

10 Disney Movies : Watch Before Your Trip to Disneyland

by Ginger Jabour, PassPorter Guidebook Co-Author

We all know trips to Disney parks require loads of planning and preparation, so why am I suggesting you add another step to your preparations?

Two reasons: 1) Watching Disney movies helps get you into the Disney state of mind and 2) some rides are just better if you've watched the movies recently.

Here's my top 10 list of movies to watch before visiting Disneyland (a Walt Disney World list would be similar but not identical).

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1. Cars

You have to watch Cars again! Cars Land is Radiator Springs brought to glorious life before your eyes, and Radiator Springs Racers takes you into scenes from the movie before the thrillingly fast finish. Cars 2 introduces you to Luigi's familia, whom you'll meet in Luigi's Rollicking Roadsters.

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2. The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad

If you must ride Mr. Toad's Wild Adventure in Fantasyland, you're going to want to see The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad. Many people love this ride because it's a classic, but the vignettes in the ride are pretty meaningless if you haven't seen the movie. It's still available at online vendors.

3. Who Framed Roger Rabbit

Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin in Mickey's Toontown is another dark ride that draws heavily from the movie. Who Framed Roger Rabbit is an excellent film most of us haven't seen in a while, so be sure to check that one out.

4. A Bug's Life

A bug's life is a must if you have small children. They'll love the kiddie rides in Disney California Adventure's "a bug's land," and it'll mean much more to them if they've seen the movie.

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5. The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh

Not only are Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree and Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day charming, but they're also faithfully recreated in The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, in Disneyland's Critter Country.

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□6. Monsters, Inc.

□Monsters, Inc. is a good preparation for Disney California Adventures' Monsters, Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue! in Hollywood Land. Another dark ride, this attraction recreates the movie as you ride a cab through Monstropolis, and chat with Roz at the end.

□7. Alice in Wonderland

□Re-watching Alice in Wonderland -- the original 1951 version -- gives more context to riding Mad Tea Party and, of course, Alice in Wonderland. Children who missed the movie won't get the Mad Hatter, the Queen of Hearts, or Tweedledee and Tweedledum, much less the magnificent Cheshire Cat.

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□8. Sleeping Beauty

□Watching Sleeping Beauty, from 1959, will give you a new appreciation for her castle, the centerpiece of Disneyland Park, and the castle's walkthrough, which features dioramas with scenes from the movie.

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□9. Frozen

□If you liked Frozen, you've probably seen it fairly recently, but you might want to watch it again before your trip. Anna and Elsa, and sometimes Olaf, are available with much shorter lines than they garner at Walt Disney World, and Frozen -- Live at the Hyperion is a lavish stage show that fans of the movie won't want to miss.

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□10. Classic Fab Four Shorts

□Mickey fans should make it a point to see some of the old classic Fab Four shorts, and head straight for Mickey's Toontown when you get there! This land is totally different from the old Mickey's Toontown Fair at Walt Disney World, and is a whole "town" filled with sight gags and puns. Mickey's Toontown has only two rides (Gadget's Go Coaster and Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin), neither of which really seems to belong, but it's still a blast, and small children will enjoy playing in one of three play areas: Chip 'n Dale Treehouse, Goofy's Playhouse, and Donald's Boat. Larger children (like me) will enjoy meeting Mickey Mouse and seeing his and Minnie's houses. Other characters sometimes make appearances here, too.

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□These are my top Disney movie recommendations but, of course, several other rides draw directly from the movies for which they're named: Snow White's Scary Adventures (really scary for small ones), Peter Pan's Flight, The Little Mermaid -- Ariel's Undersea Adventure, Dumbo the Flying Elephant, Star Tours, Indiana Jones Adventure, and Toy Story Midway Mania, but this list will get you started. And if you don't have any current plans to visit Disneyland, maybe watching the movies will inspire to start planning a visit. Happy watching!

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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.

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