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Disneyland® 2023

Save time in line, score a spot on the newest rides,
and get the most for your money

Seth Kubersky with Bob Sehlinger, Len Testa & Guy Selga Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

WHY “UNOFFICIAL”?

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

THE AUTHORS AND RESEARCHERS OF THIS GUIDE specifically and categorically declare that they are and always have been totally independent of the Walt Disney Company, Inc.; of Disneyland, Inc.; of Walt Disney World Company, Inc.; and of any and all other members of the Disney corporate family.

The material in this guide originated with the authors and researchers and has not been reviewed, edited, or in any way approved by Walt Disney Company, Inc.; Disneyland, Inc.; or Walt Disney World Company, Inc.

With no obligation to toe the Disney line, we represent and serve you, the reader. The contents were researched and compiled by a team of evaluators who are completely independent of the Walt Disney Company, Inc. If a restaurant serves bad food, if a gift item is overpriced, or if a ride isn't worth the wait, we say so. And in the process, we hope to make your visit more fun, efficient, and economical.

DANCE TO THE MUSIC

A DANCE HAS A BEGINNING AND AN END. But when you're dancing, you're not concerned about getting to the end or where on the dance floor you might wind up. You're totally in the moment. That's the way you should be on your Disneyland vacation.

You may feel a bit of pressure concerning your vacation. Vacations, after all, are very special events—and expensive ones to boot. So you work hard to make your vacation the best that it can be. Planning and organizing are essential to a successful Disneyland vacation, but if they become your focus, you won't be able to hear the music and enjoy the dance.

PART ONE

PLANNING *Before* YOU LEAVE HOME

GATHERING INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THIS GUIDE, we recommend that you first visit our website, theunofficialguides.com, which is dedicated to news about our guidebooks, as well as a blog with posts from Unofficial Guide authors. You can also sign up for the Unofficial Guides Newsletter, containing even more travel tips and special offers.

Our sister website, touringplans.com, offers essential tools for planning your trip and saving you time and money. Its blog, blog.touringplans.com, lists breaking news for the Disneyland Resort and Disney theme parks worldwide. Touringplans.com also offers computer-optimized touring plans for Disneyland and Disney California Adventure (DCA), as well as searchable dining menus, including wine lists, for every food cart, stand, kiosk, counter-service restaurant, and sit-down restaurant in the Disneyland Resort.

Another really popular part of touringplans.com is its Crowd Calendar, which shows crowd projections for Disneyland and DCA for every day of the year. Look up the dates of your visit, and the calendar will not only show the projected wait times for each day but will also indicate for each day which theme park will be the least crowded. Historical wait times are also available, so you can see how crowded the parks were last year for your upcoming trip dates.

Much of the content on touringplans.com—including the menus, resort photos and videos, and errata for this book—is completely free for anyone to use. Access to parts of the site, most notably the Crowd Calendar, premium touring plans, and in-park wait times, requires a small annual subscription fee (current-book owners get a substantial discount). This nominal charge helps keep touringplans.com online and costs less than a souvenir bucket of popcorn at Disneyland. Plus touringplans.com offers a 45-day money-back guarantee.

A subscriber from Arvada, Colorado, wrote in to say:

The biggest drawback of the whole trip was the numerous breakdowns of the rides. We were aware of Big Thunder Mountain and a few other rides closed for long-term scheduled maintenance, but a lot of the rides broke down as soon as we headed to them! The only things that didn't have any breakdowns were the cash registers!

Disney's attractions are technically complex, so it's almost inevitable that you will experience some unscheduled downtime during your visit. If a ride is temporarily closed, ask the attendants outside if there is an estimated reopening time (usually they can't tell you) and continue with your touring, returning later if possible. If a ride stops running while you're already in the queue, decide whether to stay based on how long the posted wait was when you entered and how much time you've already invested. Most "brief operational delays" are resolved in about 15 minutes, but there are no guarantees.

If a ride halts unexpectedly while you're on it, remain calm and rest assured that Disney has extremely safe evacuation procedures for every contingency. Stay seated and listen for announcements, and be patient because employees may need to evacuate ride vehicles one at a time in a specific order. On the plus side, you may get an exclusive backstage view of how the ride operates, and you should be offered either an immediate re-ride (if the attraction resumes operating) or a return ticket to let you skip the standby line later on.

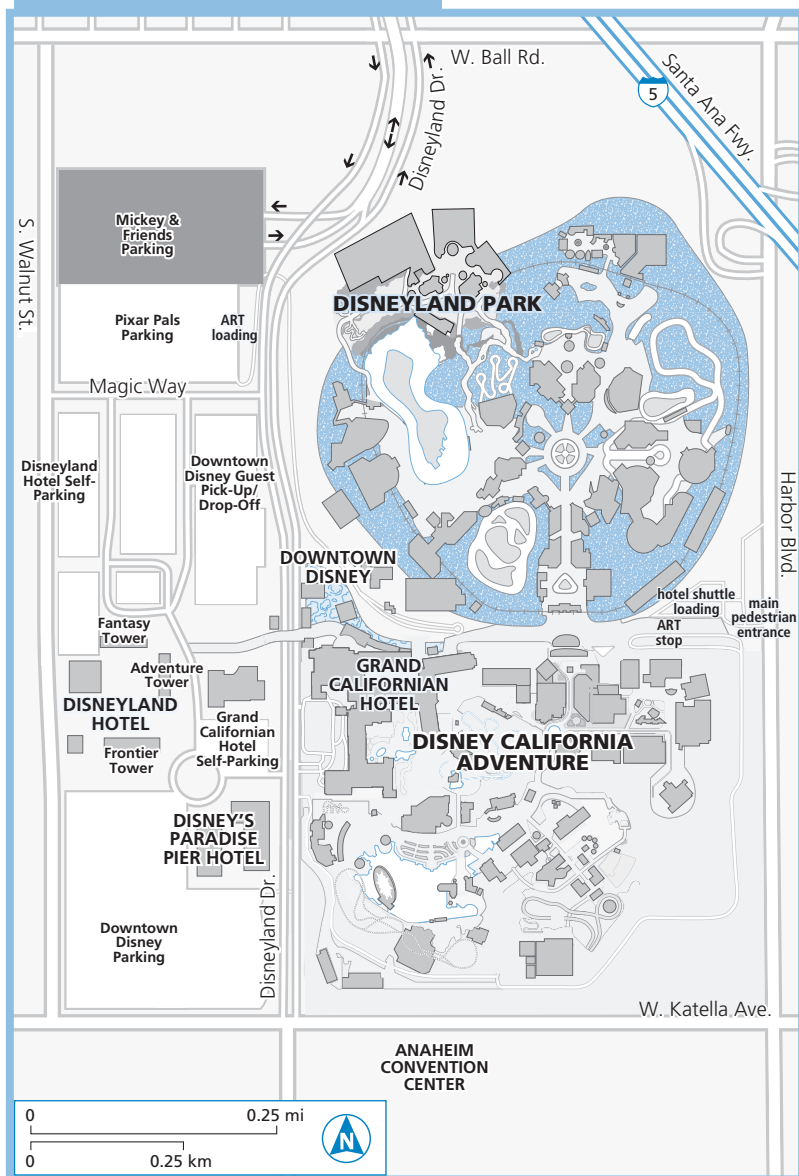
HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GO TO DISNEYLAND FOR A DAY?

LET'S SAY THAT we have a family of four—Mom, Dad, Tim (age 12), and Tami (age 8)—driving their own car. Because they plan to be in the area for a few days, they intend to buy the Three-Day Park Hopper tickets. A typical day would cost \$853.11, excluding lodging and transportation. See the table below for a breakdown of expenses.

HOW MUCH DOES A DAY COST?	
Breakfast for 4 at Denny's with tax and tip	\$51.51
Disneyland parking fee	\$30.00
1 day's admission for 4 on a Three-Day Park Hopper Pass	\$513.33
Dad: Adult 3-day is \$390 divided by 3 days = \$130	
Mom: Adult 3-day is \$390 divided by 3 days = \$130	
Tim: Adult 3-day is \$390 divided by 3 days = \$130	
Tami: Child 3-day is \$370 divided by 3 days = \$123.33	
Morning break (soda or coffee)	\$18.27
Fast-food lunch (burger, fries, and soda), no tip	\$66.08
Afternoon break (soda and popcorn)	\$43.10
Dinner in park at counter-service restaurant with tax	\$76.97
Souvenirs (Mickey T-shirts for Tim and Tami) with tax*	\$53.85
One-day total (without lodging or transportation)	\$853.11

* Cheer up—you won't have to buy souvenirs every day.

Around Disneyland



PART TWO

ACCOMMODATIONS

WHERE *to* STAY

TRAFFIC AROUND DISNEYLAND, and in the Anaheim–Los Angeles area in general, is so terrible that we advocate staying in accommodations within 2–3 miles of the park. Included in this radius are many expensive hotels as well as a considerable number of moderately priced establishments and a small number of bargain motels.

READERS' DISNEYLAND RESORT REPORT CARD

EACH YEAR OUR READERS grade their hotel in several categories (see table on the next page). Room quality indicates cleanliness, bed comfort, and room size. Check-in efficiency rates how quickly and accurately the hotel staff get you into your room. Quietness of room considers soundproofing from neighbors and exterior noise. The pool rating includes the size of the pool, how crowded it gets, and how clean the pool and pool area are. The staff category assesses how friendly and effective the hotel staff are at handling problems and special requests. Our hotel dining rating applies to any on-site counter-service dining, and the overall rating is the summary for every category.

Readers rate Disneyland hotels better than neighboring hotels, continuing a years-long trend. Much of the lodging around Disneyland consists of motels with aging rooms, many in need of refurbishment, content to trade on their proximity to the park rather than the quality of their rooms.

Readers indicate that Disneyland's top two hotels are substantially better than nearby hotels; however, the Anaheim Desert Inn & Suites (the off-site hotel that appears most often on our reader surveys) scores higher than the Paradise Pier in key categories. In this year's reader report card, Disney's highest grades are in room quality and staff friendliness—two things you'd expect to see, given the premium Disney charges for its lodging.

The Disneyland hotels fare poorly in the dining category, but some context is necessary. Each of the hotels offers decent choices for breakfast, from quick grab-and-go options to table-service meals. And the hotels' short walk to Downtown Disney and surrounding neighborhoods provides plenty of options for good lunches and dinners.

