

Expect the Unexpected - To, From, and At the Happiest Place on Earth (Part One): A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Amy Jones, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Expect the unexpected. True, that's a cliché. We all say it, we all know it, and we smile and nod when we hear it.

Unfortunately, it's so easy to forget, especially when we are headed to, or even experiencing, the Happiest Place on Earth.

I'm a voracious planner, and I plan our Disney vacations down to the proverbial letter. Yes, I try to leave plenty of room for exploration, downtime, and of course "doing less and enjoying more." But I've come to terms with this: I'm a Disney planning junkie. I'm the one who sets the alarm for 4:30 so that I can be ready at 5:00 with a cup of coffee, a piece of bread, and My Disney Experience login so that I can make dining reservations for six months in the future (half of which I'll probably switch out before our trip).

But the fact is this: we all live in a crazy, unpredictable world where plans can become obsolete in a heartbeat.

My family and I just returned from a wonderful trip to Walt Disney World at the beginning of October, and before I go any further, I will say that we blessedly escaped Hurricane Matthew. There were a few hard storms while we were there, and we even completely soaked our shoes in six-inch-deep flooding at Disney's Hollywood Studios and had to shoe shop for our daughter that night, plus a few attractions and pools were closed during the lightning. But other than that, Matthew was on its/his way in right as we were leaving. I'm grateful we missed him/it, but heartbroken for those who didn't.

That isn't to say our trip wasn't without its unexpected adventures and problems that had to be solved, however.

We left our home in Kentucky on a beautiful Friday to start the twelve-hour journey. The kids were already watching a DVD on their portable players, thanks to my awesome mother (who will come into play in this story soon with more awesomeness) and we were smoothly sailing down the highway.

Almost two hours into the journey I realize something. My wallet. My

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wallet is not in the floorboard under my feet. It didn't fall into the map compartment in my door. It's not in my travel bag. It's not in my purse. It's not in the car at all.

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□Then I remember this: my wallet isn't lost or stolen. It's at home. After all that packing, checking, checklists, checklists of other checklists, and last minute checking, I had left my wallet with my credit card and, most importantly, my driver's license, at home. My husband asked if I really needed those things--after all, he had a license and a credit card--but I wanted to be free to legally drive, and I wasn't sure what I'd need this time at Disney. We were new annual pass holders and hadn't activated them yet--would I need my license for that? I called Disney and, yes, it turns out, I would need photo identification to activate our annual passes.

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□By now the kids were crying that they didn't want to drive back home, and I didn't blame them, so I called the closest thing to a superhero I had at hand (after a prayer, of course)...my awesome mom.

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□I asked her to enter our home (she lives almost next door) and check to see if the wallet was even there. She immediately complied without scolding or complaint and found that the wallet was, indeed, in my bedroom. She then offered to drive down to where we were to meet us. I didn't want her to do that, nor did we want to wait two hours for her, so I asked her to take my credit card and driver's license out of the wallet, take them to the post office, and overnight them to our resort at Walt Disney World.

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□She agreed that this was the best idea and took care of it immediately. She even insisted on paying for the transaction. Still no scolding or complaint--she was just happy to help however she could.

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□During the rest of the trip down I made various calls to Disney and was even given a direct line to our resort's switchboard so that I could check on the delivery of my credentials, so I knew just which shelf number to which to direct the cast member when she went to retrieve the envelope.

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□Of course, I couldn't help blaring out laughter when she asked "Can I see a photo ID?" I told her that was what was in the envelope, and she did give me a strange look, but after answering a couple of security questions, I was completely me again, or at least could prove so. So, all's well that end's well ... but that was just the trip down. I'll share more of our unpredictable adventures in Part 2 -- watch for it in an upcoming issue!

About The Author: Amy Jones lives in Kentucky with one husband and two future Disney imagineers. She is a stay-at-home mom, a runner, a writer, and a Disney planning fiend. She and her family have been to the World twice and have two more trips scheduled for 2017 to celebrate birthdays, Star Wars, and a long-awaited 20th wedding anniversary.

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