



ULTIMATE GUIDE

Planning your WALT DISNEY WORLD VACATION



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WALT DISNEY WORLD

Overview

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Walt Disney World Resort opened its gates on October 1st, 1971, in Orlando, Florida. The brainchild of Walt Disney, this entertainment complex spans nearly 25,000 acres.

Initially, the resort featured only Magic Kingdom and three hotels: Disney's Contemporary Resort, Disney's Polynesian Village Resort, and Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground. Over the years, Walt Disney World has expanded significantly. EPCOT opened in 1982, followed by Disney's Hollywood Studios in 1989, and Disney's Animal Kingdom in 1998.

Today, the resort boasts four theme parks, two water parks, and over 25 Disney-owned hotels. It also includes Disney Springs, a shopping and dining district.

So, if you're planning a trip to the most magical place on earth for the first time, it could feel a bit overwhelming. That's why we're here to help. In this ultimate guide to planning your Disney World vacation, we'll walk you through all the steps involved from the early planning process to how to optimize your time in the parks and everything in between.

THEME PARKS



Each of Disney's four theme parks offers unique experiences and attractions. These parks cater to different interests and age groups, ensuring there's something for everyone in your family.

MAGIC KINGDOM

Magic Kingdom is the heart of Walt Disney World. Here, you'll find iconic attractions like Space Mountain, Haunted Mansion, and Pirates of the Caribbean. And, of course, Cinderella Castle serves as the park's centerpiece.

The park has five themed areas that include rides and shows to fill your day including Adventureland, Frontierland, Liberty Square, Fantasyland, and Tomorrowland. And, Main Street, U.S.A. is where you'll find shops and get the best view of daily parades and fireworks shows.

EPCOT

EPCOT combines futuristic innovation with global culture. This park has undergone the most changes over the past five years and is divided into four main sections: World Celebration, World Discovery, World Nature, and World Showcase. The first three feature some of the most iconic EPCOT rides including Test Track, Soarin' Around the World, and Mission: SPACE. [World Showcase](#) features 11 pavilions that each represent a different country where you can enjoy authentic cuisine, shop for unique souvenirs, and view cultural performances.

EPCOT also hosts several festivals throughout the year, including the Festival of the Arts, Food & Wine Festival, Festival of the Holidays, and Flower & Garden Festival.

DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

This park celebrates the magic of movies and television. You'll find thrilling attractions and immersive experiences based on popular franchises including [Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge](#) where you can live out your own Star Wars adventure and Toy Story Land where you'll shrink to toy size in Andy's backyard.

DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

Animal Kingdom blends conservation and wildlife encounters with thrilling attractions. The park is divided into themed lands that represent certain regions of the world including Asia and Africa and some other fictional lands like [Pandora - The World of Avatar](#).

Overall, the park offers a nice balance of relaxing nature trails where you can see wildlife up close and thrilling rides like Expedition Everest and Flight of Passage in Pandora - The World of Avatar. You can also enjoy live shows that recreate beloved Disney movies like Festival of the Lion King and Finding Nemo: The Big Blue... and Beyond!



BEYOND THE PARKS



Walt Disney World also offers numerous attractions and activities outside its main theme parks. These areas provide more entertainment, dining, and recreation options for anyone who wants to escape the park crowds and enjoy more of that Disney magic.

DISNEY SPRINGS

[Disney Springs](#) is a massive shopping, dining, and entertainment district. You'll find over 150 shops, from popular brands to Disney-themed boutiques. Plus, dining options range from casual eateries to upscale restaurants owned by celebrity chefs. And, the best part is that it's completely free to visit!

WATER PARKS

Disney World boasts [two unique water parks](#): [Typhoon Lagoon](#) and [Blizzard Beach](#). Typhoon Lagoon features a tropical theme with fun family-friendly attractions like the Crush 'n' Gusher water coaster and the Typhoon Lagoon Surf Pool (which is one of the largest wave pools in the U.S.).

Blizzard Beach, on the other hand, features a ski resort-themed experience. You can race down Mount Gushmore on Summit Plummet (one of the world's tallest and fastest free-fall body slides). Or, for a more relaxing time, float along Cross Country Creek, the park's lazy river.

Both parks offer children's areas, dining options, and private cabana rentals providing refreshing alternatives to the main theme parks on hot Florida days.



Insider info...
[How to Survive Disney in the Summer](#)





DECIDE ON A Budget



If all that sounds like the best vacation ever, then it's time to start planning! When planning a trip to Disney World, it's important to determine how much you want to spend. Your budget is going to be the biggest factor in shaping your Disney vacation.

Your budget will dictate how long you can visit, where you'll stay, and if you'll purchase other upgrades. [The biggest expenses of a Disney trip include travel, theme park tickets, hotel stays, food, and optional add-ons.](#) And, with 25 hotels, 200+ restaurants, and numerous customization options, determining the exact cost can be tricky. Luckily, there are easy ways to calculate the cost before booking.

TRAVEL COSTS

First, you need to decide how you're getting to Disney World! Travel costs can vary a lot depending on whether you're flying, driving, or renting a car. On average, here's how much to plan for each:

- **Airplane Ticket:** \$150 to \$500 per person round trip
- **Car Rental:** \$49 to \$78 per day for an economy car
- **Gas and Tolls:** \$3.59 per gallon and 6 cents per mile

TICKET PRICES

Disney World park tickets make up a huge chunk of your vacation budget. [Currently, there are six different ticket options available.](#) Here's a breakdown of how much tickets cost in 2026:

- **One-Day One-Park Ticket:** \$119 to \$209 per person
- **Park Hopper:** \$198 to \$284 per person, per day
- **Park Hopper Plus Ticket:** \$218 to \$307 per person, per day
- **Disney World Water Parks:** \$64 to \$74 per adult, \$58 to \$68 per child
- **Annual Passes:** \$489 to \$1,629 per person, per year depending on the pass
- **Multi-Day Tickets:** You can purchase multi-day tickets if you plan to visit for 3 or more days, which will save you about \$20 per person, per day

It's also important to note that ticket prices are dynamic, fluctuating based on when you decide to visit.

HOTEL COSTS

Disney World Resort hotels are divided into three categories: Value, Moderate, and Deluxe. Each category offers different amenities and price points. Here's how much you can expect to pay for a resort stay in each category.

- **Value Resorts:** starting at around \$110 per night
- **Moderate Resorts:** starting at around \$250 per night
- **Deluxe Resorts:** starting at around \$430 per night

Disney Vacation Club Villas are also available for current [Disney Vacation Club members](#) or vacationers who are looking for a bit more space. These resorts feature two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and large suite options that can sleep up to 9 people in one room. However, these are much more expensive with prices ranging from \$600 to \$5,000 per night.

Note that resort fees may also be applied to some Disney hotel stays depending on where you stay. These add an additional \$15 to \$45 per night to your bill.



Insider info...
[Complete Guide to the Best Disney World Hotels](#)

FOOD COSTS

Disney World has multiple different dining options throughout the parks and resorts. This includes quick service restaurants (which are considered the most budget-friendly meal option), table service restaurants (which are the most expensive dining options), and snacks. Here's how much you should budget for each:

- **Quick service restaurants:** \$10-\$15 per adult
- **Table service restaurants:** \$15-\$60+ per person
- **Snacks:** \$3-\$15 per person

If you prefer to pre-pay for your meals during your vacation, you can opt to add a Disney Dining Plan to your vacation package. There are multiple levels of the Disney Dining Plan available ranging in price from \$60 to \$99 per adult, per day and from \$26 to \$31 per child (ages 3 to 9), per day. We recommend researching where and what you plan to eat to help you decide if a dining plan is worth the cost for you and your family.



OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

Once you've decided on the basics, there are a lot of ways to customize your Disney World vacation and make your experience even more special. But, they'll cost you! From tours to special events to skipping the long lines at popular attractions, here are some of the extra costs you may want to include in your vacation budget:

- **Special Events:** \$119 to \$230 per person
- **Specialty Dining Packages:** \$100+ per person
- **Behind-The-Scenes Tours:** \$40 to \$275+ per person
- **Private VIP Tours:** \$450 to \$950 per hour
- **Lightning Lane Multi Pass:** \$15 to \$45 per person, per day
- **Lightning Lane Single Pass:** \$12 to \$25 per person, per attraction
- **Lightning Lane Premier Pass:** \$129 to \$449 per person, per day
- **Merchandise & Experiences:** \$100 to \$250 per person

SO, HOW MUCH DOES A DISNEY WORLD VACATION REALLY COST?



Based on average vacation costs and accounting for inevitable extras, we recommend that a family of four budget approximately \$5,000 to \$6,500 for a 4-night, 5-day Disney World vacation. A family of 3 should budget between \$4,000 to \$5,000. And, two adults should budget \$2,500 to \$3,500 for a 4-night, 5-day trip. Of course, if you plan to stay for a week or longer, you'll likely need to double these costs.

On the next page you'll find a [Disney Vacation Budget Worksheet](#)

Use this worksheet to budget your expenses and keep track of your actual costs.



DISNEY VACATION BUDGET WORKSHEET

Category	Item	Budget	Actual Cost	Notes
Travel Costs	Airfare			
	Hotel Transportation			
	Parking Fees			
	Rental Car + Gas and Tolls (if applicable)			
	Shared Ride/Taxis (if applicable)			
	Travel Insurance			
Hotel Costs	Room Rate			
	Resort Fees (if applicable)			
	Taxes			
Ticket Costs	Adult Tickets			
	Child Tickets			
	Park Hopper Option			
	Special Event Tickets (if applicable)			
	Lighting Lane Passes (if applicable)			
Dining Costs	Breakfast			
	Lunch			
	Dinner			
	Snacks			
	Grocery Delivery			
	Dining Plan (if applicable)			
Other Costs	Souvenirs			
	Memory Maker Photo Package			
	Miscellaneous Expenses			
	Totals:			

Budget Total: _____
Actual Cost Total: _____
Difference: _____

Additional Notes:

HOW TO SAVE MONEY



As you can see, a Disney World Vacation can get pretty pricey. But, there are still several ways you can save money without sacrificing any of the magic!

TICKETS

Here are some of the easiest ways to reduce the biggest cost of your Disney World vacation – park tickets!

- Visit during the off-season (January, February, August, and September) when prices are lower.
- Invest in multi-day passes.
- Check for seasonal ticket discounts on Disney's website before booking.
- Don't park hop and opt for one-park, one-day tickets.
- Consider purchasing [an annual pass](#) if you're visiting for 10+ days in one year.



Insider info...

[Our Expert Tips and Tricks to Save Money on Your Disney World Vacation](#)

HOTEL STAY

Your hotel stay is one of the easiest opportunities for saving on your Disney trip. Here are three simple ways to save!

- Check for special offers and discounts before booking. Contact Disney if a deal becomes available after you've already booked to see if they can apply it to your stay!
- Visit during the off-season (January, February, August, and September) when rates are lower.
- Consider staying off-site at nearby hotels or at least in an on-site Value Resort instead of a Deluxe Resort.

FOOD

The cost of food can add up quickly! But, with a little bit of planning and some smart choices, you can save money on everything you eat during your visit too.

- Check for vacation package offers that include savings on the Disney Dining Plan or Disney Dining Card promotions.
- Portion sizes at Disney World are big! Consider sharing meals with your family or purchasing a kids' meal from quick service restaurants.
- Don't overbook table service restaurants. We recommend opting for one dining reservation per day or less.
- [Have groceries delivered to your hotel.](#)

MORE WAYS TO SAVE



There are a few more simple ways to save on your Disney vacation that you may not know about! Keep these in mind when you're budgeting to save on things like merchandise and more:

- Purchase Disney gift cards for less at Sam's Club and Target. Target Red Card members can save 5% off Disney gift cards and Sam's Club offers some discounts for members as well.
- Avoid the overpriced merchandise and [purchase souvenirs for the kids](#) before your vacation at stores like Target, the Disney Store, Amazon, or Hot Topic.



DECIDE WHEN *You Want to Visit* ✨ ✨ ✨

There's never a wrong time to visit Walt Disney World, but nailing down your vacation dates can be a challenge. How many days should you visit? Should you brave the crowds for the chance to experience the parks during the holidays? What about the weather? These are only a few questions that will likely run through your mind when you're deciding when to visit. Luckily, narrowing down your options is a lot easier when you have an idea of the best and worst times to visit and know about all the special events in Disney World throughout the year!

HOW LONG DO YOU REALLY NEED?

With four theme parks, two water parks, Disney Springs, and more, it's easy to get overwhelmed when you're trying to decide how long you need to do it all. There's no right or wrong answer to how long your Disney World vacation should be – it's about determining what YOU want to see and do and then making sure you've got enough time to do all those things on your list!

Here are 5 things to consider when determining how long your Disney trip should be:

1. What is your budget? Shorter trips are best for smaller budgets. Whereas, the larger your budget, the more you can do and the more time you'll need.
2. Who are you traveling with? Two adults can do the parks much more efficiently than a party of 10+ for a family reunion.
3. When are you traveling? If you're traveling when crowd levels are higher, you may need more time in the parks to do everything you want.
4. What parks do you want to visit? Sit down and write out the parks you want to visit so that you can start making a rough itinerary.
5. Do you plan to park hop? This can help you do more in fewer days. Though, it does cost more.

And, the question that we always get when it comes to determining the length of your trip – [how many days do you need in each Disney World theme park?](#) Here's our recommendation:

Magic Kingdom	1-2 days
EPCOT	1-2 days
Disney's Hollywood Studios	1 day
Disney's Animal Kingdom	1 day
Disney Springs and Other Disney World Attractions	0.5-1 day

In general, we recommend that first-time Disney goers plan to stay at least 5-7 days. This gives you enough time to go to all four theme parks, enjoy a few table service restaurants, visit Disney Springs, and relax at your hotel at a pace that makes it feel like you're actually on vacation. Of course, it's totally doable to visit Disney World for much shorter...or even much longer and still have a great trip. So, sit down with your family and determine what exactly it is you want to do – this will give you a good idea of the right trip length for you!



BEST TIMES

The “best” times to visit Disney World can vary from family to family based on what you’re looking to accomplish during your trip. Whether it’s avoiding the crowds, enjoying great weather, getting the best prices, or experiencing Disney’s special events, determining the best time to visit depends on what’s important to you. Here’s when we recommend visiting based on your priorities:

- **Best time to visit Disney World to avoid crowds:**
January, February, late August, and September
- **Best time to visit Disney World for the best weather:**
December, January, and February
- **Cheapest times to visit Disney World:**
January, February, August, and September
- **Best time to visit for special events:**
August, September, October, November, December



WORST TIMES

You’re spending a lot on a Disney World vacation, so you may not want to visit when the parks are at near capacity. In general, we recommend avoiding traveling over [Spring Break](#) (late March through April), summer vacation (late May through mid-August), and the holiday season (the week of Thanksgiving through New Year’s Day) if you want to avoid the highest crowd levels in the parks and resorts. Because of the high demand and large number of travelers, these are also the most expensive times to visit Disney World.