READERS' DISNEYLAND RESORT REPORT CARD							
HOTEL	ROOM QUALITY	CHECK-IN EFFICIENCY	QUIETNESS OF ROOM	POOL	STAFF	HOTEL DINING	OVERALL RATING
Disneyland Hotel	A-	B	B	B+	A	C	B+
Grand Californian	A-	B-	B	A	A	C	A-
Paradise Pier	B	B	B	C	A	D	C+

WALKING TO DISNEYLAND FROM NEARBY HOTELS

WHILE IT IS TRUE that most Disneyland-area hotels provide shuttle service, or are on the ART routes, it is equally true that an ever-increasing number of guests walk to the parks from their hotels. Shuttles are not always available when needed, and parking in the Disneyland lot has become expensive. A pedestrian walkway from Harbor Boulevard provides safe access to Disneyland for guests on foot. This pedestrian corridor extends from Harbor Boulevard west to the Disneyland Hotel, connecting Disneyland Park, Disney California Adventure, and Downtown Disney.

Close proximity to the theme parks figures prominently in the choice of a hotel. Harbor Boulevard borders Disneyland Resort on the east, and Katella Avenue runs along the resort's southern boundary. The closest non-Disney hotels, and the only ones really within walking distance, are on Harbor Boulevard from just south of I-5 to the north to just south of the intersection with Katella Avenue, and along Katella Avenue near Harbor. The eastern gateway, which leads between the guest drop-off and bus loops off Harbor Boulevard to a security checkpoint at the edge of the Esplanade, is the most popular entry point for pedestrians. It's hard to overemphasize how beneficial it can be to stay at one of the hotels in close proximity to this entryway, as a reader from Pflugerville, Texas, happily reported:

Staying at a hotel across the street from Disneyland was the best decision I made. It was easy to come and go whenever we wanted to.

Farther south on Harbor are some of the best hotels in the area. They are a little far removed for commuting to the parks on foot, but you can walk into the Toy Story parking lot and take a free bus to the parks. Additionally, these hotels are close to the Anaheim Convention Center and tend to cater, though certainly not exclusively, to business travelers.

While the hotels near Disneyland Drive appear close to Disney property on a map, pedestrian access to the parks from the west is a bit more circuitous. If staying along Katella Avenue to the west of the convention center, you can walk north on Disneyland Drive and cut through the hotel parking lot across from the Grand Californian to Downtown Disney's security checkpoint, which is usually less crowded than the eastern entrance. A keycard-operated pedestrian gate on the Grand

Californian's Disneyland Drive entrance prevents anyone not registered there from entering, and the neighboring entrance into DCA is exclusively for guests at the Pixar-themed hotel. From West Ball Road, you can't enter the Mickey & Friends garage from its north side; instead, you must take a long walk south along Disneyland Drive to Downtown Disney, which isn't particularly convenient with children in tow.

It's worth noting that we've observed a marked increase in the homeless population on the streets surrounding the Disneyland Resort since the pandemic started. Although incidents of serious conflicts with visitors remain rare, when walking to and from your hotel it's wise to remain aware of your surroundings and stick to the well-lit sidewalks.

For families, a second important consideration is the quality of the hotel swimming pool. We mention this because, unfortunately, many of the non-Disney hotels closest to the theme parks have really crummy pools, sometimes just a tiny rectangle on a stark slab of concrete surrounded on four sides by a parking lot.

Our lodging reviews include the walking time from each hotel to the theme park entrances. The times provided are averages—a couple of fit adults might cover the distance in less time, while a family with small children will likely take longer. The walk times do not include the wait to pass through security screenings, which can be substantial. Note that several non-Disney hotels are closer than the Disneyland Resort hotels, except for the Grand Californian. Also in the reviews, we rate the swimming areas of the hotels listed on a scale of 1–5 stars, with 5 being best. As a rule of thumb, any pool with a rating less than 3 stars is not a place where most folks would want to spend much time.

The above discussion might lead you to wonder whether there's any real advantage to staying in a Disney-owned hotel. The Disney hotels, of course, are very expensive, but if you can handle the tariff, here are the primary benefits of staying in one:

1. You are eligible for early entry 30 minutes before official opening at Disneyland Park and DCA on most days.
2. Preferred access to dining reservations at select hotel table-service restaurants (availability is limited).
3. The Disney hotels (especially the Grand Californian) offer some of the nicest rooms of any of the hotels within walking distance.
4. The Disney hotels offer the nicest swimming pools of any of the hotels within walking distance.
5. Numerous dining and shopping options are within walking distance, with hotel lobby delivery service from select Downtown Disney restaurants.
6. It's easy to retreat to your hotel for a meal, a nap, or a swim.
7. You don't need a car.
8. You can charge purchases at most Disney-owned shops and restaurants to your hotel account and have packages delivered to your room.
9. You can use the Disneyland mobile app to check in and unlock your room (at Disneyland Hotel and Grand Californian).
10. The "Hey Disney!" digital assistant in the Amazon Alexa devices inside all on-site hotel rooms allow you to communicate with Disney characters and get information about your vacation.

HOW THE HOTELS COMPARE			
HOTEL	OVERALL QUALITY RATING	WALKING DISTANCE TO PARKS	COST
DISNEYLAND AREA			
Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa	★★★★½	0.2 mi.	\$682-\$958
Hyatt House at Anaheim Resort/Convention Center	★★★★½	0.6 mi.	\$177-\$303
JW Marriott Anaheim Resort	★★★★½	0.9 mi.	\$223-\$387
Westin Anaheim Resort	★★★★½	1.0 mi.	\$272-\$709
Disneyland Hotel	★★★★	0.5 mi.	\$481-\$674
Courtyard Anaheim Theme Park Entrance	★★★★	0.5 mi.	\$369-\$499
Four Points by Sheraton Anaheim	★★★★	0.8 mi.	\$120-\$258
Home2 Suites by Hilton Anaheim Resort	★★★★	0.6 mi.	\$198-\$268
Homewood Suites by Hilton Anaheim Resort-Convention Center	★★★★	1.0 mi.	\$171-\$267
Hotel Indigo Anaheim	★★★★	0.7 mi.	\$173-\$242
Radisson Blu Anaheim	★★★★	1.1 mi.	\$295-\$375
Residence Inn at Anaheim Resort Convention Center	★★★★	1.0 mi.	\$206-\$406
Sheraton Park Hotel at the Anaheim Resort	★★★★	0.8 mi.	\$134-\$446
Springhill Suites at Anaheim Resort Area/Convention Center	★★★★	0.7 mi.	\$188-\$377
Wyndham Anaheim	★★★★	0.7 mi.	\$199-\$259
Anaheim Majestic Garden	★★★★½	1.2 mi.	\$171-\$219
Best Western Plus Park Place Inn	★★★★½	0.2 mi.	\$242-\$274
Candy Cane Inn (<i>temporarily closed</i>)	★★★★½	0.6 mi.	\$178-\$189
Desert Palms Hotel & Suites	★★★★½	0.7 mi.	\$135-\$270
Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel	★★★★½	0.6 mi.	\$387-\$489
Element Anaheim Resort Convention Center	★★★★½	0.8 mi.	\$300-\$630
Howard Johnson Anaheim	★★★★½	0.6 mi.	\$279-\$342
Park Vue Inn	★★★★½	0.3 mi.	\$259-\$279
Anaheim Camelot Inn & Suites	★★★	0.3 mi.	\$269-\$309
Anaheim Desert Inn & Suites	★★★	0.3 mi.	\$169-\$189
Best Western Plus Stovall's Inn	★★★	0.9 mi.	\$199-\$224
Fairfield Inn Anaheim Resort	★★★	0.5 mi.	\$179-\$351
Hotel Lulu	★★★	0.8 mi.	\$189-\$209
Ramada Anaheim Maingate North	★★★	1.0 mi.	\$126-\$156
Tropicana Inn & Suites	★★★	0.3 mi.	\$209-\$329
Alpine Inn	★★½	0.8 mi.	\$160-\$180
Castle Inn & Suites	★★½	0.5 mi.	\$179-\$189
Eden Roc Inn & Suites	★★½	1.0 mi.	\$176-\$319
Grand Legacy at the Park	★★½	0.3 mi.	\$166-\$254
Kings Inn Anaheim	★★½	0.8 mi.	\$146-\$205
Del Sol Inn	★★	0.3 mi.	\$151-\$244
Riviera Motel	★★	0.8 mi.	\$105-\$153
UNIVERSAL AREA			
Sheraton Universal Hotel	★★★★	0.3 mi.	\$174-\$305
Tilt Hotel	★★★★½	0.9 mi.	\$179-\$218
BLVD Hotel & Spa	★★★	0.7 mi.	\$199-\$209

Grand Legacy at the Park ★★½**Rate per night** \$166–\$254. **Maximum occupants per room** 4. **Pool**★★★½. **Fridge in room** Yes. **Breakfast** Yes (cold). **Wi-Fi** Free.**Parking** \$17/day. **Walk to Esplanade** 7 minutes (0.3 mile).1650 S. Harbor Blvd.
Anaheim☎ 714-772-0440
grandlegacyhotel.com

THE LOFTILY NAMED GRAND LEGACY AT THE PARK used to be a Ramada, and aside from a spiffed-up lobby and newly constructed tower, it still feels like a budget motel. As long as you know what you're getting into, the rooms (which received new bedding in 2020) are comfortable enough for the price, if not particularly roomy. The heated pool is impressively large and includes a small splash pad for the kids, and adults can enjoy the chic bar on the rooftop. There are also a few convenient shops and restaurants on the ground floor, including a Hawaiian barbecue takeout and a boba tea shop, which is good because the grab-and-go breakfast is pretty paltry. The best reason to book the Grand Legacy is because it's almost as close to Disneyland as the Park Vue Inn but costs less. Be aware that parking your car past checkout is not permitted.

