

Jingle Bell, Jingle BAM! Holiday Dessert Party at Disney's Hollywood Studios: A Walt Disney World Event Review

by Sally Portera, PassPorter Guest Contributor

When I heard in back in October about the new Jingle Bell Jingle Bam! Holiday fireworks show that would be offered at Hollywood Studios, I was both happy and sad. I had been looking forward to seeing the Star Wars fireworks show with my son. I was also excited, though, to see how Disney would use the existing set up of the Chinese Theater and big screens to tell us a holiday tale alive with lasers and fireworks. I was happy to see that Disney was offering a holiday dessert party with the fireworks show.

My small family is all about enjoying every minute of our visits and do not enjoy having to stake out a spot an hour or two in advance of fireworks shows. Initially, the holiday party tickets for our dates sold out within an hour of Disney releasing them. Tip #1: Just like with hard to get dining reservations, I kept checking to see if tickets opened up. The night before the show, I found two tickets available!

We spent the day at Epcot and ate dinner at Beaches and Cream. At 6:00 pm, we went to the Beach Club Resort dock to board a boat to Hollywood Studios. We managed to squeeze on a busy boat and got the Studios around 6:45. That gave us enough time to head over to Star Wars Launch Bay to look around and take pictures with Chewbacca and Kylo Ren. Tip #2: The lines in the evening were much shorter than during the day. We waited five minutes for Chewbacca and one minute for Kylo Ren! Compare that to 30 minutes earlier in the day.

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□At 7:35, we headed over to the entrance to the Great Movie Ride to check in for the Holiday Party. The party takes place in the courtyard right in front of the Chinese Theater. We were given special wristbands to wear and a pair each of HoloSpex glasses to wear during the fireworks show. Our glasses turned the bright lights around us into elves. Other guests had glasses that turned the lights into reindeer. We then went to the line to wait for the party to open. While in line, cast members were handing out hand warmer packets to all the guests since it was a "chilly" that night. The temperature was in the 50's. Didn't think I would make use of the hand warmers, but they did come in "handy" for my son and I while we were waiting for the fireworks to start. Just another little touch that I didn't expect but appreciate from Disney.

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□At 7:45, party guests began streaming in. Now, many of the fireworks

parties offer no seating. Fortunately, this one had seating but not for everyone. Luckily, we found a mother and daughter with two extra seats at their table. I asked about sitting with them and they happily agreed. One of two instances where swallowing my shyness helped me out that night. I wasn't expecting as many chairs as there were, so I was quite happy to get a seat. My son and I then went to grab a drink and some snacks.

There was a good size spread of sweet treats including chocolate peppermint mini-cupcakes with a white chocolate Santa hat, crispy holiday bon bons, lemon meringue tarts, and gingerbread almond chocolate cookies. There were also many savory options that were specially created for the party. I elected to stick with the sweets. I also picked up one of their two signature cocktails, the gingerbread martini. It was a creamy drink and as Disney usually does; it was strong but tasty. The signature drink is the apple cinnamon cocktail. You can also choose from a variety of wines, beers, sodas, tea, fruit punch or water.

□ After finishing round one of treats, the night's special guest character, Santa Goofy, came to our table. We had a very quick photo op with him. Unfortunately, my son's eyes were closed in the picture. After meeting Santa Goofy, we went over to the Liquid Nitro Frost Bite Station and had chocolate mint ice cream. Both my son and I loved it. Jacob had two portions, and he is a very picky eater! I was happy to see that they still had this station. It was my favorite treat at the Star Wars Dessert Party this summer.

□ After finishing the ice cream around 8:40, we headed over to the reserved fireworks viewing area. As we left the party area, we were both given a chocolate dipped gingerbread man with Mickey ears. It was so cute! Plus, it turned out to be delicious! As we were leaving, I saw Santa Goofy standing near us and asked his cast member handler if my son could take another photo with him since his eyes had been closed for the first. She agreed and I was able to get a cute pic of the two of them. Tip #3: It can't hurt to kindly ask for a little bit of extra Disney magic!

□ The open area for fireworks viewing was unbelievably crowded. If I had not already known where the reserved viewing area was, I would have had a very difficult time finding it. We showed our wristband to enter the area and passed a table with bottles of cold water for us. Why not take one or two, right? About 25% of our private viewing area was full. I found a good spot where thought my son would be able to see the show well. We played with our HoloSpex glasses, chatted with another family and before we knew it, the show was starting.

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□ It was a cute show with characters from Prep and Landing and the Nightmare Before Christmas. It was hard to follow at times though. I enjoyed the holographic projections and laser lights over the Chinese Theater, multiple big screens, and surrounding areas. My favorite part of the show was, of course, the fireworks, but...surprise! They made it snow! We missed the snow on Main Street at the Very Merry Christmas Party, so we were tickled to see it snow at Hollywood Studios. They continued the snow from about midway through the show through closing of the park at 9:30. I live further north now, but I grew up in the south and anytime it snows, I become a kid again. I loved it!

□ Overall, I enjoyed the Jingle Bell Jingle Bam! Holiday Dessert Party and the show. The party area did appear full but not overloaded. We never waited more than a minute or two at a station for food or drinks. I liked the gingerbread Mickey and HoloSpex glasses (they work at home!) much better than the Chewbacca stein from the Star Wars Galactic Spectacular Dessert Party. I was also happy to see Disney incorporated a photo op and that they add this element into fireworks dessert parties in the future. If you have thought about attending a dessert party, this one was definitely worth the cost to me and my family! <

About The Author: Sally has been a Disney lover since childhood. She is now an anesthesiologist by day (sometimes the middle of the night too!) and a Disney vacation and cruise specialist in her free time. She is mother to a wonderful, lively eight year old boy.

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