[The weather](#) can also play a huge role in making (or breaking) your Disney vacation. So, we recommend avoiding the hottest months of the year (June to August) and [hurricane season](#) (June 1st to November 30th) if you want to ensure that your trip isn’t impacted by severe weather.

And, be sure to check Disney’s refurbishment calendar and special events calendar before you pick your travel dates! This will help you avoid any major disappointments when you arrive.

Of course, [the worst times to visit](#) can also be the best times to visit because of the special events and extra celebrations happening during these times. So, if you do want to travel during these times, just adjust your expectations and budget accordingly.

EPCOT INTERNATIONAL FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

The [EPCOT International Food & Wine Festival](#) features food and wine from across the globe. It has the largest number of food booths of any EPCOT festival along with plenty of other activities to attend between bites including culinary demonstrations, a scavenger hunt, and a concert series.

Highlights of this festival include:

- Over 20 Global Marketplaces, each offering unique food and beverage items from different regions of the world.
- Emile's Fromage Montage cheese stroll which entails purchasing five pre-selected cheesy dishes to earn a complimentary treat upon completion.
- Nightly live concerts from popular artists in various genres during the Eat to the Beat Concert Series.
- Remy's Ratatouille Hide & Squeak scavenger hunt takes you around World Showcase to find Remy in each pavilion to receive a free souvenir upon completion.
- Seminars and demonstrations that cover topics such as wine tasting, mixology, and cooking. These events are led by industry professionals and are a fun way to learn something new.

The festival usually runs from **August to late November**, giving you a little over three months to experience all the offerings.



EPCOT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE HOLIDAYS

[The International Festival of the Holidays](#) celebrates the traditions and cultures of the holiday season around the globe and features holiday-themed entertainment, holiday ride overlays, a special retelling of the Christmas story by celebrity narrators, and – of course – tons of holiday food and drink at Holiday Kitchens around World Showcase.

Highlights of this festival include:

- Several Holiday Kitchens around World Showcase offer menus full of small bites and sips that are inspired by holiday traditions from around the world.
- A cookie stroll that requires you to purchase five pre-selected holiday cookies from select Holiday Kitchens to receive a complimentary treat upon completion.
- Nightly retellings of the story of Christmas during the Candlelight Processional featuring celebrity narrators, a 50-piece orchestra, and a full choir. This is one of EPCOT's most popular live events of the year!
- Holiday Storytellers retell holiday stories and legends from celebrations across the globe in select World Showcase pavilions.
- Meet Santa Claus in the American Adventure pavilion.
- Special holiday overlays at select rides in the park including Living With The Land.
- An Olaf-themed scavenger hunt around World Showcase.

The festival usually runs from **late November through December**, giving you about a month to experience all the offerings.



DECIDE WHERE *You Want to Stay* ✦ ✦ ✦

Now that you've hopefully wrapped your head around all the seasonal happenings and picked YOUR perfect time to visit Disney World, it's time to book your hotel stay! You'll first need to decide if you want to stay on-site at a Disney Resort hotel or off-site at a nearby hotel. Then, if you are choosing to stay at a Disney hotel, you'll need to determine what hotel best fits your needs and budget. Let's dive deeper into these considerations.

STAYING ONSITE VS. OFF-SITE

With more than 25 Disney World Resort hotels to choose from, PLUS even more off-site hotels near the parks, it can be hard to decide which is best for you and your family. It's important to consider the pros and the cons of each option before making a reservation.

WHY STAY ON-SITE

When staying at a Disney Resort hotel, you're not just paying to be close to the parks and staying in a Disney-themed room — there are other perks too! And, they can make a big difference in your Disney vacation! Here are the biggest benefits of staying on-site at a Walt Disney World Resort hotel during your stay:

✦ Complimentary Transportation

All of the Disney hotels provide free bus transportation to all four Disney Parks, Disney Springs, and the water parks. So, you don't have to worry about navigating the roads or traffic throughout your stay. Select resorts also offer other ways to get to the parks like the monorail, Disney Skyliner, or boat. Check Disney's website before you book to see what transportation options are available at your hotel.

✦ Complimentary Theme Park Parking

The cost of [parking at the theme parks](#) (and your hotel!) is included in your Disney resort stay.



Insider info...
[Pros and Cons of Staying at a Disney Resort](#)

◆ **Early Theme Park Entry**

Early Theme Park Entry replaced Extra Magic Hours in 2021 and allows guests staying at any Walt Disney World Resort hotel to enter any of the four theme parks 30 minutes before the park opens every day.

◆ **Extended Evening Theme Park Hours** *(At Select Disney World Hotels Only)*

Extended Evening Theme Park Hours function similar to Extra Magic Hours in that hotel guests can stay an extra 2 hours in certain parks on select days of the week. However, you must be staying at a Disney World Deluxe Resort or Villa to qualify for this perk.

◆ **Early Access to Lightning Lane Selections**

Disney hotel guests are a step ahead of everyone else when it comes to securing the best Lightning Lane attractions and return windows. When staying at a Disney hotel you can make Lightning Lane selections up to 7 days prior to your check-in date for the entire length of your stay. In contrast, those staying off-site can make selections 3 days before their theme park visit.

◆ **Early Access to Dining Reservations**

Currently, Disney resort guests are allowed to make dining reservations up to 60 days in advance PLUS the length of their stay (for up to a 10-night stay). This can give you a big advantage when it comes to securing reservations at the most popular restaurants in Disney World.

◆ **Option To Add a Disney Dining Plan**

There is also an option to add a Disney Dining Plan to your reservation, which could save you some money and offer convenience. When you book your hotel stay, you'll be able to choose from two different dining plans, each including a different number of quick service, table service, and snack credits per person, per day.

◆ **Early Access to Disney Event Tickets**

If you're visiting Disney World when special events are happening like Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, Disney makes it easy to ensure that you get a ticket by opening up the purchasing window early for guests with confirmed hotel reservations.

◆ **Airport Luggage Transfer Service** *(For Select Guests Only)*

As of April 2025, Disney Value Resort guests flying with Southwest Airlines to/from Orlando International Airport (MCO) can send their bags ahead to their resort upon arrival eliminating the need to wait at baggage claim. They can also send their bags ahead to the airport upon departure eliminating drop-off lines.

◆ **Free Water Park Admission on Your Check-In Day**

All guests staying at any Disney World Resort hotel get free admission to both of the Disney water parks on their check in day for arrivals from May 26 to September 8, 2026.



WHY STAY OFF-SITE

While there are many benefits to staying at a Disney World Resort, there are also some downsides to consider before booking your stay. Here are the biggest benefits of staying off-site at a hotel near Walt Disney World:

◆ **Affordability**

While not directly on Disney property in most cases, off-site non-Disney-owned hotels are often more affordable and offer similar guest benefits.

◆ **Larger Rooms and More Room Size Options**

If you're traveling with a large family or group, you may find that the rooms at Disney World Resorts are a little too small for comfort. Off-site hotels, on the other hand, tend to have large guest rooms for the price.

◆ **Access To Other Central Florida Attractions**

Many off-site hotels offer complimentary transportation to Disney World and other Orlando attractions like SeaWorld and [Universal Orlando](#), while Disney hotels do not provide transportation to other locations.



◆ **Disney Resort Guest Perks** *(At Participating Hotels Only)*

Note that select off-site hotels also offer Disney hotel guest benefits like access to Early Theme Park Entry, Extended Evening Theme Park Hours, and complimentary theme park transportation.

Here are a few of the current participating hotels:

- **Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel**
- **Walt Disney World Swan Hotel**
- **Walt Disney World Swan Reserve**
- **DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Orlando**
- **Drury Plaza Hotel Orlando Lake Buena Vista**
- **Four Seasons Resort Orlando**
- **Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace**
- **Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista**
- **Holiday Inn Orlando**
- **Shades of Green on Walt Disney World Resort**
- **Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek**
- **Waldorf Astoria Orlando**
- **Wyndham Garden Lake Buena Vista**
- **Wyndham Lake Buena Vista**

Of course, this list is subject to change. Be sure to check your hotel's website or call to confirm what guest benefits are offered before you book.

DELUXE VS. MODERATE VS. VALUE HOTELS



We're going to assume that you've decided to stay on Disney property. So, now it's time to decide exactly where you'll stay.

Disney World Resort hotels are split up into three different categories – Deluxe Resorts, Moderate Resorts, and Value Resorts. Deluxe Resorts are Disney's luxury hotels with the most amenities and ideal locations, Value Resorts are the cheapest hotels with fewer amenities, and Moderate Resorts fall somewhere in the middle. Here's what you need to know about each category to help you determine which is best for you.

VALUE RESORTS

Value Resorts are the cheapest hotels available on Disney property **ranging from \$100-\$400+ per night**. These hotels offer a great balance between price and quality, making them ideal for families or travelers on a budget.

Currently, there are five different Value Resorts at Walt Disney World including:

- [Disney's Pop Century Resort](#)
- [Disney's All-Star Movies Resort](#)
- [Disney's All-Star Music Resort](#)
- [Disney's All-Star Sports Resort](#)
- [Disney's Art of Animation Resort](#)

Each hotel features larger-than-life Disney theming, multiple pools, a food court that opens for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, free theme park transportation, a gift shop, and resort activities. While the rooms are the smallest out of all the Disney hotels, they're still spacious enough for a family of four with standard rooms featuring two queen-sized beds or a king bed based on your preferences. Select resorts also offer family-suite options that sleep up to six adults.



MODERATE RESORTS

Moderate Resorts are great for those looking to stay somewhere that offers a greater number of amenities without breaking the bank. The cost of the Moderate Resorts **ranges from \$260 to \$475+ per night**.

Currently, there are four Moderate Resorts in Disney World including:

- [Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort](#)
- [Disney's Port Orleans Resort – Riverside](#)
- [Disney's Port Orleans Resort – French Quarter](#)
- [Disney's Coronado Springs Resort \(including Gran Destino Tower\)](#)

Each hotel has its own unique theming and atmosphere along with additional dining options compared to Value Resorts, multiple pools with water slides, recreation activities, and a greater variety of transportation options to theme parks. The standard rooms are also larger and often feature a 5th sleeper for larger families.



Insider info...

[A Family Guide to the Disney Value Resorts](#)

[Here's How to Pick the Best Disney World Moderate Resort](#)

DELUXE RESORTS

Deluxe Resorts are the most luxurious hotels at Disney World providing an unforgettable experience during your stay. These resorts offer the highest level of comfort, convenience, and entertainment, and they tend to be located closest to the theme parks. But, luxury does come at a cost with **prices beginning around \$500 per night and exceeding over \$1,000+ per night** depending on where you stay.

Currently, Disney World has ten Deluxe Resorts including:

- [Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa](#)
- [Disney's Polynesian Village Resort](#)
- [Disney's Contemporary Resort](#)
- [Disney's Wilderness Lodge](#)
- [Disney's Yacht Club](#)
- [Disney's Beach Club](#)
- [Disney's BoardWalk Inn](#)
- [Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge](#)
- [Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Hotel*](#)
- [Walt Disney World Swan Reserve*](#)

*Note that Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Hotel and Swan Reserve are considered off-site hotels and are operated by Marriott. Due to this, some Disney Deluxe Resort guest benefits are not available here.

When it comes to amenities, these hotels offer the most including multiple dining options (usually a quick service restaurant, multiple table service restaurants, and lounges), full-service spas, high-end shopping, and more. The standard room size is also the largest out of all the Disney hotels and many of them also offer Deluxe Villas that are part of the Disney Vacation Club and include one-, two-, and three-bedroom villas that come with a full kitchen and washer and dryer.

Insider info...

[What You Need to Know About Deluxe Resorts at Disney World](#)

[Are Disney Deluxe Resorts Worth It?](#)



DISNEY VACATION CLUB RESORTS

Disney Vacation Club (DVC) Resorts are part of Disney's timeshare program, allowing members to stay at top-tier accommodations while enjoying extra amenities that cater to extended stays and family comfort. Though the initial cost of joining DVC can be high, members can take advantage of long-term savings and the ability to visit Disney properties around the world using their points.

To buy into the Disney Vacation Club, **prices begin at \$23,500 for 100 Vacation Points plus closing costs and annual dues starting at \$70/month**. Non-DVC members can pay cash value to stay at DVC resorts with prices starting around \$400 per night and exceeding over \$1,500 per night depending on the room type and resort you select.

Currently, Disney World has 13 Disney Vacation Club Resorts including:

- [Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort](#)
- [Boulder Ridge Villas at Disney's Wilderness Lodge](#)
- [Copper Creek Villas & Cabins at Disney's Wilderness Lodge](#)
- [Disney's Animal Kingdom Villas - Jambo House](#)
- [Disney's Animal Kingdom Villas - Kidani Village](#)
- [Disney's Beach Club Villas](#)
- [Disney's BoardWalk Villas](#)
- [Disney's Old Key West Resort](#)
- [Disney's Polynesian Villas & Bungalows](#)
- [Disney's Riviera Resort](#)
- [Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa](#)
- [The Cabins at Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort](#)
- [The Villas at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa](#)

Each resort offers a variety of accommodations ranging from deluxe studios to one-, two-, and three-bedroom villas, which include kitchenettes or full kitchens, washer and dryer, and separate living spaces, making them ideal for families or extended stays. DVC resorts also provide access to all the top-tier amenities at Deluxe Resorts including pools, multiple dining options, and close proximity to Disney parks, offering convenience and luxury for families.

CHOOSING YOUR BEST DISNEY WORLD HOTEL



With so many options, how do you choose the Disney World Resort hotel that's right for you? Well, here are some of the top-ranking hotels!

BEST FOR ADULTS

◆ Disney's BoardWalk Inn

Disney's BoardWalk Inn is a Deluxe Resort that is located in the EPCOT Resort Area. The theming is inspired by the boardwalks of the early 20th century, and it is in a great location with both EPCOT and Disney's Hollywood Studios only a short walk or boat ride away. Plus, there are also plenty of places to eat and things to do nearby on [Disney's BoardWalk](#).

