

# When Does Your Walt Disney Vacation Really Begin?: Making the Most of Every Moment

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

When does your Walt Disney World vacation REALLY begin?

Now surely, if ever there was one, that's got to be a simple question! doesn't? Well, yes, and no.

The answer is always going to depend on you as an individual, and your perceptions. For some people the moment you really start your Disney vacation is passing underneath those gates, as you enter Walt Disney World. Others will say that they're not really at Disney until they've seen the castle. But what about those of us with slightly longer journeys to even get there? There are so many points at which I could truly say, "That's when my Disney vacation truly starts." There are no right or wrong answers, but these ten points may give you some fun food for thought.

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□Point 1: Leaving the house Now you could argue that the second you leave the house, and start your journey to Disney, that's when your vacation begins. It's at that point that everything (hopefully!) is packed, and you're off, leaving your cares and the real world behind you. However, if you've got a long journey ahead of you, perhaps hours of driving or flying, it may not really feel as if your vacation has started.

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□Point 2: Arriving at the airport Now, if you're flying, another point where you could say your vacation starts is when you get to the airport. The worry about getting there on time, and whether you're going to make your flight (surely, we're not the only ones who think like this?!) are gone from your mind. Now you can concentrate on the flight ahead of you, and the destination you're heading to. However, there's still check-in, unless you've done it already online, checking in your bags, if you have them with you, and the dreaded clearing of security to do yet before you get on your plane.

Point 3: Getting on the plane So now, having ensured that you're not a security risk, and all your bags are (hopefully!) safely on your flight, you're on board. You can relax, and feel like you're really starting your Disney vacation. Well, yes, and no! Of course, there could still be delays. There's nothing worse than sitting on the tarmac, waiting for the go ahead to take off, knowing that your precious Disney time is ticking away.

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□Point 4: Take-off Once you get to take-off, perhaps that's the point where you really emerge into your Disney bubble. Now you're in the air, and you're on your way, but of course, you still have a few hours' travel time to get to Disney. In our case, it's nine and-a-half hours, which is essentially a full working day, which can be quite depressing at the start of the flight, knowing you have all that time still ahead of you.

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□Point 5: Landing So what about landing? Now you're in Florida, you're in Orlando. You can almost taste the Disney magic! Of course, there's still the taxiing to your gate, getting off the plane, getting your luggage, and for us poor international travellers, we still need to officially be allowed into the country!

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□Point 6: Leaving the airport In which case, how about once you get through all of those phases, and are finally outside Orlando International or Sanford International Airport? I know that, for us, the second the doors open to the outside world, and we felt the heat, we know we've arrived! Usually, as we tend to visit in the winter season, it's a shock to the system, but if we've left behind exceptionally cold weather, it's a pleasant shock too! But, you do still have to actually reach Disney.

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□Point 7: Passing under those Walt Disney World gates Aah... the moment that so many of us wait for, and dream about. You pass underneath those familiar arches, take a deep sigh, and you're back in the Disney bubble, into a magical land, where nothing from reality can trouble you. This is surely where your vacation starts? Well, as you might have guessed by now.... yes and no! You still have to get to your resort, and while it can be a fast process if you have a rental car, or a town car service, if you're on Disney's Magical Express, you may have other stops to make first before you get to your resort.

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□Point 8: Arriving at your resort Now you're finally there. Not only are you on Disney property, but you're actually at your resort, waiting to check in, so that's surely the point at which your Disney vacation begins, isn't it? On the flip side, you're not yet in your room, and you're not yet in a Disney park, which brings me to...

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□Point 9: Getting into your room Once you step into the room that's going to be your party's home for however many nights you're at Walt Disney World, suddenly you do get that "homey" feeling -- well, at least we do, and I'm sure that's not just because we're Disney Vacation Club members, and are welcomed home. So that's it, surely? Well, there is just one more to cover...

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□Point 10: Entering a theme park Whichever your favorite is, for some people, a Disney vacation doesn't truly start until they step foot into the parks. It could be that glimpse of the castle for the first time, or seeing the Tree of Life or Spaceship Earth, but this is what we all come to Disney for, after all.

□Of course, for those of you who drive to Disney, there may well be similar points along your journey, where you pass the next hurdle, and are that little bit closer to your destination. It may be a state line, or it may be the end of a day's drive or waking up the next morning, ready to start all over again. If you're taking the Auto Train, a lot of the same points from flying can be applied, from boarding the train, to actually leaving, to arriving.

□So which of those points do you feel is when your Disney vacation truly starts? I think, if I'm honest, I'm a traditionalist -- it's point 7 for me, as that's when we enter the Disney bubble, and our vacation is finally underway, after all the stress of getting there.

*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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