

Say Cheese!: Making The Most of PhotoPass

by Terry Rohrer, PassPorter Guest Contributor

It all started at an amusement park, with a bunch of pushy kids trying to get everyone's picture at the front gate. Then they hand you a piece of paper that tells you to come back and see your group photo after a designated time. After a long day of rides and ice cream, you find the ticket and stop to see your picture (that is if you remember). When you find it, it's a small slide photo on a cheap key chain that you have to hold up to a light to see. All this for the bargain price of \$11.95.

Like all things, Disney has made this not just better, but fantastic. Disney teamed up with Kodak some years ago to capture families as they walk down Main Street USA. With the help of Kodak, cast members were trained to not only stop and take pictures, but give them better quality pictures than most family's point and shoot cameras.

This service has "developed" as the technology advanced. Yes, they started with old-style film cameras, but like everything Disney touches, they have made it better. With the old way, film had to be developed, so you had to stop back after a period of time to see the prints. Even after the introduction of digital cameras, you had to wait about an hour or so to see the pictures, but now you could view them on a computer screen. You still had to go to a shop and ask to see your pictures. Then you had to decide at that very moment if you wanted to purchase the photos. Sometimes, it was a tough decision due to budget constraints, or because Mom did not have her eyes open in the picture but everyone else looked great. Now with the new PhotoPass system, you don't have to stop that day to look at pictures, and you have lots of time to make your decision. Yes, Disney still has locations in every theme park where you can view and purchase your photos, but you can also view and purchase any and all of your PhotoPass photos on the Internet when you get home.

So here is how it works - you start down Main Street USA (or as you go into any park) and someone with a Nikon D-70 Digital SLR camera and a Disney name badge asks you to stop for a picture. Tell the kids this will only take a second, and make them turn around and follow the directions of the cast member. The cast member will stand you in the perfect spot and take a few pictures of the family. If you want a picture of just the kids, ask, and they will make that happen also. By the way, they will be more than happy to take a shot with your camera, too. If you ask for advice, they will give you some tips about how to take photos

and get great shots during your vacation. Be sure that you get your PhotoPass card before you walk away (they should offer it to you automatically). Treat this card like your park tickets or your credit cards, as it will be the way you will be able to see your photos later.

Carry your card with you, and give it to each cast member that takes your picture. They will scan your card, and all your photos will be stored together. If you forget to give them your card (or leave it in your room), they'll give you another. Don't worry, you will be able to view all of the pictures - you'll just need to keep track of all those extra cards. To be safe, make sure you have a record of each card. Take a digital photo of the back or write down the number, so you have it in case the card gets misplaced.

When you meet Disney characters there will usually be a PhotoPass photographer on hand to take pictures of you and your kids with the characters. They will get candid shots of the first moments with the characters, as well as posed shots.

If you are taking pictures at the same time the cast member is, let your family know that the cast member gets the first photo, then have whatever family member is also taking photos say, "Now, look at me." This way, you will not get home and find that everyone in your pictures was looking at the PhotoPass photographer!.

As I said in an earlier article, the cast member with the character (the "handler") will be happy to take your picture, using your camera. We had the PhotoPass photographer use our camera right after he took his shots and they turned out great. Use both of these cast members to your advantage while you spend time with the characters.

Now you have spent the day or week getting your picture taken in front of all the park icons and with the characters. You can stop at one of the locations in the park to look at the photos, or better yet, go home and visit the PhotoPass web site to start the process of viewing your photos.

Logging into the web site is a simple process. On the first page of the web site you are asked for the number on the back of your PhotoPass card. Enter the number and go to the second page and fill out the required information. It will ask for your, name, address, e-mail, and a password. Keep in mind that if you want anyone else to be able to view and purchase these photos, they will have to enter your e-mail and password, so don't use a password you use for other software.

After you register, the photos will come up in the file marked "My

Disney Photos." They will be there for the next 30 days so you can view them and decide if you want to purchase any of them. There are six things you can do at this point - view all of them in a slideshow, purchase them, create greeting cards out of your favorite photos, share them with others, enhance them, and add other PhotoPass numbers if you have multiple cards - you'll be able to view everything with a single login. To me, the neatest feature is enhancing the photos with borders, autographs, or customized captions.

If at any time you need help, you can click on the word "Help" at the top of the page and it will take you to <http://www.disneyphotopass.com/help>. This will answer any questions you may have and give you additional information about the system. Two things to keep in mind at this point is that you only have 30 days to make up your mind, and you will not be able to download any photos from the site. Any photos you buy will be shipped to the address you listed.

The cost of the program is listed at the site when you choose to purchase a picture. Currently, a 5x7 is \$12.95, an 8x10 is \$16.95, and the best deal is 1- 5x7 and 4 wallets for only \$19.95.

If you want all of them but they took A LOT (our last trip they took 120 photos), you can have all of your photos put onto a CD for \$149.99 and take them home with you. You can order this CD from the [or at one of Disney's in-park camera shops before you head home.](#)

[Disney usually has discounts available on the web site and they will change often. For the most part, the more you buy, the better the discount. Just keep checking and take advantage of them if you can.](#)

[In closing, do not shy away from the PhotoPass cast members, as they are there to not only help Disney's bottom line, but to capture the magic as it happens for your family. Take the time to let them take your picture, talk to them about photographic tips and when you get home, share the photos with everyone you know. Who knows? You may just find the perfect picture, and save the magic forever.](#)

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