

10 Tips for Bringing Baby to Walt Disney World: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Jennifer Lee, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Considering taking the little one(s) on a magical Disney World Vacation?

☐ Have you been told that "they won't remember it, wait until they are older" and/or "it's a waste of money"? Fear not my friends; it most definitely can be done! I'm a travel consultant and a mother and I'm here to tell you that we took my 2 year old daughter (while 6 months pregnant mind you) and I had absolutely no regrets.

Here are my top 10 tips for bringing your baby to Disney, so that you too may have a stress free, memory filled vacation.

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☐1. Bring a lightweight umbrella stroller Do not bring your heavy, bulky stroller from home. They are not travel friendly and it will be a hassle folding that thing repeatedly on the bus. Stroller rentals are available at the park, but they can be pricey and aren't the most comfortable when baby is trying to snooze. Do yourself a huge favour a buy a cheap umbrella stroller (less than 20 pounds preferably) and write your name on it. Easy to navigate through the crowds and if it gets damaged it's not a big deal. A colourful one with a design will also be easier to spot in the stroller parking areas.

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☐2. Do not try to rush and attempt to do everything Babies can get over-heated and grumpy quite quickly, so try not to rush around and fit too much into your schedule. Take a break every once in a while to people watch, get a Dole Whip (believe me you will want to try this!), have a cool down at Casey Jr Splash N Soak Station. There are also a lot of indoor shows and rides that are good to take advantage of when the Floridian sun is high in the sky. I also highly recommend going back to your Disney Resort and taking an afternoon nap, so that little ones can recharge and get back to enjoying the park. This brings me to my next point...

3. Stay onsite at a Walt Disney World Resort When you stay onsite you can take advantage of the Magical Express, which is a complimentary motor coach service to and from the airport. They also handle your luggage and deliver it straight to your room. No waiting at baggage claim and struggling with heavy bags! There is also transit included at each resort to take you to the parks various times of the day. You can

take advantage of Magic Hours, which are only available for guests staying at Disney Resorts. Certain parks are open early in the morning, or late in the evening, which means less crowds and minimal wait time for the rides. Not to mention you are in the middle of all the magic! The customer service is extraordinary, the properties are impeccably themed and cleanliness is always a priority. You can request cribs, bed rails, and the gift stores at your resort stock baby essentials if you happen to forget anything at home.

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□4. Reserve those FastPass+ Once you have booked your Disney World Vacation you can go online and visit <https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/plan/>. After you have created a login in, I highly suggest making your dining and FastPass reservations. Fastpasses can be reserved 60 days prior to departure and are completely free with purchased theme park tickets. Children are not the most patient of folk and a lot of the baby/toddler friendly attractions have quite the long wait. Peter Pan's Magical Flight and The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh are two great examples of rides that can have a wait time of well over an hour. Reserve these and you will sail through your day.

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□5. Rider Switch Service The parents need to enjoy the attractions too and Disney created a wonderful program to make this possible! For example, Mom, Dad and child (non rider) wait in line at a participating ride. Mom goes on the ride while Dad and baby wait until she is finished. Once she returns, Dad hands the child to her and Dad boards the same ride without having to wait in line again. Amazing right? Just approach a Cast Member, tell them your interest in this service and they will provide you with a Rider Switch pass.

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□6. Baby Care Centers For the mothers who are breastfeeding, or who want some peace and quiet while feeding, can retreat to these wonderful little hideaways called Baby Care Centers. There is one in every park and they offer a private nursing area with rocking chairs, highchairs, kitchen with microwave and oven, changing room, and even a living room area with TV. Once again this is all complimentary! There are items available for purchase such as wipes, diapers, formula, baby food and sunscreen. It's honestly a lifesaver. If you are not close to a Baby Care Centre, there are plenty of restrooms scattered throughout the parks with changing tables as well.

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□7. Enjoy a day (or evening in my case) at the pool Take a day (or several hours) to relax and frolic with your child at the pool. Most babies/toddlers adore the water and it's a chance to just slow down, talk about the events of the day and watch their little faces fill with joy. We left the parks early in the evening just to let our little one splash around

the wading pool. She had the time of her life there and we made some fantastic memories.

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□8. Take tons of pictures Bring your good quality camera, visit the PhotoPass photographers, and purchase the Memory Maker. Get as many pictures as you can, especially if it's your child's first Disney Vacation. Capture that moment of them viewing Cinderella's Castle for the first time, or seeing Mickey Mouse's face up-close, or enjoying the lights and sounds of the Main Street Electrical Parade. They may not remember their visit, but they will cherish the photographs in their elder years, as you will too.

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□9. Bring some snacks and small toys from home Not only will these be helpful at the airport, in the airplane and at the resort, but also while experiencing the parks. Having rice crackers, dry cereal and fruit/veggie pouches will ward off hunger and grumpiness, especially if you're waiting for a photo op with Sophia the First. Most of the infant friendly rides have interactive queues to entertain the senses, but if crankiness sets in a small toy such as a rattle or book may distract for a bit. Not to mention this will save you a bit of money, which you can use towards cute souvenirs such as...

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□10. Mickey Mouse Ear Hat for Baby Not only are these super cute, but look adorable in pictures. They come in different colours and you can also get them personalized with your child's name. A great keepsake and for less than \$20 US. Also, pick up a free "First Visit" pin at the hotel concierge, or City Hall at Magic Kingdom. It's an adorable touch and most cast members will interact and celebrate with your child making your experience that more memorable.

About The Author: Jennifer is a home daycare provider, lover of all things Disney and a Certified Travel Consultant with Click the Mouse. She lives in Southern Ontario with her husband, Allen and her children, Arielle and Zander. She is looking forward to her next Disney Cruise in December. To begin your Disney planning experience contact Jennifer at jenniferl@clickthemouse.ca.

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