

# Disney Alone Time: Planning for a Solo Trip to Walt Disney World

by Heather Macdonald, *PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)*

I'll be honest, I like traveling by myself.

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□The biggest perk is not having to please anyone but myself. I also think it is easier to plan a solo trip, and it usually gets done with very little notice, often just a few days before the trip.

The first things you need to worry about when planning a solo trip are your hotel room and your transportation. These two things eat up the biggest part of your Walt Disney World (WDW) budget. It is probably easiest to do these two tasks in tandem to make sure the budget is there before you book one or the other. Use two browser windows or tabs in your computer to get yourself to the final booking pages for both, before buying either. That way you aren't stuck with a room or a flight that you can't really afford.

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□I definitely prefer onsite hotels for a solo trip. Any Disney hotel would be just fine for a solo stay, but I have two favorites based on what my budget is for the trip. If I'm doing a low cost, quick trip I really like All-Star Sports. It is the first bus stop both to and from the All-Stars and I think it is in the best shape in terms of maintenance. Staying at an All-Star Resort also gives you access to all the All-Star resort amenities - three pools, three food courts, and three different shops. If I have a little more money to play with, or a really good discount code, I like to stay at the Contemporary. The Contemporary has multiple onsite dining options, the rooms have just been redone, and there are multiple transportation choices. I just love riding the monorail to the parks. It's also a really quick walk to the Magic Kingdom.

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□Dining reservations are always a toss up for solo trips. How many meals do I want to sit down and eat by myself? I think sitting down for meals provides a nice break and time to regroup, plan the rest of the day, and organize my notes and photos. There won't be anyone telling you that the meal is taking too long and they want to get back to the parks. I make as many reservations as I can before I leave. I usually end up changing them from my smart phone, using the mobile [Disney Dining Site](#).

Don't worry about eating alone. The restaurants at Walt Disney World are so busy all the time, you won't feel like you are alone. Servers will be happy to take photos for you, if you book a character meal--or you can do what I do, and ask the unsuspecting table next to you! Some of the

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best solo meals I've had at WDW, in terms of both food and service, are the Crystal Palace breakfast, dinner at California Grill during the Wishes fireworks, and Sanaa at Kidani Village. If you decided you'd like some interaction with other guests, Biergarten and Teppan Edo have family-style seating where you are seated with other guests.

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□Touring on a solo trip is a little bit different than touring with a group or a family. I make a list of things that I want to do before I leave and then try to schedule them into my mornings. I leave the evenings open for either fireworks or meals. I still plan for a nap in the afternoon, because I get up super early when I'm touring alone and I need a break in the middle of the day.

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□The biggest tip I can give you to maximize your solo touring plan is the 20-minute rule. I never get in a line that has more than a 20-minute wait. If I come to a ride that has more than a 20-minute wait, I either grab a FASTPASS, I come back first thing another morning, or during a slower time of the day; during a parade works well. Make sure you take the time to visit the attractions that you love, but that the folks you usually tour with don't love. Some of my favorites when I'm by myself are Walt Disney: One Man's Dream, The Art of Disney Animation, Carousel of Progress, The American Adventure, and The Hall of Presidents.

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□The other thing I love to do when I'm touring alone is character meet and greets. I always get great interaction from the characters when I'm alone, and the cast members are more than happy to take photos for me. I think that being a character handler at Walt Disney World almost makes you a photography pro! They handle all different kinds of cameras every day, and really want you to have special memories. Try and get to the meet areas right when they open for the shortest lines and longest interactions. On my last trip I met 20 different characters with almost no waiting at all--and it was only a two-day trip! (Tip: Use FASTPASS to meet Mickey and the Princesses in the Magic Kingdom!)

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□Special experiences are great things to do on a solo trip. If you'd like to relax on your trip (unlike the commando-style touring the rest of your family goes for), make a reservation for a treatment at the spas or massage centers. The spa at the Grand Floridian is closing for expansion construction beginning in mid-September but I prefer the spa at Saratoga Springs. I find it larger and more relaxing. There are massage centers at the Contemporary, Yacht and Beach Club, Boardwalk, Animal Kingdom Lodge, Wilderness Lodge, and Coronado Springs. Visit [www.relaxedyet.com](http://www.relaxedyet.com).

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□Another great thing to do is take a backstage tour, especially if you have kids at home who aren't old enough for these experiences. I have

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really enjoyed taking the Keys to the Kingdom, Undiscovered Future World, and Wild by Design tours solo. These are more great opportunities to do things in a group setting. One last event that is a great choice for a solo tour is the wine tasting held at 2pm at Jiko at Animal Kingdom Lodge, on Wednesdays. The cost is a reasonable \$25 and I had a great time meeting the other folks who were seated at the table. We all chatted about where we were from and our Disney experiences. Three glasses of South African wine helped loosen everyone up as well!

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□ I do have some basic tips for a trip by yourself. There won't be anyone to talk to in line, unless you are super outgoing. I load my iPhone with plenty of books to read once I've finished taking pictures. Pack extra camera batteries and cards---I bet you take more photos on a solo trip, then you do with your family.

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□ I highly recommend trying a trip to Walt Disney World by yourself. You'll find you have the freedom to do all of the things you want to do, at the speed you wish to do them. There are so many opportunities to meet and interact with other people at Disney, if you choose to seek them out. It is also completely possible to spend a few days just keeping to yourself and relaxing.

Tip: Listen to Heather discuss [solo travel on the PassPorter Moms Podcast!](#)

*About The Author: Heather is a PassPorter Message Board Guide (moderator). She lives in New Orleans and works for a major hotel chain as a bartender. Heather visited Walt Disney World as a child and after surviving Hurrican Katrina, thought it would be the perfect escape vacation! She loved it so much that she has been 10 times in the last five years.*

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