

Spending Easter at Walt Disney World: Disney During the Busy Season

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Being regular visitors to Walt Disney World Resort, we know when the busy and the quiet times are to visit, and Easter is one of the more crowded times to head to Disney.

Having said that, we're not ones to shy away from crowds, having spent five Christmases in the World already, so Easter didn't present that many fears for us.

Why did we decide to spend Easter at Disney? It was simply because of how things happened for us. That's when good friends would be in the World, and at the time we booked, we thought family would be there as well, although that never happened in the end. If you want to travel at the same time as people with young children, you need to go during school holidays. Therefore, we opted to take the two weeks running up to Easter.

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□As we have a four-day weekend over Easter in the United Kingdom, with Good Friday and Easter Monday both being national holidays, we'd have been crazy to not stay on at Disney for that weekend, so our flights home were booked for late on Easter Sunday itself.

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□The first thing it's worth saying about our Easter experiences at Disney is that 2011 wasn't a typical year for Easter. It fell amazingly late, meaning that many schools had different patterns of attendance. For example, in Indiana, schools were back in session in mid-April, two weeks before Easter, whereas in the United Kingdom, that's exactly when the Easter holidays were starting. To a certain extent, that helped to stagger the crowds somewhat, although the whole time we were in the World, none of the days were what you'd call quiet.

Ironically, the crowds didn't build in the way we'd expected. With Christmas, we know that they increase gradually during the few days leading up to Christmas Day, culminating in insane amounts of people in the parks every day from just after Christmas until New Year's Eve. Not so at Easter, at least that's what we found. If anything, the biggest crowds were the weekend before Easter.

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□We're pretty sure that the Magic Kingdom filled to capacity on one day, as we saw the parking lots were fairly full, and then no more cars arrived during the rest of the afternoon or early evening. On that day, we were on a backstage tour in the Magic Kingdom, and it's the first

time I've seen Disney open up a backstage area to funnel regular guests past Town Square and Main St. There was a parade starting at the time, but obviously they were being swamped with the numbers still coming through the turnstiles. Even the parking lot at Animal Kingdom was getting close to full on some days we passed it.

☐ Fast forward to Easter Sunday itself. There was no way we intended on going anywhere near any of the theme parks, as we thought the crowds would just be crazy. As we drove up to the Contemporary, where we planned to rent a boat from the marina and have lunch, we noticed that the parking lot was the quietest we'd seen it all week. We decided to go and explore, and see just how bad the lines were. The simple answer was that they really weren't.

☐ We walked straight through the turnstiles with no line and found PhotoPass photographers aplenty, all desperate to take someone's photo, as they had very little to do. Women in extravagant Easter costumes were waiting to greet people, although there were very few people to meet, and when we got to the attractions, the wait times told the same story. Just 20 minutes for Buzz Lightyear's Astro Blasters, and 10 minutes for the Haunted Mansion. Not what we'd expected at all.

☐ We stayed in the park for a good couple of hours, but as we were leaving, people were starting to throng in through the turnstiles. The only logic we could apply to this is that either people had got up late, as it was now nearly lunchtime, or perhaps they'd been to Easter services first.

☐ Outside of the crowds, there really wasn't that much to mark Easter at Disney, and certainly no decorations at the parks, although the Easter Bunny did make appearances in the Magic Kingdom, and we saw Mrs. Rabbit from Bambi, surely an unusual character to come out at any other time of the year?

☐ We made our way to the Wave at the Contemporary, where we were able to enjoy a traditional Easter brunch, which was pretty good. Others offering special holiday meals last year included Chef Mickey's, the Cape May Cafe, and Captain's Grille, although this does change from one year to the next.

☐ Some of the resorts we visited over the weekend did have some Easter decorations, with some lovely creations on the front desk of the Contemporary. They were also offering various activities, including character meet and greets and Easter egg hunts, although just about everything we saw was for Sunday, and no other day.

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□As for merchandise, we were expecting to see a range of eggs and perhaps soft toys themed around Easter. We only found a few eggs, although we were delighted to see the wonderfully British Cadbury's Creme Eggs. When it came to soft toys, you could pick up a small Mickey and Minnie, both encased in a zip-up egg. The only other Easter merchandise we spotted were baskets, containing either Duffy or Mickey, but we were surprised by the timing of their appearance. Like all the other Easter merchandise, it only appeared a week beforehand, rather than the months we've been used to in the past.

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□Previously, we've visited in May and saw Independence Day items out on the shop shelves. Easter was certainly an interesting experience for us, although I'm not sure we'd visit at that time again. Our main draw for going in the spring is seeing Epcot in all its glory during the Flower and Garden Festival, and there are definitely quieter times to see that. Unlike Christmas, where you put up with the crowds, because of the wonderful decorations and additional events, Easter sadly offers nothing like that, which is a shame, and I'd say a missed opportunity on Disney's part.

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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