◆ Disney's Polynesian Village Resort

This Deluxe Resort is located on the Magic Kingdom monorail loop and offers beautiful theming, newly updated rooms, and plenty of luxury amenities. The hotel is home to some of the most popular restaurants on Disney property including 'Ohana and Kona Cafe.

BEST FOR FAMILIES

◆ Disney's Art of Animation Resort

This resort has four themed sections featuring The Little Mermaid, The Lion King, Finding Nemo, and Cars. The thing that makes it great for families is the space! The majority of rooms at this hotel are Family Suites that come with two rooms, three beds, a kitchenette, and two bathrooms.

◆ Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort

If you plan to frequent the theme parks during your family trip, [Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort](#) is the perfect hotel for you. This resort features the main hub for the Disney Skyliner gondola system, making it easy to get to EPCOT and Disney's Hollywood Studios quickly.

BEST ON A BUDGET

◆ Disney's All-Star Resorts

These three resorts - [All-Star Movies](#), All-Star Music, and [All-Star Sports](#) - offer the most affordable rates across all Disney World hotels with a fun Disney-themed atmosphere. Each of the three resorts has its own unique theme, with larger-than-life decorations and details that will make you feel like you're right in the middle of a Disney movie immersing you in the Disney magic without breaking the bank.

◆ Gran Destino Tower at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort

If you're looking for luxury on a budget, the Gran Destino Tower at [Disney's Coronado Springs Resort](#) is a great option. While the price point to stay in the new tower is more than the main resort area, the tower offers a higher-end experience for a moderate price. The resort also boasts the most dining options of all the hotels in the Moderate Resort category.

BEST POOLS

◆ Disney's Yacht & Beach Club Resort

These Deluxe Resorts share one of the greatest amenities for anyone looking to relax on their Disney trip - the pool! Stormalong Bay is a 3-acre water park that includes a water slide, lazy river, and sand-bottom pool, and it's only accessible to hotel guests. These hotels are also a short walk to EPCOT, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's BoardWalk.

◆ Disney's Art of Animation Resort

The Big Blue Pool is the largest resort pool at Disney World, and the Finding Nemo theme and splash pad make it one of the best pools for families. While you won't find a water slide here, there are other features that make it stand out including zero entry, a kids' wading pool, and splash pad area.

Insider info...

[Best Disney Resorts for Couples:
9 Romantic Hotels Worth Your Money](#)

[We Compare the Best Disney Resorts for Families](#)

[6 Cheapest Disney World Hotels](#)

[Our Picks for the Best Walt Disney World Resort Pools](#)





BOOK YOUR Vacation Package



Now that you have your travel dates nailed down and know where you want to stay, it's time to book your vacation! While hotel stays and tickets can be purchased separately on Disney's website, most Disney-goers choose to book a Walt Disney World vacation package. The vacation package includes your hotel stay, park tickets, and the option to add a Disney Dining Plan to your reservation. And, because everything is booked at once, you have the best chance of getting the best deal on your Disney vacation. Here's everything you should know before you book your WDW vacation package!

WHEN TO BOOK

While it's certainly possible to plan a [last-minute Disney trip](#), we recommend booking your vacation (or at least starting the planning process) [6 to 12 months in advance](#). This will give you enough time to research and make informed decisions about your trip, as well as secure the hotel, tickets, and dining reservations that you prefer.

At the very least, aim to have your plans solidified and tickets purchased 60 days in advance so you don't miss out on popular dining reservations when the booking window opens.



Insider info...
[Complete Guide to Making Disney World Dining Reservations](#)

CONSIDER USING A TRAVEL ADVISOR

If you're a first-timer or simply overwhelmed by the planning process, consider having a travel agent help you plan your trip. They can help you navigate all the Disney ticket options, hotel reservations, and dining reservations. Plus, they can provide insider tips and tricks to make your trip as magical as possible at no cost to you!

We recommend working with our preferred travel partners at [Mouse Fan Travel](#). They'll handle the hassles of planning so you can have a stress-free vacation!

DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO ADD A DINING PLAN TO YOUR TRIP

One of the biggest benefits of booking a Walt Disney World vacation package is the option to add on a Disney Dining Plan. These allow you to prepay for meals and snacks for the entirety of your Walt Disney World vacation so that you don't have to worry about sticking to a dining budget during your trip – everything is already paid for in advance!

There are currently two different dining plans to choose from including the Disney Dining Plan and the Quick Service Dining Plan. Each one comes with a certain number of meal and snack credits that can be used at select Disney World restaurants.



DECIDE WHAT TICKET TYPE YOU WANT TO PURCHASE

Deciding on Disney park tickets can be complicated! Currently, there are three main ticket types available for guests and each has its pros and cons. Your budget and vacation plans will help determine which theme park tickets are best for you. Here's an overview of each ticket and why it may (or may not) be best for you:

ONE-DAY ONE-PARK TICKET

Disney's one-day, one-park tickets are the cheapest ticket option in Disney World. They provide admission to one park per day allowing you to choose from Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Disney's Hollywood Studios, or Disney's Animal Kingdom.

Cost: \$119 to \$209 per person, per day

Purchase One-Day One-Park Tickets If:

- You're looking for the best deal on theme park tickets.
- You plan to visit only one park per day.
- You're traveling for 4-6 days and want to visit all four theme parks.

PARK HOPPER

[Park Hopper tickets](#) allow you to visit multiple parks in one day including Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom. You could visit two, three, or even all four parks in one day at your leisure.

Cost: \$198 to \$284 per person, per day

Purchase Park Hopper Tickets If:

- You want to visit more than one park per day.
- You enjoy the flexibility of being able to go to any park you want when you want.
- You're traveling for 2-3 days but still want to visit all four theme parks.



PARK HOPPER PLUS

The Park Hopper Plus ticket combines the benefits of the Park Hopper ticket with the ability to do even more in Disney World. With this option, you can visit multiple parks in one day and also visit one of the following per day:

- [Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park](#)
- [Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park](#)
- ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex
- Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course
- FootGolf at Disney's Oak Trail
- Disney's Fantasia Gardens Miniature Golf Course (one round; prior to 4:00 PM)
- Disney's Winter Summerland Miniature Golf Course (one round; prior to 4:00 PM)

Cost: \$218 to \$307 per person, per day

Purchase Park Hopper Plus Tickets If:

- You want to visit more than one park per day.
- You enjoy the flexibility of being able to go to any park you want when you want.
- You want to visit Disney's water parks, golf, or play miniature golf.
- You're staying for 5-7+ days and want to take advantage of activities beyond the four main theme parks.





DECIDE WHERE *You Want to Eat* ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

If you're planning a trip to Disney World, you're in for a treat when it comes to dining experiences. With over 200 restaurants across the massive resort, [there is something for everyone](#), even the [pickiest eaters](#)!

Currently, there are two different types of dining experiences in Disney World – table service restaurants and quick service restaurants.

Table Service restaurants at Disney World offer a sit-down dining experience where a server will take your order and bring your food to you. These restaurants range from casual to fine dining, and some even offer character dining experiences. Reservations are highly recommended.

Quick Service restaurants, on the other hand, offer a fast and convenient dining experience where you order your food at a counter and then find a seat to enjoy your meal. These restaurants range from grab-and-go options to more substantial meals and can be found throughout the parks and resorts.

It can be hard to decide where and what to eat when you're visiting. So, we highlight below some of the best restaurants to prioritize, some that you might want to skip, and all the new options that have recently opened at Walt Disney World.



BEST OVERALL WALT DISNEY WORLD RESTAURANTS



◆ **Be Our Guest at Magic Kingdom**

Dine here for a chance to eat inside of The Beast's castle from Beauty and the Beast and enjoy a French-inspired prix fixe menu.

◆ **Le Cellier at EPCOT**

Head into a cozy wine cellar and enjoy some of the best steak that Walt Disney World has to offer.

◆ **Tiffins at Disney's Animal Kingdom**

Taste some of the best food from faraway lands like Asia and Africa from this table service restaurant.

◆ **The Hollywood Brown Derby at Disney's Hollywood Studios**

Step into the golden age of Hollywood and be sure to try the famous Cobb Salad!

◆ **Homecomin' at Disney Springs**

Whether it's a proper Southern-style brunch, lunch, or dinner, this spot has become one of the most popular spots to dine in Disney Springs – and for good reason! Be sure to try the Thigh High Chicken Biscuits and Jasper Board.

◆ **Wine Bar George at Disney Springs**

Head to Wine Bar George for a delicious tasting menu that pairs perfectly with the wide selection of wines selected by Master Sommelier George Miliotes.

◆ **California Grill at Disney's Contemporary Resort**

Located on the 15th floor of Disney's Contemporary Resort you can enjoy stunning views of Magic Kingdom while dining on a three-course California-inspired menu.

◆ **Sanaa at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge**

This hidden gem of a restaurant features one of the most famous appetizers in Disney World – the Indian-style bread service!

◆ **'Ohana at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort**

This is an all-you-care-to-enjoy restaurant that features a traditional character breakfast where you can meet Lilo & Stitch in the morning and a Polynesian-inspired menu for its traditional dinner service.

◆ **Victoria & Albert's at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa**

If you're interested in an upscale dining experience at Disney World, Victoria & Albert's delivers! This award-winning restaurant features an innovative tasting menu, impeccable service, and a list of 500+ wines. Just be sure to pack the appropriate attire as there is a dress code.



BEST RESTAURANTS IN THE DISNEY PARKS



In addition to the best overall restaurants above, consider eating at these restaurants in each Disney Park during your trip. You won't regret it!

MAGIC KINGDOM

◆ **Best Table Service Restaurant: Liberty Tree Tavern**

The restaurant is known for serving a full Thanksgiving-style prix fixe meal that will leave you feeling satisfied. It earns its best table service restaurant title thanks to the fact that you can get a lot of good food for a great price.

◆ **Best Quick Service Restaurant: Casey's Corner**

Casey's Corner serves up a delicious meal that won't break the bank and has gained popularity among Disney fans for having some of the best hot dogs and fries in the park. They're sure to please even the pickiest eaters!

◆ **Best Snack Spot: Sleepy Hollow**

This quick service restaurant offers a limited menu, but what they do have is absolutely delicious. Be sure to try the Mickey waffles that come with some seriously delicious toppings.

EPCOT

◆ **Best Table Service Restaurant: Biergarten**

This buffet-style restaurant in the Germany Pavilion offers a wide variety of German-style fare, along with a short German-inspired show. Plus, the atmosphere here can't be beat!

◆ **Best Quick Service Restaurant: Connections Eatery**

One of the standout features of Connections Eatery is the variety of foods on the menu. Plus, you won't have to stress about seating! Connections Eatery is one of the largest quick service restaurants in EPCOT.

◆ **Best Snack Spot: Anywhere in World Showcase**

While nearly all of the restaurants in EPCOT are good, this park is made for snackers! In fact, we often recommend skipping out on having a full meal and snacking your way around the countries in World Showcase instead.

DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

◆ **Best Table Service Restaurant: Roundup Rodeo BBQ**

The Toy Story theme of Roundup Rodeo BBQ is top-notch and the family-style meal is both filling and tasty.

◆ **Best Quick Service Restaurant: Woody's Lunch Box**

Located in Toy Story Land, this spot serves up American comfort food with a fun, creative twist that even your pickiest eaters will love. Be sure to try the famous "Totchos" when you're here!

◆ **Best Snack Spot: Ronto Roasters**

Located in Black Spire Outpost's marketplace in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, this uniquely-themed eatery offers a variety of exotic meats and snacks that have become fan favorites over the years. We recommend trying the Ronto Wrap – the classic is our favorite, but there are also other varieties that are just as good!

DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

◆ **Best Table Service Restaurant: Yak & Yeti Restaurant**

This underrated spot offers a wide range of pan-Asian dishes that are sure to satisfy everyone in your family.

◆ **Best Quick Service Restaurant: Satu'li Canteen**

Located in Pandora - The World of Avatar, Satu'li Canteen has become known as one of the best places to eat in the park thanks to its create-your-own-bowl options. Think of it kind of like a Chipotle...but better! Fans also love the cheeseburger pods from the menu.

◆ **Best Snack Spot: Eight Spoon Café**

What makes Eight Spoon Cafe unique is its focus on a single dish: baked macaroni and cheese. You can try a variety of tasty takes on the classic dish. Give the pulled pork jelly doughnut sandwich a try!



Insider info...

[The Best & Worst Magic Kingdom Restaurants](#)

[The Best & Worst EPCOT Restaurants](#)

[The Best & Worst Hollywood Studios Restaurants](#)

[The Best & Worst Animal Kingdom Restaurants](#)

BEST CHARACTER DINING IN DISNEY WORLD

Character dining at Disney World is a chance for guests to grab breakfast, lunch, or dinner with some of their favorite characters. Fan-favorite Disney characters come to the table, interact with guests, take pictures, and may even sign autographs. But, who you get to meet depends on the restaurant!

Here are the best character dining restaurants in Disney World that are known for both their quality of food and character interactions:

◆ **Best For Princesses: Cinderella's Royal Table at Magic Kingdom**

Enjoy a prix fixe menu while Cinderella and other princesses make their way around the dining room to greet guests. The thing that makes this character restaurant so unique is that it is located inside Cinderella Castle!

◆ **Best Bang For Your Buck: The Crystal Palace at Magic Kingdom**

Meet Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet, and Tigger while you dine on a traditional breakfast, lunch, or dinner buffet. Be sure to try the Churro Mickey Waffles if you're eating here for breakfast!



◆ **Best Quality of Food: Topolino's Terrace - Flavors of the Riviera at Disney's Riviera Resort**

Start your day with a birds-eye view from this rooftop restaurant with Mickey and friends! Characters are only present during breakfast though.

◆ **Best Experience: Storybook Dining at Artist Point with Snow White at Disney's Wilderness Lodge**

At Artist Point, you'll dine in the Enchanted Forest and enjoy eating delicious food while meeting Snow White, Dopey, Grumpy, and The Evil Queen.

Insider info...



[The Best Disney World Character Dining Your Whole Family Will Love](#)

[The 5 Worst Character Meals at Disney World](#)

RESTAURANTS TO AVOID IN DISNEY WORLD



While you really can't go wrong eating anywhere in Disney World, not all restaurants are created equal! These are the restaurants that long-time Disney fans often skip.

MAGIC KINGDOM

◆ **Cosmic Ray's Starlight Cafe: Worst Quick Service Restaurant**

The menu is pretty underwhelming here with standard American fare like burgers, hot dogs, and chicken available. But perhaps the biggest issue with Cosmic Ray's are the crowds.

