

## Planning a First Trip to Disneyland Paris - Part 3: What to Do Outside the Parks

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

This is the final in a series of articles looking at what first time visitors to Disneyland Paris should not miss. We've already covered the [Disneyland Park](#), and the [Walt Disney Studios Park](#), but there's plenty more to see than just the two parks.

For starters, Disneyland Paris has what I think is perhaps one of the most stunning hotels at any Disney property: the Disneyland Hotel, located right at the entrance to the Disneyland Park. This hotel is the first thing you see as you arrive from the Marne La Vallee and it's a beautiful introduction to the whole resort. No matter how many times I see it, it always takes my breath away. However, while the Disneyland Hotel is stunning from the outside, it's also well worth taking a look inside as well. We didn't step inside until we stayed at the hotel a couple of years ago, and I immediately regretted that. The Disneyland Hotel in Disneyland Paris is like the Grand Floridian at Walt Disney World, but somehow, I find it less ostentatious. Sure, it's grandiose, but it all seems in perfect proportion, and we didn't feel out of place in our theme park gear, something I can't say about my visits to Disney's Grand Floridian Resort at Walt Disney World.

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□ Near to the Disneyland Paris parks is another must-do -- the recently opened World of Disney store. Now, before you think "I've seen the World of Disney at Walt Disney World or Disneyland and I don't need to see this one," think again. This World of Disney only opened in July 2012 and the Imagineers had a field day here. You only have to look at examples like the additions and changes to Disney California Adventure or Disney's Art of Animation Resort to see what Disney's Imagineers can do these days. That theme continues here at the World of Disney store in Disneyland Paris. The second you walk in you're transported into a Disney realm -- this is so much more than just a shop. I love shopping, but when we entered, my eye was immediately drawn to the ceiling, with familiar Disney figures outlined in the stars. Further in, there are murals from much loved Disney movies, some with merchandise from those films underneath them, as in the case of Cars. There's still a lot of Disneyland Paris specific merchandise, which was good to see, as I hate the way that a lot of Disney items are now becoming generic across all the parks. I like to go to a park and pick up something unique from that destination, and you can still do that here.

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□ Something else that any first-time visitor to Disneyland Paris should not miss is seeing Lake Disney, with its selection of beautiful resorts around it. I love this set-up, and to me, it's at least on a par, if not better than the resorts around the Seven Seas Lagoon, and the reason I say that is because Disneyland Paris is on a smaller scale. The view you get of Lake Disney as you approach it from the Disney Village, Paris' equivalent of Downtown Disney, has Disney's Hotel New York on your left, the Sequoia Lodge ahead of you, and the Newport Bay Club away to the right. I also get a sense of nostalgia as well when I see this view, with the Sequoia Lodge bearing more than a passing resemblance to the Wilderness Lodge, and the Newport Bay Club the closest I'll get to my beloved Beach Club on this side of the Atlantic. If the weather is fine, there's nothing more enjoyable than strolling around the lake and exploring these lovely resorts.

Of course, if you're a first-time visitor to Disneyland Paris, it may well be that it's also your first visit to the beautiful French capital. If that's the case, something else that has to be on your must-do list is spending some time in Paris itself. I'd suggest a full day as a minimum, but preferably, if time allows longer, maybe two or three days? You can choose to either stay at Disneyland Paris, and commute into Paris. From the Marne-La-Vallee station, you'll be in central Paris in about 40 minutes, and we've made the journey many times before, and it's a pleasant enough journey.

□ Our favourite things to do in Paris include of course the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, although we go more to admire the architecture, rather than the contents of the museum, as it's not our cup of tea. The nearby Tuileries gardens are lovely to stroll along, and the Champs Elysees is a pleasure to shop, including its own Disney Store. Another thing we love to do is take a cruise along the River Seine, and the Notre Dame is a beautiful cathedral, well worth seeing after its massive clean-up in recent years. Now you see why you need at least a full day in Paris, and that's before I've thrown in other ideas, like the Sacre-Coeur basilica, and the enchanting neighbourhood of Montmartre around it, or the jaw dropping Palace of Versailles. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, and not to be missed on a visit to Disneyland Paris if you haven't seen it before.

□ So there you go -- for anyone heading to Disneyland Paris for the first time, some ideas of what you must make sure you do while you're there. It's certainly got a lot to commend it, and plenty of unique attractions, so if your plans take you anywhere near the French capital, be sure to add some time on for Europe's only Disney park.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to*

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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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