Home2 Suites by Hilton Anaheim Resort ★★★★★**Rate per night** \$198–\$268. **Maximum occupants per room** 6. **Pool**★★★★. **Fridge in room** Yes. **Breakfast** Free (hot). **Wi-Fi** Free. **Park-****ing** \$30/day (valet only). **Walk to Esplanade** 13 minutes (0.6 mile).1441 S. Manchester Ave.
Anaheim
☎ 714-844-2811
hilton.com

FUNCTIONAL BUT NOT FLASHY, Home2 Suites has huge rooms, decent prices, and close proximity to Disneyland Resort, making it a great option for families. The lobby is clean and modern, with room to relax, and has a small shop with snacks and drinks. The pool is heated and has a splash pad for the kids. Studio rooms with two queen beds and a sleeper sofa can fit six with room to spare; one- and two-bedroom suites are also available. Mattresses are on the firm side, but pillows are extremely soft. There are power outlets and USB charging ports all over the place, including at the laptop-friendly work desk. The kitchenette has everything you need to heat up food and brew coffee, with ample fridge space for all that uneaten park food you swear you'll eat before you go back to the airport, but then never do. The bathroom is solid, with plenty of counter space and good water pressure, but the barn-style sliding door offers very little sound dampening. There's a huge exercise room on the second floor with treadmills and exercise bikes. The only real negatives are road noise from I-5 for rooms on the east end of the building and mandatory valet parking.

Homewood Suites by Hilton Anaheim Resort-Convention Center ★★★★★**Rate per night** \$171–\$267. **Maximum occupants per room** 6. **Pool**★★★★½. **Fridge in room** Yes. **Breakfast** Free (hot). **Wi-Fi** Free. **Park-****ing** \$28/day. **Walk to Esplanade** 20 minutes (1 mile).2010 S. Harbor Blvd.
Anaheim☎ 714-750-2010
hilton.com

ALTHOUGH THE WALK from Homewood Suites to Disneyland can take 20 minutes, you can skip that thanks to its location next door to Disneyland Resort's Toy Story parking lot. From there, you can take a bus to the eastern entrance of the Esplanade between Disneyland and Disney California Adventure. Homewood Suites' large rooms and full kitchens (with full-size

PART THREE

MAKING *the* MOST of YOUR TIME

ALLOCATING TIME

THE DISNEY PEOPLE RECOMMEND spending two to four full days at Disneyland Resort. While this may seem a little self-serving, it is not without basis. Disneyland Resort is *huge*, with something to see or do crammed into every conceivable space. In addition, there are two parks, and touring requires a lot of walking, and often a lot of waiting in line. Moving in and among large crowds all day is exhausting, and often the unrelenting Southern California sun zaps even the most hardy, making tempers short.

During our many visits to Disneyland, we observed, particularly on hot summer days, a dramatic transition from happy, enthusiastic touring on arrival to almost zombielike plodding along later in the day. Visitors who began their day enjoying the wonders of Disney imagination ultimately lapsed into an exhausted production mentality (“We have two more rides in Fantasyland; then we can go to the hotel”).

If your schedule and budget permit, try building in a day of rest to break up your park visits, as a mom from Folsom, California, suggests:

You are SPOT ON when you emphasize how exhausting a Disneyland Resort trip is. If I could go back and do the trip again, I would spend one day at Disneyland, have a day of rest at the motel (with the kids swimming and me being in the shade and off my feet), and then go to California Adventure on our third day in Anaheim.

A family from Vancouver, Canada, concurs:

With a four- or five-day pass, I strongly recommend a day's break in between where you can sleep in, swim, read a book, and have a day off from theme parks. In hindsight I think this would have made the back end of our holiday that much more enjoyable.

Alternately, plan to spread your touring over additional days so that you can spend afternoons outside the park, as this Fort Collins, Colorado, family did:

We had a four-day park hopper ticket, which allowed for a much more leisurely pace compared to our previous visits. We were present each day at rope drop, which enabled us to complete our desired attractions and lunch by noon or 1 p.m., then head back to the hotel to rest or visit the pool, and then return to the parks later for parades, shows, or other events (DCA Food and Wine Festival). For the first time on a Disney vacation, I felt somewhat relaxed.

OPTIMUM TOURING SITUATION

WE DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONE IDEAL ITINERARY. Tastes, energy levels, and perspectives on what constitutes entertainment and relaxation vary. This understood, here are some considerations for developing your own ideal itinerary.

Optimum touring at Disneyland requires a good game plan, a minimum of three to five days on-site (excluding travel time), and a fair amount of money. It also requires a fairly prodigious appetite for Disney entertainment. The essence of optimum touring is to see the attractions in a series of shorter, less-exhausting visits during the cooler, less-crowded times of day, with plenty of rest and relaxation between excursions.

Because optimum touring calls for leaving and returning to the theme parks, it makes sense to stay in one of the Disney hotels or in one of the non-Disney hotels within walking distance. If you visit Disneyland during busy times, you need to get up early to beat the crowds. Short lines and stress-free touring are incompatible with sleeping in. If you want to sleep in *and* enjoy your touring, visit Disneyland when attendance is lighter.

The **CARDINAL RULES** *for* **SUCCESSFUL TOURING**

MANY VISITORS DON'T HAVE three days to devote to Disneyland Resort. For these visitors, efficient touring is a must. Even the most time-effective plan, however, won't allow you to cover both Disney theme parks in one day. Plan to allocate at least one day to each park. We provide "best of" one-day park-hopper plans for those who insist on seeing the resort's highlights, but it's an expensive and exhausting option. Instead, if your schedule permits only one day of touring, we recommend that you concentrate on one theme park and save the other for another visit.

ONE-DAY TOURING

A COMPREHENSIVE ONE-DAY TOUR of Disneyland Park or Disney California Adventure (DCA) is possible, but it requires knowledge of the parks, good planning, and plenty of energy and endurance. One-day touring doesn't leave much time for full-service meals, prolonged shopping, or lengthy breaks. One-day touring can be fun and rewarding, but

THE CARDINAL RULES FOR SUCCESSFUL TOURING

allocating two days per park, especially for Disneyland Park, is always preferable if possible.

Successful touring of Disneyland Resort hinges on three rules:

1. DETERMINE IN ADVANCE WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO SEE What rides and attractions most appeal to you? Which additional rides and attractions would you like to experience if you have any time left? What are you willing to forgo?

To help you establish your touring priorities, we describe every attraction in detail. We include the author's critical evaluation of the attraction as well as the opinions of Disneyland Resort guests expressed as star ratings. Five stars is the highest (best) rating possible.

Finally, because Disneyland Resort attractions range in scope from midway-type rides and horse-drawn trolleys to colossal, high-tech extravaganzas spanning the equivalent of whole city blocks, we have developed a hierarchy of categories for attractions to give you some sense of their order of magnitude:

SUPER-HEADLINERS The best attractions that the theme park has to offer. They are mind-boggling in size, scope, and imagination and represent the cutting edge of modern attraction technology and design.

HEADLINERS Full-blown, full-scale, multimillion-dollar, themed adventure experiences and theater presentations. They are modern in their technology and design and employ a full range of special effects.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS Themed adventure experiences on a more modest scale but incorporating state-of-the-art technologies, or larger-scale attractions of older design.

MINOR ATTRACTIONS Small-scale dark rides (spook house-type rides), Midway-type rides, minor theater presentations, transportation rides, and elaborate walk-through attractions.

DIVERSIONS Exhibits, both passive and interactive. Also include playgrounds, video arcades, and street theater.

Though not every attraction fits neatly into the above categories, the categories provide a relative comparison of attraction size and scope. Remember, however, that bigger and more elaborate does not always mean better. Peter Pan's Flight, a minor attraction, continues to be one of the park's most beloved rides. Likewise, for many small children, there is no attraction, regardless of size, that can surpass Dumbo the Flying Elephant.

2. ARRIVE EARLY! ARRIVE EARLY! ARRIVE EARLY! This is the single most important key to touring efficiently and avoiding long lines. With your admission pass in hand, be at the gate ready to go at least 30–45 minutes before the theme park's stated opening time. There are shorter lines and relatively fewer people first thing in the morning. The same four rides you can experience in 1 hour in the early morning will take more than 3 hours to see after 11 a.m. Have breakfast before you arrive, so you will not have to waste prime touring time sitting in a restaurant.

From a Cincinnati mom:

VIRTUAL QUEUES

ALONG WITH THE OPENING OF *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* came the arrival at Disneyland Resort of Virtual Queues (also referred to as Virtual Boarding Passes), which Disney devised to help manage the overwhelming demand for popular attractions like *Rise of the Resistance*. The system was also used for *WEB SLINGERS: A Spider-Man Adventure* at Disney California Adventure (DCA) when it opened. Virtual Queues have been discontinued at *Rise of the Resistance* and *WEB SLINGERS*, as both rides now offer standby queues and paid Individual Lightning Lanes, but Virtual Queues are still employed for controlling access to *World of Color* viewing areas. Virtual Queues may also be reintroduced during peak attendance periods or on popular new attractions, such as the upcoming *Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway*. Check Disneyland's app or website ahead of your visit to see if they are offered.

When in use, Virtual Queue boarding passes, which are free for all guests, become available for nighttime spectaculars at noon daily; when offered for rides, they are released each morning exactly at 7 a.m., with a second batch made available daily at noon. Guests must use their smartphone's Disneyland app to secure their place in the Virtual Queue; fast fingers are required because passes are all snapped up within a matter of minutes or even seconds.

If you're lucky enough to successfully join a Virtual Queue for a show, you'll be assigned a performance time (on days when there are multiple showings) along with a time to enter the designated viewing area; see the show descriptions (pages 226 and 280) for details on where to go. For rides using Virtual Queues, you won't receive a set time at which you schedule your return; rather, you'll be assigned a group number and receive a push notification on your phone when your turn has arrived. At that point you will then have a 1-hour window in which to arrive at the attraction and show your boarding code. (Those without a phone can periodically check their Virtual Queue status at a designated kiosk.) Cast members have some discretion in enforcing the boarding end time, so plead your case if you are late because you were stuck on another attraction or had a dining reservation.

In theory, you should then be able to experience the attraction with a minimal wait. In practice, between the line to scan the pass and the queue to board, we've waited up to 30 minutes for *Rise of the Resistance*, and up to 60 for *WEB SLINGERS*, on top of the Virtual Queue. Guests with Disability Access Service (DAS) should tell a cast member about their status when redeeming their boarding pass so they can bypass most of the subsequent wait.

Guests can try for the 7 a.m. Virtual Queue ride boarding group distribution from anywhere inside or outside the Disneyland Resort area, but you must already have tickets and a theme park reservation booked for that day, and park hoppers can only join the queue for a ride that is in the park reserved. For the noon distribution of both rides and shows, all members of your party must have scanned their

usually have a dedicated single-rider lane that is clearly marked, but at older rides you'll need to ask a cast member at the entrance for a paper pass, which will permit you to walk up the exit pathway.