◆ **Jungle Navigation Co. LTD Skipper Canteen: Worst for Picky Eaters**

Sticking with the Jungle Cruise "adventure" theme that this table service restaurant is known for, the menu is full of adventurous eats. There are a couple of more approachable menu items, but the options are far more limited compared to other restaurants in Magic Kingdom.

EPCOT

◆ **Coral Reef: Worst Table Service Restaurant**

The menu at Coral Reef is limited, and the seafood dishes don't typically wow guests. The food is generally pretty pricey, and the quality just doesn't live up to the price.

◆ **Lotus Blossom Cafe: Worst Quick Service Restaurant**

The Americanized Chinese food here just isn't that great and there's not much on the menu to select. It can also be hard to find seating near the restaurant.



DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

◆ **Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater: Worst Table Service Restaurant**

While the restaurant is known for its immersive 1950s drive-in movie setting, the car-style booths make it difficult to enjoy a family meal and the menu is often criticized as being limited and basic.

◆ **50's Prime Time Cafe: Worst for Introverts**

The restaurant's theme revolves around a 1950s living room. And, the servers play the role of your mom, dad, aunt, or uncle. They will ask you to eat your veggies, clean your plate, and behave -- which can spell disaster for you if you're an introvert.

DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

◆ **Rainforest Cafe: Worst Table Service Restaurant**

While the thought of eating here might sound convenient if you're a fan of the restaurant (which has many locations across the globe), it doesn't offer the unique experience that you might be looking for at Disney World.

◆ **Pizzafari: Worst Quick Service Restaurant**

The main draw here is the pizza, and, unfortunately, it's some of the worst pizza in Disney World (unless you love a big, doughy, bubbly slice). The rest of the menu features other basic options like salads and sandwiches, which are also considered average or forgettable by most.

NEW DISNEY RESTAURANTS & LOUNGES

◆ **The Perch Lounge**

The Perch is a brand new bar located in the lobby of Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa. The design fits right into the resort's Victorian theme, and the bar serves a light menu of champagne, wine, beer, and two signature cocktails. Non-alcoholic options are also available.

◆ **Popcorn and Snacks Stand in Toy Story Land**

A brand new snack stand has joined the line-up of places to eat inside Toy Story Land, and it's the only place at Disney's Hollywood Studios where you can find Pizza Planet Spring Rolls! You'll also find a small menu of Disney Park essentials like churros, popcorn, Mickey Premium Bars, sodas, and a few adult alcoholic cocktails and beer.

◆ **Beak & Barrel Lounge**

Magic Kingdom invites pirates of all ages to step inside its new lively pirate pub, The Beak and Barrel! This immersive (and rowdy) lounge has quickly become a fan-favorite. There is a menu of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages available here, along with a small food menu. And, whether you're dining in the "Mess Hall" or "Captains' Quarters," you're in for a treat, including special show elements that happen throughout the lounge every 5-10 minutes.



◆ **Geo-82 Lounge**

Calling anyone 21+ — there's a new place to grab a cocktail in EPCOT! Inspired by the park icon, the adults-only lounge offers one of the most elegant places to relax in EPCOT. Inside the secluded space, you can find stunning views of the World Celebration Gardens and a unique view of the nightly fireworks show if you're able to snag a late-night reservation.

◆ **Wailulu Bar & Grill at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort**

Wailulu Bar & Grill is located inside the new Polynesian Island Tower at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort and serves a full menu of appetizers, entrees, desserts, and cocktails inspired by the flavors of the South Pacific Islands. Plus, while you dine you'll be treated to some of the best views of Seven Seas Lagoon! Reservations are recommended for anyone planning to dine here.



◆ **The Cake Bake Shop by Gwendolyn Rogers**

The Cake Bake Shop by Gwendolyn Rogers brings its whimsical charm to Disney's BoardWalk. This enchanting bakery and restaurant offers an immersive dining experience where you can indulge in a variety of sweet treats, including elaborately decorated cakes and pastries. The menu also features savory options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.



◆ **Blue Ribbon Corn Dogs**

A taste of the West Coast has arrived at Disney's BoardWalk with the addition of Blue Ribbon Corn Dogs. This grab-and-go eatery specializes in gourmet corn dogs and related snacks. The menu offers classic corn dogs alongside some more unique offerings like cheese-stuffed dogs, a pickle corn dog, and intriguing batter flavors.

◆ **Ice Cold Hydraulics**

Disney's Hollywood Studios recently added a new spot just outside of the Grand Avenue area called Ice Cold Hydraulics. You can stop here for small bites including candy painted cinnamon rolls and mini churros.

◆ **Summer House on the Lake**

Summer House on the Lake is a new California-inspired table service restaurant at Disney Springs. The bright, airy space features beach house-style decor, creating a relaxed coastal vibe, and the food compliments the space. The menu focuses on fresh, seasonal ingredients with a West Coast influence. You'll find options like wood-fired pizzas, salads, and seafood dishes.

Summer House on the Lake also includes a grab-and-go market called The Cookie Jar where you can find some of the best cookies on Disney property.

◆ **EET by Maneet Chauhan**

Celebrity chef Maneet Chauhan brings her culinary expertise to Disney Springs with EET. This fast-casual concept offers an Indian street food-inspired menu with dishes like tandoori-spiced chicken, naan wraps, and salads.



◆ **Shiki-Sai: Sushi Izakaya**

Shiki-Sai: Sushi Izakaya is a new table-service restaurant in EPCOT's Japan pavilion. This fine dining experience combines traditional Japanese cuisine with a modern twist. The menu showcases a variety of sushi rolls, sashimi, and izakaya-style small plates. Sake pairings and Japanese-inspired cocktails are also available.

◆ **Roundup Rodeo BBQ**

Toy Story Land at Disney's Hollywood Studios welcomed Roundup Rodeo BBQ, a family-style table service restaurant that shrinks you to toy-size and transports you to Andy's backyard, complete with toy-sized decor and Western-themed elements.

The menu features classic barbecue dishes with a playful twist. You'll find options like ribs, brisket, and chicken, along with sides like mac and cheese and corn on the cob. Vegetarian options are also available.



MAKING DINING *Reservations*



Now that you're better informed, hopefully you've narrowed in on which restaurants you'd like to try during your visit to Disney World.

If you're hoping to dine at a table service restaurant, the only way to guarantee that you get to eat there is by securing a dining reservation. Reservations are highly recommended at every sit-down restaurant in the parks, resorts, and Disney Springs and you can begin making them 60 days prior to your check in day for the length of your trip (up to 10 days).

HOW TO MAKE DINING RESERVATIONS

So, set your alarms for early in the morning 60 days in advance and follow these steps to make your dining reservations:

Step One

OPTION 1: SEARCH AND RESERVE SPECIFIC RESTAURANTS

Search for the restaurant at which you would like to make a dining reservation either on your browser or in the My Disney Experience app. Then select "Reserve Dining" or "Check Availability." You'll then be asked to input your party size, select the date you'd like to dine, and pick an available time.

OPTION 2: SEARCH RESTAURANTS BY DATE AND TIME

On your browser go to "Things To Do" > "Make Reservations" or, if you're using the My Disney Experience app, click the "+" button at the bottom of the screen and select "Check Dining Availability". You'll then be prompted to select your party size, the date you plan to dine, and the time period you'd prefer (all day, morning, afternoon, or evening). This will bring up all of the dining reservations available for all restaurants across Walt Disney World for you to browse and book.

Step Two

CONFIRM YOUR DINING RESERVATIONS

Follow the prompts on the browser or app to input your contact information and a form of payment. Your card will only be charged if you fail to cancel your dining reservation 2 hours before and do not show up.

You'll receive a confirmation email with the dining reservation details and the reservation will be added to your plans in your My Disney Experience account. Be sure to keep copies of your confirmation in case there are any technical issues!



THE BEST TIME TO BOOK A RESERVATION

When it comes to booking dining reservations at Disney World, timing is everything. We recommend making your reservations as soon as your booking window opens 60 days prior to your check-in date. Disney World's official opening time for dining reservations is 6 AM ET. However, the system may release dining reservations even earlier so be prepared!

THE HARDEST DINING RESERVATIONS TO GET IN DISNEY WORLD

Every Disney World restaurant has its own unique theming and menu. And, it's these differences that make some restaurants more popular than others. When you're making dining reservations, you'll want to prioritize the order in which you make them by securing the most popular reservations first.

If any of these restaurants are on your must-dine list, be sure to snag them first when your dining reservation window opens.

HERE ARE THE TOP 5 MOST POPULAR RESTAURANTS IN EACH THEME PARK AND ACROSS RESORTS

Magic Kingdom

- Cinderella's Royal Table
- Be Our Guest Restaurant
- The Crystal Palace
- Jungle Navigation Co., Ltd. Skipper Canteen
- The Beak and Barrel

EPCOT

- Akershus Royal Banquet Hall
- Space 220
- Garden Grill Restaurant
- Via Napoli Ristorante e Pizzeria
- Le Cellier Steakhouse

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- Roundup Rodeo BBQ
- Hollywood & Vine
- Oga's Cantina
- The Hollywood Brown Derby
- 50's Prime Time Cafe

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- Tusker House Restaurant
- Tiffins Restaurant
- Yak & Yeti Restaurant
- Rainforest Cafe

Disney World Resorts

- Chef Mickey's at Disney's Contemporary Resort
- 'Ohana at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort
- Topolino's Terrace – Flavors of the Riviera at Disney's Riviera Resort
- Cape May Cafe at Disney's Beach Club
- 1900 Park Fare at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa





MORE ON DISNEY

Dining Plans

If you've decided to purchase a [Disney Dining Plan](#), it's important to know the differences to ensure you pick the right one and make full use of all the inclusions.

DISNEY DINING PLAN

The [Disney Dining Plan](#) is currently the "highest" meal plan option for Disney World vacations and is the only plan that allows you to dine at both table service and quick service restaurants during your vacation.

Inclusions:

- 1 Quick-Service Meal (per night of stay)
- 1 Table-Service Meal (per night of stay)
- 1 Snack/Nonalcoholic Drink (per night of stay)
- 1 Resort-Refillable Drink Mug (which can be refilled at any Disney World Resort hotel Quick-Service location at your leisure)

Cost: \$98.59 per adult, per night (ages 10+);
\$31.94 per child, per night (ages 3 to 9)

QUICK SERVICE DINING PLAN

The [Disney Quick-Service Dining Plan](#) is the "lower" tier dining plan and is best for guests who do not plan to eat at table service restaurants (a.k.a. sit-down restaurants) every day of their stay.

Inclusions:

- 2 Quick-Service Meals (per night of stay)
- 1 Snack/Nonalcoholic Drink (per night of stay)
- 1 Resort-Refillable Drink Mug

Cost: \$60.47 per adult, per night (ages 10+);
\$26.16 per child, per night (ages 3 to 9)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED WITH YOUR DISNEY DINING PLAN

It's important to note that the Disney Dining Plans don't necessarily pay for everything when it comes to dining in Disney World. Be sure to budget for the following as they are NOT included in the cost of the dining plans:

- Gratuity and tips
- Items that are more than a single serving (such as a box of doughnuts)
- Items (such as popcorn or drinks) that are served in a souvenir container
- Items considered to be merchandise (such as bottle toppers, glow cubes, and bottle straps)
- Special dining events offered at certain table-service locations

Also, note that certain character dining and signature dining restaurants cost TWO dining credits with the Disney Dining Plan. This means that you'll have one less credit to use during the length of your stay.



BEST AND WORST DINING PLAN SNACKS

When you purchase one of the Disney Dining Plans, each person gets one snack or nonalcoholic beverage per night of stay in addition to the meals. To make it easy to identify what counts as a snack, look for the DDP snack logo on menus and display cases. This purple and white symbol is an indicator that the item is eligible as a snack on the dining plan.

But, don't buy just any snack if you're hoping to maximize your dining plan! A snack credit is worth roughly \$6, so you want to make sure you're using it on items that are more costly. [Here are some snacks you should \(and shouldn't\) use your snack credits on in Disney World.](#)

Buy these snacks:

- DOLE Whip from Aloha Isle
- Gaston's Cinnamon Roll from Gaston's Tavern
- Sweet Cream Cheese Stuffed Pretzel from The Lunching Pad
- Any snacks from Les Halles Boulangerie Patisserie
- Werther's Caramel Apple (or any other treat) from Karamell-Kuche in Germany Pavilion
- Blue and Green Milk from the Milk Stand in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge
- Num Num Cookie at Neighborhood Bakery
- Wookiee Cookie from Backlot Express
- Baked Mac & Cheese dishes at Eight Spoon Cafe
- Night Blossom from Pongu Pongu
- Venti Starbucks drinks

Avoid these snacks:

- Popcorn
- Soda
- Bottled Water
- Fresh Fruit
- Bagged Chips
- Coffee and tea (Starbucks is an exception)
- Pre-Packaged Candy
- Plain Bakery Items
- Extra Sauce
- Any snack priced under \$6

And remember, you're also allowed to bring your own snacks into Disney World!



COFFEE IN DISNEY WORLD

Yes, we said Starbucks drinks can be purchased with your snack credits. So, if you can't imagine taking on the Disney Parks without a cup of coffee in hand, you're in luck! There are plenty of spots to get your caffeine fix in the parks and resorts.

If you're a Starbucks fanatic, you can find full-service locations at:

- Main Street Bakery at Magic Kingdom
- Connections Cafe at EPCOT
- The Trolley Car Cafe at Disney's Hollywood Studios
- Creature Comforts Coffee Shop at Disney's Animal Kingdom
- West Side by the Aerophile at Disney Springs
- Marketplace by World of Disney at Disney Springs

Or, you could give Joffrey's Coffee a try! Joffrey's is the official coffee of Walt Disney World and can be found all over the parks and Disney Springs. You'll also find Joffrey's coffee at most Disney World restaurants, including quick service restaurants, and inside the resort hotels.



ALCOHOL IN DISNEY WORLD

Well, since we've talked about coffee, you might be wondering about [alcohol in Disney World](#). If you want to indulge in some adult beverages during your vacation, there are a few options:

1. **Bring your own**
2. **Get it delivered to your hotel through a grocery delivery service**
3. **Purchase alcohol at Disney World quick service restaurants or bars/lounges**

While the cost of alcoholic drinks tends to be much higher when you're buying directly from Disney compared to your local grocery store, there are some really unique bars and lounges that offer a great cocktail and beer menu throughout the parks and resorts. Plus, we definitely recommend getting a few drinks to try if you're visiting during any of the EPCOT festivals!

Just note that alcohol can only be ordered at table service restaurants in Magic Kingdom. All other Disney theme parks have multiple grab-and-go options if you're in the mood for a cocktail. Additionally, all of the Disney World Resort hotels have at least one bar that serves alcohol, and you can often find canned beverages at the quick service restaurants.

