

Top 10 (Actually 13) Reasons to Stay at Disneyland's Grand Californian: A Resort Review

by Rebecca Oberg, PassPorter Guest Contributor

When planning any Disney vacation, one of the first concerns on most traveler's minds is "where should we stay?" Planning a trip to the Disneyland Resort is no exception. There are so many options to consider. On property or off property? Budget accommodations or "bust the budget" bliss?

If you're planning the ultimate California Disney experience, there is really only one place to stay; and that's Disney's Grand Californian Hotel. We've been hooked since our very first stay. We fell in love with our first step into the woodsy lobby with the ever so delicate pine-y smell. It's really like a mini-vacation within the vacation, a relaxing respite away from theme park madness with a charm all its own.

Here are my family's top thirteen (well, we tried to fit it into ten) reasons for choosing the Grand Californian Hotel for our stays at the Disneyland Resort.

13. The ultimate in Craftsman architecture and decor. From the awe-inspiring lobby (we love the simply amazing front door and all the little cozy nooks and crannies) to the finely appointed guest rooms, you won't be disappointed. If you'd like a free tour pointing out the details, just check your daily newsletter for details (see number 11).

12. The wonderfully elegant, yet relaxed pool area. With a waterslide built right into a Sequoia tree trunk and luxurious, padded loungers; it's heaven for kids and sun-worshippers alike. The two giant hot tubs are worth a soak as well.

11. Nightly turn-down service. You don't even have to ask. Who doesn't love little notes and chocolates on your pillow? And the daily newsletter is helpful too.

10. White Water Snacks. Even though they did away with the refillable mug option, it's still a great spot for a quick meal or snack. We loved the peaceful, shady outdoor seating (and the French fries).

9. Storytelling by the fire. Even if you don't have kids with you, it's fun to watch while sipping a glass of fine wine or hot toddy from the nearby Hearthstone Lounge.

8. Relaxing by the fireplace. While similar to the storytelling experience, this one is more relaxing and a wonderful rustic spot to revisit the day's highlights. They must keep the air conditioning on high (or pump in fresh mountain air, its Disney magic after all). Even on the warmest summer day, it feels good to sit by the fire.

7. Rooms with a view. Even if you don't spring for the fantastic Park or the sparkling Downtown Disney Views, you may score the monorail whooshing by or a lovely wooded area with the standard view.

6. That legendary Disney service. We've found the cast members here to go above and beyond to assure a magical stay. Even the housekeeping is superb.

5. Piano music in the lobby. Evenings are even more elegant with a real live musician tickling the ivories. Holiday tunes make the atmosphere especially festive.

4. Storyteller's Cafe - a cozy, warm location for a rib-sticking breakfast with your favorite woodland characters. (Meeko is adorable and will try to steal your desserts if you're not careful!) Dinner is yummy too, but no raccoons around to plunder your goodies. There's so much detail in here that we notice new things each time we visit.

3. An evening at Napa Rose. It's not just dinner, it's an experience. From the fragrant wines to the delectable gourmet food and superior service team (including a team of sommeliers) you'll never regret it. At least until the bill comes, of course!

2. Sheer convenience. Ever been soaking wet after a spin on Grizzly River Rapids? Not for long if you can zip up to your room and change into dry clothes. Ever been weary and sore after a day of hard-core park hopping? Your feet will thank you as soon as you set foot in your comfortable room five minutes from the park exit (if it even takes that long).

1. That secret entrance to Disney's California Adventure Park. It's not really secret, but it feels like it is! Head over before rope drop and say yes if a cast member asks if you'd like the "tour." Even if you miss the tour, you'll still be one of the first on Soarin' Over California for the day. How cool is that? So, what are you waiting for? Call or get online with no delay to book that trip to Disneyland Resort. You already know where to stay. Now where to eat? That's a whole 'nother topic…

About The Author: Rebecca is married with three children and teaches third grade. She is also a Guide (moderator) on the PassPorter Message boards.

Article last updated: 9/20/2007

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<http://www.passporter.com/articles/top-10-Actually-13-reasons-to-stay-at-disneylands-grand-californian-resort.html>

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