

## What I Miss About a Disney Christmas: Disney at the Holidays

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

I'll start by saying that we're exceptionally lucky.

I have been able to spend the holidays, and by that I mean Christmas Day itself, at Walt Disney World, five times in the last 11 years, with our sixth visit coming up next year. That probably tells you a lot about how much we love this time of year at Disney.

I know that a lot of people shy away from actually spending Christmas at Disney, and I can't say I blame them, because you will have huge crowds to deal with, there's no disputing that, and a lot of people have family commitments. For us, though, it's a perfect time to visit, and around about now, there are 10 things that I realise I miss about not being in Disney for Christmas.

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□The first thing is how easy everything is there. There are no discussions about which part of the family we should be spending time with this year, or whether we should just spend it alone. There's no travelling, well, provided you don't count the nine-and-a-half-hour flight there and back to the UK, of course! By that I mean that you don't have to face the road trip to visit relatives on, or perhaps just before or after the day itself. You can settle down in a beautiful resort and just enjoy yourselves. There are no demands on your time, it's up to you what you want to do and when.

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□The second thing I miss about a Disney Christmas is that we can get some amazing meals for less than we'd pay here -- seriously! I bet you weren't expecting me to say that, but if we go out for a Christmas meal at a local restaurant, which is often preferable for us, then we're easily looking at a bill for just food equivalent to around \$175, plus drinks. We've been amazed by the quality of meals we've had at Disney for a similar amount, or even less. After one memorable Christmas Day dinner at California Grill, we commented that it was much better value than had we stayed home, and of course there you can also enjoy an additional treat of Wishes!

The third thing I miss about Christmas at Disney is just wandering around the parks, and the resorts, and taking in all the beautiful decorations. Every time we see homes decked out with lights, I can't help but think of the Osborne Spectacle of Lights at Disney's Hollywood Studios, and of course, nothing can compare to those. Sadly, a lot of the time, we don't see any decorations over here that even remotely rival

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Disney's stunning displays, and boy do I miss the sight of enormous Christmas trees, poinsettias everywhere you look, and oversized wreaths.

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□When you think of Disney at Christmas, you can't help but miss the added extras that the holiday season brings. Every time I read a trip report from someone lucky enough to be there around Christmas, I experience a fleeting moment of sadness, realising that this year I won't be able to watch, and in part, smell the parade during Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, hear the beautiful vocals of the Candlelight Processional, and admire the stunning Christmas ending to IllumiNations. So that's the fourth thing I miss about a Disney Christmas, all those additional offerings that won't be back at the World for another 12 months.

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□The fifth thing I miss about a Disney Christmas is the weather. Yes, of course, it can be all over the place, and we've had days and nights when the UK would have been decidedly warmer, but there's always the chance of a warm day and a pleasant night. There's something very magical about enjoying pleasant temperatures during the middle of the winter, and trust me, there's nothing more surreal than being able to go swimming on Christmas Day, which we've done before!

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□Number six is the music that's constantly played around the parks. That may sound odd, but there are so many songs that we just never hear over here, but are always present at Disney. The classic is, "It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." Every time I hear that, it just makes me smile and think of Disney. After all, if that title doesn't sum up Christmas at Disney, I don't know what does?

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□The seventh thing is some of the treats you get when you stay at a Disney resort. These have become more limited in recent years, and last time we were there in 2009, sadly there was no Christmas stocking waiting on our door on Christmas morning, as we'd always had before. However, you can usually find some of the Disney characters in the lobby, and perhaps some festive hot drinks as well. Keep an eye out for details.

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□The eighth is being able to find wonderful Christmas goodies in all of the shops, and not just Disney's Days of Christmas in Downtown Disney or the Christmas shop in Liberty Square. We've gotten so many special personalised souvenirs over the years, the most important of which is the Christmas ornament of Eeyore, with our married names on it, that we got on our honeymoon. It was the first time I'd had something, apart from our wedding certificate, with that on it. If this is something you want to do, then be sure to get in early, as waits can stretch for days

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and days at this busy time of the year.

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□Number nine is something that's also been affected in recent years, the poinsettia trees. I absolutely fell in love with them on our first holiday trip to the World, and now I always make sure to have a couple of poinsettias in the house to remind me of the amazing creations you can find at Disney. I hope that, after a disappointing show in 2009, the trees are back to full strength by the time we next return.

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□The final thing I miss about Disney at Christmas is perhaps the most obvious one, being immersed in magic from start to finish! Somehow, right now, 2012 seems a very long way away, but my goodness, when we do get back to Disney next Christmas, we'll enjoy every minute of it!

*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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