SAVING TIME *in* **LINE** *by* **UNDERSTANDING** *the* **RIDES**

THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF RIDES IN DISNEYLAND. Some rides, such as It's a Small World, are engineered to carry several thousand people every hour. At the other extreme, rides such as Dumbo can accommodate only around 500 people an hour. Most rides fall somewhere in between, so we provide for each attraction an estimate (based on published information and our own observations) of its typical guest throughput, assuming normal operating conditions. Lots of factors figure into how long you will have to wait to experience a particular ride: the popularity of the ride, how it loads and unloads, how many people can ride at one time, how many units (cars, rockets, boats, flying elephants, or whatever) of those available are in service at a given time, and how many staff are available to operate the ride. Let's take them one by one:

1. HOW POPULAR IS THE RIDE? Newer rides such as WEB SLINGERS: A Spider-Man Adventure or Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance attract a lot of people, as do longtime favorites such as Space Mountain. If you know a ride is popular, you need to learn a little more about how it operates to determine when might be the best time to ride.

2. HOW DOES THE RIDE LOAD AND UNLOAD? A ride need not be especially popular to form long lines. The lines can be the result of less-than-desirable traffic engineering; that is, it takes so long to load and unload that a line builds up. This is the situation at the Mad Tea Party and Dumbo. Only a small percentage of the visitors to Disneyland Park (mostly kids) ride Dumbo, for instance, but because it takes so long to load and unload, this ride can form long waiting lines.

Some rides never stop. They are like a circular conveyor belt that goes around and around. We call these continuous loaders. Haunted Mansion is a continuous loader. The more cars or ships or whatever on the conveyor, the more people can be moved through in an hour. Haunted Mansion has lots of cars on the conveyor belt and consequently can move more than 2,400 people an hour.

Other rides are interval loaders. This means that cars are unloaded, loaded, and dispatched at certain set intervals (sometimes controlled manually and sometimes by a computer). Matterhorn Bobsleds is an interval loader. It has two separate tracks (in other words, the ride has been duplicated in the same facility). Each track can run up to 10 sleds, released at 23-second or greater intervals (the bigger the crowd, the shorter the interval). In another kind of interval loader, such as the Jungle Cruise, empty boats return to the starting point, where they line up waiting to be reloaded. In a third type of interval loader, one group of

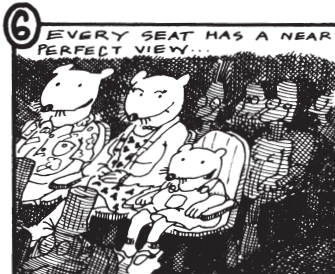
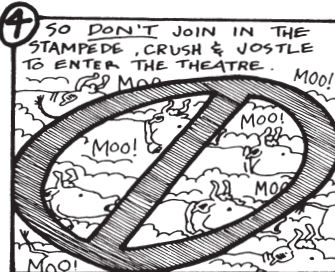
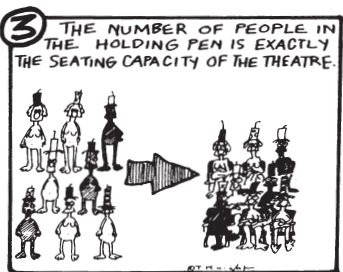
bump into her throughout the book doing, well, what characters do. Pay attention to her—she knows what she's talking about.

SAVING TIME *in LINE by* UNDERSTANDING *the* SHOWS

MANY OF THE FEATURED ATTRACTIONS at Disneyland are theater presentations. While they're not as complex as rides from a traffic-engineering viewpoint, a little enlightenment concerning their operation may save some touring time.

Most Disneyland theater attractions operate in three distinct phases:

CAUTION: HOW THEATER ATTRACTIONS WORK



PART FOUR

ESSENTIALS

The **BARE NECESSITIES**

CREDIT CARDS

AMERICAN EXPRESS, MASTERCARD, VISA, Discover, and Japan Credit Bureau credit cards are accepted for theme park admission. Disneyland shops, fast-food and counter-service restaurants, sit-down restaurants, and the Disneyland Resort hotels also accept all the cards listed above. Most vendor carts accept credit cards, but a few do not—ask before you order. Disney Visa cardholders can get a private character meet and greet in Disney California Adventure's Hollywood Land 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., and an exclusive face-to-face with a *Star Wars* villain inside Disneyland's Star Wars Launch Bay 2–6 p.m. or 4–8 p.m. depending on the season. Cardholders also get a code to download all their private poses from disneyland.com/photopass or the Disneyland smartphone app. Disney Visa cardholders save 10% on merchandise (\$50 minimum purchase) and dining at select resort locations and 15% on guided tours. Instant application kiosks can be found in Downtown Disney, with \$100 or more in statement credits sometimes offered as an incentive to approved applicants. Visit disneyrewards.com for current offer details.

Mobile payment or tap-to-pay, a wireless payment method on newer iPhones and NFC-equipped Android smartphones, is supported at most Disneyland Resort ticket booths, stores, quick-service restaurants, and outdoor vending carts. Locations that support tap-to-pay have a small black pad with a Contactless Indicator symbol (also known as an EMVCo symbol, which looks like a Wi-Fi symbol turned sideways). When it works, mobile payment is the swiftest way to pay, even quicker than swiping a hotel key.

SALES TAX

A COMBINED STATE AND LOCAL sales tax of 7.75% applies to all purchases made at Disneyland Resort except for admission tickets,

which are untaxed. Hotels in Anaheim charge a 15% room occupancy tax. All prices listed in this book are before tax, unless otherwise noted.

FACE MASKS AND SANITIZING

AT PRESS TIME, face coverings are optional indoors and outdoors for all guests, and no proof of vaccination is required at any Southern Californian attraction. (However, even in the absence of coronavirus, wearing a face mask in the parks is a great way to reduce your odds of coming down with a post-vacation common cold.) Face masks are also optional while using transportation, such as the shuttle from the parking lot, and while riding Disney-operated or public buses. Themed fabric face masks can be purchased at most Disneyland retail locations for under \$10, but we recommend bringing at least two disposable masks per person, per day (preferably N95 or KN95 with elastic ear loops and a wire for fitting along the nose) from home.

Likewise, complimentary hand sanitizer dispensers are available near the entrances or exits of most attractions, but their use is not mandatory, and they frequently need refilling. Pack a travel-size squeeze bottle of sanitizer for each member of your group, and remember to visit the restrooms regularly for thorough handwashing.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

IN ADDITION TO THE BASICS that you would bring along on any vacation—casual clothing, comfortable footwear, bathing attire, necessary medications and toiletries—you'll want to stock up on the following before your Disneyland visit:

- Small bottles of hand sanitizer and sunscreen
- Cell phone backup battery or charger with cord and plug (see page 120)
- Zip-top plastic bags, to protect electronics and masks on water rides
- A hat with brim and sunglasses (even during the winter)
- Pocket-size umbrella and/or poncho
- Refillable water bottle

By the same token, there are some items you'll definitely want to leave behind:

- Alcohol, controlled substances (including medical cannabis), and any illegal drugs
- Weapons, including knives, firearms, and explosives
- Glass containers or glassware (except baby food, medicine, or perfume containers under 4 oz.)
- Loose ice cubes or dry ice (reusable ice packs are allowed)
- Large or hard-sided coolers
- Food that requires refrigerating or reheating (bottled water and small snacks are OK)
- Pets (excluding service animals)
- Selfie sticks (small folding tripods or monopods are allowed)

PART FIVE

DISNEYLAND *with* KIDS

I am very grateful for the help your book gave me. The best part was that there were no surprises that spoiled the fun. I was ready for rain, wind, cold, expensive food, small-child meltdowns, and 40-minute potty stops for the grandparents (well, maybe not quite ready for the 40-minute potty stops). I did need an hour alone in the Grand Californian bar after the third day.

—Mom from Lompoc, California



The **BRUTAL TRUTH** *About* **FAMILY VACATIONS**

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED that the phrase *family vacation* is a bit of an oxymoron because you can never take a vacation from the responsibilities of parenting if your children are traveling with you. Though you leave work and normal routine far behind, your children require as much attention, if not more, when traveling as they do at home.

Parenting on the road requires imagination and organization. You have to do all the usual stuff (feed, dress, bathe, supervise, comfort, discipline, and so on) in an atmosphere where your children are hyperstimulated, without the familiarity of place and the resources available at home. Though not impossible—and possibly even fun—parenting on the road is not something you want to learn on the fly.

The point is that preparation, or the lack thereof, can make or break your Disneyland vacation. Believe us: you don't want to leave the success of your expensive Disney vacation to chance. Your preparation can be organized into several categories: mental, emotional, physical, organizational, and logistical. You also need a basic understanding of the two theme parks and a well-considered plan for how to go about seeing them.

Attraction Minimum Height Requirements	
Disneyland Park	
Autopia	32" (54" to drive unassisted)
Big Thunder Mountain Railroad	40"
Toontown Coaster	35"
Indiana Jones Adventure	46"
Matterhorn Bobsleds	42"
Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run	38"
Space Mountain	40"
Splash Mountain	40"
Star Tours—The Adventures Continue	40"
Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance	40"
Disney California Adventure	
Goofy's Sky School	42"
Grizzly River Run	42"
Guardians of the Galaxy—Mission: Breakout!	40"
Incredicoaster	48"
Jumpin' Jellyfish	40"
Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters	32"
Mater's Junkyard Jamboree	32"
Radiator Springs Racers	40"
Redwood Creek Challenge Trail	42" (rock wall and zip line only)
Silly Symphony Springs	40" (tandem swing) 48" (single swing)
Soarin' Around the World	40"

young 'uns along. But as a Minneapolis mother reports, some attractions are better for babies than others:

Shows and boat rides are easier for babies (ours was almost 1 year old, not yet walking). Rides where a bar comes down are doable but harder. Peter Pan's Flight was our first encounter with this type, and we had barely gotten situated when I realized that he might fall out of my grasp. The 3-D films are too intense; the noise level is deafening and the images inescapable.

I thought you might want to know what a baby thought (based on his reactions). At Disneyland Park: Jungle Cruise: didn't get into it. Pirates of the Caribbean: slept through it. Mark Twain Riverboat: the horn made him cry. It's a Small World: wide-eyed, took it all in. Peter Pan's Flight: couldn't really sit on the seat. A bit dangerous. He didn't get into it. Disneyland Railroad: liked the motion and scenery. Enchanted Tiki Room: loved it. Danced, clapped, sang along.

