

Looking Forward to 2017: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There's surely nothing better than an unexpected visit to Walt Disney World, and that's the fortunate position we've found ourselves in. We've gone from heading back in December 2017 to a trip in the spring, just a few weeks ago, and of course, that's got me looking forward to all the things I want to see and do in 2017.

Sadly, we're going to miss out on a lot of the major new additions to the Disney parks during 2017, the biggest of which will be Pandora -- The World of Avatar at Animal Kingdom, opening in the summer. We'll also just have to accept that some of Disney Springs won't yet be complete, particularly some of the planned restaurants.

□ However, I am still holding out some hope; Ok, maybe just a little hope; hope that perhaps Rivers of Light might finally be in place at Disney's Animal Kingdom. I'd love to see it, although I have heard rumors that it may not be opening until Earth Day, which is way past our visit. I'm hoping we will at least get to enjoy some night-time entertainment at the park, although the opening hours aren't yet proving favorable in that respect.

□ Our last Disney trip was in September 2016, and the heat and humidity absolutely drained us, so the most important thing I'm looking forward to is some cooler weather, so we can see and do more this time around. The prospect of walking even short distances to explore, and visit attractions was just too much for us.

One of the things we missed out was the Disney Vacation Club member exclusive after hours party at Animal Kingdom, but during this stay, we get a second chance, with something similar on offer at the Magic Kingdom, and we've already grabbed our free tickets. Let's hope nothing stands in our way this time, as I want to experience what it's like.

□ Frozen Ever After was one of the big attraction openings of 2016, and I really wanted to try it out for myself. However, luck wasn't on our side, as we first struggled to get Fastpasses for it, and then every time we passed it, either the waits were crazy long, or the ride was down. We managed to snag one Fastpass time, and guess what happened? It was down again. Hopefully, this time we'll get to ride it.

□ We also managed to miss out on the Star Wars additions at Disney's Hollywood Studios, and that's something else that's down on my list of

things to experience.

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□We'll be staying at the Wilderness Lodge, or should I say the newly named Boulder Ridge Villas at Disney's Wilderness Lodge, as the Disney Vacation Club villas there are now known. The resort is currently undergoing a massive expansion, as more villas, and waterfront cabins, are added, and although I appreciate it will be a bit like a building site, I can't wait to see how work is progressing there.

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□We'll also be returning to Old Key West, and the BoardWalk Villas, both of which we've stayed in before, but many years ago. In fact, it was so many years ago, I barely remember what the rooms looked like now, except I remember how huge they were at Old Key West! I know both resorts have many fans, but they're not amongst our favorite, so I'm looking forward to finding a bit more love for them both.

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□Dining is one of our favorite past-times at Disney, and recently a lot of their expansions have focused on this. Tiffin's is on the list for this trip, and at least one of the new arrivals at Disney Springs, although I'm holding fire on making a final decision, as I really want to try Paddlefish (formerly Fulton's Crab House), and I'm not sure if it will be open by the time we visit.

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□After reading someone's trip report on the [PassPorter message board forums](#), when they went up on the Characters in Flight balloon after dark, I immediately realized this was something we hadn't done yet. The photos from high above Disney Springs at night were just beautiful, and our plans now include this, provided the wind doesn't interfere of course.

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□It may sound as if we have a lot planned that are either new to us, and that's true, and equally we have restaurants on our list that we haven't eaten at in many years, but in truth, the thing I'm most looking forward to in this Disney trip is exactly the same as all the others. It's about going back to a familiar place that we know and love, and enjoying the attractions, resorts, and restaurants, but at the same time, trying out new things, all in that wonderful cozy Disney bubble. That's what keeps us coming back year after year after year...

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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