

Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa: The Luxurious Life

by Jennifer and Dave Marx, Authors of [PassPorter Travel Guidebooks](#)

The most luxurious of Disney's resorts, the Grand Floridian Resort & Spa is a breathtaking Victorian hotel with turrets and gabled roofs. It extends into the Seven Seas Lagoon between the Polynesian and the Magic Kingdom. From the moment you step into the Grand Lobby, you will feel as though you've been transported back to the 1890s and the days when the well-to-do wintered in style at grand seaside resorts. As in that unhurried time, the warm whites and soft pastels draw you in, just as the towering lobby and stained glass skylights draw your eyes upward. It is the picture of charm, romance, and luxury.

Resort Layout & Rooms at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

900 guest rooms are generously spread out among five lodge buildings and the Grand Lobby. The luxurious rooms are decorated in four different whimsical-yet-subtle themes: floral, cameo (fairies), swans (Wind in the Willows), and Alice in Wonderland. Rooms are about 400 sq. ft. and are resplendent with marble-topped double sinks and balconies or patios. Most guest rooms offer two queen-size beds and a daybed, accommodating five people. The lodge buildings also house the slightly smaller "dormer" rooms, plus suites. Amenities include signature toiletries, turndown service, mini-bar, large in-room safe, hair dryer, newspaper delivery, valet parking, 24-hour room service, high-speed Internet (fee) -- and best of all -- comfy robes to relax in after a long day.

Dining at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

Culinary delights await you in any of the restaurants and lounges, largely located on the first two floors of the Grand Lobby. Table-service restaurants, which are described on pages 229--230 of *PassPorter's Walt Disney World* guidebook, include: 1900 Park Fare, a festive character dining experience; C&T, sophisticated Floridian and Mediterranean cuisine; Grand Floridian Cafe, a sun-splashed cafe with traditional fare; Garden View Lounge, high tea in the afternoon; Narcoossee's, seafood with a view of Seven Seas Lagoon; and Victoria & Albert's, Disney's finest restaurant. Quick-service options include the Grand Floridian Pool Bar for snacks and Gasparilla's Grill and Games for light fare 24 hours a day. Typical menu items at Gasparilla's Grill include an egg croissant (\$5.59), a double cheeseburger (\$6.89), a whole cheese pizza (\$13.99, toppings are \$1.50), and chili (\$3.50).

Lounges at the Grand Floridian include the Garden View Lounge, which

offers drinks in the evening. Mizner's serves cocktails and light snacks within earshot of the musicians who often perform in the Grand Lobby. The Grand Floridian Pool Bar also serves drinks and snacks, such as a cheeseburger with fries (\$11.95) or a Cobb salad (\$12.95). Visit Gasparilla's Grill and Games to buy refillable mugs (\$12.49) and get refills.

Relaxing & Playing at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

For Athletes: Two clay tennis courts are available for a fee. Rent a variety of boats at the marina. You'll also find walking/jogging paths.

For Charmers: The Ivy Trellis Salon pampers you with hair and nail treatments. The Grand Floridian Spa & Health Club (see page 189) is a full-service spa facility. Call 407-824-2332 for information.

For Children: A playground is adjacent to the Mouseketeer Clubhouse, a supervised program for kids 4--12 (see page 255).

For Gamers: Gasparilla's Grill and Games has a video arcade.

For Shoppers: On the first floor, Sandy Cove stocks sundries and Summer Lace offers upscale women's clothing. On the second floor, M. Mouse Mercantile has gifts; Basin White offers upscale bath products; and Commander Porter's has men's and women's apparel.

For Swimmers: A moderately-sized leisure pool and hot tub are available, as is a themed, zero-entry pool near the beach with a slide and play fountain. Sunbathers enjoy the beach (no swimming).

Transportation at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

A monorail goes to Magic Kingdom as well as the Contemporary, the Polynesian, and the Transportation and Ticket Center (TTC), where you can transfer to the Epcot monorail. Boats also take you to the Magic Kingdom and the Polynesian. For other parks (see chart below for in-transit times), use the direct buses in front of the resort. For other resorts, monorail to the Magic Kingdom (daytime) or bus to Downtown Disney (evening) and transfer to a resort bus.

Tips and Notes for Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

The Grand Lobby is often filled with the sound of live music, ranging from solo pianists to full dance bands.

Many children's activities are offered, including scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, and story time (complimentary). Additional-fee activities like fishing trips, the Wonderland Tea Party, and the Pirate Cruise (see page 246) are also available.

Private dining is available for a quiet or romantic evening. You can have a meal on your balcony, on the beach, or even on a boat in the lagoon. Make arrangements in advance with room service.

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For a touch of magic, end your day with a romantic, nighttime stroll along the beach. You may even catch the Electrical Water Pageant on the Seven Seas Lagoon around 9:15 pm.

Four extra-special types of rooms are available. The lodge tower rooms have a separate sitting area, an extra TV and phone, and five windows. Concierge rooms offer personalized services, continental breakfast, evening refreshments, and a private elevator. Of the concierge rooms, special turret rooms (see our honeymoon photo on previous page) have wet bars and windows all around, while honeymoon suites pamper with whirlpool tubs!

The Grand Floridian Resort & Spa is also a conference center.

Even though this is a luxury resort, don't feel you need to dress up. Casual wear is the norm here. The only exception is Victoria & Albert's restaurant, which requires evening attire.

Check-in time is 3:00 pm. Check-out time is 11:00 am.

Best Locations at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

The dormer rooms on the top floors of the lodge buildings may be a bit smaller (they only fit 4 rather than 5), but they feature vaulted ceilings, a secluded balcony, and a charming window above the French doors. The best views of Cinderella Castle come in the theme park-view rooms in Sago Cay and Conch Key lodges. Sugar Loaf Key is the closest lodge house to the Grand Lobby, but also sees the most traffic and hears the most noise. Big Pine Key is near the beach, and its lagoon-view rooms offer picturesque views.

Room Rates at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort

2009 room rates begin at \$399 for a garden view room, \$465 for a lagoon view room, \$485 for a lodge tower room, \$520 for a lodge concierge room in Sugar Loaf, and \$690 for a concierge room in the main building. 12.5% tax is not included in above room rates. Honeymoon concierge rooms start in the high \$600s. Suites, which are available in one- and two-bedrooms, are upwards of \$1,000. Higher rates in price ranges are for weekends and holiday periods (see page 29).

Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa Quick Facts

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About The Authors: [Jennifer and Dave Marx](#) are the founders of PassPorter Travel Press/MediaMarx, Inc. and the authors of dozens of

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