

Whatever the Weather: Making the Most of Your Disney Vacation in Inclement Weather

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

Every time we take a vacation, we want it to be perfect.

After all, it's a break from the normal day-to-day routine, and we want to be able to enjoy it as much as possible. You can plan all you want, but there are some things that will just take their natural course, and perhaps the thing that can impact your vacation the most is the weather. What do you do when the weather plays foul with your carefully made plans?

I'll say at the outset that we deliberately don't visit Walt Disney World during the hottest months of the year, because we don't do well in extreme heat and humidity, but sadly, with changing weather patterns, despite trying to avoid the heat, we've ended up affected by it. Having sweltered at the start of May, I figured that a trip in April would be much cooler. If only! We hit record-breaking temperatures for that time of the year, and the effect on us was devastating. How people tour in the heat of the summer months, I do not know.

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□ But you're at Disney, you have to make the best of it, right? Well, that's exactly what we did. We adapted our touring patterns, ensuring that we hit the parks as early as possible in the morning, before the heat became unbearable, taking full advantage of any Extra Magic Hours we could find in the mornings. We'd then clear out of the park when walking between the air conditioned attractions became too much for us, retreating to either our room, or heading out of Walt Disney World in the car, both of which, of course, have air conditioning. Thankfully, on most days we also had lunch booked, so that would take us out of the sun as well. We also made sure that every time we passed a drinking fountain, we took full advantage of it, as we didn't want to become dehydrated.

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□ Heat is only half the story. If you travel to Walt Disney World in the winter months, you'll learn only too well how varied the weather can be. We frequently go in December, and it's not unusual to have one day where the temperatures reach into the low 80s, whereas the next day may only give you a high in the low 50s. That can be a huge shock to the system, and here you really have to pay attention to the weather forecasts. Generally, these guys know what they're talking about (obviously there are sometimes exceptions!) and if they say it's going to

be cold, take notice and dress accordingly. There's nothing worse than wandering around the parks, freezing, and having to buy a new sweatshirt. I know a lot of us have been there before, and it certainly grates on me when you know there's another cozy layer sitting back in your room that you could've brought with you.

We've talked about temperatures so far, but what about the weather that comes with them? When it's sunny, and perhaps not too hot, it's perfect weather for touring, but be sure to lather up with suntan lotion, especially if you're prone to sunburn, like I am. And don't forget, once may not be enough -- the effects can wear off quickly in the intense Florida sun. A hat is also a good idea to stop any burning on top, if you see what I mean. Again, think about rehydration.

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□When the rain comes, the traditional wisdom if you're a Disney fan is to get yourself out to the parks, as crowds will lessen when it's wet. You won't find many attractions closed in the rain, although Test Track can be a notable exception, and many are inside, with indoor waiting areas, so you won't get that soaked. Some of my fondest memories are of being in the parks when it's been tipping down with rain. Seriously!

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□Sometimes the rain is a blessed relief after the searing heat, but at other times with lower crowds, you can have some unexpected fun. I've never forgotten the time we found Tigger at Disney's Hollywood Studios, with no guests around to do meet and greets with him. Obviously bored, he was playing around, jumping up and down in the puddles, much to the consternation of his handler. Now that's what I call a magical memory!

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□Florida is often subject to extreme weather, and while we've never been affected by hurricane season, we have experienced some pretty severe storms. We've seen torrential rain pour down for hours, and hours, and hours. New Year's Eve 2002 into 2003 was a classic, with a downpour that started at around 7:00 pm, and continued until the early hours of the morning. It meant the midnight showing of IllumiNations was a complete washout, but despite getting drenched watching it, I'm glad we did, as there was almost no-one else around, everyone else having given up much earlier in the evening. Again, it's something that sticks in my memory.

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□Another memory is the night of what was verging on a tropical storm. It was Christmas Eve, and we were trying to get from the Beach Club Villas to the BoardWalk for dinner at the Flying Fish Cafe. We decided to take the Friendship across Crescent Lake, and as we waited for one to arrive, the sky opened, and we were in the middle of an intense storm, complete with thunder, lightning, and severe winds. Sheltering

underneath the lighthouse there, we were stuck for over half an hour before a boat finally rescued us. At least we finally got to dinner, and we had another memorable experience on the way there.

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□ Writing this, perhaps the one thing that comes across to me is how much the weather can shape your vacation, sometimes in good ways, sometimes in not-so-good ways. But whatever the weather, you're at Disney, and that's always magical, right?

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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