

## Disney's Magical Express: How It Works

by Justine Fellows, PassPorter Guest Contributor

So what's the big hype about Disney's Magical Express and how does it work? Disney's Magical Express (DME) was introduced a few years ago, and provides free bus transportation between Orlando International Airport and Disney's resorts at Walt Disney World. At first, most Disney fans thought it was a nice free promotion that would soon turn into another way for Disney to snag up a few bucks. But, fortunately, and let's hope permanently, this service continues to be offered free to all guests staying at Disney's on-site resorts. If you think this just means you get a ride on a bus to your hotel, you're in for a pleasant surprise. Not only will you get a ride, but you won't have to deal with your baggage at the Orlando airport, it will be whisked away to your hotel for you. This is an incredible convenience and a great way to start off a magical trip. So let's walk through a typical trip with Magical Express.

As soon as possible -- during or after booking your hotel reservations, you will need to provide Disney with your flight information.

About 45 days before you leave a nice little packet will arrive with your Magical Express vouchers and large yellow tags, complete with Mickey ears, to attach to your luggage. Make sure to follow the instructions carefully and stick to the airlines baggage guidelines, so that you are not charged an additional fee.

Now here's the key to Magical Express success - make sure to carry all paperwork, tickets, medication, and anything you will need for at least one full day including swim suits, pajamas, and a change of clothes. We have always had great success with our bags arriving to the room within a few hours after us. One time they were even there before us. But, be prepared, Disney warns that it may take up to 6 hours and if you arrive late this may mean tomorrow morning. Make sure to call the bell hop if you have any trouble or questions once you arrive. (Editor's note: DME now asks that any guests arriving after 10:00 pm retrieve their own luggage at baggage claim at Orlando Airport and bring it with them to the DME desk.)

At the airport you will check in as normal. Your baggage will now have an airline tag as well as the Magical Express tag.

In Orlando, upon exiting the plane, you will head towards baggage claim but no need to claim your luggage. There will be signs for Disney's Magical Express bus service. There are also directions in the Magical

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Express voucher book that you received. You will follow signs to the DME counter on Level 1, check in, and cross the aisle to the line designated for your hotel. It's all timing here -- buses run frequently, but you may have just missed one. I would estimate about a 15- to 20-minute wait inside and 10--15 minutes on the bus before it departs. Don't worry if the line is long, this is your first introduction to the fine efficiency of Disney World.

The bus is clean and comfortable. On the way, the excitement will grow, with a video highlighting the parks and features of Walt Disney World. The ride to Disney is about 40 minutes, and your bus will most likely need to make two to three short stops at different resorts, so be patient and enjoy the scenery.

The Magical Express bus will drop you off at the entrance of your hotel. When you arrive I recommend sending an adult ahead to check in, while someone hangs behind to deal with carry-on luggage and kids. The lobbies are comfortable -- there is usually a spot where weary kids can relax and watch Disney movies, nice bathrooms to change into appropriate clothing, and a gift shop or dining area nearby if you need anything.

Enjoy your trip and get ready for my favorite Magical Express bonus. Most airlines allow you to check in at the hotel and they handle your baggage on the way home as well. The night before you leave you will receive instructions for your trip home. Ahhhh, if they only could be at every airport, now that would be truly magical!

*About The Author:* Justine, the author of [PassPorter's Disney Speed Planner: The Easy Ten-Step Program](#), works in education in Connecticut. She is also the host of [Travel Girl's\(TM\) Tips for Disney World](#) podcasts.

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