

Pirates & Princess Party: A Magic Review

by Barry Hom, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Disney has a lucrative business with pirates and princesses. The Pirates of the Caribbean movie series has made a truckload of money. The ride that inspired the movie is as popular as ever and recently has undergone changes with the addition of Captain Jack Sparrow. A Pirate Cruise disembarks from different points at the Walt Disney World Resort. A Pirates Lair recently took over the old Tom Sawyer's Island location at Disneyland.

For those who want to experience the princess lifestyle, the Walt Disney World Resort offers the Perfectly Princess Tea Party, the Princess Storybook Dining at Epcot, Cinderella's Grand Feast, the Wonderland Tea Party, the Biddidi Bobbidi Boutique, and special meals at Cinderella's Castle: "Once Upon a Time Breakfast," "A Fairytale Lunch at Cinderella's Royal Table," and the "Dreams Come True Dinner." (Sorry, PassPorter friends, I am not having a makeover at the Biddidi Bobbidi Boutique and writing an article on it. They can't pay me enough to do it!) You can also experience rides and attractions based on Disney princess, such as Cinderella's Golden Carrousel and Snow White's Scary Adventures at the Magic Kingdom, and the shows "Beauty and the Beast -- Live on Stage" and "Voyage of the Little Mermaid" at Disney-MGM Studios.

If pirates and princesses generate this much money and attention for Disney, why not combine these two cash cows? These two Disney properties come together at the Pirates and Princess Party at the Magic Kingdom. This hard-ticketed event began in January 2007 and returns on select nights from August 11, 2007 to September 3, 2007. I had visited the event on its last night during the spring: March 8, 2007. The event hours during my visit were 7:30 PM to 1:00 AM. On the select nights in August and September 2007, the hours are 7:00 PM to 12:00 AM. Ticket prices from Walt Disney World's website are as follows:

Pirates & Princess Party Advance Price: Ages 10 and over: \$38.95 + tax
Ages 3-9: \$32.95 + tax

Pirates & Princess Party Day of Event Price: Ages 10 and over: \$45.95 + tax
Ages 3-9: \$39.95 + tax

Advanced tickets can be purchased on www.disneyworld.com or by calling 407-W-DISNEY.

The Pirates and Princess Party follows a similar format to another hard-ticketed event, Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party. The party has a parade and fireworks. Stations scattered around the Magic Kingdom hand out candy. Nearly all the rides and attractions are open, except for rides such as the Jungle Cruise in Adventureland. Guests are allowed, even encouraged, to come dressed in princess or pirates costumes. On the night of my visit, one guest came dressed up as the red head from the Pirates of the Caribbean ride!

With your Pirates and Princess Party ticket, you can enter the park as early as 4:00 pm without regular park admission. If you enter early, you can catch the rides and attractions not open during the event. Additionally, during spring event times, you might be able to catch the Wishes fireworks show before the Pirates and Princess Party (if Wishes is scheduled during your visit). You can see two fireworks show for the price of one ticket (assuming you've never seen Wishes before). Sadly, Wishes is not scheduled for any of the fall Pirates and Princess Party dates.

When you enter the park, you're given a small bag to collect candy from around 13 "Treasure Spots" scattered around the Magic Kingdom. The bag is made of velvet, has the Pirates and Princess Party logo emblazoned on the front, and is a little smaller than your hand. The Pirates Bazaar at Adventureland has similar bags that you can stuff full of "precious" stones.

The Magic Kingdom laid out red carpets at the entrance. You really feel like royalty when you walk on this carpet! Be sure to pick up an event map to find your way around the park, to see the show times, to locate the "Treasure Spots," and to see when other activities are scheduled through the night.

The event has the two things that Disney does best; parades and fireworks. The "Disney's Enchanted Adventures Parade" begins at Frontierland and winds its way across Liberty Square and down Main Street U.S.A. You can see royal knights on horseback, court dancers, and Disney princesses such as Ariel, Snow White, Belle, and Cinderella. The pirates' portion of the parade has a 39-foot pirate ship, a treasure float with Jack Sparrow, and Peter Pan with his gang fighting Captain Hook and his cronies. My favorite area for parade viewing is in Frontierland in front of the Country Bears building. This area has enough light to videotape and photograph without excessive problems. You can find other well-lit spots along the parade route in Frontierland.

The fireworks show is called "Magic, Music, and Mayhem." This show starts out with fireworks celebrating the Disney princesses. Then the

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pirates attack and cause trouble for the princesses. Don't worry, like most Disney attractions, it ends happily with a little help from a "pixie-dusting" Disney friend. I've seen the fireworks shows at the Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland. They've all been spectacular and this show is no exception. View this show anywhere along Main Street, U.S.A., facing Cinderella's Castle.

The "Dream Along With Mickey" show is performed at the Castle Forecourt Stage in front of Cinderella's Castle. Mickey Mouse and other Disney character friends invite guests to join in to dream and have happy, adventurous exploits. On the night of my visit, the show abruptly ended early due to technical difficulties. This show is also performed during regular park hours.

You think that treasure hunting, watching the parade, and admiring the fireworks show is enough to fill your evening? The Pirates and Princess Party has even more fun! DJ booths in Tomorrowland and Fantasyland allow you to dance the night away with such Disney characters as Stitch and Sebastian. Watch break-dancing pirates and acrobats perform their incredible moves. Meet Aurora, Belle, and Cinderella at the Princess Pavilion in Mickey's Toontown Fair. Learn how to be a pirate in Captain Sparrow's Pirate Tutorial. The Magic Kingdom is packed full of these smaller shows during the event!

The best part of the Pirates and Princess Party is experiencing the Magic Kingdom's rides and attractions with a short wait. FastPass is not available during the night, but it's not needed. Most waits are 5 to 10 minutes. You will rarely find a long queue. The longest line I saw during my visit was 15 minutes for Peter Pan's Flight. Still, the wait for this ride is relatively short compared to its normal wait time during regular operating hours. Since the waits are low, you can go on rides and attractions that you may not experience during the day because of long queue times, like AstroOrbiter or the Magic Carpets of Aladdin. Sorry, the Hall of Presidents is not open during the Pirates and Princess Party. You will have to find someplace else to take a nap!

Figure out which princess you want to be: Cinderella, Snow White, or Princess Leia. Decide on which pirates you want to dress up as: Captain Jack Sparrow, Peter Pan, or a Pittsburgh Pirate. Then go to the Pirates and Princess Party and have fun. You will have a magical and memorable experience. Just remember to collect a bag of "treasure" for me!

More Information: [Disney's official web site for the Pirates and Princess Party](#)

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My video of the Pirates and Princess Party:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyJfqpRkbbk>

About The Author: Barry is a roller coaster and theme/amusement park enthusiast. So far, he has ridden 382 roller coasters and visited over 80 theme and amusement parks in many U.S. states, France, United Kingdom, Norway, and Sweden. He is also a columnist and a moderator for the web site IOA Central. He is looking forward to a group trip with the web site Theme Park Review to Japan in September and a side trip to SoCal shortly afterwards.

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