

The Parades of the Magic Kingdom: A Plethora of Processions

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There's a good reason why the Magic Kingdom was given that name -- because it's full of magic. And nowhere is that more evident than in the stunning parades that take place there. Don't get me wrong, the parades at Animal Kingdom and Disney's Hollywood Studios are definitely worth seeing and perhaps one day, we might see the return of a parade to Epcot, but let's face it, where else can you see such a selection of parades throughout the year, but at the Magic Kingdom?

On most days throughout the year, you can enjoy the new for 2009, Celebrate a Dream Come True Parade, which features all the major characters that Disney is famous for, many riding on stunning floats styled to suit them. This new parade features new music, new costumes, and new floats that represent Disney's "What Will You Celebrate" theme. This replaced the Disney Dreams Come True Parade, which featured all the major characters that Disney is famous for.

It's such a successful formula that it's spawned plenty of other parades at the Magic Kingdom, with different variations for the parties at Halloween, Christmas, and during the Pirates and Princesses Parties. These are all usually held in darkness and can feature different characters that you won't usually see during the afternoon. For example, there's more of a focus on the villains and ghouls and ghosts during the Halloween Party parade, while you'll see Santa and find lots of reindeer and gingerbread present in the parade that takes place during the Christmas party.

A more common nighttime parade at the Magic Kingdom is SpectroMagic. It's performed year-round, although not every night. It's worth checking out the park hours as soon as they're published to see if it's held during your stay, as it's something we try to catch on every visit. Don't despair if at first no parades are listed, as sometimes Disney will add in extra nights for SpectroMagic to take place. Once a night has been announced, it's very rare for it later to be removed from the schedules.

up by literally thousands of fiber optic and colored lights, SpectroMagic is a bright and fun fantasy parade, and again features some very unique appearances. As well as the characters, many of whom will have those lights on their costumes to illuminate them, you'll find some interesting additions that run alongside the floats. It's hard to describe them if you haven't seen this parade, but essentially they're free-running units that

can spin around, with our favorites including the "spectro-men" at the start of the parade and the fish that accompany the Little Mermaid float. To us, those are some of the highlights, as they're great fun.

Where's the best place to stand and see the various parades? That's a question I often hear asked and we don't have any one particular spot that we head for, but there are a couple of things I always look out when choosing a spot. Firstly, it's worth finding out which way the parade is going to go. We learned the hard way, when we were convinced that it would come from Frontierland (the usual departure point for the afternoon parades), but instead it came from the Main Street USA end. It's especially worth checking that if there's more than one show of SpectroMagic in an evening, as the start and end can vary from one parade to the next.

Once you know that, you can check a few things out. If it's a daytime parade, where is the sun? You don't want to be squinting into the sun to see the parade and you certainly don't want the sun behind the floats if you're trying to take photos of them. Also check for any trees that may obscure the higher parts of the floats as they travel along. This generally isn't a problem if you're in the front row of the parade, as Disney has done a great job in recent years of checking this for you, but it's a check I still carry out to this day.

I also like to find a spot where I can see the parade coming from some distance away, especially for the nighttime parades. The reason is simple. When taking photos at night, it's sometimes hard to know whether to use flash on your photos or not, so I like to try and do both versions to be on the safe side, but that means that you need enough time to do that. Equally, whenever you take a flash photo, your camera's battery usually needs time to re-charge, so it can be a few precious seconds before its ready again -- and you don't want to miss that perfect shot in the meantime.

If it's a nighttime parade you're watching and you intend to leave straight afterwards, you may want to think carefully about this. Make sure that you don't get yourself cut off and can quickly get to the exit gates. Sometimes it's actually quicker to watch the parade from further along the route -- perhaps somewhere near the top of Main Street USA and then scoot down through the shops towards the exit, as usually you'll be moving faster than the parade will.

How early should I get there to watch the parade? Again, there's no set time-scale, but a general rule of thumb is that when you see people finding seats, then perhaps it's time to start looking for a spot. Generally, if there are two parades in an evening, the later one is

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usually quieter and don't despair if you're late in getting a spot. Always try Frontierland, which tends to fill up much more slowly than spots along Main Street and in front of the castle.

Although you can undoubtedly get a great deal done while the parades are going on, as it will draw crowds away from the rides, all of the parades put on in the Magic Kingdom are definitely worth catching. Although you may have to stake-out your spot some time in advance, by the time the last float has passed you by, I'm willing to bet that you'll be thinking that the wait was worth it.

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!](#)

Article last updated: 01/22/2009

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