

Say Cheese!: Getting the Most From PhotoPass

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Let's be honest -- one of the best things about going on any vacation is the memories you bring back. That can be memories in your head, ones that you put into a scrapbook, or the photographic memories you take while you're away.

It's the latter category that Disney's PhotoPass system is aimed at capturing -- as well as your money of course! For many years, Disney has had photographers positioned at all the entrances to the parks and sometimes around some of the major landmarks within each of those parks, but previously, the way it worked was that you could just buy individual photos, usually at comparatively high prices. Of course, if there is just one image that you really want, you can still do that, but now with Disney's PhotoPass, you have a lot more options open to you.

These days, you'll find an array of photographic memorabilia for sale at the PhotoPass website from photo mugs to photo shirts, canvas prints, and photo cards. You can put your own photo book of memories together or even have a photo -- movie, where you'll get a full screen slide show of your images set to music, allowing you to star alongside your favorite Disney characters.

Perhaps the item that most people will be interested in -- and certainly the one that's marketed most heavily in the parks - is the PhotoPass CD. The standard price is \$124.95, which may seem like a lot of money, until you realize that gives you all the images taken of you by PhotoPass photographers at all the various locations in the parks, in high resolution. The CD even comes complete with a copyright release, allowing you to print your photos on your own, in any size you want, provided that they're for your personal use.

We were a bit skeptical on our last trip and, despite the very good pound/dollar exchange rate that we were enjoying at the time, did wonder if we would really get our money's worth from the PhotoPass CD. But we were at Disney for 19 nights and it seemed like as good a time as any to try it out. As we did so, we came across some interesting - and perhaps less well known -- ways to get the most out of our PhotoPass.

Firstly, if you want to get the CD -- or any of the other items available on the web site -- it's a good idea to get a good selection of photos while

you're in Disney. That means going up to every PhotoPass photographer you see to get more photos done. You'll find them all over the place and you'll be amazed at how quickly the number adds up. During our 19 night stay in Disney, we were able to clock up around 400 shots, which average out to more than 20 shots each day!

If that's your plan, it's worth warning the other members of your party, particularly if you've got anyone who's a bit camera shy. At least that way they can prepare themselves for all the attention they're going to be getting from the photographers.

When you get to Disney, start getting PhotoPass shots done as early in your vacation as possible. Don't just walk by the photographers, go up to them and ask if they'd take photos of you. That's what they're there for and they'll be more than happy to oblige. If you want a different combination of people to appear in the photos - perhaps as well as a general group shot, you want a photo of just the kids, then don't be afraid to ask for that.

As soon as you get your PhotoPass card (which is how Disney keeps track of all your photos), be sure to write down the card number and keep it somewhere safe - and away from your card. It's your way of being able to access your precious photos, should the worst happen and you lose your card. Of course, be sure to give that card to every PhotoPass photographer, so your shots will all be grouped together. Yes, you can have more than one PhotoPass card, but that complicates things when you get back home. [Ed.- You can use the same card at Walt Disney World and Disneyland, and can use it for every visit, if desired -- that'll just help you keep your photos even more organized.]

It's worth thinking whether you want to collect similar shots from each park. An obvious collection is a series of photos in front of all the park icons, but over the Christmas period, we also collected photos of us in front of all the Christmas trees. We did our best to collect photos at any country in World Showcase where we saw a photographer as well.

And here's where we learned an interesting trick. If there's one particular area of a park that you really would like a PhotoPass photo taken, don't be afraid to ask. The photographers are given allocated areas, but we discovered by talking to them that, if they don't have a line and they're not required in that area for a character meet, they may be happy to move somewhere else just to take your photos. For example, we borrowed the photographer who was in Morocco in Epcot to get a couple of shots done in neighboring Japan, and we did the same with a guy taking photos on the bridge between France and the United Kingdom. He was happy to come with us to the United Kingdom to get a

couple of shots done there, before returning to his previous post.

If you also see a photographer lingering around, it can be worth asking them what they're taking photos of. We did this on one occasion and were delighted to find out that the reason the guy was in the area was because Aladdin, the Genie, and Jasmine were due out in 20 minutes time, so we were able to be the first in line for them.

Another little known fact is that you can combine cards together for your CD. We visited Disney with extended family and were told that their card could be added on to ours. Of course, if you are going to do this, it's important to do it on the last day of your vacation, once all the photos have been taken.

We were also pleasantly surprised to discover that the photos taken during Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party could also be added on to our card, even though we were originally told this wouldn't be possible. The moral here is it really does pay to ask.

Then the fun starts when you get home, especially if you're ordering products like the CD, book, or movie, as you get to play with your images and can add extras, such as borders, the year, or even crop your photo. Don't forget that you only have 28 days to do all of this before you need to place your order or lose your images. We set to work on this almost as soon as we got home, as we didn't want to get anywhere near that deadline and risk losing our precious photos.

These are just some useful pointers that we've picked up while using Disney's PhotoPass system. If you want to learn more about Disney's PhotoPass and how to get the best out of it, it's well worth visiting <http://stitchkingdom.com/disneysPhotoPass/> which is packed full of useful information and answers to every question you can think of!

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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