

Disney Park Parade Etiquette - Ensuring Everyone Has a Good Time: A Disney Parks Planning Article

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Whenever you go to Disney, one of the big attractions are the parades.

Parades take place in various parks in the afternoons and the evenings. They're a huge draw at Disney, with massive crowds often turning out to watch them, but that can present problems in itself. Some of you will no doubt know what I'm alluding to, if you've had similar experiences, and that's parade etiquette.

What do I mean by that? Essentially it's how we all behave when we gather to watch a parade and understanding how that behaviour can impact on others. As there are Disney parks around the world, how crowds behave is somewhat dependent on the country you're in. For example, if you're lucky enough to make it to the Tokyo Disney Resort, things are exceptionally civilised. People lay out a blanket on the ground, and that is their personal space. No-one sits on it, no-one invades it. If there's still a space on that blanket two minutes before the parade starts, it doesn't matter. It's literally sacred. It's different in other parts of the world, and certainly we noticed on a recent trip to Disneyland Paris that there's a lot more pushing and shoving to get a good spot, which is a huge shame.

There seem to be two distinct types of people who watch parades at Disney. One group get there early, settle themselves down and get a prime spot, while the other group turn up a lot later. Now that's fine, and we all have different priorities, and I fully understand people wanting to maximise their time on rides and in shows, rather than waiting perhaps an hour for a parade. However, if you do decide to turn up with five minutes to go, please don't expect to find a front row spot, and equally please don't get annoyed with others when that turns out to be the case. I've seen this happen, and I've heard tutting, as if someone should have magically left a spot open for others. It's not going to happen, unless you're perhaps going at a very quiet time of the year or the weather's not playing ball, and you're in the middle of a torrential downpour.

If you do arrive late and you have children, I think most people would agree that generally they'd be happy for them to go to the front and stand in front of you. However, this is not going to work where the front row's been told to remain seated, and please don't just assume this. It's

always better to ask, as usually people won't say no. I have lost count of the amount of times I've suddenly had something shoved into me, and realised it's a parent thrusting their child into me, rather than just tapping me on the shoulder and asking "would you mind if?" It's not something (I hope) that people would usually do in the streets, and a bit of politeness always goes a long way. I think my answer, when I've been asked, has always been "of course not", and it helps to ensure children are learning good manners from their parents.

Whenever you're in the parks, there are Cast Members around to help, but they're also there at times to tell people what they need to do. When it comes to parades, if a Cast Member tells you that you can't sit or stand in a location to watch, please do take that seriously. They're not just saying it for the sake of it, and the chances are you will be moved. We've watched exactly this happen, with a number of warnings given that a particular spot cannot be used for whatever reason. Then when people are finally moved on, it seems to be the Cast Member's fault. They are only doing their job. In Disneyland in California, we were clearly told the front row was to remain seated, while everyone else would stand, which seemed perfectly sensible to me. We had one "conscientious objector" (that's what he called himself) who refused to fall in line, and the Cast Members had some challenging debates with him. I'm sure they didn't need that, and it was embarrassing to sit there and listen to it.

Technology has obviously moved on in leaps and bounds in recent years. A couple of decades ago, everyone had cameras where you had to use the view finder to get your shot. Now you have screens built into most cameras, along with cell phones and bigger devices like iPads. You can hold them above your head to get the shot you want, which is fair enough; except if you happen to be standing in front of someone else, and blocking their view. We've found this happening more and more, and while we do this, we always try and look around us to ensure, wherever possible, we're not blocking someone else's views or shots. Equally, once we've taken the photo, we put the camera down, rather than holding it constantly in place, just in case you might want to take another shot in a few minutes' time. It would be so nice if everyone else could do the same thing.

On the subject of technology, where you're viewing a night-time parade, also check your shots to see whether they need flash or not. A lot of the time, you may well get better photographs without it, and flash is blinding to other people. For that reason, I try to only use it when I absolutely need to, as there's nothing worse than having a flash go off in your face.

Finally, please do what people talk a lot about, and stop and smell the roses during the parade. What do I mean by that? We watched a grandfather frantically photographing the Disneyland Paris parade, while he was missing the look of complete enchantment on his granddaughter's face, lit up with wonder at every single float that passed by. Now that would've made for some superb photos and some wonderful memories, but sadly it was missed. What a great shame.

Disney parades are absolutely enchanting and (nearly!) always worth seeing, which is why they attract so many people. They would be even more enjoyable to watch if everyone could just remember to spread and share the magic when they're viewing them, both beforehand and during them.

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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