

Using Orlando's "Other" Airport: Sanford Airport

by Margaret Harris, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Many people do not realize that Orlando is home to two airports - the big busy International Airport and then there is what I call Orlando's best kept secret, the Orlando Sanford Airport. This is a smaller airport located approximately 43 miles from Walt Disney World. There is no Magical Express Service to Walt Disney World from this airport and alas there is little information in most guide books about Sanford. I would not have known about arranging a town car if a prior vacationer had not filled me in. So, why bother with this airport? I'm hoping that my recent experience will encourage others to give this alternative a chance.

Orlando Sanford offers Allegiant Air as one of its carriers and flying from Des Moines as we do, it is a wonderful option. I am not a flyer so it helps me to think of it as only one take off, one landing, and three hours in the air and I am there. Another comforting thought for me ... no connecting flights, so less chance that my luggage is lost or delayed. To top it off, the price is amazing! We bought our tickets in November 2006 and paid \$203.00 round trip per person. We flew into Orlando Sanford on February 3rd, 2007 and our Iowa weather was good but coming home on February 13th blizzard conditions left many flights that were going through Minneapolis, Chicago, and Kansas City stranded for up to 8 hours. Not so with Allegiant -- our flight was perhaps 30 minutes late and had a delay unloading us at the airport but we were home in less than 4 hours from Orlando to Des Moines.

So here I am at the Orlando Sanford airport. Claiming my luggage is easy since this is a small airport and we are the only flight at the baggage check. It is delightful to see my town car driver holding a poster with my name on it. It truly makes me feel like a star! How did I find this wonderful service? There are many reputable town car services available and the Internet makes it so easy to make arrangements. I used the resources on the Orlando Sanford airport web site and e-mailed Sam's Transportation. I had called prior to my trip to confirm my date and the price. He was professional and prompt. I told him that I would need to stop at Albertson's for groceries and he was very accommodating. (For our 2005 trip I used Tiffany Town Car and they were wonderful and also accommodating. Their price in 2005 was \$165.00.) Both companies required the full balance upon arrival at the airport, and any time this type of service is utilized a tip is in order. The driver that picks you up may not be the driver that takes you back so a tip is in order both ways. I did see many cab companies waiting at the

airport but my driver warned me that the fares are very high.

It is always wonderful to have the opportunity to grocery shop before arriving at Walt Disney World and if you have a moderate or deluxe accommodation your room comes with a refrigerator. Be aware it is a refrigerator only and no freezer compartment. Our flight from Des Moines always arrives late at night (around 9:45 pm) so the only thing open is an Albertson's. We don't have those in Iowa so when they asked me if I had a preferred customer card I replied that I am from out of state. The cashier was more than happy to issue me a number to give me the preferred price. If you are interested in a rental car the airport literature stated that Alamo-National, Dollar-Thriftly, Avis, Enterprise, and Hertz are all available on-site and Budget and U-save have off-site locations with shuttle service. I am overwhelmed at the prospect of driving in the Orlando area so a town car is well worth the money for me.

So I made it to Walt Disney World with all of my luggage and my groceries having had a pleasant trip and an easy car ride. All that and I saved money too! Reason enough for me to fly into Sanford from now on. How about you?

About The Author: Margaret Harris is an avid Disney traveler. Every trip she says "This is my last trip." and then six months later she is back on the Internet planning another trip.

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