

Disneyland Paris In A Day: You Can Do It!

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it -- traveling round the Disney theme parks of the world that is.

The plan to visit Disneyland Paris for the day came when there was a special two for the price of one offer on the Eurostar train between London and Paris. I managed to find a date that would work for us with this deal and shortly afterwards, we had two tickets to Paris for a very small investment. The plan was for us to be on the first train of the day out to Paris and the last train back, giving us the maximum possible amount of time in the park.

To reach Disneyland Paris from the center of Paris, you need to take the fast speed rail line, otherwise known as the RER. It's easy enough to get to the park. It's literally the last stop heading eastbound on Line A at the Marne-la-Vallee stop. When you get there, you're clearly signposted to the park, but really it's impossible to miss it, as the entrance through security is right by the station exit. (Ed. note: RER Lines B and D serve the Eurostar Paris station, Gare du Nord. Disneyland Paris-bound travelers transfer from either line to RER Line A one stop later at Chatalet - Les Halles.)

You have two parks to choose from at the Disneyland Paris Resort and let's be honest here; you're not going to see everything in one day. You probably won't even come close, but you will be able to see a lot and the way to maximize your day is, as with all Disney vacations, do a little bit of planning beforehand.

Try to head for the parks on a day when the crowds are likely to be lower. This means avoiding any French -- or British -- school holidays, as that's where most of the visitors come from. If possible, avoid the weekends, as lots of locals head here over the weekend, but we have found in the past that the crowds aren't too bad on weekends out of season - and that proved to be the case again on the weekend we visited, on a freezing cold day in mid January. If there aren't extra reasons to visit the parks, like fireworks or special events or parades, the crowds will be lower and that's certainly the case in January. We didn't encounter waits at any of the major rides of longer than 30 minutes and the vast majority of attractions at both parks were walk-ons.

So how on earth do you decide what to do with just a day for both parks? The first decision we made was that we wouldn't stand and wait for parades or the characters. In the past, we've had bad experiences with both, with people pushing us out of the way, and we decided instead to spend our time hitting as many of the unique attractions that the park has to offer as we possibly could.

We had already purchased our tickets online and just had to validate them. That probably saved us about 10 or 20 minutes, as the lines to buy tickets at the gate were horrendous, whereas we just walked straight up and were set a couple of minutes later.

We're in the fortunate position of not being great thrill riders, so we didn't have to worry about lines at any of the major coasters, such as Indiana Jones and the Temple of Peril. Big Thunder Mountain Railroad was down the day we visited, so that was off the list as well. We did our usual and headed left when we got to the top of Main Street, heading first for Adventureland. One stop worth making is Phantom Manor, their version of the Haunted Mansion. It never ceases to amaze me how much this old favorite varies between all the Disney parks around the world.

Another old favorite that is very different in Paris is Pirates of the Caribbean, and it's something we decided was worth waiting in line 20 minutes for. OK, so it doesn't have the nice new additions of the American parks, but there's still something very special about this version. On the way there, we stopped off to explore Skull Rock and the Pirates' Beach, really both walk-through attractions and well worth getting some photos of, as they're beautifully themed.

Fantasyland was our next stop, where I had one main attraction to visit, Alice's Curious Labyrinth, which was closed the last time we were here. It's based on Alice in Wonderland and the maze takes you past all the famous characters from the film. Again, it's another beautifully themed attraction. Although you might not recognize the name, Le Pays des Contes de Fees is essentially the Storybook Land Canal Boats ride from Disneyland in California, although with a European twist and some of the fairytale favorites from over here, including Peter and the Wolf, although interspersed with Disney favorites such as Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast, along with the Wizard of Oz.

Into Tomorrowland! The unique attraction here has to be Les Mysteres du Nautilus, a walk-through attraction, usually with little or no lines, through the famous Nautilus submarine.

One other thing not to be missed at Disneyland Paris on any visit of any

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length is Sleeping Beauty's Castle. Unusually for a Disney castle, it's home to attractions, with a dragon beneath, and the story of Sleeping Beauty played out in stained glass windows above.

Then it was over to the Walt Disney Studios park nearby. No more than a five-minute walk, we were able to enjoy two of our favorites from previous visits - Animagique, a fun show using the Japanese puppetry technique of Banraku, and Cinemagique, a tribute to cinema combining live action and famous movie scenes. Sadly, lines for the Tower of Terror, which had only opened a few days earlier for previews, were too long for us to include it, but you can't do everything in a day!

We didn't stop for a table service lunch, as we didn't have much time, instead preferring to grab counter service goodies. Fortunately, we were able to fit in a table service dinner, as we had managed to cram so much in during our day at the parks. The Plaza Gardens Restaurant offers both an a la carte and a buffet at dinner. We opted for the buffet and were very pleased with the selections on offer.

By the time we finished dinner, it was dark and time to grab a few night-time photos, as well as do some shopping in the Main Street shops on the way out (Disneyland Paris has some excellent merchandise!). Then it was back to catch our connecting train back to Paris and the final Eurostar service of the night. It had been a long, but exceptionally rewarding day and it just goes to prove that, if you put your mind to it, you can experience Disneyland Paris in just a day!

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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