The same mom also advises:

We used a baby sling on our trip and thought it was great when standing in the lines—much better than a stroller, which you have to park before getting in line and navigate through crowds. It is impractical to go to the Baby Care Center every time your baby needs to nurse, so moms should be comfortable nursing in public situations.



About INVITING Your CHILDREN'S FRIENDS

IF YOUR CHILDREN WANT TO INVITE FRIENDS on your Disneyland vacation, give your decision careful thought. First, consider the logistics. Is there room in the car? Will you have to leave something at home that you had planned on taking to make room in the trunk for the friend's luggage? Will additional hotel rooms or a larger suite be required? Will the increased number of people in your group make it hard to get a table at a restaurant?

If you determine that you can logistically accommodate one or more friends, the next step is to consider how the inclusion of the friend will affect your group's dynamics. Generally speaking, the presence of a friend will make it harder to really connect with your own children. So if one of your vacation goals is an intimate bonding experience with your children, the addition of friends will possibly frustrate your attempts to realize that objective.

If family relationship building is not necessarily a primary objective of your vacation, it's quite possible that the inclusion of a friend will make life easier for you. This is especially true in the case of only children, who may otherwise depend exclusively on you to keep them happy and occupied. Having a friend along can take the pressure off and give you some much-needed breathing room.

If you allow a friend to accompany you, limit the selection to children you know really well and whose parents you also know. Your children's friends who have spent time in your home will have a sense of your parenting style, and you will have a sense of their personality, behavior, and compatibility with your family. Assess the prospective child's potential to fit in well on a long trip. Is he or she polite, personable, fun to be with, and reasonably mature? Does he or she relate well to you and to the other members of your family?

A trip to the mall including a meal in a sit-down restaurant will tell you volumes about the friend. Likewise, inviting the friend to share dinner with the family and then spend the night will provide a lot of relevant information. Ideally this type of evaluation should take place early on in the normal course of family events, before you discuss the possibility of a friend joining you on your vacation. This will allow you to size things up without your child (or the friend) realizing that an evaluation is taking place.

By seizing the initiative, you can guide the outcome. For example, Ann, a Redding, California, mom, anticipated that her 12-year-old son would ask to take a friend on their vacation. As she pondered the various friends her son might propose, she came up with four names. One, an otherwise sweet child, had a medical condition that Ann felt unqualified to monitor or treat. A second friend was overly aggressive with younger children and was often socially inappropriate for his age. Two

SMALL-CHILD FRIGHT-POTENTIAL TABLE

As a quick reference, we provide this table to warn you which attractions to be wary of and why. The table represents a generalization, and all kids are different. It relates specifically to kids 3–7 years of age. On average, as you would expect, children at the younger end of the age range are more likely to be frightened than children in their 6th or 7th year.

Disneyland Park

MAIN STREET, U.S.A.

- **Disneyland Railroad** Tunnel with dinosaur display frightens some small children.
- **The Disneyland Story, presenting Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln** Brief battle sound effects may surprise small children.
- **Main Street Cinema** Not frightening in any respect.

ADVENTURELAND

- **Enchanted Tiki Room** A small thunderstorm momentarily surprises very young children.
- **Indiana Jones Adventure** Visually intimidating, with intense effects and a jerky ride. Switching-off option (see p. 164).
- **Jungle Cruise** Moderately intense, with some macabre sights; a good test attraction for little ones.
- **Treehouse** Not frightening in any respect.

NEW ORLEANS SQUARE

- **Haunted Mansion** Name of attraction raises anxiety, as do sights and sounds of waiting area. An intense attraction with humorously presented macabre sights. The ride itself is gentle.
- **Pirates of the Caribbean** Slightly intimidating queuing area; an intense boat ride with gruesome (though humorously presented) sights and two short, unexpected slides down flumes.

CRITTER COUNTRY

- **Davy Crockett's Explorer Canoes** Not frightening in any respect.
- **The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh** Not frightening in any respect.
- **Splash Mountain** Visually intimidating from the outside. Moderately intense visual effects. The ride itself, culminating in a 52-foot plunge down a steep chute, is somewhat hair-raising for all ages. Switching-off option (see p. 164).

STAR WARS: GALAXY'S EDGE

- **Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run** Simulated space flight with intense visual effects may discombobulate droids (and guests) of all ages. Switching-off option (see p. 164).
- **Rise of the Resistance** Intense visual effects, close encounters with sci-fi villains, and one brief drop that can scare kids and sensitive adults. Switching-off option (see p. 164).

FRONTIERLAND

- **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad** Visually intimidating from the outside; moderately intense visual effects. The roller coaster may frighten many adults, particularly seniors. Switching-off option (see p. 164).
- **Fantasmic!** Loud and intense with fireworks and some scary villains, but most young children like it.
- **Frontierland Shootin' Exposition** Frightening to children scared of guns.
- **Mark Twain Riverboat** Not frightening in any respect.
- **Pirate's Lair on Tom Sawyer Island** Some very small children are intimidated by dark walk-through tunnels that can be easily avoided.
- **Sailing Ship Columbia** Not frightening in any respect, aside from a single loud cannon blast that is announced well in advance.

LOST CHILDREN

LOST CHILDREN NORMALLY do not present much of a problem at Disneyland Resort. All Disney employees are schooled in handling such situations. If you lose a child while touring, report the situation to a Disney employee; then check in at City Hall (Disneyland Park) or Guest Relations (DCA) where lost-children logs are maintained. In an emergency, an alert can be issued throughout the park through internal communications. If a Disney cast member encounters a lost child, the cast member will escort the child to the Baby Care Center located at the central-hub end of Main Street in Disneyland Park and at the entrance plaza in DCA. Guests age 11 or under are taken to the Baby Care Center in the Pacific Wharf area at DCA. Guests age 12 and older may leave a written message at City Hall or the Guest Relations lobby or wait there.

It is amazingly easy to lose a child (or two) at a Disney park. It is a good idea to sew a label into each child's shirt that states their name, your name, and the name of your hotel. The same task can be accomplished by writing the information on a strip of masking tape; hotel security professionals suggest that the information be printed in small letters, and that the tape be affixed to the outside of the child's shirt 5 inches or so below the armpit.

HOW KIDS GET LOST


CHILDREN GET SEPARATED from parents every day at the Disney parks under remarkably similar (and predictable) circumstances.

1. PREOCCUPIED SOLO PARENT In this scenario the only adult in the party is preoccupied with something such as buying refreshments or using the restroom. Junior is there one moment and gone the next.

2. THE HIDDEN EXIT Sometimes parents wait on the sidelines while allowing two or more young children to experience a ride together. As it usually happens, the parents expect the kids to exit the attraction in one place, and lo and behold, the young ones pop out somewhere else. The exits of some Disney attractions are considerably distant from the entrances. Make sure that you know exactly where your children will emerge before letting them ride by themselves.

3. AFTER THE SHOW At the completion of many shows and rides, a Disney staffer will announce, "Check for personal belongings and take small children by the hand." When dozens, if not hundreds, of people leave an attraction at the same time, it is easy for parents to temporarily lose contact with their children unless they have them directly in tow.

4. RESTROOM PROBLEMS Mom tells 6-year-old Tommy, "I'll be sitting on this bench when you come out of the restroom." Three situations: One, Tommy exits through a different door and becomes disoriented (Mom may not know there is another door). Two, Mom belatedly decides that

 **unofficial TIP**
We suggest that children younger than 8 years old be color-coded by dressing them in purple T-shirts or equally distinctive clothes.

