

# Planning Your First Visit to Disneyland Paris: Disneyland Paris Tips

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

For Disney veterans, it's sometimes hard to remember what it's like to plan a visit to a Disney theme park as first-timers.

After all, we know the parks, the attractions and restaurants so well that we know exactly where we want to go, and what we want to do during our vacation. However, what happens when you're going with first-timers who've never experienced the park before? It certainly causes you to look at the parks in a totally different light, as I discovered recently when we made plans to meet friends, who were first-time visitors to Disneyland Paris.

Our friends are Walt Disney World veterans, but they would be new to Paris' two parks, so what highlights would be right for them? The first thing I immediately thought of was things unique to Disneyland Paris, and there are plenty of those. It's one thing I hope Disney never changes, as I love experiencing new and unique attractions at each Disney park around the world.

□ Disneyland Paris is home to two parks, the Disneyland Park, which is your traditional Magic Kingdom-style park, and the Walt Disney Studios. Despite its name, it's not really like Disney's Hollywood Studios at all, although it does share a couple of the same attractions. Any first-timer should visit both parks, but Studios still has fewer attractions with which to occupy a day than Disneyland Park. In this articles, I'll take a look at the Disneyland Park.

□ Entering this park, one of the main draws that you literally can't miss is the beautiful Sleeping Beauty Castle. I'd say that it's the most stunning castle of any Disney theme park in the world, and not only that, but there's also a dragon that slumbers beneath the castle, awakening every so often to roar at the visitors who come to see him. Given that there's rarely ever a wait to see the dragon, it's one of the things we make sure to do whenever we're there.

Outside of the castle, if you like your rides rough, it's worth checking out Indiana Jones and le Temple de Peril. It's something I'm never going to try (I've already more than pushed my limits at Disneyland Paris over the years with other rides), but I'm reliably informed not only does it loop round, it's also pretty bumpy.

□ For me, the real attraction are the quieter rides that Disney is so well

known for, and I love finding unique versions of these in every Disney park we visit. Something I adore at Disneyland Paris is Alice's Curious Labyrinth, which does exactly what it says on the tin. It's a maze, but it's perhaps the most creative and fun one I've ever come across, complete with characters from Alice in Wonderland. Of course, it being Disney, it's not too tough to finish it either.

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□So what else in this park are must-dos for a first time visitor? Well, personally I love to experience Disney's classic rides to see if they're different, and they certainly are here. There are three that spring to mind. The first is Big Thunder Mountain, a rougher version of the Walt Disney World ride you'll no doubt be familiar with. I found it a bit too much, although I did love the twist that you go underground to actually get out to the island where the ride is based.

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□Another classic is the Haunted Mansion, although in Disneyland Paris, it's called Phantom Manor. Beautifully themed, it's an imposing building, and particularly when the weather takes a turn for the worse and the skies turn grey, which it can often do here. Inside, it's unique in that the narration is in primarily in French, which makes for a very different ride.

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□The final classic ride we always make a beeline for is Pirates of the Caribbean. I particularly love the entrance, which I think is much better than the Walt Disney World version. You really feel as if you've been transported away to a Spanish style Castillo, and on the way there, you get the bonus of seeing Adventure Isle, complete with Skull Rock, and the wonderfully detailed Captain Hook's Pirate Ship. Once inside, this is very much like the Disneyland ride, complete with its own restaurant inside, although here it's known as the Blue Lagoon. All the scenes are the same, but Captain Jack hasn't made it over here yet, and the scenes are in a different order to the one you might be used to, which can be a bit off-putting, the first time you ride.

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□I'll say now that Space Mountain also falls into this category, but after a highly disturbing ride on the Walt Disney World version as a child, it's something I'll never do again. While on this subject, Discoveryland, as it's known in Paris, is absolutely not to be missed. This is their version of Tomorrowland, and instead of trying to be futuristic, it instead steps back in time to the days of Jules Verne, and how he would have imagined the future to be. As a result, the theme really works, and it's an enchanting place to visit, with the added bonus that it will never age. You're not going to walk through here, as I sometimes do with Tomorrowland at Walt Disney World, and think, "Well, I bet this looked futuristic when they did it..." Whenever we're over in Disneyland Paris, this is one part of the park that I happily snap away photographing, as I

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just love it. If only they could import this into the American parks, I think that would be a big improvement. It's perhaps my favorite part of the whole park, and a definite not-to-be-missed for any first-time visitor.

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□After having taken you on a whirlwind journey around the Disneyland Park, in the next of this series of articles, we'll take the short walk over to the Walt Disney Studios Park and see what you shouldn't miss 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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