

Disney's Most Magical Attractions: The Best of the Best!

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

One word that's always associated with Disney is "magic," and probably quite rightly, as it's something the company has always worked hard to ensure exists at all of its parks around the world.

If we're honest though, there are some rides that are packed with a lot more Disney magic than others. To me, those are the ones that you'd never find at any other theme park in the world, because they're just, well, Disney I guess! Look at Universal's theme parks -- and this is no criticism of them at all -- they're packed with superb rides and experiences, but magical? That's not a word that instantly springs to mind.

So what sort of things am I talking about? I guess it falls into a couple of categories and probably one of the biggest is the Audio-Animatronics. Sure, other places do have these and I've sampled a few here in the United Kingdom, but none of the attractions I've seen come close to the mastery Disney has of this subject. Take a look at the likes of Pirates of the Caribbean, a ride superb enough to launch an entire trilogy of films, and you'll see what I mean. There's nothing like it in terms of storyline or the sheer volume of characters and the things they do, anywhere else. To me, that's Disney magic.

Equally, another old favorite with many Disney fans is the Haunted Mansion. Its popularity shows, with versions in Florida, California, Paris, and Tokyo. Where else are you ever going to see such thought and imagination go into what essentially is a ride around a haunted house? Yet somehow the mastery of the Disney Imagineers takes you a million miles away from any haunted house ride you may have experienced at any fairground. Again, another example of Disney magic.

And where else in the world would you ever find such a cute ride as "it's a small world?" Sure, it's one of those that you either love or hate, but I can't ever imagine anyone other than Disney coming up with this concept and, more to the point, keeping it in place for so many years. A lot of other companies would have torn this ride down many years ago, but it's still as popular as ever, perhaps shown by the fact that last year it was also added to the world's newest Disney theme park in Hong Kong.

I also can't imagine anyone else ever blending entertainment and education so seamlessly. Look at Epcot, set up to inform people about

the world of opportunities ahead of them. You'll find Spaceship Earth that takes you on an enlightening tour of communications throughout the last two millennia. Despite that, it's something many people put on their list of top attractions at the park -- including myself -- and one that kids always seem to enjoy, because it's done in such a fun and entertaining way. Equally, the same can be said of Ellen's Energy Adventure in Universe of Energy. Every time we see this show, I'm amazed by just how much information they cram into this about energy, yet the part that I remember most -- and I'm sure it's the same for many others -- is the wonderful dinosaur dioramas, where you're taken through life millions of years ago in slow moving cars. Now that has to be Disney magic, educating you without you even realising it!

Then there are more learning opportunities when you get to Disney's Animal Kingdom. Even though you're enjoying the ride on Kilimanjaro Safaris, you're also learning about the natural make-up of the African savannah as you travel around in your safari jeep. I've learnt the names of so many animals that I could never identify before Animal Kingdom opened. And of course, Disney magic has to have a hand in ensuring that there are always animals out for you to see, regardless of how hot or cold it is and whether it's brilliant sunshine or torrential rain. That's no accident, as a lot of it is down to clever Imagineering, making sure the animals' favorite spots are within easy viewing distance of the trail the jeep follows.

There's certainly magic in all the live shows you can see at Disney parks. From the Festival of the Lion King to Beauty and the Beast, and from Finding Nemo to the Little Mermaid, they all absolutely ooze Disney magic, featuring famous characters that we all know and love from the big screen. But even the non-character shows, such as Lights, Motors, Action and Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular at Disney's Hollywood Studios are filled with the same Disney magic. Every attention just seems to be paid to getting everything exactly right and giving you a show that will take your breath away. That's not to say that other parks don't do that, but somehow the shows at those parks always seem a little less Disney to me. Perhaps it's the slightly more adult overtones to some of them, such as Terminator 2: 3D at Universal, but Disney shows all have their own unique feel to them.

Disney magic is ever-present outside the parks themselves, with all the minute attention to detail everywhere you go on property. Whether it's the wonderful Mousekeeping creations that you may find in your resort room or the stunning floral displays in the gardens outside the resorts, every care is taken to ensure that you're completely cocooned in Disney magic during your entire stay on property.

And I think that's probably why so many of us love Disney -- because of the magic that we can find everywhere, whenever we're there. It's not just confined to Florida either. Having been lucky enough to visit Disneyland California, Disneyland Resort Paris, and Hong Kong Disneyland, that magic pixie dust has been well and truly sprinkled on to all of those locations as well, making each of them the perfect getaway for a retreat from real life.

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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