Insider info...



[Everything To Know Before You Drink Around The World at EPCOT](#)

[7 Must-Do Disney World Bar Crawls](#)

[The 15 Best Bars at Disney World You'll Wish You Found Sooner](#)

MOBILE ORDER

If you're looking to maximize your time in the parks and grab a bite to eat at one of the Quick Service restaurants, we suggest you use the [Mobile Order feature](#) in the My Disney Experience app.

All you have to do is download the app, find the restaurant, select your pick-up time, and place your order—all while enjoying everything else the parks have to offer. Once your pick-up window opens, you'll select the tab that you are on your way and your food will be prepared and ready when you arrive.

WATER REFILL STATIONS

Whether you have a dining plan or not, don't waste your money (or snack credits) on bottled water! Bring a reusable water bottle from home and take advantage of [Disney's water refill stations](#). These can be found all over the parks (and even some resorts!). Most quick service restaurants will also provide you with free cups of water upon request.

Here's the full list of water refill stations in the Disney Parks:

Magic Kingdom

- At TRON restrooms
- Inside Pinocchio's Village Haus
- Inside Cosmic Ray's Starlight Cafe

EPCOT

- At EPCOT International Gateway Entrance restrooms/lockers
- At restrooms inside Connections Cafe
- At Rose Walk restrooms
- Inside the Odyssey Building
- Outside guest relations
- Outside Journey of Water
- Near the World Nature restrooms
- At CommuniCore Hall

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- At Black Spire Market restrooms
- At bus loop restrooms
- At Grand Ave restrooms
- At restrooms inside ABC Commissary
- At restrooms next to Blue Milk Stand
- In Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run exit queue
- On Sunset Blvd
- Outside guest relations
- Outside of security

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- In Avatar: Flight of Passage queue
- In Na'vi River Journey queue
- Near Flame Tree Barbecue
- Near Mombasa Marketplace
- Near Satu'li Canteen

Note: You can search for the full list of water refill stations in the My Disney Experience App and even get directions to the nearest one.



DECIDE WHAT YOU *Want to Do & See* ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Now that you've decided where you are going to stay and where/what you are going to eat, there's more fun to be had planning what you're going to see and do during your Disney World vacation.

DECIDE WHICH PARKS YOU'LL VISIT AND ON WHAT DAYS

Whether this will be your first or 50th time visiting Disney World, you're probably planning on spending most of your time in the parks. So, you'll need to plan out where you're going and when!

It's important to [check the park hours](#) prior to making your plans so that you don't encounter any surprises on the day of your visit. For example, in the fall and winter months, Magic Kingdom closes early for special ticketed events and you'll want to know about those in advance!

Certain days of the week also tend to be better for visiting specific parks based on crowd patterns. Magic Kingdom is typically less crowded on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, as many visitors head there first, making Mondays and weekends busier. EPCOT sees lighter crowds on weekdays, especially Tuesdays through Thursdays, as weekends attract locals for its festivals. Disney's Animal Kingdom is often less busy midweek, and Disney's Hollywood Studios tends to be quieter on Fridays. Disney Springs is ideal for a Monday or Thursday visit, avoiding the weekend rush. And, a resort day works well on a Sunday or Saturday, allowing for relaxation during the busiest park days. Crowd calendars from third-party websites can also help fine-tune these decisions based on seasonal trends.

But, which parks should you prioritize if you're only visiting for a few days? Or, what parks should you go to more than once if you have an extended stay? While all four theme parks are designed with both young and old in mind, here are the parks that you may want to spend more time in based on who you're traveling with:

- ♦ **Best Park for Kids: Magic Kingdom**
- ♦ **Best Park for Teens: Disney's Hollywood Studios**
- ♦ **Best Park for Adults: EPCOT**



PLAN A BASIC ITINERARY FOR EACH DAY

Once you've got your parks scheduled, it's time to plan a basic itinerary for each day. While we don't recommend having a minute-to-minute schedule (flexibility is important!), it's good to do some prep work so that you know what to prioritize.

ATTRACTIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Spend some time reviewing the [height requirements](#) for all the attractions in each park if you're traveling with younger children and decide which rides are must-do's for you and your family.

Of course, there's lots to do besides the rides as well. From shows, parades, character meet & greets, photo-ops, and various other experiences, decide what's important to you during your trip.

Insider info...

[What Are the Best Disney World Rides?](#)

[The Best Disney World Rides for Kids](#)

[Disney World Roller Coasters Ranked From Worst to Best](#)



Some of the best rides, parades, nighttime spectaculars, and shows in each park include:

Magic Kingdom

- TRON Lightcycle / Run
- [Tiana's Bayou Adventure](#)
- Seven Dwarfs Mine Train
- Space Mountain
- Peter Pan's Flight
- "it's a small world"
- Festival of Fantasy Parade
- Happily Ever After Fireworks
- Mickey's Magical Friendship Faire Show

EPCOT

- Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind
- Test Track
- Soarin' Around the World
- Frozen Ever After
- Luminous: The Symphony of Us

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance
- Rock 'n' Roller Coaster
- The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror
- Slinky Dog Dash
- Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular
- Beauty and the Beast - Live on Stage
- Fantasmic!

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- Avatar: Flight of Passage
- Expedition Everest
- Kilimanjaro Safari
- Festival of the Lion King
- Finding Nemo: The Big Blue... and Beyond!
- Tree of Life Awakening

If you need further help, check out our full itineraries for each theme park at [EatSleepDisney.com](#).



CHARACTER MEET & GREETES

Besides the rides and attractions, one of the best things to do in Disney World is meet your favorite Disney characters. And, they're all over the parks and resorts!

You can see a full list of characters and their meet and greet times on the My Disney Experience App. Keep in mind that some greet guests constantly throughout the day while others are only out at specific times. So, it's important to plan ahead and prepare for long lines.

*Insider
info...*



[Character Meet and Greets at Disney World: Everything You Need To Know](#)

Here are the characters that traditionally greet guests daily in each Disney Park and where you can find them:

Magic Kingdom

- Mickey at Town Square Theater
- Meet Disney Princesses in Princess Fairytale Hall
- Peter Pan in Fantasyland
- Winnie the Pooh and Tigger at the Thotful Spot
- Minnie, Daisy, Donald, and Goofy at Pete's Silly Sideshow in Storybook Circus
- The Little Mermaid (from the Animated Story) at Ariel's Grotto
- Mirabel from Encanto at Fairytale Garden
- Chip and Dale by the Buzz Lightyear Exit Courtyard
- Stitch in Tomorrowland
- Aladdin and Jasmine at Agrabah Bazaar
- Captain Jack Sparrow near Pirates of the Caribbean

EPCOT

- Mickey & Friends Meet-and-Greet in CommuniCore Hall
- Rotating Disney Pals near EPCOT's Main Entrance
- Figment in the Imagination Pavilion
- Star-Lord near Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind
- Moana near the entrance to the Journey of Water attraction
- Donald Duck in the Mexico pavilion
- Anna and Elsa at Royal Sommerhus in the Norway pavilion
- Mulan in China
- Snow White in Germany
- Jasmine in Morocco
- Belle in France
- Princess Aurora in France
- Alice in the English Gardens of the United Kingdom pavilion
- Mary Poppins in the English Gardens of the United Kingdom pavilion
- Winnie the Pooh in the United Kingdom pavilion
- Asha from Wish at the World Showcase Plaza Gazebo

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- Jiminy Cricket near Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Pinocchio near Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Mary Poppins near Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Bert near Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Olaf at Celebrity Spotlight
- Minnie and Mickey Starring in Red Carpet Dreams
- Ariel from the Live-Action version of The Little Mermaid at Walt Disney Presents
- The Edna Mode Experience in Pixar Plaza
- Mr. and Mrs. Incredible in Pixar Plaza
- Frozone from The Incredibles in Pixar Plaza
- Sulley from Monsters, Inc. in Pixar Plaza
- Joy from Inside Out in Pixar Plaza
- Buzz Lightyear, Sheriff Woody, and Jessie in Toy Story Land
- Chip and Dale near Echo Lake
- Donald and Daisy near The Hollywood Brown Derby
- Goofy, Max, and Pluto at Grand Avenue
- First Order Stormtroopers, Kylo Ren, Rey, Vi Moradi, Chewbacca, and The Mandalorian and Grogu in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde from Zootopia in Discovery Island
- Pluto at The Oasis
- Mickey and Minnie at Adventurers Outpost
- Moana in Discovery Island
- Pocahontas in Discovery Island
- Russell, Dug, and Kevin from Up in Discovery Island
- Timon and Rafiki at Rafiki's Planet Watch

DISNEY SPRINGS

[Disney Springs](#) is a massive shopping and dining district in Disney World. And, the best part? It's completely free to visit! A visit to Disney Springs is a great way to utilize your time on your resort check in day or in the evening on any day of your trip. You'll find some of the best restaurants and Disney shopping here so don't skip it!



Here are some must-do's to add to your list when you visit Disney Springs:

- **World of Disney:** The largest Disney merchandise store in the world.
- **Jock Lindsey's Hangar Bar:** Indiana Jones-themed bar with unique cocktails.
- **Gideon's Bakehouse:** Famous for its half-pound cookies and gothic decor.
- **Everglazed Donuts & Cold Brew:** Unique and delicious donuts paired with craft cold brews.
- **Chef Art Smith's Homecomin':** Southern comfort food with farm-to-table ingredients.
- **M&M Store:** A signature M&M store filled with customizable M&Ms and fun merchandise.
- **Salt & Straw:** Unique ice cream shop offering adventurous and seasonal flavors.
- **LEGO Store:** A must-see for LEGO fans with giant sculptures and hands-on, customizable building stations.



OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS ON DISNEY PROPERTY

If you're visiting for an extended amount of time or just want to switch up what you do on your vacation, there are a few other activities and attractions to check out in Walt Disney World including water parks, golf courses, sports arenas, and more.

Here are some other things to add to your to-do list beyond the theme parks if you have time:

- Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park
- Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park
- Disney's BoardWalk
- ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex
- Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course
- FootGolf at Disney's Oak Trail
- Disney's Fantasia Gardens Miniature Golf Course
- Disney's Winter Summerland Miniature Golf Course

Keep in mind that separate tickets are required for all of these locations (with the exception of Disney's BoardWalk). If you're interested in visiting more than one during your trip, it may be worth purchasing a Park Hopper Plus ticket to minimize costs.



WHAT'S NEW IN Walt Disney World

Disney continues to expand its offerings with exciting new attractions and unique experiences. And, more is coming soon! From thrilling rides to reimagined classics, be sure you don't miss anything NEW on your next Disney trip!

ZOOPTOPIA: BETTER ZOOGETHER

Zootopia characters are now officially in Disney World with a new 4D show at Disney's Animal Kingdom that takes you to the different biomes featured in the movie, alongside Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, and other characters you know and love.

TEST TRACK 3.0

The fan-favorite ride, Test Track, got a major overhaul, and now you can experience it for yourself! Take a test drive into the future of cars to see all of the ways that technology is changing the way we drive. You'll learn about current car technology, imagine how you may be able to customize your car in the future, take a joyride through country roads, and finish with a high-speed circuit around the exterior of the attraction.



Insider info...

[Complete List of All the New Rides & Attractions in Disney World](#)

DISNEY VILLAINS: UNFAIRLY EVER AFTER

The Disney Villains now have a permanent spot in Disney's Hollywood Studios! The brand new live stage show takes you on a wicked adventure to discover who is the most wicked of all. Throughout the show, you'll see various musical numbers from Cruella de Vil, Captain Hook, and Maleficent. Plus, you never know who else might be lurking around the stage.



THE LITTLE MERMAID – A MUSICAL ADVENTURE

The popular stage show at Disney’s Hollywood Studios inspired by Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* got an update! The new show retells the story of Ariel in a brand new way. During the live show, you’ll hear your favorite songs, including “Part of Your World” and “Poor Unfortunate Souls.” Plus, Disney has added two new numbers to the show including, “Daughters of Triton” and “Kiss the Girl.”



“DISNEY STARLIGHT” NIGHTTIME PARADE

Magic Kingdom welcomed a brand new nighttime parade called “Disney Starlight: Dream the Night Away” in summer 2025! It features new technology and A TON of Disney characters. You can expect to see the Blue Fairy from *Cinderella* and others from *Peter Pan*, *Encanto*, *Frozen*, and more make their way down Main Street, U.S.A. on all-new sparkling floats.

TRON LIGHTCYCLE / RUN

This high-speed roller coaster in Magic Kingdom’s Tomorrowland immerses you in the digital world of TRON. You’ll board a sleek Lightcycle and race against the Grid’s programs at speeds up to 60 mph. The ride features both indoor and outdoor sections, with stunning visual effects and a pulsing electronic soundtrack.

And, for a limited time in early 2026, you can enter the digital world from the new *Tron: Ares* movie with a red and orange light overlay and a soundtrack from Nine Inch Nails (who did the music for the movie).

TIANA’S BAYOU ADVENTURE

Replacing Splash Mountain, this reimagined attraction brings *The Princess and the Frog* to life in Magic Kingdom’s Frontierland. You’ll join Princess Tiana, Naveen, and Louis on a musical adventure through the bayou as they prepare for a Mardi Gras celebration.

COUNTRY BEAR MUSICAL JAMBOREE

This beloved Frontierland show at Magic Kingdom received a modern update to its charming country flavor. The revamped performance features new songs, enhanced animatronics, and improved sound and lighting systems.





ADDITIONAL TIPS TO PLAN *Your Perfect Day* ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨

When planning out how you're going to spend your days in the theme parks, there are a few other things that you should keep in mind. From making the most of early mornings in the parks to deciding whether you want to purchase Lightning Lane passes, these tips can really help you make the most of your days.

EARLY THEME PARK ENTRY

If you're staying at a Disney World Resort hotel, one of the best perks is extra time in the parks! So, be sure to set your alarm to take advantage of the lower wait times for rides during [Early Theme Park Entry](#). We recommend arriving at least 60 minutes prior to the official park opening to get the most out of these extra 30 minutes every morning.

If you are staying on Disney property, the transportation will begin running about an hour before your Early Entry time, or 1.5 hours before the official park opening.

Early Theme Park Entry is one of the best ways to ride Disney's most popular attractions with little to no lines. So, DON'T waste these precious 30-minutes waiting in line for coffee. Instead, pick a ride on your to-do list that's popular and head there first! Then, if you have some extra time, hop in line for another nearby popular attraction. You'll likely only have time to get on 1-2 rides, so choose wisely!



