

Halloween at Disneyland: 13 Frightfully Fun Things to Check Out This Year

by Ginger Jabour, PassPorter Guidebook Co-Author

□ With the Diamond Celebration done, can you find anything new to do at Disneyland? Yes! Halloween is in full swing at both Disney California Adventure and Disneyland Park. Here are 13 great things about Disneyland at Halloween:

□

□1. Jack-O-Lanterns. The first things you'll notice are the jack-o-lanterns everywhere, starting at the entry gates, in all the windows on Main Street, U.S.A., and of course the giant Mickey jack-o-lantern in Town Square, which even lights up at night. PhotoPass photographers keep busy, taking visitors' pictures in front of it at all hours of the day and evening. These aren't real pumpkins, of course (imagine the smell after a month!), but they're all hand-carved and each is unique.

□

□2. Ghost Gallery. In Tomorrowland, Space Mountain has its annual transformation into Ghost Gallery, in which the projected stars are replaced by spooky images, some of which appear suddenly or seem to reach for you. It's not particularly scary, but it is a fresher take on an old favorite ride.

□3. Dia de los Muertos. Frontierland gets into the act, too, with a celebration of the Mexican Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), traditionally celebrated on November 1st. You'll find special treats like Pumpkin Flan in Rancho del Zocalo Restaurante. Step outside into Zocalo Park to see a beautiful display of calacas, or painted skeleton figures, and other traditional items, and have your face painted from 10 am to 6 pm.

□

□4. The Nightmare Before Christmas Overlay. New Orleans Square has its own tradition: the Haunted Mansion is taken over by the characters from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* this particular overlay stays on through the Christmas season, of course. More on this attraction below.

□5. Late Checkout at the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror. New this year is a once-in-a-lifetime dark ride on the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, called Late Checkout. Starting at sunset, guests can experience this attraction in complete darkness! The queue and the library scene all run normally, but once the elevator doors close, the lights are gone until the end of the ride. The narration inside changes a little, and the mirror

sequence is deleted. Experiencing this ride in the absence of all light adds a fun dimension to the ride and is well worth the wait. FastPasses for the Tower of Terror end before Late Checkout begins, so everyone waits in a queue that usually runs 45-60 minutes on a weeknight and up to 90 minutes on weekends.

□6. Silver Lake Sisters. The Silver Lake Sisters, a 40s-style singing trio, entertains at select times during the daylight hours, singing songs from Hollywood's Golden Age and exchanging silly banter. Outside the Tower, have your picture taken by the hotel's "taxi stop," with vintage luggage. Late Checkout continues until the Tower of Terror closes its doors forever January 2, 2017, to become a Guardians of the Galaxy-themed attraction later that year.

□

□7. Haunted Haunts Tour. If Haunted Mansion is your thing, or you love Disney history, consider taking the Happiest Haunts Tour, as I did last week. It's not cheap at \$85, but discounts are available for Annual Passholders and Disney Vacation Club members, and it only runs during the Halloween season. This two-and-a-half hour walking tour features a history of the Haunted Mansion and of Walt Disney's vision of creating his now-iconic AudioAnimatronic figures.

□

□A tour guide leads you throughout the park and gives you an exclusive close-up look at Ophelia, a "singing" orchid, after which you see her relatives in The Enchanted Tiki Room show, one of the first uses of AudioAnimatronics.

□

□8. Hatbox Ghost. We also learned about the history of the Hatbox Ghost, an original feature of the Haunted Mansion which only lasted a few days before it was pulled. The original ghost didn't work properly in the Mansion's lighting. Imagineers dug him up recently, though, updated him, and placed him back in the Mansion in May 2015. My Doombuggy ended up stopping directly in front of him on the ride that night, so I managed to get great photos of him with his head on, and then with his head appearing in his hatbox. Sally from The Nightmare Before Christmas is new this year, too. The haunted gingerbread house in the gallery is edible -- who knew?

□

□The tour doesn't include a ride in the Haunted Mansion, but you get a FastPass to use any time that same day. Guests also receive a special tour badge with their names on it, a huge Mickey Mouse Halloween sugar cookie (covered in orange sugar crystals), and an exclusive pin -- this year's pin is a "key" to the Haunted Mansion, with Madame Leota's face, mounted on a large Tarot-like card, also featuring Madame Leota.

□

□9. Seasonal Treats. If you're there for the food, Halloween at Disneyland won't disappoint, with special seasonal treats at virtually every restaurant, bakery, and candy store. From butterscotch beignets in New Orleans Square, to Dia de los Muertos-themed caramel apples, to pumpkin fudge and mummy krispy treats, you're sure to find something to delight everyone.

□

□10. Candy, Candy, Candy. Speaking of food, you won't go hungry at Mickey's Halloween Party, with more than 50 treat stands! Each treat trail features three to six treat stands, and cast members each handed out two to three pieces of candy. I visited several and stopped when my treat bag was about two-thirds full, but I could have filled it several times over had I wished to do so -- many other guests did.

Trick-or-treating began around 5 p.m. in Mickey's ToonTown, which closed to non-party guests at that time. Various characters in Halloween costumes were at the head of long meet-and-greet lines, but were well worth the wait. A costumed Mickey and Minnie also greeted guests at Town Square, and villains were sprinkled around the square. Other characters were available throughout the park.

□

□11. Headless Horseman. The Headless Horseman came to Disneyland for the first time in 2016, to herald the Frightfully Fun Parade, which runs at 8:30 pm and 10:30 pm. Jack Skellington from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* leads the parade, followed by gravediggers marching in spooky choreographed order, raising sparks from their shovels. Dancers and hitchhikers from the Haunted Mansion appear, along with various villains from Disney movies. My favorite was Dr. Facilier from *The Princess and the Frog* -- totally in character and quite authentic-looking.

□

□12. Spooky Music. Throughout the evening, spooky music plays everywhere in the park. On Main Street, U.S.A., however, you'll find another surprise: figures projected on the building, dancing in time to the music. Disney makes good use here of this technology, which debuted with the Paint the Night Parade during the Diamond Celebration. Many guests wore costumes, but with the daytime high at 105 degrees the day I visited, many looked rather uncomfortable in long and sometimes furry costumes. My favorite costume: a family dressed as characters from *Pinocchio*: dad was Gepetto, mom was Figaro the cat, daughter was the Blue Fairy, pre-school son was Pinocchio, and toddler little brother was a precious Jiminy Cricket!

□

□13. Halloween Fireworks. Halloween Screams, billed as "a villainous surprise in the skies fireworks," appears at 9:30 pm. It opens with Zero, Jack's dog from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, zooming around in the air, as Tinker Bell does for other fireworks -- I still haven't figured

out how the character manages to make all those turns in midair! Jack Skellington narrates and spooky lighting on the castle compliments the fireworks which, as always, are perfectly timed with the music.

□

□ Tickets for Mickey's Halloween Party are pricey, at \$89 at the gate for every show, except the last two, which are \$99 each. Tickets for shows for Oct. 17 and earlier, however, were \$79 in advance. Annual Passholders paid \$72 in advance for weeknight shows only.

□

□ Halloween is a great time to enjoy Disneyland parks -- if you can't make it this year, think about visiting next year.

About The Author: Ginger Jabour is a PassPorter guide and co-author of PassPorter's Disneyland Live! Guide. She's also a retired Air Force colonel, a tutor, and assistant Scoutmaster. She has two sons: Matt, a recent graduate of Purdue University, and Mark, who is a high school senior.

Article last updated: 10-10-2016

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/halloween-disneyland-13-frightfully-fun-things.html>

Copyright by Ginger Jabour. 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/>