

Disneyland: The 'Original' Magic Kingdom - Part 4

by Sarah Mudd, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

(Check out the first three parts of Sarah's Disneyland series at PassPorter.com!)

Continuing on in our land-by-land tour of the parks of the Disneyland Resort, we exit Frontierland and gaze in awe at the lovely Sleeping Beauty Castle.

Sleeping Beauty Castle is the central focal point of Disneyland Park, although it may be hard to see her from the far end of Main Street, U.S.A.

The poor little thing. She's small in stature, at only 77 feet tall. To match the height of Walt Disney World's Cinderella Castle, you would have to stack nearly two and a half Sleeping Beauty Castles! While the shortest castle in the Disney Castles family, and often ridiculed for being "tiny," no one wants to be remembered for their shortcomings. So, let's discuss the many redeeming qualities of Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle.

The area around the castle is quite lovely, with a swan-inhabited moat at the front of the castle. To the right of the castle is Snow White's Grotto, a lovely little waterfall adorned with white marble statues of Snow White and her seven "little men," and her Wishing Well. Above the well is a sign that reads "Your wishes will help children everywhere," and they do, as Disney takes every cent placed into that well and donates to children's charities.

Like Cinderella Castle at Walt Disney World, you can walk straight into, and through, Sleeping Beauty Castle. Its drawbridge can be raised and lowered, although that has only been done twice since Disneyland Park opened in 1955; once on the park's opening day and the other when Fantasyland was rededicated in May 1983. Along the walls inside you'll find murals depicting scenes from Sleeping Beauty. As you exit the back of the castle, to your left you will find a fountain adorned with bronze statuettes of Prince Phillip, Princess Aurora, and the fairies Flora, Fauna, and Merriweather.

You may also notice a small awning bearing a sign reading "Sleeping Beauty Castle." This is the entrance to the Sleeping Beauty Castle Walkthrough, a series of "rooms" and windows within the castle telling the story of Sleeping Beauty via "storybooks" and animated 3D displays.

The attraction was originally opened in 1957 but was closed following the events of September 11, 2001. After a little over seven years, and having had a few technological improvements made, the walkthrough reopened in November 2008. Unfortunately, the walkthrough is not wheelchair or stroller accessible. In order to see the displays, you will need to climb stairs and deal with narrow passageways. If you aren't able to do enjoy the dioramas upstairs, there is a special area at ground level where you can see the display digitally.

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□ Making our way into Fantasyland, directly to the right of the Castle Walkthrough exit is Peter Pan's Flight and the classic Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, which is still one of my favorite attractions in all of the US Disney parks! Crossing the courtyard, we find Snow White's Scary Adventures and Pinocchio's Daring Journey. Pinocchio's was added during the Fantasyland rededication in 1983 and is one of the "new" rides that I most vividly remember during my family's visit to the park just a few weeks after the rededication! Just across the walkway from Pinocchio's Daring Journey is the Casey Jr. Circus Train, which takes you on a short ride around the perimeter of Storybook Land, an exhibit shared by several attractions.

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□ Fantasyland, in my mind, just wouldn't be Fantasyland without Dumbo the Flying Elephant and a carousel (in this case, King Arthur's Carrousel), and Disneyland has got you covered with both! Looming just past Dumbo, you'll find Monstro the Whale, whose mouth is the tunnel entrance for the Storybook Land Canal Boats, the other attraction that takes you past the beautiful miniature displays of Storybook Land. Alice in Wonderland is represented by two Fantasyland attractions at Disneyland: Mad Tea Party, and Alice in Wonderland. The Alice in Wonderland attraction is a three-minute long dark ride (however, the queue and part of the ride's track is outside) that depicts the story of Alice's fall down the rabbit hole and visit in Wonderland.

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□ Heading to the very back of Fantasyland, you'll find the iconic "it's a small world." This is the original version of the ride, installed at Disneyland just after its display at the 1964 New York World's Fair. Though the ride itself is the same length as its Florida counterpart, there are a few differences. The Disneyland version's facade is outdoors, much larger, and the Disneyland Railroad trains run through it. Its queue and loading area is also completely outside, and on the inside they have added Disney characters (modeled after the look of the "original" figures) in several of the scenes. Even if the song has a tendency to stick in your head for days, weeks, even months at a time, I still feel "it's a small world" at Disneyland is a ride not to be missed.

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□ Crossing under the railroad bridge just past "it's a small world," you

enter the brilliantly themed Mickey's Toontown, where you will find the homes of Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, Donald, and Chip and Dale. Looking at the buildings of Toontown, you'll notice there is not a straight line or sharp, square corner to be seen. The colors are bold and bright. It, quite honestly, looks like you just stepped into a cartoon.

□ While Chip & Dale Treehouse, Goofy's Playhouse, and Donald's Boat are fun "play" attractions for the little kids, there are two rides in Toontown. Gadget's Go Coaster is similar in size to Walt Disney World's Barnstormer and is themed after the MacGyver-like "Gadget Hackwrench" character from the late 1980s/early 1990s cartoon series, Chip & Dale's Rescue Rangers. The coaster is "built" using common items that Gadget "recycled." There are quite a few sight gags and interactive things to do throughout Mickey's Toontown, as well as eateries and shops (including a magic shop!), but you'll probably want to stop when you get to the red brick building and pop inside for a dizzying, weasel-dodging taxi ride on Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin!

□ As we make our way out of Toontown and head to the east side of Disneyland Park, you just can't miss that big white mountain straddling Fantasyland and Tomorrowland. The Matterhorn Bobsleds attraction opened in 1959, and has the distinction of being the very first tubular steel roller coaster in the world! The ride has two separate tracks, thus two different queues; the Fantasyland side and Tomorrowland side. Matterhorn Bobsleds can be pretty rough and jarring, but it is one of those classic attractions that is a must-ride for me! The mountain is 140 feet tall and can be seen from the I-5 freeway. On fair-weather days, watch for Mickey (and sometimes Goofy) climbing to the top!

□ We've got one land left to cover, so let's head to Tomorrowland!

□ Disneyland's Tomorrowland is home to Space Mountain, Astro Orbitor, Captain EO, Innoventions, and the newly-reimagined Star Tours, as well as Disneyland's own Autopia, Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters, and the very popular Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage which, after nine years of it being closed, replaced 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea. The Nemo subs is a must-visit, though there is no FastPASS, so you will want to visit early in the day!

□ This brings us to the end of our tour of Disneyland Park! I hope you have enjoyed our whirlwind jaunt through the park and will join me next time when I take you across the Esplanade for a trip through Disney California Adventure!

About The Author: Sarah is a busy stay-at-home mom, Travel Consultant with [Ears to You Travel](#), PassPorter Message Board Guide and Navy wife

whose family is currently stationed in Washington state. She has made many trips to both Walt Disney World and Disneyland. Her family is excited to be heading to Disneyland (her husband and 2-year-old son's first trip) in August 2011!

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