Here are some of the rides to prioritize in each park:

Magic Kingdom

- Seven Dwarfs Mine Train
- Space Mountain
- Peter Pan's Flight

EPCOT

- Frozen Ever After
- Remy's Ratatouille Adventure
- Test Track
- Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance
- Slinky Dog Dash
- Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Tower of Terror
- Rock 'n' Roller Coaster

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- Avatar: Flight of Passage
- Na'vi River Journey

SINGLE RIDER

One of the best ways to save time and avoid long lines is by utilizing [single-rider lines](#). These lines are often much shorter than the regular lines and are a great option if you don't mind splitting up your group. Currently, a single rider line is consistently offered at Rock 'n' Roller Coaster, Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run, Test Track, and Expedition Everest. Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance and Remy's Ratatouille Adventure sometimes have single rider lines as well.

RIDER SWITCH

[Rider Switch](#) enables those traveling with little ones who don't meet the height requirements of an attraction to still ride by taking turns. One parent waits in line and rides the attraction while the other parent waits with the child. When the first parent is finished riding, they switch with the second parent, allowing them to skip the line and ride the attraction without waiting in the regular queue.

To use Rider Switch, simply go to the attraction's entrance and let the Cast Member know that you'd like to use the service. They'll provide you with instructions and direct you to the designated waiting area.



LIGHTNING LANE PASSES

Lightning Lane Multi Pass and Lightning Lane Single Passes are the new way to skip the lines at the most popular attractions in the Disney Parks. But, unlike its predecessor FastPass+, it now costs money to gain access to this perk. Of note, if you've heard or read about Disney Genie+ in the past, this Lightning Lane Multi Pass is its replacement as of July 2024.

Lightning Lane Multi Pass allows you to skip the line at the majority of the rides and attractions throughout all four Disney World theme parks. Prices vary by date and theme park, but you can expect to pay between \$15-\$45 per person on top of your park ticket on the days that you opt to buy Multi Pass.

Each theme park currently has one to two attractions that are not included in Lightning Lane Multi Pass and are instead a separate cost if you'd like the opportunity to skip the line. Known as **Lightning Lane Single Passes**, you can choose to purchase them with or without the purchase of Lightning Lane Multi Pass. Prices for Single Passes vary by date and attraction but you can expect to pay between \$12-\$25 per person, per attraction.

Both Lightning Lane Multi Pass and Single Passes can be booked prior to your trip, and we highly recommend doing so. Disney World Resort hotel guests can purchase and make their Lightning Lane selections 7 days prior to their check-in day at 7AM ET for the duration of their trip. And, all other guests can purchase and make their selections 3 days prior to their visit at 7AM ET.

To purchase, open up the My Disney Experience app when your booking window opens and select "Purchase" under the Lightning Lane Multi Pass and Lightning Lane Single Pass banner. You can then view all available times for all participating rides and attractions AND make all of your selections for the entire length of your stay before you pay.

Also, new as of October 30, 2024 is **Lightning Lane Premier Pass**. This all-new premier pass eliminates the need to schedule Lightning Lane return times at attractions and gives you a one-time entry to every Lightning Lane attraction in one park for one day, including the most popular rides.



Insider info...
[Complete Guide To Disney's New Lightning Lane Services](#)



FINAL PREPARATION

for Your Vacation ✨ ✨ ✨

Now that you know where you're going to stay, what you're going to eat, and what you're going to see and do, the hard part is out of the way. So, let the countdown to your Walt Disney World vacation begin! As you make final preparations for your trip, these are some of the most important things to keep in mind.

DOWNLOAD MY DISNEY EXPERIENCE APP

The [My Disney Experience app](#) is a mobile application designed to help you plan your vacation, get up-to-date information about the theme parks, and so much more. The app is available for download on both Apple App Store and Google Play.

While you can certainly go to Disney World without it, most guests find that it's nearly impossible to navigate the parks and keep all of their plans straight without the app on their phone. So, we recommend downloading the app and becoming familiar with it before your vacation. The app is free, so there's really no reason not to have it!

In the app, you can:

- Purchase and manage Lightning Lane Multi Pass and Lightning Lane Single Pass selections.
- Mobile order food.
- Make dining reservations.
- Check into your hotel.
- Open your hotel room door.
- Access, purchase, and download your Disney PhotoPass images.
- Get theme park information including park maps, current ride wait times, character meet-and-greet locations, and theme park hours.
- See when the next Disney bus will arrive at your hotel.
- Mobile check out at merchandise locations.
- Activate MagicBands.
- Get recommendations for where to eat, what rides have the lowest wait times, and more.
- Join the virtual queue for select attractions (when applicable).
- Use as your ticket to get into the park.
- Contact guest services including concierge at your hotel.
- Track where you parked your car.

CONSIDER PURCHASING MAGICBANDS

MagicBands are wristbands that are designed to be worn throughout the entirety of your Disney World vacation. They make your visit a bit easier in more ways than one and are a convenient and innovative way to access a variety of features during your stay. With a MagicBand, you can enter the theme parks, get into your hotel room, redeem Lightning Lane selections, make purchases, and so much more.

If you're staying at a Walt Disney World Resort hotel, we recommend purchasing your MagicBands in advance so you're ready to dive right into all the fun as soon as you set foot in Disney World.

While MagicBands are not required to visit Walt Disney World, they are certainly convenient. It eliminates the need to fumble around with tickets, money, etc. while in the parks.

PACKING

As your vacation dates approach, [it's time to pack!](#) Be sure to check the weather forecast for Central Florida before you start packing so that you can [be prepared for the heat, rain, or even the cold](#) depending on when you're visiting.

There's a lot to keep track of and you don't want to forget anything. So, use the included [packing checklist](#) to help ensure you don't leave something behind!

See the next pages for your printable:

- [Disney World Vacation Planning Checklist](#)
- [Disney World Vacation Packing Checklist](#)
- [Disney World Park Day Bag Packing Checklist](#)



DISNEY WORLD VACATION PLANNING CHECKLIST

Planning a magical vacation to Walt Disney World can be both exciting and overwhelming. This comprehensive checklist is designed to guide you through the planning process, ensuring you don't miss any important steps along the way. From booking your accommodations to packing your park day bag, we've organized tasks by time frame to help you stay on track. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a seasoned Disney traveler, use this checklist to make your Walt Disney World vacation planning as smooth and stress-free as possible. Remember to stay flexible and have fun! Your magical Disney World vacation is about to begin!

6-12 MONTHS BEFORE

- Set vacation dates
- Determine budget
- Choose and book accommodations (Disney Resort or off-site hotel)
- Research and decide on ticket options (number of days, Park Hopper, etc.)
- Decide if you want add a dining plan to your vacation package
- Research travel insurance plans
- Start saving for the trip

3-6 MONTHS BEFORE

- Book flights if traveling by air
- Arrange for transportation to and from the airport (if flying)
- Research table service restaurants you want to dine at
- Research and plan which parks to visit on which days
- Start a rough itinerary of must-do attractions and experiences
- Consider purchasing Memory Maker photo package
- Research special events happening during your trip (festivals, holiday celebrations, etc.)

2-3 MONTHS BEFORE

- Download and familiarize yourself with the My Disney Experience app
- Create a My Disney Experience account and link all party members
- Make dining reservations (opens 60 days in advance)
- Purchase MagicBands
- Make reservations for any special experiences (Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique, dessert parties, tours)
- Arrange for stroller rental if needed
- Start planning what to pack

1 MONTH BEFORE

- Confirm all reservations (hotel, dining, special experiences)
- Finalize park itinerary
- Make a packing list
- Arrange for pet care if needed
- Inform your bank and credit card companies about your travel plans
- Check passport expiration dates if traveling internationally

2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Begin packing
- Print or screenshot important documents (reservations, tickets, etc.)
- Check the weather forecast and adjust packing if necessary
- Purchase any last-minute items (Disney-themed clothing, accessories, etc.)

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Finish packing
- Arrange for mail and newspaper hold if necessary
- Charge all electronic devices
- Check-in for flights (if applicable)
- Purchase Lightning Lane Multi Pass and/or Single Pass for the length of your trip (the pre-booking window opens 7 days before check-in for Disney hotel guests and 3 days before your first park day with date-based tickets)

DAY BEFORE DEPARTURE

- Complete online check-in for your Disney Resort hotel
- Ensure MagicBands are linked to everyone in your travel party
- Activate MagicBands
- Double-check all reservations and confirmation numbers
- Pack park day bag with essentials (sunscreen, portable charger, water bottle, etc.)
- Confirm transportation arrangements to the airport or Disney World



DISNEY WORLD PARK DAY BAG PACKING CHECKLIST

A well-packed park bag is your ticket to a stress-free day in Disney World! This essential packing list covers everything you need for a magical day, from must-have items like park tickets and comfortable clothing to practical necessities such as sunscreen and portable chargers. Use this to ensure you're well-equipped to make the most of your park experience.

Remember to check the weather forecast and adjust your park day essentials accordingly!

CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES

- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Extra Pair of Socks
- Portable Fan and/or Cooling Towels
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Wallet (with ID and Credit Cards)
- Cell Phone
- _____
- _____
- _____

PARK NECESSITIES

- MagicBand or MagicBand+ (if using)
- Park Tickets (if not using MagicBand)
- Dining Reservations Confirmation
- Portable Phone Charger
- Reusable Water Bottle
- Snacks (if bringing your own)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

SUN AND WEATHER PROTECTION

- Sunscreen
- Umbrella or Poncho (check weather forecast)
- Anti-Chafe Balm
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- Hand Sanitizer
- Lysol Wipes
- Any necessary medications
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

ENTERTAINMENT AND EXTRAS

- Autograph Book (if collecting character signatures)
- Games to play while standing in line
- Ziploc Bags (for protecting items on water rides)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- Stroller (if applicable)
- Diapers and Wipes (if needed)
- Change of clothes for kids
- Reusable Straws (if desired)
- Feeding essentials (bottles, formula, etc.)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

MISCELLANEOUS

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

DECIDE IF YOU'LL PURCHASE ANY OTHER ADD-ONS

There are a lot of ways to customize your Disney vacation. From special event tickets, to dessert parties that give you a better view for fireworks, to Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique for your little ones, to Disney PhotoPass, behind the scenes tours, and more there are plenty of add-ons to choose.

Be sure to do your research on these in advance as they can have [a big impact on your budget](#) and schedule.

FINAL COUNTDOWN TO YOUR TRIP

The final countdown is here! It's time to wrap up any loose ends and get ready for your trip. Go down this checklist and complete these action items before you leave:

- Mobile check in to your hotel.
- Ensure that your MagicBands are linked to everyone in your travel party (if using.)
- Confirm how you'll get from the airport to your hotel (if applicable.)
- Register with disability services (DAS) if necessary.
- Decide if you're renting a stroller from a 3rd party company and make arrangements for drop off and pick up.
- Arrange grocery delivery to your hotel if desired.

Insider info...

[Complete Guide to Renting a Stroller in Disney World](#)



[Disney Disability Access Service: How the Program Works and Who Qualifies](#)





WALT DISNEY WORLD

Transportation

GETTING TO WDW

Your Disney World vacation is finally here!

How you get to Disney World will largely depend on how far away you live. If you're traveling by car, getting to Disney World is as simple as putting the address of your resort hotel into your preferred maps app on your smartphone and clicking go. However, getting to Disney World is a bit more complicated if you're [flying into the Orlando International Airport \(MCO\)](#).

Disney's free transportation system between the airport and resorts (Disney's Magical Express) is no longer available. So, you'll need to find a way to get to your hotel...and it likely won't be free. Luckily, whether you're looking for the cheapest way, the fastest way, or the most convenient way to get from the airport to your hotel, there are a lot of options available.

MEARS CONNECT DRIVEN BY SUNSHINE

MEARS Connect Driven By Sunshine is a shuttle service that takes guests between the Orlando airport and Disney World hotels (including some other area hotels) for a fee. This is similar to the experience previously offered on Disney's Magical Express, but a fee is charged.

Cost: Standard Service – \$17.60 per adult and \$14.30 per child one way; Express Service – \$250 round trip (for up to 4 people), \$55 extra per person for groups of 5+

RIDESHARE OR TAXI

Rideshare apps (like Uber and Lyft) and taxis service all of the terminals at MCO. Just remember to select a car that is big enough to fit your traveling party, along with ALL your luggage.

Cost: \$60-\$120 for your ride each way

CAR RENTALS

Getting a rental car at the Orlando airport and driving yourself to your hotel provides you with the most flexibility. Just choose your favorite car rental company, reserve your car online, and follow the signage at the airport for pick-up of your car.

Cost: \$25-\$65+ per day

PRIVATE CAR SERVICE

Several private car services currently operate out of MCO to take you to and from Disney World. This includes Happy Limo, Quicksilver Tours, Tiffany Towncar, and FL Tours. They will usually greet you at the baggage claim area, assist with your luggage, and provide car seats and booster seats if needed.

Cost: \$100-\$300 round trip

MINNIE VAN SERVICE (ONLY AVAILABLE AT SELECT RESORTS)

Minnie Vans are Disney's version of a rideshare service. They provide rides for up to 6 people (including complimentary car seats) with a Cast Member as your driver. While the vans currently only service Disney World property and are not available for transportation between MCO and Disney World hotels for most guests, those staying at select Disney Deluxe Resort hotels can catch a ride to the airport. Check with your Disney hotel to see if you qualify.

Cost: \$199 one-way; \$398 round-trip (gratuity not included)

GETTING AROUND WDW



Now that you've made it to Walt Disney World, the next thing to do is decide how you'll get around the property during your stay.

Throughout Walt Disney World, there are four convenient ways to get around including the monorail, bus, water taxi, and Disney Skyliner. And, the great thing about all of them is that they're FREE to all guests – even if you aren't staying at a Disney hotel!

To use the Disney transportation system, all you need to do is wait at the designated transportation area for your desired mode of transportation. There are signs near all of the exits and entrances to guide you, or you can ask a Cast Member for help. Once you board, you can sit back, relax, and leave the driving to someone else.

Now, it's important to know that not all Disney transportation is created equally. There are some key differences between the four different transportation types and where you're coming from/where you're going will determine which type you take. Let's dive into each one.

BUSES

Disney buses are the most common way to get around Disney World. Bus transportation is available at all of the Disney hotels to take guests to Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Disney's Animal Kingdom, the two water parks, and Disney Springs (unless another mode of transportation is available).

The buses run frequently, with service starting one hour before park opening and ending one hour after park closing.

