

Taking It Easy at Walt Disney World: Downtime at Disney

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

It's all too easy to find yourself rushing from one attraction to the next whenever you're in a Disney park, frantically trying to see, and do it all in the time that you've got there. It's very hard sometimes to wind down, and relax, which is, after all, the aim of a vacation.

It's supposed to be a break from the "real world," a time when you can take it easy, without fear of falling behind on something, either at work, or at home. However, how many of us can honestly put our hands up, and say, "Yes, I took some time out on my last Disney vacation?" I'm proud to say that I can, and here's how we do it.

First off, don't program things for you and your party to do every single second of each day. Been there, done that one, and it doesn't make for a pretty result! Instead, try planning just a few "must-dos" for each day, and then if you can achieve anything else, you've done well. Don't be too ambitious with this. If we have a day at the Magic Kingdom, we may say that we'll aim to hit four or five attractions, and that's it. If we do anything else, then it's a bonus.

□ Secondly, and on a similar view, make sure you allow yourself time to get from one thing to the next. I've been guilty of not building that into our plans in the past. Remember that it does take some time to get from one park to another, or from a park to a resort. Don't plan something at Epcot, and then something at the Magic Kingdom half an hour later. It just makes for a stressful time, trying to run from one thing to another.

□ Number three is an easy one, and probably one that a lot of people do. Take a regular break from the parks. Usually it's in the early to mid afternoon for us, as that's when the day is at its hottest, and despite our attempts to visit Walt Disney World at cooler times of the year, we seem to be failing more, and more! We've seen record-breaking heat in both December and April on recent trips, which has made us even more thankful for some downtime in the wonderful air conditioning of our room. However, some days, we may decide to go to the park that's open the earliest, have a couple of hours, and then have a break. Another option can be going in later in the day, and having the morning to just relax, and unwind, before getting some touring under your belt.

Ok, so that's the timing side of things. But what can you do that's a bit more relaxing to refresh the batteries while you're at Walt Disney World? I've already mentioned heading back to your room for a break,

and there are plenty of other options at the various resorts on Disney property. Of course, the swimming pool is a logical one, particularly if you have a water baby in your family. Do remember though that when the heat is on, often the pool can be just as packed as the parks, which may not make for the most relaxing time! If you're from a colder climate, you may want to hit the pools on days when a lot of people wouldn't even consider it. For us, anything in the high 60s is warm, and I'm happy to swim in those temperatures. We've even had days when the lifeguards are bundled up in their coats, and we're happily swimming, and sunbathing by the pool!

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□ Another option at your resort is to explore it. You'll often find that there are some wonderful hidden nooks, and crannies, where you can just settle down, perhaps read a book, or just watch the world go by. For me, there's nothing I love more than being able to grab a few minutes in the communal areas of the Beach Club, and its beautiful Villas. Sitting either in the lobby (now that the ghastly pumpkin chairs are finally banished from there!), the Solarium as you head out to the Villas, or the Breezeway, or Drawing Room in the Villas, is my idea of heaven. You can just take your time, and soak up the atmosphere.

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□ As well as soaking up the sun by the pool, don't forget that many of the Disney resorts have beaches, where you can just watch the world go by. Think of the Polynesian, with its views across to the Magic Kingdom, the banks of the Sassagoula River at Port Orleans, or even alongside Hourglass Lake at Pop Century. You don't even have to stay at your own resort. You can visit other resorts to explore them or just sit in the communal areas, either inside or outside. You may find access to swimming pools restricted, particularly at those with the more popular pools, but apart from that, everyone's welcome!

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□ Ways to relax can also be found at the Walt Disney World spas. Although the Grand Floridian Spa is currently closed, I can heartily recommend the Saratoga Springs Spa, and don't forget that you can get massage treatments at the fitness centers to be found at Animal Kingdom Lodge, BoardWalk, Contemporary, Coronado Springs, Wilderness Lodge, and the Yacht and Beach Club.

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□ Personally, I always find being out on the water relaxing, of course provided it's nice, and calm, and that's one thing you can guarantee at Disney! If you want to unwind, consider taking the FriendShip between the Studios, and Epcot. It will take longer, but it gives you a chance to get your weight off your feet, and just refocus your mind. And if you want some longer time messing about in a boat, consider booking some time to do that at one of the various marinas around property.

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□The final idea is probably a funny one to many people, but I always find it relaxing to head off Disney property, albeit for a short period of time. It just gets you away, and when we return, I always find I appreciate the Disney bubble even more! One of my favorite getaways, apart from my favorite pastime of shopping, is visiting Disney's own town, Celebration. There, you can step back in time to an era when life seemed to go more slowly.

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□Whatever you do on your next Disney vacation, try and take the opportunity to slow down, and take things easy. You'll find it not only helps you to make you truly feel like you're on vacation, but it will also help to refuel those batteries, ahead of more touring of the parks we all know and love.

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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