

# Wilderness Back Trail Adventure: Walt Disney World Backstage Tour Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

□ Disney is forever adding new things for visitors to discover, and often these additions revolve around something that's popular with guests.

□ The Wilderness Back Trail Adventure is no exception! What exactly is that? Read on!

If we go back a few years, most people heading to Walt Disney World had no idea what a Segway was. Then they started to see Cast Members zipping around the parks, standing on those two-wheeled vehicles, and began to ask the question, "What are those things?" Segway tours began to appear at Epcot, originally Around the World on a Segway, which so popular it's now offered several times a day, instead of just once daily. Still, this wasn't enough, so a new shorter tour, Simply Segway, arrived on the scene, still based in Epcot.

□ But what about those of us who have already done a couple of Segway tours and want to do something a bit more advanced? Well, Disney thought of that and introduced a new tour, the Wilderness Back Trail Adventure, using the Segway X2. The X2 is designed to deal with a variety of terrains, including grass, gravel, and dirt, so the tour plays up to those abilities, ensuring that you get to try all of these during your time on your machine.

□ This is the first Segway tour to be based outside of Epcot, taking place at Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground, and our first challenge was getting there. You need to meet at the Meadows, right in the middle of the resort's sprawling grounds. This requires a ride on the resort's internal bus system, from either Outpost Depot at the resort's entrance, or from Settlement Depot by the boat dock on Bay Lake, so do be sure to allow plenty of time to get there. We did, and of course, as is always the way, everything ran on time, and we were about half an hour early, but this gives you a chance to explore the area, which is beautiful.

We signed waiver forms, and then were kitted out with safety helmets and wireless earpieces, so that we could hear our guide. It's a great way of running a tour, as it allows you to drop behind a little bit, without missing anything the tour leader says. And during your initial training, the receivers come in especially handy, as we did have one or two in our group who went the wrong way at times!

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□ I did expect this tour to be made up of people experienced with Segways, partially because it's a relatively new tour, and also because it does take you on to the different terrains. However, I was very wrong, with a number of complete novices in our group. They all learnt exceptionally quickly, and almost before we knew it, the training was over. It probably took about half an hour, in truth, and you cover the same skills as in all the other Segway tours; making sure that you can get on and off, move around, stop, and turn. Then they give you a chance to zap around on grass, to give you an idea of how your Segway will handle this. I was immediately surprised that I didn't feel the bumps, although I did spend the whole tour bracing my body every time I went over any rough terrain!

□ We were told, before we started out, that the tour would cover a total of four and a half miles. That really surprised me, firstly because I didn't realise the scale of the Fort Wilderness Resort, which covers a huge expanse of land, and also because I didn't realise that the Segways can travel up to six miles an hour. We got up to those speeds a couple of times, although we quickly had to reduce our speed again, as these things really do tell you when you hit your speed limit!

□ You do get a number of stops along the way, and the first is sensibly for the restrooms. Then it's out towards the edge of Bay Lake, learning all about Fort Wilderness on the way. It was a wonderful way to get a more thorough look at this resort, and hear more about its history. If, like me, you've not had a chance to see much of this part of Walt Disney World, this is a great way to enjoy it.

□ Soon we were at Bay Lake, at a perfectly chosen spot for photos, with the backdrop of the Magic Kingdom, the Contemporary, and Bay Lake Tower in the distance. From there, we headed over to the Tri Circle D Ranch, home to some of the Disney horses, including the one ridden by the Headless Horseman during the Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party parade. As well as learning more about the stables, we were given time to meet the various horses, and enjoy music from the vintage 1907 circus calliope that Walt himself purchased. It's a beautiful piece of machinery, and something I never knew existed. You really do learn a lot on this tour!

□ Our next stretch of Segway work was a long one, taking us out on the trail to the Wilderness Lodge, and this gave us the chance to do various bits of off-terrain work, zipping through a pine grove. This neatly showcased just what the Segway X2 can cope with, as nothing worried it, including large tree roots.

□ From the Wilderness Lodge, we headed along the edge of Bay Lake

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again, stopping for another photo opportunity, with the Contemporary and Bay Lake Tower in shot. Sadly, by this point, it was time to start making our way back to the Meadows, where we had started from, hearing more Disney history on the way. It was an exceptionally informative tour, but remained fun at all times. Although you learnt a great deal, in true Disney style, it was done in such an entertaining way.

□ We really loved doing this tour, and it's great to finally be able to explore somewhere outside of Epcot on a Segway, although I will say that this was tough work physically, and we certainly knew about how much work we had done when we finally dismounted our Segways for the last time. I'm not sure that I'd want to do this as a first-timer, as I do think trying out one of the Epcot Segway tours is a good introduction, before you graduate on to the Segway X2. Having said that, the first-timers on our tour seemed to love doing this, and had just as much fun as the rest of us.

□ The Wilderness Back Trail Adventure Segway tours are available from Tuesdays through to Saturdays at either 8:30 am or 11:30 am on each of those days. Tours meet at the Fort Wilderness Meadows Bike Barn, and cost \$90 per person, although do ask about whether there are any discounts available to Annual Passholders, Disney Vacation Club members, or Disney Visa cardholders. To take part in this, you must be at least 16 years old, and if you're under 18 years old, you have to be accompanied by an adult. To ride the Segways, you must weigh between 100 and 250 pounds. Tours can be booked by calling 407-WDW-TOUR.

*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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