PART SIX

DISNEYLAND PARK



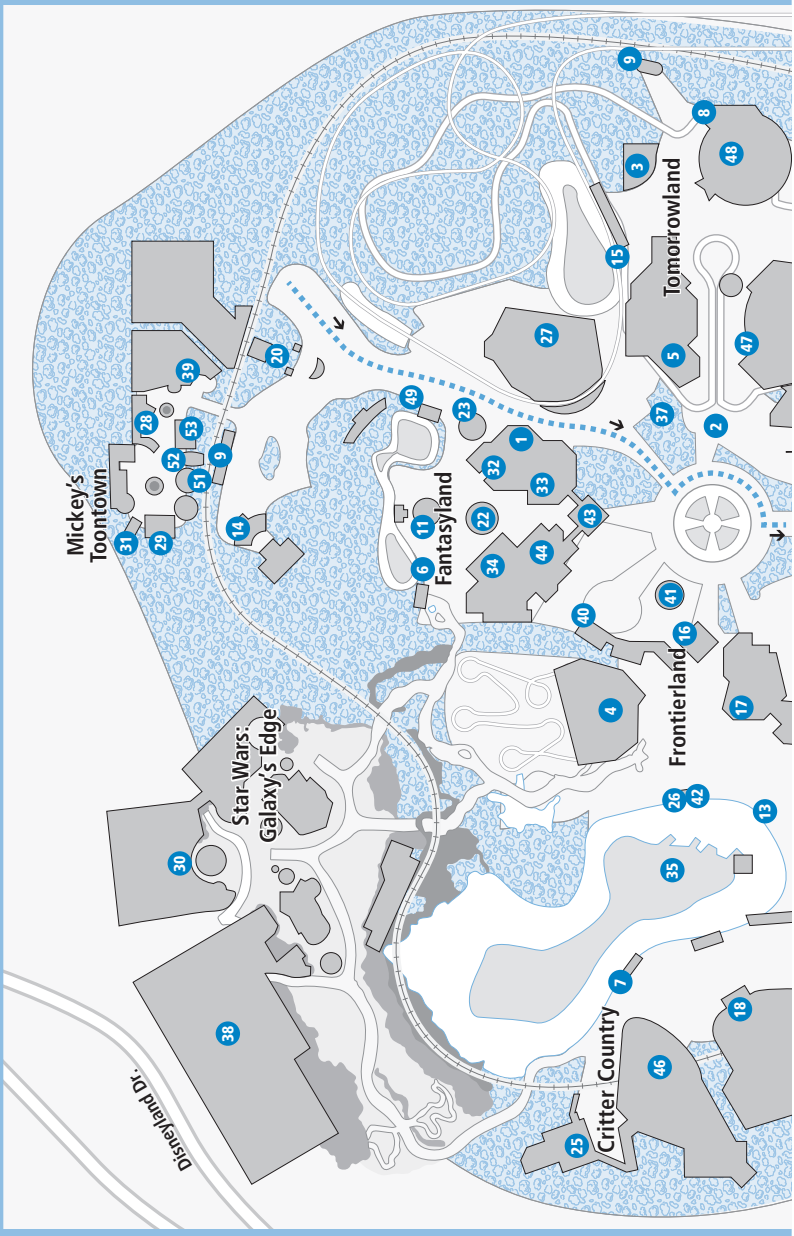
ARRIVING *and* **GETTING ORIENTED**

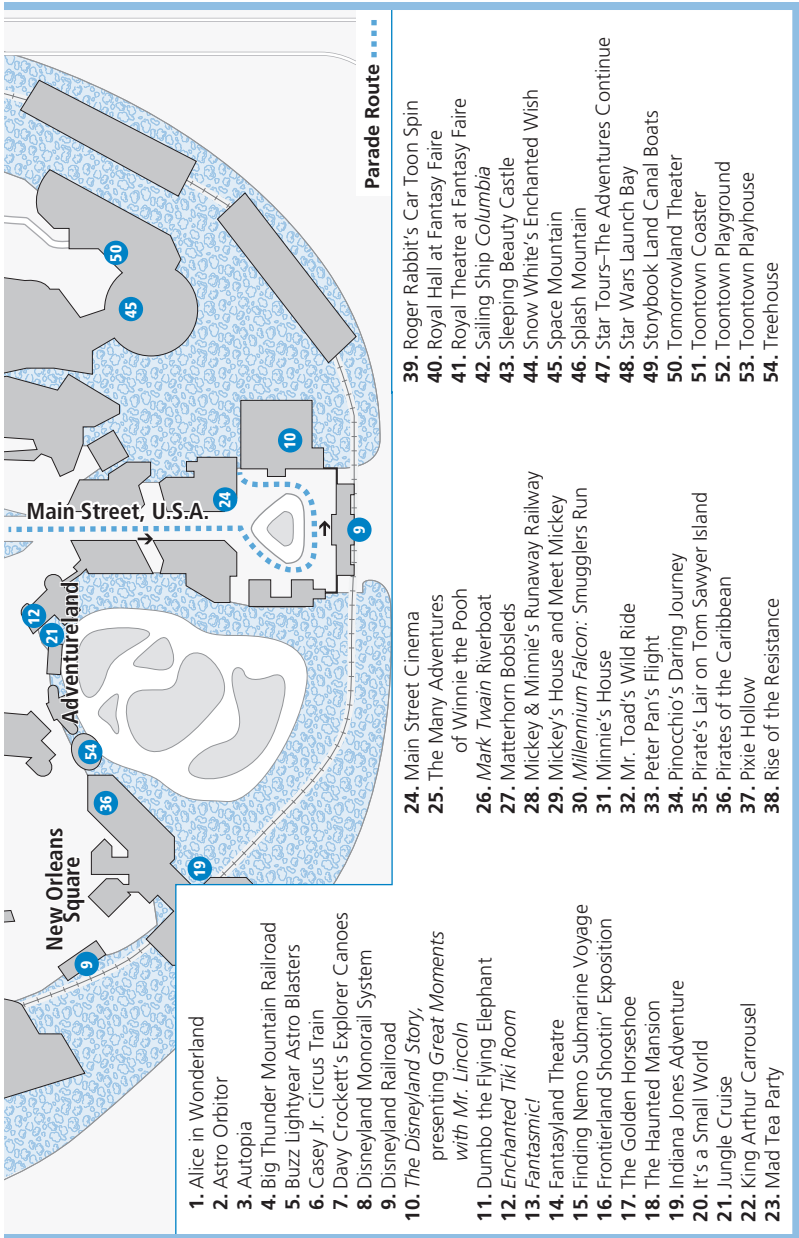
AFTER PARKING AT OR WALKING into the resort, guests pass through security screenings before entering the Esplanade to approach Disneyland's front turnstiles. Two entrance gates, 14 and 19, are blocked by trees situated in the entrance plaza about 10 feet from the security checkpoint. The trees sometimes inhibit the formation of a line in front of both the obstructed gates. Gates 14 and 19 are staffed nonetheless and draw guests from adjacent lines 13 or 15 and 18 or 20. When this happens, it significantly speeds up the entry process for guests waiting in lines 13 and 20. Our advice on arriving, therefore, is to inspect the lines leading to gates 14 and 19 and join whichever looks to be shortest. Later in the day, the outside gates (1 and 32) tend to be fastest for reentry. Stroller and wheelchair rentals are available in the Esplanade between Disneyland and Disney California Adventure. As you enter Main Street, City Hall is to your left, serving as the center for general information, lost and found, and entertainment information.

To combat rampant resales of unexpired tickets, Disneyland Resort has implemented a policy of photographing all guests upon their first park entry. Have your ticket ready for scanning by a cast member just before you enter the turnstiles; if your mug isn't yet in Mickey's mainframe, you'll be asked to pose before proceeding. These added steps can sometimes slow the line at the start of the day, and there's no express lane for returning guests or Magic Key passholders.

Be sure to pick up a park map as you pass through the turnstiles. Maps are also available in the passages connecting the park entrance to Main Street, U.S.A.; at City Hall; and at a number of shops throughout the park. Printed *Times Guide* pamphlets, which detailed daily entertainment schedules for live shows, parades, fireworks, and character greetings, have been phased out in favor of the Disneyland smartphone

Disneyland Park







DISNEYLAND PARK TOURING PLANS

THE GOAL OF OUR STEP-BY-STEP TOURING PLANS is to help you see as much as possible with a minimum of time wasted standing in line. They are designed to avoid crowds and bottlenecks on days of moderate to heavy attendance. On days of lighter attendance (see “Selecting the Time of Year for Your Visit,” page 28), the plans will still save you time but will not be as critical to successful touring.

Choosing the Right Touring Plan

If you have two days to spend at Disneyland Park, the two-day touring plans are by far the most relaxed and efficient. The Two-Day Touring Plan A takes advantage of early-morning touring, when lines are short and the park has not yet filled with guests. This plan works well all year and is particularly recommended for days when Disneyland Park closes before 8 p.m. On the other hand, Two-Day Touring Plan B combines the efficiencies of early-morning touring on the first day with the splendor of Disneyland Park at night on the second day. This plan is perfect for guests who wish to sample both the attractions and the special magic of Disneyland Park after dark, including *Fantasmic!*, parades, and fireworks. The Two-Day Touring Plan for Families with Small Children spreads the experience over two more-relaxed days and incorporates more attractions that both children and parents will enjoy.

If you have only one day but wish to see as much as possible, use the One-Day Touring Plan for Adults. This plan will pack as much into a single day as is humanly possible, but it is pretty exhausting. If you prefer a more relaxed visit, read the preceding ride descriptions and drop the ones that interest you the least.

If you have small children, you may want to use the Dumbo-or-Die-in-a-Day Touring Plan for Families with Small Children. This plan includes most of the children’s rides in Fantasyland and Mickey’s Toontown and omits roller coasters and other attractions that small children cannot ride (because of Disney’s age and height requirements), as well as rides and shows that are frightening for small children. Because this plan calls for adults to sacrifice many of the better Disney attractions, it is not recommended unless you are touring Disneyland Park primarily for the benefit of your children. In essence, you pretty much stand around, sweat, wipe noses, pay for stuff, and watch the children have fun. It’s great.

An alternative to the Dumbo plan is the One-Day Touring Plan for Adults, taking advantage of switching off (see page 164). Switching off allows adults to enjoy the wilder rides while keeping the whole group together.

For guests who really want to burn the candle at both ends (as well as a bunch of money) by buying a single-day Park Hopper, we offer a

PART SEVEN

DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE

We enjoyed DCA much more than Disneyland Park. More fun, fewer strollers and little kids, more-adventurous people. Just a different feeling all the way around.

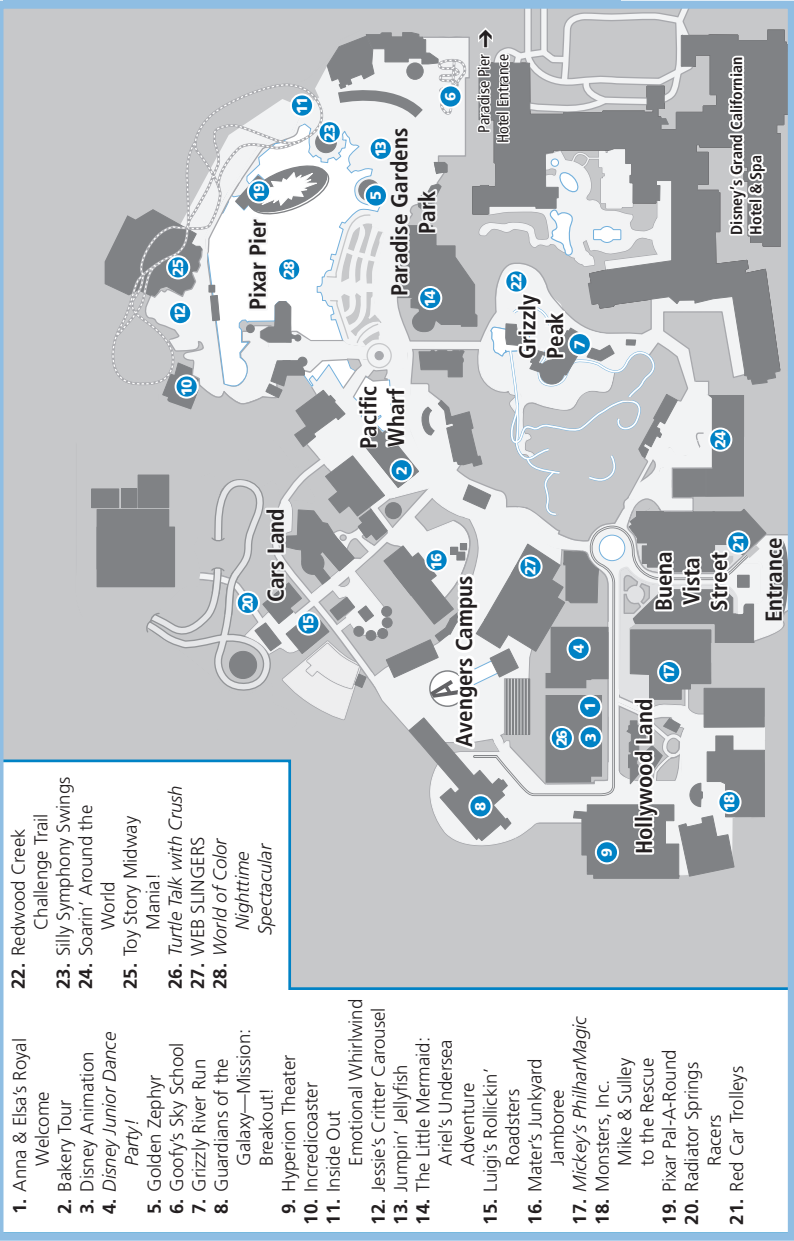
—Mom from Bend, Oregon

A MOST ANTICIPATED SEQUEL

DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE held its grand opening on February 8, 2001. Known as DCA among Disneyphiles, the park is a bouquet of contradictions conceived in Fantasyland, starved in utero by corporate Disney, and born into a hostile environment of Disneyland loyalists who believed they'd been handed a second-rate theme park. Its parts are stunningly beautiful yet come together awkwardly, failing to compose a handsome whole. And perhaps most lamentable of all, the California theme is impotent by virtue of being all-encompassing. But after a billion-dollar metamorphosis, DCA overcame its inauspicious debut and emerged as an honorable companion to its storied older sibling across the Esplanade.