MONORAIL

The monorail is the most iconic way to get around Disney World. It currently operates on three different routes:

- **The Magic Kingdom Resort Loop:** stops at Disney's Contemporary Resort, the Transportation and Ticket Center, Disney's Polynesian Village Resort, Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, and Magic Kingdom.
- **EPCOT Loop:** stops at the Transportation and Ticket Center and EPCOT.
- **Express Loop:** runs between the Transportation and Ticket Center and Magic Kingdom with no stops in between.



Insider info...
[Guide to Disney World Transportation - Getting Around WDW](#)

WATER TAXI

Water Taxis offer a relaxing and convenient way to get between select resorts, theme parks, and Disney Springs. They typically operate from early morning until late at night. However, the exact schedule may vary depending on the season, weather, and the day of the week. Here is the current list of water taxi routes in Walt Disney World:

Water taxis to Magic Kingdom are available from:

- Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground
- Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa
- Disney's Polynesian Villas & Bungalows
- Disney's Wilderness Lodge

Water taxis are available to travel between:

- Disney's Contemporary Resort
- Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground
- Disney's Wilderness Lodge

Water taxis (also known as FriendShip Boats) to EPCOT are available from:

- Disney's BoardWalk Inn
- Disney's Beach Club Resort
- Disney's Yacht Club Resort
- Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel
- Walt Disney World Swan Hotel

Water taxis (also known as FriendShip Boats) to Disney's Hollywood Studios are available from:

- Disney's BoardWalk Inn
- Disney's Beach Club Resort
- Disney's Yacht Club Resort
- Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel
- Walt Disney World Swan Hotel

Water taxis to Disney Springs are available from:

- Disney's Old Key West Resort
 - Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa
 - Disney's Port Orleans Resort – Riverside
 - Disney's Port Orleans – French Quarter
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DISNEY SKYLINER

[The Disney Skyliner](#) is an aerial gondola system and Disney's newest way to get around. It connects four Disney resort hotels (Disney's Art of Animation Resort, Disney's Pop Century Resort, Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort, and Disney's Riviera Resort) to Disney's Hollywood Studios and EPCOT.



OTHER WAYS TO GET AROUND DISNEY WORLD



WALKING PATHS

Depending on where you're heading, you could skip Disney transportation entirely by using one of the many walking paths that connects select resorts to certain theme parks and Disney Springs. Just follow signage or ask a Cast Member for directions.

Currently, walking paths are available from:

- Magic Kingdom to Disney's Contemporary Resort (5 mins), Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa (10-15 mins), Disney's Polynesian Village Resort (15-20 mins), and the Transportation and Ticket Center (20-30 mins)
- EPCOT to Disney's BoardWalk Inn (5 mins), Disney's Yacht & Beach Club (5-10 mins), Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Hotel (15 mins), and Walt Disney World Swan Reserve (15 mins)
- Disney's Hollywood Studios to Disney's BoardWalk Inn (25 mins), Disney's Yacht & Beach Club (25-30 mins), Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Hotel (20 mins), and Walt Disney World Swan Reserve (20 mins)
- Disney Springs to Disney's Old Key West Resort (20 mins) and Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa (15 mins)

MINNIE VANS

[Minnie Vans](#) are Disney's exclusive rideshare system operated through Lyft. Each Minnie Van is driven by a Disney Cast Member and can take you anywhere on Disney property for an additional cost. You can access it through the Lyft app on your smartphone.

While these function similarly to a traditional rideshare service, you may want to opt for Minnie Vans over Lyft or Uber if you're in a rush. They are guaranteed to be nearby and often have access to better pick up and drop off locations at the parks and resorts. However, just keep in mind that pricing for Minnie Vans may be more than other rideshare services in the area.

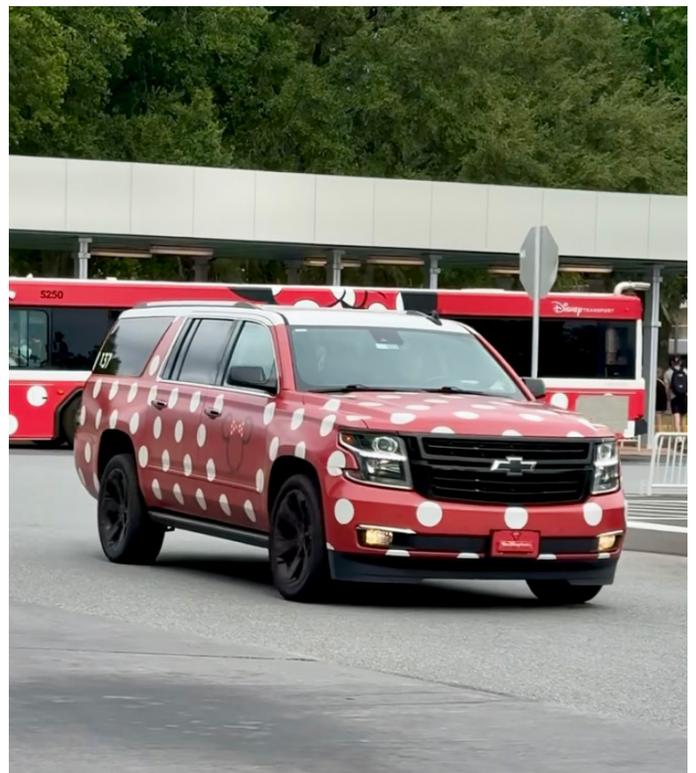
RIDESHARE

If you prefer to have more control over your transportation, you can use ride-sharing services like Uber or Lyft. Each theme park has a designated pick-up and drop-off location for these rideshare services near the park entrance.

You may not want to rely on rideshares for transportation throughout the entirety of your trip, however. These services are an additional cost and pricing can be high during busier times. It can also be more challenging if you need car seats.

CAR RENTALS

If you're planning to visit other attractions in the Orlando area or need more flexibility, you may prefer to rent a car to travel around Disney World. Major car rental companies have locations at the Orlando International Airport, which is just a short distance from Disney World. As mentioned previously, all Disney Resort guests get free parking at the theme parks and your hotel.





EXPERT DISNEY WORLD

Tips & Tricks

During your visit to Walt Disney World, these are some additional tips and tricks to keep in mind to ensure you have the best day(s) ever!

WHAT TO DO IF IT RAINS

It's not uncommon to experience some rain during your Disney trip, especially if you're visiting over the summer. But, don't fret! Rain showers and thunderstorms don't usually last very long in Central Florida. Here's what you can do to ensure that a little bit of inclement weather doesn't ruin your park day:

- Don't leave the park! Most people tend to leave when the rain starts which can mean that you'll face fewer crowds once the storm clears.
- Head to an indoor ride or show to pass the time.
- Stop for a snack break at any of the quick service restaurants in the park.
- Look out for special entertainment. Magic Kingdom usually hosts the Rainy Day Parade if it's still raining when parade time rolls around.
- Check for activities at your hotel. Cast Members are often out with crafts, games, and more in the resort lobby.

And, don't forget to pack some rain gear just in case! An umbrella, poncho, and change of socks can go a long way in saving your park days.



Insider info...
[What To Do If It Rains at Disney World](#)



Insider info...
[Expert First Time Disney World Tips You Need to Know](#)

DON'T OVERSCHEDULE YOURSELF

While it's important to have an idea of what you want to do during your vacation, it's important to leave room for spontaneity. Whether it's stumbling upon a character you didn't know you could meet, a ride that you didn't know you'd want to go on, or just the need for a break back at the hotel, don't over-schedule your days.





Insider info...

[43 Disney World Tips Most Guests Learn Too Late](#)

[The Disney World Loopholes 90% of Guests Don't Know](#)



CAR LOCATOR

The My Disney Experience App has a useful Car Locator feature that can help you keep track of where you parked your car at the Disney Parks. Just go to the Sandwich Menu at the bottom of the app, scroll down, and select “Car Locator” from the options. Then follow the prompts to add your parking lot and row number information.

BE PREPARED TO WALK

Remember Walt Disney World is massive and that means that there’s a lot of walking. You can expect to log at least 10,000 steps a day, most likely more, making your way through the parks and resorts. So, be sure to wear comfortable shoes and socks!

BE FLEXIBLE

With all the planning that goes into preparing for a Disney World vacation, it can be easy to feel like the *stars must be aligned* to have the perfect trip. But, there are so many things you can’t plan for with a Disney vacation that it’s important to remain flexible and not be tied down to a minute-by-minute schedule.



BEST PLACE TO WATCH FIREWORKS

If you’re watching the fireworks at Magic Kingdom, the best place to view them is from the middle of Main Street U.S.A. since the show involves special projection effects all the way down the street that you’ll miss if you stand too close to the castle.

For EPCOT’s show, try watching from the bridge between the UK and France pavilions for the best view.

You may also want to purchase a Fireworks Dining Package for any of Disney’s nighttime entertainment which includes a guaranteed viewing area.

And, if you want to avoid the parks altogether, you can view Magic Kingdom fireworks from locations at Disney’s Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, from the beaches at Disney’s Polynesian Village Resort, and California Grill at Disney’s Contemporary Resort (with a dining reservation). EPCOT fireworks can be viewed from the bridge between Disney’s BoardWalk and Disney’s Beach Club.



WHATS COMING TO DISNEY WORLD IN *2026 & Beyond* ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

After your first trip to Walt Disney World, you'll probably be ready to plan your next visit. And, the best news is that [Disney World has already announced so many exciting plans for the future](#), with new attractions, shows, and experiences set to debut in the coming years. Here are some of the major changes set to take place within the next 5 years.

FROZEN EVER AFTER REFURBISHMENT *FEBRUARY 2026*

Coming in February 2026, all of the Audio-Animatronic characters on this popular EPCOT attraction will be updated to have a more “true-to-film look” that mirrors the technology used at World of Frozen in Hong Kong Disneyland.



DISNEY'S GRAND FLORIDIAN RESORT & SPA REFURBISHMENT *EARLY 2026*

Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa has been under construction for many years now, and the refurbishment will officially be complete in early 2026 when the Garden View Lounge reopens in the resort lobby. It will feature a refreshed look that complements the new lobby design and brings back one of their most popular offerings – afternoon tea!



BUZZ LIGHTYEAR'S SPACE RANGER SPIN REFURBISHMENT *SPRING 2026*

The beloved Toy Story attraction at Magic Kingdom will reopen with some major updates in Spring 2026, including a new ride vehicle design with digital video monitors for score keeping, and new handheld blasters. The updates also include new interactive targets in the ride scenes and a brand new scene.

BIG THUNDER MOUNTAIN RAILROAD REFURBISHMENT *SPRING 2026*

Big Thunder Mountain Railroad's long-term refurbishment is set to end in Magic Kingdom this spring. Updates to the fan-favorite attraction include enhanced story elements throughout the queue, new on-ride effects (including rainbow mines and a rattling track), and more.

NEW MISSION COMING TO MILLENNIUM FALCON: SMUGGLERS RUN **MAY 2026**

Beginning May 22nd, 2026, Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run at Disney's Hollywood Studios will receive a new storyline and mission featuring Grogu (a.k.a. Baby Yoda) and the Mandalorian.

SOARIN' ACROSS AMERICA MEMORIAL DAY **2026**

For a limited time, EPCOT's Soarin' will fly over a brand new set of monuments as Disney presents Soarin' Across America! To honor America's 250th birthday, the scenes of Soarin' Around the World will be replaced with more than a dozen scenes from some of America's natural beauty and iconic cityscapes.



ROCK 'N' ROLLER COASTER STARRING THE MUPPETS **SUMMER 2026**

The Muppets are taking over Rock 'n' Roller Coaster at Disney's Hollywood Studios, bidding goodbye to the current Aerosmith theming. This will be Disney's first-ever ride to feature characters from The Muppets, and you can expect brand-new music and updates to the merchandise location at the exit of the attraction.

"THE MAGIC OF DISNEY ANIMATION" AND "THE WALT DISNEY STUDIOS" COURTYARD **SUMMER 2026**

Inspired by the Emmy Award-winning short film Once Upon a Studio, Disney is transforming Star Wars: Launch Bay inside Disney's Hollywood Studios into the iconic Disney Animation headquarters. The building will house fun, interactive animation elements, an animation drawing experience, an Alice in Wonderland-inspired indoor playground, and SIX highly-themed character meet-and-greet locations.

And, just outside, Animation Courtyard will be reimagined as "The Walt Disney Studios," transforming into a space inspired by the iconic buildings of the Walt Disney Studios Lot in Burbank, CA. The soundstage will feature the new Disney Jr. Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Live! show, and the open space will be a place to spot some of your favorite Disney characters out greeting guests.

NEW BLUEY EXPERIENCE **SUMMER 2026**

Starting summer 2026, you'll be able to play and dance with Bluey and Bingo at Conservation Station inside Disney's Animal Kingdom. Between dance modes, you'll be able to play some of your favorite games from the Bluey TV show (like keepy-uppy!) and even learn about the animals native to Bluey's home in Australia.



CINDERELLA CASTLE MAKEOVER 2026

Cinderella Castle at Magic Kingdom got a major paint update to honor the Walt Disney World 50th Anniversary a few years ago, but Disney is now in the process of restoring the castle to its original blue and white colors by late 2026.

Note that there may be cranes visible around the castle as work progresses. However, Disney has shared that they will be lowered and out of sight by noon each day. So save those precious Cinderella Castle pictures for the afternoon!

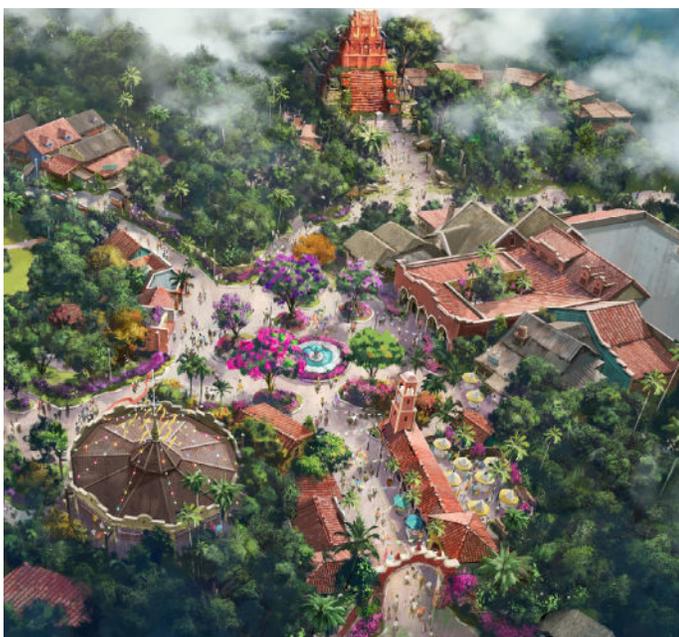
LEVEL99 AT DISNEY SPRINGS 2026

The popular “social gaming” venue, Level99 will open in Disney Springs in 2026. The two-story building combines all your favorite things from popular group games like escape rooms, obstacle courses, and high-tech arcades into one giant play space for adults and older kids.

