

Helping Plan A First Trip to Disney: Asking the Right Questions

by Paul Moore, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Are you like me? Do your friends and family know that you are that "go-to" person when they finally decide to take a family vacation to Walt Disney World?

And if we were to be honest, we know there is that little adrenaline rush within us when they ask. Our minds start racing with all of the things they HAVE to do at Walt Disney World. *(Of course it is usually at this time that I wonder why the Moms Panel is still rejecting me every year, but I digress.)*

After all, year after year, those of us who travel to Walt Disney World have our own list of things we *have* to do. We all have our own, "It doesn't feel like a Disney vacation until we (fill-in-the-blank)."

Sometimes though, I think those of us who are Disney experts that know exactly what to do and when to do it, can make the planning process daunting when instructing a newbie. I've often wondered if I have scared people away from taking the plunge by helping them plan such a strategic and detailed vacation. After all, who does not want to see the special opening of the Magic Kingdom every day? "Wait, I have to get up how early on my vacation?" Or, who does not want to eat at their favorite restaurants when they go? "You mean I have to choose now when I'm going to eat in 6 months?"

So when assisting others with their plans, I have learned to ask the most important question you could possibly ask. It has nothing to do with the amount of money they want to spend or anything like that. It simply is this, "What do YOU want to get out of YOUR vacation?"

I know it seems like a loaded question, but I truly believe that this is the most important question you can ask anyone who is planning their first trip, and here is why.

The people planning a first trip to Walt Disney World are basically split into two categories, the once-in-a-lifetime people, and those beginning a tradition of visiting Walt Disney World for many years to come. Don't get me wrong, some of the people in the first category will end up in the second after their trip, and vice versa, but before they leave for this endeavor, this is how first timers are split up.

That is why the question is so important. As a once in a lifetime trip,

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you know when you help them plan that there are definite things you will tell them to do, definite places to tell them to eat, and definite memories they can make. After all, they may only be there once, so they should make the most out of it, right? Not to mention, because you are up-to-date on everything Walt Disney World-related, you may know of that one ride that is being decommissioned and therefore, this will be their only chance to ride Snow White's Scary Adventure. What ride is that you ask? I rest my case.

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□ At that point, you can start a game plan which more than likely will revolve around a daily schedule of which park is the best park to attend on that specific day, early mornings to the parks, maps of the parks with an ordered list of rides, and every other hint you could possibly give to make the most of their park experiences every day. Knowing what they want out of it really lays that ground work.

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□ For those that are planning this as their first trip of many to come, it is easier to space out and plan because, if they don't ride Stitch's Great Escape, there is always next year.

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□ For these families, you want their trip to be more like a really good appetizer. The kind that gets them super-excited about the great meal and dessert that will follow in the years to come. They may want to sleep in and be lazy around the parks, because that is what vacation means to them. If so, you have to be prepared to plan a trip that may be everything against what you do on your own vacation. But the point is, you will never know what they want out of it, unless you ask.

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□ So, if you are like me, and are constantly asked about helping with a trip to Disney, before you start planning them a vacation you would like, make sure to ask them what they want to get out of their vacation. It's the most important first timer Disney vacation question you could ask.

About The Author: Paul is an annual visitor to Walt Disney World, took his first Disney Magic cruise in 2012, and is a Disney Vacation Club member. He has just returned from his annual trip in March 2013 and is looking forward to a special coast-to-coast trip, visiting both Disneyland and Walt Disney World in October 2013!

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