The history of the park is another of those convoluted tales found only in Robert Ludlum novels and corporate Disney. Southern California Disney fans began clamoring for a second theme park shortly after EPCOT opened at Walt Disney World in 1982. Though there was some element of support within the Walt Disney Company, the Disney loyal had to content themselves with rumors and half-promises for two decades while they watched new Disney parks go up in Tokyo, Paris, and Florida. For years, Disney teasingly floated the Westcot concept, a California version of EPCOT that was always just about to break ground. Whether it was a matter of procrastination or simply pursuing better opportunities elsewhere, the Walt Disney Company sat on the sidelines while the sleepy community of Anaheim became a sprawling city and property values skyrocketed. By the time Disney emerged from its Westcot fantasy and began to get serious about a second California

Disney California Adventure



Mickey's PhilharMagic ★★½

APPEAL BY AGE PRESCHOOL ★★★★★ GRADE SCHOOL ★★★★★ TEENS ★★★★★
YOUNG ADULTS ★★★★★ **OVER 30** ★★★★★ **SENIORS** ★★★★★

What it is 3-D movie with in-theater effects. **Scope and scale** Major attraction. **When to go** Anytime. **Comment** 3-D effects and loud noises may frighten preschoolers. **Duration of show** 12 minutes. **Probable waiting time** 7 minutes.

DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS This 3-D movie imported from Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom features an odd collection of Disney characters, mixing Mickey and Donald with Simba and Ariel as well as Jasmine and Aladdin. Shoehorned into the space originally occupied by Muppet-Vision 3-D, this version substitutes a single standard-size screen instead of the immersive 150-foot-wide triptych used in Florida, but the movie is still augmented by video projections on the walls and an arsenal of special effects built into the theater. The plot involves Mickey, as the conductor of the PhilharMagic, leaving the theater to solve a mystery. In his absence, Donald attempts to take charge, with disastrous results.

Brilliantly conceived, furiously paced, and laugh-out-loud funny, *Mickey's PhilharMagic* will leave you grinning. And while it is loud and in-your-face, this show is softer and cuddlier than some other 3-D films. Things pop out of the screen, but they're really not scary. It's the rare child who is frightened—but there are always exceptions.

TOURING TIPS There's rarely more than a single screening's wait. The theater is large, so don't be alarmed to see a gaggle of people in the lobby. A vibrant new sequence featuring "Un Poco Loco" from Pixar's *Coco* was added in 2021, making this old favorite worthy of another visit, but the effects aren't nearly as impressive here as in Orlando.

Mickey's PhilharMagic is periodically preempted when the Sunset Showcase theater is used to screen movie trailers promoting Disney's hopeful cinematic blockbusters, such as the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe films.

Monsters, Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue!
(Lightning Lane) ★★½

APPEAL BY AGE PRESCHOOL ★★★★★ GRADE SCHOOL ★★★★★ TEENS ★★★★★
YOUNG ADULTS ★★★★★ **OVER 30** ★★★★★ **SENIORS** ★★★★★

What it is Dark ride. **Scope and scale** Major attraction. **When to go** Before 11 a.m. **Duration of ride** 3½ minutes. **Average wait in line per 100 people ahead of you** 4 minutes; assumes 23 cars in operation. **Loading speed** Moderate.



DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS Based on characters and the story from the Disney-Pixar film *Monsters, Inc.*, the ride takes you through child-phobic Monstropolis as Mike and Sulley try to return baby Boo safely to her bedroom. If you haven't seen the film, the story line won't make much sense. In a nutshell, a human baby gets loose in a sort of parallel universe populated largely by amusing monsters. Good monsters Mike and Sulley try to return Boo to her home before the bad monsters get their hands on her.

The Imagineers did a very good job on the Monsters, Inc. ride, recreating the humor, characters, and setting of the film in great detail. The section of the attraction where you ride through the Door Vault with all of its lifts and conveyors is truly inspired. Special effects are first-rate, and

DINING *and* SHOPPING *In and Around* DISNEYLAND

DINING *in* DISNEYLAND RESORT

IN THIS SECTION, we aim to help you find good food without going broke or tripping over one of Disneyland Resort's many culinary land mines. More than 50 restaurants operate in Disneyland Resort, including about 20 full-service restaurants, several of which are inside the theme parks. Collectively, Disney restaurants offer reasonable variety, serving everything from Louisiana Creole to California fusion, but sadly, international cuisines other than Mexican, Asian, Mediterranean, and Italian are not well represented.

On the upside, Disneyland Resort restaurant quality is much better now than it was a decade ago, though the gains have leveled off lately. Ingredients are fresher, preparation is more careful, and even steam tables and buffets are under almost constant supervision. As a whole, the culinary team has definitely stepped up its game, and we are the winners. Many establishments have undergone complete menu makeovers, with terrific results. On the downside, we've seen repeated portion reductions and price increases at some of our former favorite eateries, especially in the wake of postpandemic inflation. Unlike other attractions and shops inside the resort, the food and beverage operation remains in constant flux. Venues open and close, add and delete menu items, and change decor throughout the year. We strive to provide you with the most accurate information possible; however, we do eventually have to go to press with the most current information we have at the time. Keep this in mind when using the guide. You can find up-to-date Disneyland Resort menu information in the Lines app and the official Disneyland app.

You can expect to pay hefty prices for food within Disneyland Resort. Nearly every entrée, snack, and drink purchased inside the theme parks and resort hotels will cost anywhere from 50% to 300% more than similar items at your hometown eateries. On the concession

THEME PARK COUNTER-SERVICE RESTAURANT

Mini-Profiles

TO HELP YOU FIND PALATABLE fast-service foods that suit your taste, we have developed mini-profiles of Disneyland Park and DCA counter-service restaurants. The restaurants are listed alphabetically by park. We have noted locations that usually offer Mobile Ordering, but the participating lineup is subject to change. Detailed profiles of all Disneyland full-service restaurants follow this section, beginning on page 313. Be aware that several counter-service locations were still temporarily closed at press time, and certain menu items may be unavailable.

The restaurants profiled in the following pages are rated for quality and portion size as well as value. The value rating ranges from A to F as follows:

A = Exceptional value, a real bargain	D = Somewhat overpriced
B = Good value	F = Significantly overpriced
C = Fair value, you get exactly what you pay for	

Note: Because they offer special or unusual dishes, the following counter-service restaurants are profiled in full and are listed with the full-service restaurants:

- Docking Bay 7 Food and Cargo [Disneyland Park](#)
- French Market Restaurant [Disneyland Park](#)
- Plaza Inn [Disneyland Park](#)
- Rancho del Zocalo Restaurante [Disneyland Park](#)
- Tangaroa Terrace [Disneyland Hotel](#)

DISNEYLAND PARK

Alien Pizza Planet (*Mobile Ordering*)

QUALITY Fair-Good **VALUE** C **PORTION** Medium-Large **LOCATION** Tomorrowland
Reader-Survey Responses 71% 🍕

Selections Large slices of pizza, pasta with meatballs or chicken, Caesar or antipasto salads.

Comments Alien Pizza Planet (formerly known as Redd Rockett's Pizza Port) is loosely themed after the arcade eatery from the *Toy Story* movies. The restaurant is set up cafeteria-style, so all hot items sit under heat lamps until someone grabs them, but servers will be happy to mix up a fresh bowl of pasta or a pizza on request (a much better choice). The Little Green Men-shaped macaroons are almost too cute to eat (almost). Free drink refills are available. The cafeteria-style setup usually means less waiting. The AC system is on steroids, making it a really cool place on a hot day. Even on the busiest days, there's ample room to sit on the outdoor patio.

BEST SNACKS AT DISNEYLAND RESORT

We share our snacking insights on keeping your tummy happy at The Happiest Place on Earth. Call ☎ 714-781-0112 for a recorded message that reveals what candy will be made that week.

