

## Boats at Walt Disney World - Part 2: Marinas Around 'The World'

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Boats play an important role in life at Walt Disney World, with some operating as [means of transportation](#), others used in [attractions](#), while some are just there for relaxation.

Having looked at the first two categories in [previous article](#), now it's time for a bit of boating for relaxation.

It may be something that you've never thought of, particularly if you're desperately heading from one park to the next in order to visit all your party's "must-see" attractions, but sometimes you can have just as much fun away from the parks, messing about on the waterways of Walt Disney World.

There are lots of different marinas scattered throughout the resort, although perhaps the one that most people will be familiar with is Captain Jack's Marina at Downtown Disney Marketplace. You may have seen lots of boats sitting in a dock there and wondered what they were for. Well, the answer is simple--they're there for you, or any other guest, to rent for as long as you want.

Marinas are located at many of the various Walt Disney World resorts, and they're not all deluxe ones either. For example, you may be surprised to find that there are marinas at the Caribbean Beach, Coronado Springs, Port Orleans, and Fort Wilderness resorts. Of the deluxe resorts, most are graced with marinas. On Seven Seas Lagoon and Bay Lake, unsurprisingly all the deluxe resorts located there have marinas. That gives you a choice of the Wilderness Lodge, Contemporary, Polynesian, and Grand Floridian resorts. Over at the Epcot resorts though, this doesn't hold true, with only the Yacht and Beach Club boasting its own marina. And oddly enough, while Old Key West has its own marina, the other Disney Vacation Club resort nearby that's also located on a waterway, Saratoga Springs, doesn't have one. Instead, its dock is merely used for boats taking guests over to Downtown Disney.

Which one is the best to try? Well, it depends on what you want to see, and there's plenty on offer at each area. Personally, I have a soft spot for the marinas in the Downtown Disney area (Captain Jack's, Port Orleans, and Old Key West), as you get some wonderful views, not only of that area, but Saratoga Springs and its Treehouse Villas, Old Key West, and Port Orleans. Another good option is to rent from the Yacht

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and Beach Club marina, as you can head up towards either Epcot or the Studios.

Although you'll share the waters with Disney boat transportation wherever you pilot your rental craft, we've generally found Disney's skippers to be very good at giving inexperienced amateurs a wide berth, so don't let that put you off.

So what's available at these various marinas? Well, if you fancy putting in some effort yourself while you're out on the water, then you can take out a pedal boat, canoe, or kayak. That may not be everyone's idea of fun (it sounds like torture to me), but if it floats your boat, a pun I just couldn't resist squeezing in, then they're reasonably priced at around \$7 for half an hour. These human-powered craft won't necessarily be available at every marina, but you should find them at the Coronado Springs, Caribbean Beach, and Fort Wilderness.

Perhaps because they're motorised, you'll usually find the rest of Disney's various rental craft at every resort's marina. So what else is available? Well, let's start with the smallest first, which are Sea Raycers by Sea Ray boats, or what Disney fans fondly know as "water mice." These are small, two-passenger boats that do sit very low in the water, compared to Disney's other boats.

We took one of these out once and, although fun--they certainly pack a punch when you're able to run them at full throttle--we didn't like the fact that we were so close to the water. We found that, because they're quite small, we did get hit by waves from other, larger vessels when we were out, so since then, we've tended to steer away from them. To rent one, you'll need to be at least 12 years old and at least five feet tall. They're not cheap at around \$35 for half an hour's boating.

To be honest, we feel that we get much better value for money from some of the larger boats in Disney's fleet, which is why we tend to go for those. Our personal preference is for the SunTRACKER pontoon boats, which are 21 feet long and can take up to 10 people in total. To be honest, even though it's just the two of us, it doesn't feel strange at all, as there's plenty of space to spread out, either at the front or the rear of the boat. In a way, it's nice to have all that space at your disposal and it is a lovely luxury to have for a very small price. For one of these boats, you're looking at around \$50 for the first half hour. If you have a bigger party, that can be superb value, especially as that's not much more that you'll pay for the Sea Raycers.

Another option, and one that we haven't tried out yet, are the slightly smaller 17 foot Boston Whaler Montauk boats. The only reason we've

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never tried them is that we're very happy with the pontoon boats and, as they're pretty much the same price for the first half hour's rental, we can't see the point of going for something a bit smaller.

If you've got some sailing experience, which neither of us has, then you may be able to rent a 12 foot sailboat, which is much cheaper at more like \$25 for an hour's time on the water.

If you're worried about being able to pilot one of these bigger boats, then honestly, don't be. My husband's only previous boating experience was one vacation along the River Thames a number of years ago. The Cast Members are very good at talking you through everything you need to know, and there's always time for questions. If you're not sure of anything because you head out on to the open water, then just ask.

Generally, the longer you rent your boat for, the better value you'll get, as often the rate for an hour is less than if you'd hired two boats for half an hour each. You don't have to worry about going over your rental time either, as you pay when you return your craft. You will usually have to leave a credit card as guarantee while you're out on the boat, and we've also been asked to leave photo ID in the past. It's a good way of ensuring that you do return the boat, although as most of the major waterways in the Epcot, Magic Kingdom, and Downtown Disney resort areas aren't linked to each other, it would be pretty hard to mount an escape bid from property on them!

If boating is something you've never tried your hand at, I can't think of a better place to give it a go. You certainly get a new perspective of a familiar resort whenever you're out on the water, and it's definitely something worth trying out.

*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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