

Packing for Winter Weather at Walt Disney World: What to Pack for Cooler Temps?

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Packing your bags when you head to Florida isn't usually difficult.

□ Typically, it's a case of finding your summer clothes and your swimming things and throwing them together and you're set. But what about if you're visiting Walt Disney World in the middle of winter?

Sure, Florida is an awful lot warmer than many parts of America and the rest of the world, year-round. After all, that's why it attracts so many people during the cold winter months. Let's face it, there's nothing better than getting a break from dealing with snow, ice, and miserably cold temperatures. But sometimes it doesn't always work out that way.

□ You only need to look at the news recently to know that. Sleet and snow greeted those taking part in the half-marathon at Disney early this year, with Orlando hitting the mid 20s at night, down towards the record breaking lows the area suffered back in the early 1980s.

□ I'm sad to say that none of that comes as a surprise to me. After all, my first visit to Florida was during a freezing winter in 1981, where the orange crop was decimated by frost. That's hardly something you expect to encounter in the so-called Sunshine State. Since then, I've returned many times to Walt Disney World in the depths of winter and, without fail, our experience has always been the same; for the vast majority of the time, the weather is lovely, and sometimes even too hot. Anyone there during mid-December of 2007 will remember only too well the appalling humidity the area suffered for a few days, and in 2009, we found the sun too much on a couple of days.

When I say lovely, we're talking daytime temperatures anywhere from the high 60s to the low 80s. For those wondering, yes, generally that is warm enough to allow you to swim. While the Floridians, who've become used to burning, sticky hot summers, may shiver when it falls to the high 60s, for most of us, it's still nice enough to head to the pool, so year round, swimming gear always comes with us.

□ However, what also comes with us is a good selection of clothes that we can layer, as the weather is notoriously unpredictable in the Sunshine State in the winter months. Every vacation we usually see at least a couple of chilly days. It was the same just a few weeks ago, with

temperatures down into the low 40s one night and, on another day, highs that just nudged the mid 50s. Needless to say, that day we froze in the Capri pants we were wearing, having just flown up from Key West that morning!

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□We always carry long-sleeved tops with us that can go on over T-shirts, and even sweatshirts or fleeces for an additional layer of warmth. As well as shorts and the old faithful Capri pants, we always carry jeans with us, too. Although you may not want to wear jeans if it looks like the weather's going to warm up later in the day, on a chilly morning, if you want to get a start on the crowds and get to the parks early, you may be glad of the additional layers you brought with you for your top half. You can always carry them later on, perhaps in a backpack, or rent a locker for the day.

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□Another thing worth thinking about is a warmer pair of socks to go with your footwear, particularly if, like me, you feel the chill in your feet! If you run into a colder night, you'll suddenly be glad of that, and it won't take up much room in your case.

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□If you're thinking that this seems over the top, then there is a blessing in all of this. For most of us, these are exactly the sort of clothes that we'd be wearing at home, so flying out with these items is easy. Generally, we bundle up to board the plane and then carry what we don't need when we reach Orlando. It's the same story on the way back. Simply carry bulky items like winter coats with you onto the plane; it's easy enough to slip them on when you get home and your body will thank you for that. Sometimes the return home can be a real shock to the system, particularly when the weather there is maybe 60 degrees colder or more than what you've just acclimated to.

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□This approach also helps with the headache of how much luggage you bring with you, especially with the introduction of baggage fees by most airlines for flights within North America. This is one time when I do feel thankful that we travel internationally and still have our quota of two free suitcases.

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□If you do think that you've got too much coming with you, think carefully about whether you're prepared to do any laundry while you're at Disney. It's easy enough to do, as there are facilities at the resorts, although it will cost you money to do that and will take time away from your touring plans. This is where being a Disney Vacation Club member comes into its own, particularly if you're staying in a one-, two- or three-bedroom villa. Having your own washer and dryer in your room is exceptionally convenient and saves the walk to and from the laundry room.

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□ Another way to cut down what you're bringing with you is to look at what you've got and be really tough on yourself. Will you genuinely use every piece of clothing that's looking back at you? If you can't put your hand on your heart and say "yes," then some of it needs to stay behind. It's often suggested that you lay out everything you think you'll need and then remove half of it, but to be honest, it's not something I ever do. I already have that question in my mind with everything that goes near a suitcase, and if I can't justify it to myself, then it doesn't travel with us.

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□ Of course, there is another approach and one that can work very well, providing your budget will stretch to it. You can also buy additional layers when you get to Walt Disney World. I'll put my hand up and say that we've had to give in and buy a sweatshirt here and there, when we didn't pay attention to the weather and it was colder than we figured. However, almost invariably, these spur of the moment purchases are the sort of items that we don't seem to wear that often, which is something worth keeping in mind!

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□ Essentially, the secret to packing well for a Florida winter remains the old mantra: layer, layer, layer. While it's unlikely it'll get as cold as you're used to at home, it certainly pays to be prepared. Check the weather forecast regularly before you leave to see what you're likely to run into. You may luck out and find some superb hot weather the whole time you're down there, but it's better to prepare for the worst, just in case!

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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