

Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party: Event Review

by Jennifer Shorey Arnold, PassPorter Guest Contributor

The Halloween season is here again.

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□ This is a time of year that I've always enjoyed, from my early childhood years up through my college years. However, now as a married adult with no children, I've felt that the fun of dressing up was far behind me. At least that's what I thought before learning more about Walt Disney World's Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party. I had known a little bit about the party previously, but it wasn't until I reconnected with an old college friend on Facebook who shared pictures of her family's Halloween visit in October 2010 that I became more interested in the event.

After speaking with her and doing a little extra research on my own about previous years' parties, I started to realize that this would be a perfect party for my husband and I to attend! I learned that this is the one time when adults can join in the fun of dressing up at the parks and from the pictures I found online, it appeared a lot of adults were taking advantage of the opportunity. When the 2011 party dates were released, we selected our date, pre-ordered our tickets online, and then began planning our trip. The next big decision was what to wear! We wanted to dress as a couple and quickly decided on a pirate theme. After learning that the official party hours were from 7:00 pm to 12 midnight, we decided that we needed a strategy for the night. So, before leaving for our trip, I made sure to read reviews of the first few parties of 2011, get an online copy of the map, and checkout which characters would be at this year's parties.

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□ Finally the big day was here! We had already planned to spend a day at Magic Kingdom and store our costumes in a locker, so that morning we grabbed our costumes and arrived early for Extra Magic Hour. As we stepped off the resort bus our excitement began to build for the events of the evening. At the gates, we were greeted with smiling pumpkins in front of the train station and a festival of fall colors as we walked out from under the tunnel.

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□ The day went by quickly and after riding rides and enjoying a late lunch with Winnie the Pooh and Friends at Crystal Palace, we were ready at 4:00 pm to change into our costumes (a bit of a challenge in the park bathroom), get our wristbands, and pick up our trick-or-treat bags. In our pirate costumes, we made our way up Main Street USA,

stopping a few times for photos with the castle in the background, taken by Disney PhotoPass photographers. Next, we headed straight to the Haunted Mansion, because I had learned while doing my research that PhotoPass photographers were taking photos of the Haunted Mansion hearse with a special ghost driver. Since it was so early, there was no line and we quickly had our photos. With two photos done before the official start of the party, we rode Haunted Mansion and backtracked to ride Pirates of the Caribbean.

At the end of the ride we picked up a few finishing touches for our costumes at the Pirate's Bazaar and then made our way to Big Thunder Mountain Railroad. We weren't planning to ride the coaster, but instead I had learned that all Seven Dwarfs would be there for photos during the party. Everything I had read in my research had said to get there early and we were so glad we did. Although the party and character photos did not start until 7:00 pm, the line was already beginning to form at 6:00 pm. I knew we would lose time now, but we'd save precious time during the party. Sure enough, we were only about a dozen groups from the beginning of the line and we completed photos by just 7:30 pm.

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□ With another big photo "must do" done, we headed to Adventureland to meet Captain Jack Sparrow. There we waited for 30 minutes but by 8:00 pm we were almost done with our "must do" photo list. After riding Pirates of the Caribbean again, which only had a 5-minute posted wait time, we were able to take our time heading back up to Frontierland to get a limited edition party pin and some t-shirts. On our way back to the Haunted Mansion, we found our last "must do" photo op, which was a picture with the hitchhiking ghosts. This photo op can be easy to miss because the PhotoPass photographer is stationed just next to the entrance to the Liberty Belle Riverboat. Our photo "must do" list was complete! However, there were tons more characters and photo opportunities that I definitely would have done if we had more time at the party, but we wanted to take advantage of the short lines on the rides and the many other party events, too.

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□ With our photo list done, we were then able to enjoy the Haunted Mansion and even take part in a conversation with Madame Carlotta, a ghost who sits in the mansion's front yard greeting guests. At the party, the mansion is lit up in an eerie glow of colored light, with a rolling fog to set the mood. After riding, we began our walk through Fantasyland, and although it was busy with lots of mini princesses and pirates, it wasn't as busy as you'd think. Here there was a photo op with Cinderella's carriage but due to the line and upcoming fireworks, we hurried along. As we rounded past Cosmic Ray's the Happy HalloWishes fireworks began. The display of lights, music, and

fireworks was fabulously festive.

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□ Sure enough, as my research had indicated, the park started to clear out after the fireworks and we were able to walk down Main Street to easily find a front row seat just minutes before the Headless Horseman began his ride down the street. Soon after, the second showing of the special Mickey's "Boo-to-You" Halloween Parade marched down Main Street. As big Haunted Mansion fans, we really enjoyed the mansion section of the parade, complete with cemetery watchman and dog, grave diggers dancing with shovels, and floats including one of the three hitchhiking ghosts.

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□ As the parade ended we headed back into to park to begin trick-or-treating. What fun! Not since my early teens was I able to do this, and there were many other adults of all ages doing the same thing! At midnight, we went through our last candy station. Tired but exhilarated, we stopped for one last photo and headed for the resort bus. On the trip home, we discussed the many costumes we saw at the party. Although some opted for store-bought costume or t-shirts, some costumes obviously took countless hours of thought and preparation. We enjoyed ourselves so much, we are already thinking of costume ideas for a future trip!

About The Author: Jennifer is a Disney enthusiast and loves to visit Walt Disney World and Disneyland with her husband as often as possible. When not at the parks, she enjoys sharing her knowledge of Disney with family and friends to help them plan their own Disney trips.

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