

Touring Tips for Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party: A Walt Disney World Special Event Article

by Michele Dakho, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

A hard ticketed event at Walt Disney World is a great time and in my opinion, every Disney goer should experience at least one.

□ That being said, I must confess that this is the first time I've attended Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party since 2009. Here are few things I learned from this party and other Disney experiences.

Enjoy the atmosphere

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□ Dressing up is fun! We decided that since we were locals now we really didn't have the excuse of "a costume wouldn't fit in my luggage" that we had used in years past, so we decided to, for the first time ever, suck it up and at least attempt to dress up. We wanted costumes that were affordable, simple and comfortable, which for us pretty much meant making something out of nothing and utilizing what we had on hand that would work with shorts and t-shirts.

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□ We opted to dress as a young-ish Carl and Ellie Frederickson from "UP". Once I had the idea, I began searching "Disneybounding" on Pinterest which is a really big thing in Disneyland but hasn't quite caught up to Walt Disney World yet. It was fun, affordable and comfortable and I'm very glad we went for it!

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□ If you are debating about dressing up for the party, I would highly recommend it. There were a lot of people dressed up and we saw everything from simple t-shirts to very elaborate villains costumes. Everyone is very complimentary to one another and it was obvious everyone was there to have a great time, regardless of what that meant to them.

Have A Plan

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□ Having experienced hard ticketed events at the Magic Kingdom before, I had some ideas of what to expect and although some things have changed over the years the basic pattern and plan remains the same.

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□ Grab a map on your way in and if you've never experienced a hard ticketed event before, do yourself a favor and do a search online prior to your party day so you know what to expect. Even a glance at the maps

from years past can help you get an idea of what might be offered and where you want to be when.

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□ This year, upon our entry into the park We were guided by several party costumed Cast Members to enter to the right of Tony's Town Square Restaurant, which is normally a blocked off location. That night the gates were open and there were Cast Members handing out the trick-or-treat bags that were included with our admission ticket as well as the first candy stop. Looking back, I see this probably greatly helped them clear out the day traffic from the park as they checked wristbands of party goers and it was nice to start the night off with candy right away, it wasn't actually until much later in the evening I realized I had missed my usual stroll down Mainstreet U.S.A.!

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□ Keep an open mind, even when best-laid plans go awry

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□ I know how these parties work, I prioritize and plan and execute my plan pretty darn well, or so I thought, until I found myself almost passed out on the sidewalk in the park and nearly faint with heat exhaustion. Ok, that might be a tad bit dramatic, but I have a point. My point is, I wanted to see the fireworks show from in front of the castle. I know there are projections and perimeter fireworks, etc. and I had my heart set on seeing them from the front of the castle.

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□ Since I was famished and it was nearing fireworks time we found ourselves running to Pinnocchio's in Fantasyland because it was the last quick service opened and was closing in literally 6 minutes. (To hear my rant about food, read the next point) I argued with my husband relentlessly about getting a spot in front of the castle while he literally shoved chicken fingers down my throat to keep me from passing out.

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□ Three minutes prior to the start of the fireworks my nightmare became a reality, the flanks of the castle were already blocked off for the fireworks and we wouldn't be able to get through, there was NO way I was seeing the fireworks from the front. As I almost had a Veruca Salt sized meltdown, my husband continued to caffeinate me and guided me over to the fence by the Seven Dwarves Ride, facing the carousel. I was still pouting about my stupid hypoglycemia when the fireworks started and then my attitude changed from Grumpy to Happy REAL quick. The view of these fireworks between Beast Castle and Cinderella Castle is BREATH TAKING. The entire sky lights up all around you and when the perimeter fireworks go off you literally feel like you're in a ring of fire.

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□ My point to this story is, think outside the box and be open to new experiences. Had I gotten my way and made it to the always over crowded front of the castle, I would have missed the amazing

experience that lies right behind it!

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□ Make food a part of your plan

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□ The dining situation during hard ticketed events has always been a point of contention for me! The dining venues aren't in full swing, and in fact you'll be hard pressed to find a chicken finger come 10 p.m. in fact and I think that's ridiculous. I realize there's lots going on and many people don't want to stop to eat but sometimes you need a bit of sustenance as you're running from one character to the next.

Particularly those of us who spent the day getting our costumes ready and didn't have time to eat at home before the drive to the party. And those of us who ran in and started having fun instead of walking right in and stopping to eat.

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□ You will get hungry, you need to have some sort of food in your plan, note the times for quick service on your party map before you wander too far! Most of them close at 8p.m. and it'll be past that before you even realize it. Plan ahead for food or be prepared to suffer the consequences of your sugar buzz by midnight from dipping into your candy supply!

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□ Do a little leg work to save your legs a lot of work!

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□ I said it before and I'll say it again, do your research! There were many frustrated parents dragging their tired small children around to get to a particular experience. Many of them passed us multiple times during their search, which was increasing both their fatigue and their frustration.

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□ It was evident that many, many, many of the Cast Members weren't prepared for the party crowd and weren't sure about how and where to direct people, answer questions, etc. I understand many employees are seasonal and this was perhaps their first experience working the party but to me, "I don't know" is never an acceptable answer.

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□ I will say the majority of the Cast Members tried to quickly search their reference book to find the answers people were looking for, which was very nice, but I noticed a lot more of that referencing than you would experience on a normal day in the park. I mention this to remind you that the Cast Members are human, as are you. So if you want to make the most of your time during a hard ticketed event, know the lay of the land and what to expect and when so you don't waste valuable time asking for directions, or walking in circles!

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