

Disney's BoardWalk Resort: A Hidden Gem

by Terry Rohrer, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Most vacationers may not know what entertainment and dining options are available to guests that are not staying at the property. We found what this resort offers when a friend wanted to meet us for dinner but did not have park admission. We decided to meet at Disney's BoardWalk Resort and have dinner at one of the restaurants.

The BoardWalk Resort is of course a deluxe property with all the amenities. But what most guests miss is the actual boardwalk that sits in the back of the resort. There are restaurants, shops, an ice cream parlor & candy store, and carnival games for the kids. There is the Atlantic Dance Hall, and Jellyrolls, which is a dueling piano bar for the over 21 crowd.

There are bikes available for rent to ride around the Boardwalk and Crescent Lake. The path that circles Crescent Lake is $\frac{7}{8}$ of a mile and will take you past five different resorts. It starts at the BoardWalk and goes past the Swan, Dolphin, Beach Club and Yacht Club resorts. The best part of the bike ride is seeing these resorts from the back. You get an up-close look at the best pool on Disney property, the Beach and Yacht Club's Stormalong Bay. You can even get a four-wheeled surrey bike that the entire family can ride!

The dining options at the BoardWalk are wonderful: there is the Big River Brewing Co., the Flying Fish Cafe, Spoodles and an ESPN Club (for the sports nut in the family). Be sure to check your PassPorter for the details on what they serve and the costs. We enjoy Spoodles for the Mediterranean-style pasta. When you see the menu and the amount of food you will understand why we rent the bike AFTER dinner!

One of the things that Disney has done to make the night great for the entire family is add entertainers to the boardwalk. They change them on a frequent basis so that if you go every night you may experience a variety of entertainers or (at least) not see the same show as you saw the previous night. Each roving entertainer will stop and perform their act, and as he or she gets going you will see they have a large crowd watching. They will get the crowd involved in the act. Our 6 year-old played a washboard with the Banjo Man, swung a rope with the cowgirl, and helped the magician with a trick, all in one night.

The entertainers are out every night from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Disney does not advertise them or list when or where they will perform,

as they are meant to be a "happy surprise" for the guests. If it rains they are still there but may be a bit harder to find - they will perform in the lobby of the BoardWalk or in the restaurant lobbies. If it is raining be sure to keep a look out for them as it will help pass the time while you wait for a table and keeps the little ones happy while trapped inside.

The performers include but are not limited to:

Professor Flapdoodle and his All American Medicine Pitch is an original member of the BoardWalk Buskers, who started in 1996 when the BoardWalk opened. He performs magic with comedy.

Erick Olson and Brian Staron, who do comedic magic.

The Amazing Carlo (Marek Dudek) who does amazing balancing and sword swallowing.

Bill & Lin Whitmire do a comedy juggling routine.

Mark Anderson, aka The Musicale Mark and his bicycle piano.

Anthony the Banjo Man who does comedic banjo tunes.

When you see them perform be sure to tell them that, "Shy Brady from Indiana says hello." Our son was a bit shy at first but once he realized how much fun it was to participate he started talking to all of them, and was a hit. Every time we go back we see someone who remembers him.

Another neat thing that the BoardWalk offers is a view of IllumiNations, Epcot's fireworks spectacular. Head for the west end of the boardwalk near Jelly Rolls and the Atlantic Dance Hall to grab a spot! You can also see IllumiNations from the bridge between the BoardWalk and the Swan & Dolphin resorts.

As you can tell, the BoardWalk is on our "must do" list every trip because of everything it offers. With all things Disney, the entertainment is subject to change (and usually does) so check your Times Guide or refer to your PassPorter for more information. You will have a great time at the BoardWalk and will start to include it in every trip, like we did after just one trip. Just remember to tell them, "Hi from Shy Brady in Indiana."

About The Author: Terry is the father of two and is a previous contributor to PassPorter News.

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