

Why Our Hearts Belong To Disneyland: A Magic Review

by Kath Davis, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Wait! Don't shoot the author! I know I may hold a minority opinion on this topic. But, come on, the subject is still Disney, so it can't be all bad, can it?

And here's my disclaimer: I know Disneyland much better than Walt Disney World. I've only been to Walt Disney World once (my happiest vacation ever, outside of California), and we live less than an hour (my front door to entering the park, including parking and tram) from Disneyland. I've had an annual pass to Disneyland for about 15 years, and when my husband moved to California, one of our first joint purchases was a pair of annual passes. We don't get to Disneyland as often as we would like; it's a crime the way working gets in the way of Disneyland! But we go as often as we can, and we know the two parks in Anaheim very well. Simply put, our hearts belong to Disneyland. Read on if you want to know why. (And keep in mind that I've already written [two articles on the things we loved at Walt Disney World!](#))

Indiana Jones

There is nothing that compares to Indiana Jones in any of the parks in Orlando. Yes, we rode Dinosaur; no, it doesn't compare. It does employ the same ride platform, but we think it lacked the thrills and, even more, the atmosphere of Indiana Jones. When Indiana Jones first opened, even standing in a two-hour-long line was interesting: the carvings on the wall (Disney provided a card to translate the carvings), and twists and turns of the path, down into the bowels of the excavation site. Dinosaur's sterile scientific institute can't hold a candle to Indy's dust of ages, excavation holes, and instructional movies.

It's Smaller

Yes, we like the intimacy of Disneyland. This could certainly be an example of being comfortable with the familiar. Certainly, the smaller size causes some problems, as anyone who is trying to get across the park just after the fireworks have finished knows. But I think Disneyland's smaller size makes it easier for annual passholders to do exactly what we are well-known for doing; dropping into the park after work in the summer, or for a few hours on Sunday. It's less daunting and quicker to get around, and it's easier to get to know the secrets and the shortcuts that help you avoid the tourists.

Catch-a-Flave Ice Cream Stand at the entrance to Paradise Pier in Disney's California Adventure

The best soft ice cream you will ever have. Enough said!

Haunted Mansion Holiday

The haunted mansion in the Magic Kingdom is a beautiful building, but at Disneyland you get two rides in the same mansion. The transformation to Tim Burton's *Nightmare Before Christmas* as Haunted Mansion Holiday is one we look forward to every year. (Its been happening just as long as we've been married... any coincidence?) Obviously, the basic ride remains the same, with the elevator down to the Doom Buggies. But all the artwork and most of the characters are switched to the theme of, "when two holidays collide." If you get stuck in a long line, waiting to get in, you can listened to twisted and humorous Halloween "carols" while you wait.

Fantasyland Is A Real "Land"

When we first came upon Fantasyland in the Magic Kingdom, I commented that it felt like a street, not a land. This is a perfect example of how the limited space at Disneyland resulted in a more intimate, more-intensely themed result. Fantasyland is small, yes; there can be traffic jams, oh my, yes; but it feels like it all belongs together. The architecture and the basically circular construction, surrounding the magnificent carousel, enhance the experience of being in another place altogether. It's a Small World presents a far more impressive facade in Disneyland than in the Magic Kingdom.

You Can Walk Anywhere

We have also stayed at the hotels at the Disneyland Resort, and no matter in which hotel you are staying, no matter in which park you are, you can walk back to your room. In one case, your hotel is right across the walkway from that ride that got you all wet! Those buses at Walt Disney World were fun the first couple of times ("Oh boy, it's our bus to Animal Kingdom!"), but they do get a bit old ... especially at the end of a long day when you have to stand, crammed in, and your feet are really, really tired. When you get caught doing the Disney Two-Step (from wherever you are to Downtown Disney, and then back to where you want to be), it can be more than a bit annoying. In Anaheim, we've even occasionally chosen to walk from the park to the parking structure, when we've made the mistake of trying to leave at the same time as everyone else, rather than stand and wait for a tram.

.....

The History

After all, Anaheim is where it all started. Some of the rides have been there for 50 years. We will ride on outdated rides, like Snow White's Scary Adventure, just for the nostalgia.

Space Mountain

I just believe that you should sit beside someone on a roller coaster. You need to be able to grab your honey when you're scared. (Sitting almost in his lap on the Matterhorn is OK, too.)

Paradise Pier

Disney's California Adventure is a bit of an acquired taste; it took us a couple of visits to appreciate it. For someone who grew up in California, Paradise Pier is especially nostalgic. It recreates what you remember about those beachside amusement parks; never mind that the real thing was never so pristine or colorful... or safe! Paradise Pier is a tribute to what we longed for in our childhood; music, color, food, water, sun. It's one of the things Disney does best; reading our minds and creating what our hearts saw.

Fantasmic!

Here's a perfect example of bigger is not always better. I appreciated sitting in bleachers for the show at Disney-MGM Studios; it's much more comfortable, and the viewing is better than in Disneyland. But the show is too long! We felt that the producers added more villains just because they could, and the pace of the show suffered. Also, the Fantasmic! amphitheater feels like it was added on to Disney-MGM Studios; it's such a long walk in and out. In Disneyland, Fantasmic! creates a variety of logistical issues (read, traffic jams), but the fact that it is performed right in the middle of the park only adds to its magic. Even if you are not taking the time to watch it, you can catch glimpses of the show, and hear the music, as you walk to the Haunted Mansion or Thunder Mountain.

There you have it: my ten reasons for keeping faithful to my first love, Disneyland. As with most preferences, they are highly personal, and I am sure that many will disagree with me. But as for Randy and me, we'll keep enjoying Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure, and finding new things to love about each of them. Oh, wait, I forgot about the Electrical Parade...!

.....

About The Author: Kath Davis lives with her husband Randy in Orange County, close enough to hear the fireworks from Disneyland. Randy proposed seven years ago, in front of It's a Small World, at the end of Believe: There's Magic in the Stars. It's their all-time favorite fireworks show.

Article last updated: 11/8/2007

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/why-our-hearts-belong-to-disneyland.html>

Copyright by Kath Davis. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>