a number of people have about the smoking areas. They seem to smoke wherever they want, and unfortunately we've never once seen a guest picked up for this, which of course exacerbates the problem further.

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□ Prices: Something you may encounter even before you get to the parks is the cost of a Disneyland Paris vacation. While staying at a Disney resort is never cheap, the problem seems to be worse here. We are fortunate enough to be Disney Vacation Club members, and have used

our points on a number of occasions for stays at the Disney resorts. We've spoken to people in the past and when they've told us how much they paid to get to resort just from the UK, we realised it would actually be cheaper to go to Walt Disney World in Florida. That's saying something! The problem is particularly acute if you want the convenience of staying just outside the park gates at the Disneyland Hotel. Before you start pricing your vacation, you may want to make sure you're sitting down.

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□ There's certainly a lot to commend Disneyland Paris, but equally, to truly enjoy a vacation there, you do need to be aware of some of the potential downsides before you go, so you can adjust your expectations accordingly, and ensure you really do enjoy the Disney magic when you get there.

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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