

Walt Disney World Express Transportation: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Randy F. , PassPorter Guest Contributor

Hello fellow Walt Disney World (WDW) fans!

My wife and I just returned from a week-long visit (second week in January) to WDW and while I have many notes to share, I thought some of you who are planning trips might be interested to learn more about the new "Express" Bus Service being offered between the four major theme parks.

For those who may not be familiar, this is a service that Disney is testing that provides for a dedicated bus operating from park to park that picks up guests while 'in' the park and delivers them to the other park…inside as well. What's the benefit? Basically, it is time. Rather than exiting a park and travelling on the regularly provided buses, boats, or monorail, and then having to go through security and re-enter a park, you can avoid all this by simply going on the 'express' bus.

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□Where are the pickup and drop-off points? In the Magic Kingdom, it is located adjacent to Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin in Tomorrowland. In Epcot, next to the men's and women's restroom on the east side of Spaceship Earth. (The side opposite of where the Art of Disney is located.) In Hollywood Studios, next to the back fence adjacent to Rockin' Roller Coaster. And, in Animal Kingdom, just outside the entrance to Kilimanjaro Safaris.

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□What does it cost? Currently, a single-day ticket costs \$15…and is only good for the day you purchase it on. You can buy what is called a multi-day ticket (good for up to 7 consecutive days) good starting the day you purchase it, for \$24 per person. (Obviously you also need to have the Park Hopper option on your park tickets.)

What was our experience? While the official website for this service states that you can add this to your account at Disney Resort Hotel locations, when we attempted this we were told we needed to go to Guest Services or to one of the kiosks in the parks.

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□So we approached the table and cast member at Epcot at one of the pickup/drop-off locations and asked to have the service added to our MagicBands...which means it is charged to the credit card you have

associated with your account. In theory, this should be able to be done right there at the pickup/drop-off point, but the cast member was having trouble with their portable electronic devices…which meant a short walk to the Guest Services center, to have it done there.

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□ Busses run twice an hour, on the half-hour…but each pairing between parks has a different departure time. While we were there, there were no published schedules so you need to ask the cast member at the pickup/drop-off point, in advance, what times the buses leave for the park you wish to go to next. For example, to go from Epcot to the Magic Kingdom the busses left at 10 and 40 minutes after the hour. It is generally advisable to be there a few minutes early as the cast member will need to scan your MagicBand to confirm your eligibility. Don't be late…the busses run on time!

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□ The advertised time for the bus service is from 10am to 8pm. So…if you were thinking of using the service to try and see multiple evening fireworks displays…that won't be possible. It also means you can't go from one park to one that might have extra-magic hours that night. You'll need to plan to use regular transportation options to either go to the other park…or back to your resort.

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□ Was it crowded on the bus? No! At least not on the ones we were on. At most there were six people on the bus…and sometimes less. It's a standard Disney transportation system bus so there were a lot of empty seats. From start to finish the time was generally about 20 minutes from park to park…so definitely a time savings.

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□ What are your considerations for choosing to pay for this service? If time in the parks is critical to you…and you want to avoid the hassles of exiting and re-entering parks…this is a real winner. I should also note that all the parks are transitioning to 100% metal detector walk-throughs, so that takes extra time. You are also going to have to take the time to find out what the departure times are for your bus…and arrange your park plan to be at the right place at the right time. Hopefully Disney will eventually publish a schedule which would at least save you part of that prep time.

(Hint…Disney…put it on the My Disney Experience App!)

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□ Is there a downside? You need to realize that you are going to go 'backstage' when you are boarding and exiting the bus. The reason that you won't find pictures of these areas with my article is that pictures are not permitted backstage. With that said, there is nothing really attractive to take pictures of where you are making the short walk to and from the bus. We're talking parking lots, cast member lockers, etc. So, if you are traveling with little ones for which the parks are

magic…to include the standard transportation venues, this is going to 'break the spell'. For adults or for those whose time is more important than magic…then by all means, the multi-day ticket is worth it! Single-day would only seem to make sense if you really only had one day and were trying to speed through the parks or trying to set some sort of record!

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□For the official information on this service, you can check out the link below.

<https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/guest-services/express-transportation-options/>

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□Happy traveling everyone!

About The Author: Randy and his wife, Kathy, have been visiting Walt Disney World and Disneyland for many, many years. Retiring from the Air Force after 32 years, they now live in Blacksburg, Virginia where Randy serves as the Commandant of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. Randy's hobby is photography and he has made the study of all things Disney a second pastime.

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