DISNEYLAND PARK

- Frozen lemonade (*vending cart*) • Ronto Wrap (*Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*)
- Turkey legs (*vending cart*) • Churro toffee (*Candy Palace, Trolley Treats, Pooh Corner*)
- Stuffed baked potatoes (*Troubadour Tavern*) • Honey-pot crispy rice treat (*Pooh Corner*)
- Tigger tails (*Pooh Corner*) • Pommes frites (*Café Orléans*) • Taffy (*Candy Palace*)
- Pickles (*Critter Country Fruit Cart*) • Maurice's Pieces and Churro Gears (*Maurice's Treats*)
- New Orleans fritters (*Royal Street Veranda*) • Peanut brittle (*Candy Palace*)
- Apple pie apple (*Pooh Corner*) • Mickey-shaped crispy rice treat (*Candy Palace*)
- Pork belly skewer (*Bengal Barbecue*) • English toffee (*Candy Palace*)
- Mint juleps (*nonalcoholic; Mint Julep Bar*) • Bratwurst (*Troubadour Tavern*)
- Walt's chili with cheese (*Carnation Cafe*) • Snickerdoodles (*Pooh Corner*)
- Bacon-wrapped asparagus (*Bengal Barbecue*) • Corn dog (*Little Red Wagon*)
- Mickey-shaped pancakes (*breakfast at Red Rose Tavern*)
- Mickey-shaped waffles (*breakfast at Carnation Café*)
- Chili-lime corn on the cob (*Edelweiss Snacks*)
- Mango Dole Whip, bao, and *lumpia* (*Tropical Hideaway*)
- Coconut macaroons shaped like the Matterhorn (*Jolly Holiday Bakery Café*)
- Ice cream in a freshly made, chocolate-dipped waffle cone (*Gibson Girl Ice Cream Parlor*)
- Pretzels stuffed with jalapeño cheese (*Refreshment Corner*)
- Pineapple Dole Whip soft serve and floats, pineapple juice (*Tiki Juice Bar*)

DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE

- Red's Apple Freeze (*Cozy Cone Motel*) • Charcuterie board (*Magic Key Terrace*)
- Hand-dipped ice-cream bars (*Clarabelle's*) • Corn dog (*Corn Dog Castle*)
- Character-inspired candy apples (*Trolley Treats*) • Mickey shake (*Schmoozies*)
- Funky flavored popcorn (*Cozy Cone Motel*) • Saltwater taffy (*Bing Bong's Sweet Stuff*)
- Milkshakes with cookie "road gravel" (*Flo's V8 Cafe*) • Asada fries (*Award Wieners*)
- Cosmic Cream Orb (*Terran Treats*) • Breakfast shawarma (*Shawarma Palace*)
- Celestial-size candy bar: Choco-Smash CANDY Bar (*Pym Test Kitchen*)
- Freshly made caramel popcorn (*cart near Carthay Circle*)
- S'mores shake (*Smokeyjumpers*) • Street tacos (*Studio Catering Co.*)

DOWNTOWN DISNEY

- Gumbo Ya-Ya (*Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen Express*)
- Candy unique to Disneyland (*Marceline's Confectionery*)
- Churro ice-cream sandwich (*vending cart*)
- Beignets and chicory coffee (*Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen Express*)
- Milkshakes (*Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes*)

RESORT RESTAURANTS

- Tuna poke (*GCH Craftsman Grill at Grand Californian Hotel*)
- Panko-crusted long beans (*Tangaroa Terrace and Trader Sam's Enchanted Tiki Bar at Disneyland Hotel*)
- Caramel French toast (*character breakfast at Storytellers Café at Grand Californian Hotel*)

DISNEYLAND RESORT RESTAURANTS BY CUISINE

CUISINE	LOCATION	OVERALL RATING	COST	QUALITY RATING	VALUE RATING
AMERICAN					
GCH CRAFTSMAN BAR & GRILL*	Grand Californian	★★★½	Mod	★★★½	★★★½
LAMPLIGHT LOUNGE	DCA	★★★½	Mod	★★★½	★★★
TANGAROA TERRACE*	Disneyland Hotel	★★★½	Inexp	★★★½	★★★½
PLAZA INN*	Disneyland Park	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★½
BLACK TAP CRAFT BURGERS & SHAKES	Downtown Disney	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★
CARNATION CAFE*	Disneyland Park	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★
SPLITSVILLE LUXURY LANES	Downtown Disney	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★
THE RIVER BELLE TERRACE	Disneyland Park	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★
GOOFY'S KITCHEN*	Disneyland Hotel	★★	Exp	★★	★★½
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER					
DIN TAI FUNG	Downtown Disney	TBD	Exp	TBD	TBD
TANGAROA TERRACE*	Disneyland Hotel	★★★½	Inexp	★★★½	★★★½
CALIFORNIAN/FUSION					
NAPA ROSE	Grand Californian	★★★★★	V. Exp	★★★★★	★★★½
CARTHAY CIRCLE RESTAURANT	DCA	★★★★½	Exp	★★★★½	★★★½
WINE COUNTRY TRATTORIA	DCA	★★★★	Mod	★★★★	★★★
STORYTELLERS CAFE*	Grand Californian	★★★½	Exp	★★★★	★★★
DOCKING BAY 7 FOOD AND CARGO	Disneyland Park	★★★½	Inexp	★★★½	★★★
BALLAST POINT	Downtown Disney	★★½	Mod	★★½	★★½
CAJUN/CREOLE					
FRENCH MARKET RESTAURANT	Disneyland Park	★★★½	Inexp	★★★½	★★★½
CAFÉ ORLÉANS	Disneyland Park	★★★½	Mod	★★★½	★★★
BLUE BAYOU	Disneyland Park	★★★½	Exp	★★★½	★★½
RALPH BRENNAN'S JAZZ KITCHEN*	Downtown Disney	★★★½	Mod	★★★½	★★½
CHARACTER DINING					
STORYTELLERS CAFE*	Grand Californian	★★★½	Exp	★★★★	★★★
GCH CRAFTSMAN BAR & GRILL*	Grand Californian	★★★½	Mod	★★★½	★★★½
PLAZA INN*	Disneyland Park	★★★	Mod	★★★	★★★½
GOOFY'S KITCHEN*	Disneyland Hotel	★★	Exp	★★	★★½

FREE DISNEYLAND SOUVENIRS

Although there's no such thing as a free lunch, there are such things as free souvenirs at Disneyland. Here's a sampling of the gratis gifts that frugal visitors can bring home as giveaways for family and friends.

- Celebration buttons (*guest services, see page 121*)
- Fortunes from Esmerelda and Fortune Red (*via the Play Disney app, see page 248*)
- Park maps in a variety of languages (*park entrances*)
- Disney character stickers (*guest services*)
- Animation Academy drawings (*Hollywood Land, see page 258*)
- Mardi Gras beads (*New Orleans Square, seasonally*)
- Jungle Cruise map (*Adventureland*)
- Sourdough bread sample (*Bakery Tour, see page 276*)

If you don't want to lug your packages around, you can leave them at the shop where you made your purchase and pick them up before you exit the park. If you have a problem with your purchases or need to make a return, call Disneyland Exclusive Merchandise at ☎ 877-560-6477. If you return home and realize that you forgot to buy those Rastafarian mouse ears or some similarly essential tchotchke, a large selection of park-exclusive merchandise is available at shopdisney.com/parks. To reduce the resort's use of single-use plastic, Disneyland Resort now offers reusable themed bags with your purchases for \$2–\$3; free disposable bags are still available upon request for now.

DOWNTOWN DISNEY

VERDANT AND LANDSCAPED BY DAY, Downtown Disney pops alive with neon and glitter at night. The complex offers more than 300,000 square feet of specialty shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. The AMC Movieplex, Earl of Sandwich, and other existing structures on the western end of Downtown Disney were demolished in 2022, making way for new shops and open-air gathering spaces. The refreshed Downtown Disney features a new mid-century Palm Springs–inspired entry portal on the west side, along with green space for relaxing. Bussing musicians enliven the area, and free live concerts are held nightly on a stage near the western end of the complex.

Din Tai Fung, a popular West Coast Taiwanese restaurant chain that attracts long waits for its authentic dim sum, is being added to the complex; and Catal Restaurant & Uva Bar are being transformed into **Paseo and Centrico**, serving Mexican fare. The popular **Earl of Sandwich** will reopen a pop-up quick-service location, and **Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen** is being reimaged with a Californian vibe replacing its French Quarter flair.

Many of the restaurants offer entertainment in addition to dining, including **Splitville Luxury Lanes**, an improbably but surprisingly

PART NINE

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD (USH) was the first film and TV studio to turn part of its facility into a modern theme park. By integrating shows and rides with behind-the-scenes presentations on moviemaking, USH created a new genre of theme park, stimulating a number of clone and competitor parks. First came Disney-MGM Studios (now Disney's Hollywood Studios) at Walt Disney World, followed shortly by Universal Studios Florida, also near Orlando. Where USH, however, evolved from an established film and TV venue, its cross-country imitators were launched primarily as theme parks, albeit with some production capability on the side. Disney is also challenging Universal in California with Disney California Adventure (DCA). While DCA does not have production facilities, one of its themed areas focuses on Hollywood and the movies.

Located just off US 101 north of Hollywood, USH operates on a scale and with a quality standard rivaled only by Disney, SeaWorld, and Busch Gardens parks. Unique among American theme parks for its topography, USH is tucked on top of, below, and around a tall hill. The studios consist of an open-access area and a controlled-access area. The latter contains the working soundstages, back lot, wardrobe, scenery, prop shops, postproduction facility, and administration offices. Guests can visit the controlled-access area by taking the Studio Tour. The open-access area, which contains the park's rides, shows, restaurants, and services, is divided into two sections. The main entrance provides access to the upper section, the Upper Lot, on top of the hill. Four theater shows and five rides (including The Wizarding World of Harry Potter), as well as two walk-through attractions and the loading area for the Studio Tour, are located in the Upper Lot. The Lower Lot, at the northeastern base of the hill, is accessible from the Upper Lot via escalators. There are three (soon four) rides and a couple of meet and greets in the Lower Lot.

On April 7, 2016, USH capped a half-decade of redevelopment with the grand opening of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, a

“A Tourist’s Best Friend!”

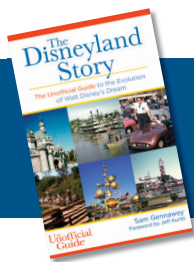
—*Chicago Sun-Times*

“Indispensable”

—*The New York Times*

Honest and Outspoken Advice from the **Unofficial** Experts

- The latest tips on maximizing your time and money with Disney’s Genie+ and Lightning Lane options
- Comprehensive in-depth critical assessments of every attraction, including Toontown’s new Mickey & Minnie’s Runaway Railway ride
- Up-to-date information on how to see the returning *Fantasmic!* and *World of Color* shows using dining packages and Virtual Queues
- Profiles and ratings for more than 30 Disneyland Resort and Anaheim hotels, with info about the Pixar characters coming to Disney’s Paradise Pier
- Updated tips for visiting Universal Studios Hollywood, featuring a preview of the upcoming Super Nintendo World’s Mario Kart ride



Check out *The Disneyland Story: The Unofficial Guide to the Evolution of Walt Disney’s Dream*. It’s the perfect companion to this guide. Supplement your valuable guidebook with tips, news, and deals by visiting our website, theunofficialguides.com.

the
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