

Christmas Day At Disney: A Disney Feature

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

The decorations are abundant, holiday music is playing and everywhere you look are advertisements for this season's must-have presents. It's a sure sign Christmas isn't far away and what better way to spend the festive season than by visiting Disney?

We've been lucky enough to spend three Christmases in the magic of Walt Disney World and there really is nothing like it. So for those of you enjoying Christmas at Disney this year or thinking about it for future years, what can you expect on Christmas Day itself?

The most common question I'm asked about being in Disney for Christmas is "what are the cast members like?" Many people are under the impression that they can't have that same magic on Christmas Day. After all, who really wants to work over Christmas?

Well, I've never come across any cast member who's been less than totally magical on Christmas Day. Every single one we've seen has wished us "Happy holidays!" with a big smile on their face -- and that even includes the lifeguards at Stormalong Bay, who were shivering because the temperature had dropped below 70°F that day! The cast members we've talked to tell us that Christmas Day is a magical time and it's wonderful to be able to share that with so many guests, who are taking in the magic of this special day.

And Disney doesn't forget that it's a special day. It's not unusual to wake on Christmas morning and discover that Father Christmas has come calling, leaving a Disney stocking hanging on the door of your room, packed with goodies to enjoy. It's a lovely touch and a great way to start the day.

However, things can quickly become less than magical if you don't plan ahead. Let's not fool ourselves. Christmas Day at Disney is wonderful -- and because of that, it's a very popular time of the year to visit. Crowd levels are at their peak and, unless you encounter particularly wet or cold weather, you'll find all of the parks straining with people.

The first choice to make about Christmas Day is whether to go to a Disney park or not. Some people feel there's no decision to be made, it wouldn't be Christmas unless they were in a park, but don't forget that there's lots you can do outside of the four main theme parks.

If it's warm enough, how about spending the day at a Disney water park? We have very fond memories of the Christmas Eve we spent at Typhoon Lagoon. Sure, you have to play it by ear and keep an eye on the weather forecast, but you may be lucky and get a warm enough day.

You can take the stress out of Christmas shopping by not bothering before the big day. One year we did exactly that and hit the shops on Christmas Day. We set ourselves a limit each and we were allowed to buy exactly what we wanted for ourselves up to that amount and it was a really fun -- and different -- way to do things! At least you can guarantee that you'll get what you want -- and there's plenty to choose from at Downtown Disney.

Another option is to spend the day visiting the various Disney resorts. They're all beautifully decorated during the holiday season and it's worth making time to see them. Our favorites that we always make sure we visit at Christmas include the Beach Club, Grand Floridian, Animal Kingdom Lodge and the Wilderness Lodge. You'll find a chocolate merry-go-round, a life-size gingerbread house and a chocolate village on your travels if you take in these resorts.

If you do want to go to a park, which one should you head for? Our favorite is Epcot, so that's the one we usually go to. It's packed with storytellers around the World Showcase, explaining about the festive season in their native country and for us, there's no better way to spend Christmas night than by watching the Candlelight Processional. Somehow, the re-telling of the Christmas story is so much more magical on the day itself and, when followed by dinner at one of Epcot's superb restaurants, Christmas doesn't get much better.

However, it's a close call for us between Epcot and MGM, with their wonderful Osborne Lights, which will this year be dancing for your delight. There's something very soothing about the lights and they never fail to bring tears to my eyes.

Don't forget Animal Kingdom either. Although it's usually the first park to close on Christmas Day, it's also usually the last one to fill up, so if you want to have a lie-in before you head out and find the other parks too much to handle, this could be a quieter alternative for you -- and what could be more unusual than going on an African safari on Christmas Day?

Of course, most people head straight for the Magic Kingdom on Christmas Day and if that's your plan, there's only one thing you need to remember -- get there as soon as it opens! This park doesn't handle crowds well and when it's full, it really does feel full. I've been the park

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has reached capacity and they've stopped letting anyone else in. All you can see in every direction from the hub in front of the castle is just a sea of people!

Don't necessarily plan on doing many rides on Christmas Day if you do go to a park. Nearly everyone else will have the same idea, with FastPasses disappearing quickly and wait times skyrocketing. Waits of three to four hours for the top rides have been seen in the past. Instead, what we tend to do is head for the more unusual attractions that don't get the crowds as much. If you've never been to Tom Sawyer Island in the Magic Kingdom or seen the films in Epcot's World Showcase or walked the various trails in Animal Kingdom, Christmas Day is a wonderful time to do just that.

Whatever you choose to do on Christmas Day at Disney, make sure you take time to just soak in the festive atmosphere and enjoy the fact that you're in the most magical place on earth at one of the most magical times of the year. It really can't be beaten and we'll be back there again for our Disney Christmas next year!

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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