REIMAGINATION OF DINOLAND U.S.A. AT DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM *OPENING IN 2027*

A major transformation is coming to DinoLand U.S.A. at Disney's Animal Kingdom, set to open in 2027. While specific details are still being formulated, you can expect new attractions themed after Disney's Encanto and Indiana Jones, dining options, and themed areas.

Note that DinoLand U.S.A. permanently closed on February 2nd, 2026.



PIXAR CARS ATTRACTIONS *TBD*

New attractions based on Pixar's Cars franchise are in development to replace Tom Sawyer Island and Rivers of America at Magic Kingdom. Disney has shared that one attraction will be a thrill ride that takes you on a “rally race through the mountains.” Whereas, the second will be geared towards families with little ones. Construction began in early 2025, though an opening date is not confirmed.



MONSTERS INC. LAND *TBD*

A land dedicated to Monsters Inc. is in the planning stages for Disney's Hollywood Studios, bringing the world of Monstropolis to life. The land will feature a new roller coaster and be Disney's first-ever suspended coaster. According to Disney, it will whisk you away on an adventure inspired by the doors room from the iconic scene in the movie. Construction began in 2025, and more details are expected to be announced in the future.

DISNEY VILLAINS LAND *TBD*

A dedicated land featuring Disney's most notorious villains is in the works as part of a massive expansion to Magic Kingdom beyond Frontierland. Though its opening date remains unconfirmed, you can expect TWO new attractions, dining experiences, and a focus on the Disney villains.

UPDATES TO CAROUSEL OF PROGRESS *TBD*

Soon, Magic Kingdom's most historic attraction will have a brand new opening scene featuring Walt Disney himself (well, an audio-animatronic version of him). Other updates to the attraction are expected to be announced.



MORE DISNEY VACATION Planning Resources ✨ ✨ ✨

Remember, planning a Disney World vacation is supposed to be fun! We know that there's a lot to keep track of, so let Eat Sleep Disney be your one-stop shop for all things Disney. Whether it's finding the best hotel to keep your toddler entertained, the best rides to wow your teens, or simply deciding on when and where you want to go, we've got the answers. Get ready to dig into all things Disney and explore all of our vacation resources below – happy planning!

DISNEY HOTELS:

- [Pros and Cons of Staying at a Disney Resort](#)
- [Complete Guide to the Best Disney World Hotels](#)
- [Complete Guide to Walt Disney World Resort Hotels](#)
- [We Compare the Best Disney Resorts for Families – See How They Rank!](#)
- [Our Complete List of the Best Disney Resorts for Couples With No Kids](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Deluxe Resorts at Disney World](#)
- [A Family Guide to the Disney Value Resorts](#)
- [Here's How to Pick the Best Disney World Moderate Resort](#)
- [6 Cheapest Disney World Hotels](#)
- [Our Picks for the Best Walt Disney World Resort Pools](#)
- [Best Hotels Near Disney Hollywood Studios](#)
- [The Best Hotels Near Magic Kingdom – Here's Where to Stay](#)
- [Best Hotels Near EPCOT](#)
- [Best Hotels Near Animal Kingdom - Here's Where to Stay](#)
- [Planning a Disney World Split Stay? Read This First](#)
- [What Most People Don't Know About Disney World Resort Hopping](#)
- [Complete Guide to Disney's Contemporary Resort](#)
- [Wilderness Lodge vs. Animal Kingdom Lodge: Which Disney World Resort Is Better?](#)
- [I Stayed at Every Disney World Value Resort—Here Are the Real Pros and Cons](#)
- [Our Expert Guide to Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa](#)
- [Are Disney Deluxe Resorts Worth It?](#)
- [All Your Burning Disney Vacation Club Questions Answered](#)
- [Your Complete Guide to Disney's Port Orleans Resort](#)
- [Our Expert Guide to Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge Resort](#)
- [Caribbean Beach Resort vs Coronado Springs: Which Disney World Hotel Is Better?](#)
- [I Stayed At The 5 Worst Disney World Hotels – Here Are My Honest Thoughts](#)
- [Port Orleans Riverside vs. French Quarter: Which Disney Resort is Better?](#)

DISNEY HOTELS CONTINUED

- [Our Complete Guide to Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground](#)
 - [Our Expert Guide to Disney's Wilderness Lodge Resort](#)
 - [Our Expert Guide to Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort](#)
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DISNEY DINING:

- [Complete Guide to Making Disney World Dining Reservations](#)
- [Here's How To Get The Hardest Dining Reservations at Disney World](#)
- [We Answer Everything You Need to Know About Disney Dining Plans](#)
- [Is the New Disney Dining Plan Right For You?](#)
- [Is a Disney Quick Service Dining Plan Right for You?](#)
- [Complete Guide to the Best Disney World Restaurants](#)
- [Best EPCOT Snacks That Are Available Year-Round](#)
- [We Answer All Your Questions About Bringing Food Into Disney World](#)
- [Our Top Picks for the Best Disney World Snacks You Have to Try on Your Next Trip!](#)
- [The Best and Worst Disney Dining Plan Snacks](#)
- [The Best & Worst Hollywood Studios Restaurants](#)
- [The Best & Worst EPCOT Restaurants](#)
- [The Best & Worst Magic Kingdom Restaurants](#)
- [The Best & Worst Animal Kingdom Restaurants](#)
- [Everything You Need to Know About Getting Starbucks at Disney World](#)
- [Here's Where to Get Alcohol in Disney World](#)
- [The Best Disney World Character Dining Your Whole Family Will Love](#)
- [Grocery Delivery at Disney World](#)
- [25 Best Disney World Restaurants You Can Walk Up To Without a Reservation](#)
- [Why Experts Recommend These 8 Most Romantic Disney World Restaurants](#)
- [The 15 Best Bars at Disney World You'll Wish You Found Sooner](#)
- [7 Must-Do Disney World Bar Crawls](#)
- [Where To Find Water Refill Stations at Disney World](#)
- [The Worst Disney World Restaurants, According To A Disney Expert](#)
- [The 5 Worst Character Meals at Disney World](#)
- [10 Best Quick Service Restaurants at Disney World \(& Which Ones To Avoid\)](#)
- [10 Best Snacks at Magic Kingdom](#)
- [Disney Mobile Ordering: A Quick Guide To Saving Time In Line](#)
- [12 Best Snacks at Animal Kingdom](#)
- [Your Picky Eater Will Actually Eat at These Disney World Restaurants](#)
- [Your Complete Guide to Disney World Dining in 2026](#)

BUDGETING:

- [How to Do Disney World on a Budget](#)
 - [20 Disney World Date Night Ideas For Every Budget](#)
 - [10 Disney World Money Traps That Are Total Rip-Offs](#)
 - [25 Free Things To Do In Disney World](#)
 - [Don't Waste Your Money On These Overrated Disney Experiences](#)
 - [8 Things Disney Experts Refuse To Spend Money On](#)
 - [I Hate Wasting Money at Disney World But These 10 Splurges Are Actually Worth It](#)
 - [Revealed: How Much Does It Really Cost to Go to Disney World?](#)
 - [How Much Do Disney World Park Tickets Cost?](#)
 - [How Much Does Food Cost at Disney World – The Answer Might Surprise You](#)
 - [We Share Our Expert Tips and Tricks to Save Money on Your Disney World Vacation](#)
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PACKING:

- [The Only Disney World Packing List You'll Ever Need \(Seriously, We Thought Of Everything\)](#)
 - [Here's What Disney Experts Actually Bring to the Parks](#)
 - [14 Disney Essentials Everyone Forgets To Pack](#)
 - [10 Unexpected Items Banned From Disney World](#)
 - [What to Wear to Disney World](#)
 - [Here's What to Pack for a Disney World Vacation](#)
 - [Top 50 Disney Gifts You Can Buy on Amazon](#)
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DISNEY PARKS:

- [I've Been Going to Disney World For Over 30 Years and These Are The Rides I Always Skip](#)
- [The Best Disney World Rides for Kids](#)
- [Disney World Roller Coasters Ranked From Worst to Best](#)
- [Disney Disability Access Service: How the Program Works and Who Qualifies](#)
- [All Your Questions About Disney World After Hours Events Answered](#)
- [Everything You Need to Know About Disney World Single Rider Lines](#)
- [8 Worst Disney World Rides \(& What To Ride Instead\)](#)
- [Complete Guide to Rider Switch at Disney World](#)
- [Everything You Need To Know About Early Entry At Disney World](#)
- [Where To Find The Shortest Wait Times For Rides At Disney World](#)
- [Is a Park Hopper Ticket Worth It at Disney World?](#)
- [Character Meet and Greets at Disney World: Everything You Need To Know](#)
- [Complete Guide to Using Disney PhotoPass](#)

DISNEY PARKS CONTINUED

- [All of the Disney World Park Hours You Need to Know For Your Next Trip](#)
 - [Everything You Need to Know About Park Hopping at Disney World](#)
 - [What Are the Best Disney World Rides?](#)
 - [Complete List of Disney World Height Requirements by Park](#)
 - [Insider Tips and Tricks for Using the My Disney Experience App](#)
 - [Complete Guide To Disney's New Lightning Lane Multi Pass and Single Pass](#)
 - [The Best Disney Parks for Teens – Surviving WDW with Your Teenager in Tow](#)
 - [The Best Disney World Parks for Adults](#)
 - [The Best Disney World Park for Kids By Age Group](#)
 - [Disney Magic Bands: All Your Burning Questions Answered](#)
 - [Our Foolproof Guide To The Disney Virtual Queue System](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Renting a Stroller in Disney World](#)
 - [What Is Disney World Rope Drop and Why Does It Matter?](#)
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MAGIC KINGDOM:

- [Everything You Need To Know About Tiana's Bayou Adventure](#)
 - [The Ultimate Magic Kingdom One Day Itinerary to Beat the Crowds](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Magic Kingdom Rides & Attractions](#)
 - [These 10 Magic Kingdom Mistakes Will Destroy Your Disney World Trip](#)
 - [Magic Kingdom Must Dos You Can't Afford To Skip](#)
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EPCOT:

- [Don't Skip These EPCOT Must Dos!](#)
- [8 EPCOT Mistakes You Should Avoid At All Costs](#)
- [See and Do Everything With Our EPCOT One Day Itinerary](#)
- [Complete Guide to EPCOT Rides & Attractions](#)
- [Guide to All the Countries at EPCOT](#)
- [Everything To Know Before You Drink Around The World at EPCOT](#)
- [A Complete List of All EPCOT Festivals](#)
- [A Complete Guide to EPCOT Festival of the Arts – Menus, Activities, and Tips](#)
- [Complete Guide to the EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival](#)
- [Complete Guide to the EPCOT Food and Wine Festival](#)
- [Complete Guide to the EPCOT Festival of the Holidays](#)

DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS:

- [8 Hollywood Studios Mistakes You Don't Want to Make in Disney World](#)
 - [Hollywood Studios Must Dos You Can't Afford To Miss in Disney World](#)
 - [Our Expert Guide to Visiting Star Wars Galaxy's Edge in Disney World](#)
 - [Our Insider's Hollywood Studios One Day Itinerary](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Hollywood Studios Rides & Attractions](#)
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DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM:

- [12 Animal Kingdom Must Dos You Should Never Skip in Disney World](#)
 - [8 BIG Animal Kingdom Mistakes Everyone Makes in Disney World](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Pandora – The World of Avatar at Disney World](#)
 - [The Ultimate Animal Kingdom One Day Itinerary to See EVERYTHING](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Animal Kingdom Rides & Attractions](#)
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HOLIDAYS:

- [Everything About The Disney Springs Christmas Tree Stroll](#)
 - [Disney World Thanksgiving: Best Resorts, Restaurants & Park Strategy](#)
 - [Here's How to Plan the Perfect Disney World Christmas Vacation](#)
 - [Ultimate Guide to Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party](#)
 - [Ultimate Guide To Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party](#)
 - [Ultimate Guide to Disney World Halloween](#)
 - [Your Guide to an Epic New Year's Eve at Disney World](#)
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DISNEY WORLD WATER PARKS:

- [Complete Guide to Disney's Blizzard Beach Water Park](#)
 - [Everything You Need to Know About Disney Water Parks](#)
 - [Typhoon Lagoon vs. Blizzard Beach: Which Disney World Water Park is Better?](#)
 - [Complete Guide to Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park](#)
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DISNEY SPRINGS:

- [15 FREE Things to Do at Disney Springs \(No Park Ticket Required!\)](#)
- [Complete Guide to Disney Springs at Walt Disney World](#)
- [Best Disney Springs Restaurants](#)

TIPS AND TRICKS:

- [I Went to Disney World Without My Kids – Here’s What I’d Do Different Next Time](#)
 - [Is Disney World Still Worth It For Adults? The Pros & Cons From A Disney Expert](#)
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 - [These Are The 9 Worst Times To Go To Disney World](#)
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 - [Expert Tips for Surviving Disney World for Spring Break](#)
 - [43 Disney World Tips Most Guests Learn Too Late](#)
 - [What To Do If It Rains at Disney World](#)
 - [Walt Disney World Weather: What to Expect and How to Prepare](#)
 - [How to Survive Disney World in the Summer](#)
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WHAT’S NEW IN DISNEY WORLD:

- [FULL LIST of Changes Coming to Disney World in the Next 5 Years](#)
 - [Complete List of All the New Rides & Attractions in Disney World](#)
 - [New Restaurants in Disney World: What Just Opened & What’s Next](#)
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DISNEY TRANSPORTATION:

- [Disney Minnie Van vs Uber: Which Disney World Rideshare Service Is Better?](#)
- [Guide to Disney World Transportation – Getting Around WDW](#)
- [Complete Guide To Riding The Disney Skyliner](#)
- [Everything You Need to Know About Parking at Disney World](#)
- [Best Ways to Get From Orlando Airport to Disney World](#)

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- [Disney World Planning Timeline: When to Book Everything \(A Step-By-Step Guide\)](#)
- [The Ultimate Disney World Girls Trip Itinerary From a Disney Expert](#)
- [You Planned a Trip During Hurricane Season at Disney World. Now What?](#)
- [Best Beaches Near Disney World](#)
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