

Pros and Cons of the Magic Your Way Premium Plan: A Disney Feature

by Dawn Erickson, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

There are so many decisions that are made when planning a Walt Disney World vacation. How you are going to get there? Where you are going to stay? Where you are going to eat? When planning my most recent trip with my husband to "the World," we decided to go all out and chose the Magic Your Way Premium Plan.

The Premium Plan includes your resort accommodations, Magic Your Way park passes with Park hopping and the Water Parks and Fun Option for the length of your stay, and breakfast, lunch and dinner at over 100 Walt Disney World restaurants. The recreation options available on the Premium plan are spectacular. You could play 18 holes on one of the many championship golf courses or participate in water sports, including parasailing and water-skiing. Some of the other options include a round of golf at one of the two miniature golf courses, watercraft rentals, bike rentals, horseback trail rides, guided fishing excursions, and tickets to Cirque de Soleil's La Nouba. For those with children, there is unlimited use of the Children's Activity Centers. Reservations are required for all recreation activities. Last but not least, you can book as many tours as you want throughout your package stay. Choose from a wide variety of options like the Keys to the Kingdom tour at the Magic Kingdom, Disney's Backstage Safari at the Animal Kingdom, and the Undiscovered Future World tour at Epcot.

The main reason we chose the Premium Plan was for the dining options. We wanted to leave for this trip knowing we did not have to pay for any meals out of pocket. With the plan, we received breakfast, lunch, and dinner at over 100 restaurants on Walt Disney World property. Just like under the regular Dining Plan, alcoholic beverages, souvenir mugs, glow cubes, and in-room mini bars are excluded from the plan. A nice feature is that many of the restaurants that are two (2) dining credits on the Magic Your Way Dining Plan, like Hollywood Brown Derby and Cinderella's Royal Feast, only used one (1) credit on the Premium Plan. We also were able to dine at Fulton's Crab House in Downtown Disney, which is not offered on the Magic Your Way Dining Plan. We were able to dine at restaurants we normally overlooked for one reason or another and took advantage of seven character meals. Since the meals were paid for, we also enjoyed appetizers and desserts at most table service meals.

As far as dining goes, I found two cons with the plan. The first con is

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that this is a lot of food. Even my husband, who is a big eater, thought the amount of food was too much. There were a couple of days where we cancelled our reservations as we just were not hungry. The second con is in regard to the lack of snack credits that are normally offered on the regular Magic Your Way Dining Plan. The snack credits are a plus for those bottles of water in the park, those Mickey Bar cravings, and during the Food and Wine Festival, those tasty offerings at all the booths throughout the World Showcase. We were unable to exchange any of our credits for what are considered "snacks" under the Magic Your Way Dining Plan, so we did incur some out-of-pocket expenses because we enjoyed the offerings during the Food and Wine Festival.

Of all the extra amenities included on the Premium Plan, we only took advantage of three on our trip. We took the Keys to the Kingdom at the Magic Kingdom (\$120.00 value for both). This is a spectacular tour and one of the highlights of our trip. We also reserved tickets for a showing of La Nouba in Downtown Disney (\$162.00 value for both). We had excellent seats in section 202, row AA, seats 1 and 2. Finally, we played a round of golf at Fantasia Gardens near the Swan/Dolphin resorts. The total value was \$21.50 for both of us.

We booked our vacation package through AAA and received the AAA discount. The prices I am giving to you are based on that information. It will differ for each individual or family. To give you an idea on the cost of the Premium Plan, we calculated what the cost was per day for each of us and compared it to the total cost of our meals and extras. Based on our cost, it was approximately an extra \$161.66 per day for the both of us (\$969.96 for 6 nights). On our dining alone, we would have spent \$984.14. The extras would have cost us \$303.50. Grand total: \$1287.64. Difference: \$317.68 to our advantage.

Overall, the Magic Your Way Premium Plan worked well for us on this trip. We were unable to experience everything it had to offer but it truly made this trip something to remember. We did not have to worry about out-of-pocket expenses except for snacks and souvenirs. I recommend if you are considering the Premium Plan to do some research and see if you can fully take advantage of everything it offers and weigh the cost.

A full breakdown of all the amenities available on the 2007 Premium Plan, as well as the participating restaurants, can be found on the Walt Disney World web site.

About The Author: Dawn Erickson is a Co-Guide in the Disneyland: Making More Magic and Office Forums on the PassPorter message boards. She is currently planning a trip with some fellow PassPorters to Disneyland in February 2007.

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