

## Tips for a Disney 'Newbie': Planning Tips for First Time Visitors

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

You're a newcomer to Walt Disney World.

□

You've never been to a Disney park before, and, despite all the television commercials and word of mouth, you may still have no idea of what to really expect. But you have a trip to plan, and believe me, for a place like Walt Disney World, you need a plan! Just where do you begin?

We've been in the position of visiting Walt Disney World with complete newcomers, and the one thing that they just couldn't get their heads around was how big the whole place is. It didn't matter that we told them that "the World" covers an unbelievable 43 square miles -- that's a bigger area than some of the UK's largest cities. It's the one thing that our friends told us they just hadn't appreciated; how big the place would be, and that's one of the biggest issues people face when planning their first trip to Disney.

□

The first question you usually consider when planning any vacation is how long to take in your chosen location. With Walt Disney World, I always say you should allow a minimum of six days, with two days each for the Magic Kingdom and Epcot, while Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom deserve at least another day each. Of course, that's the minimum, and you could spend so much longer enjoying all four parks. If you want to venture outside those four parks, and spend time at the water parks, Downtown Disney, or just enjoy some down time, then perhaps it's worth planning even longer.

It's also worth thinking about the time of the year of your visit. We've had friends who've visited at some of the busiest possible times, and returned home complaining about the crowds and the wait times for the attractions. Needless to say, those weren't exactly happy family holidays and they failed to see the charm of Disney. There's no reason why first timers shouldn't head to Disney at Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas, traditionally some of the more crowded times, but you just need to know in advance what to expect, and prepare for it, so you don't get a nasty surprise!

□

Another key piece of advice is to keep in mind that there's no way you can see and do everything. If you try to do that, you'll end up having a miserable time with an exhausted family. Instead, you need to pick and choose your priorities, and that means planning. I always advise people to come up with just a few things they want to visit in each park, both

---

attractions and restaurants. If you keep your list to just five "must-do" things, then you've got a realistic chance of doing those, and won't come away disappointed. Do those, and everything else you do (and you will be able to do more), will seem like a bonus.

□

□ Although staying on Disney property is not a cheap option, and may not be in the budget for some people, if it's your first visit, it will allow you to take some down time during each day, as you can easily head back to your resort to enjoy some time there. Stay outside of Disney, and getting back for a mid afternoon break may not be as simple.

□

□ Taking regular breaks is the key to a happy, and harmonious, family vacation, and trust me, as a first-timer, you'll need it, as you may find yourself on sensory overload! Taking your time also allows you to appreciate the parks. There are so many places to just sit and watch the world go by, and appreciate the wonderful detail in the parks. Sometimes these can be the happiest times, and don't under-estimate the power of just taking time out to "smell the roses."

□

□ Plan your days carefully, making sure that you don't miss out on some of Disney's headline shows. In particular, it's worth thinking about which night-time shows you want to see, as there are plenty to pick from. To me, no first-time visit would be complete without enjoying at least one: The Magic Kingdom's Wishes fireworks, or the Main Street Electrical Parade; Epcot's IllumiNations, or Fantasmic! at Disney's Hollywood Studios. If you do choose to stay out late one night for one of these, then don't plan an early start the next morning, as you may find yourself wanting to take your time getting going.

□

□ If you're a newcomer, then the chances are you won't know just how good the food is at Disney! As many Disney veterans know, it's not standard theme park fare, with some superb restaurants available to choose from. Whether you want fine dining, or a meal with Disney characters, it's vital to book in advance. There's nothing worse than arriving for your vacation, and discovering that the restaurant you wanted to eat in is fully booked -- and that certainly happens for the more popular places in any season, and seemingly everywhere at busier times of the year. It may seem alien to think about where you want to eat six months before your vacation, but it's well worth doing.

□

□ One final thing to keep in mind is that there's every chance that one trip just won't be enough. Many people get bitten by the Disney bug on their first vacation, and you may find yourself planning your next trip, even before your first one is finished!

*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: 08-18-2011

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/walt-disney-world-newbie-tips.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>