

# STEP-BY-STEP DISNEYLAND PLANNING GUIDE



BY GAVIN DOYLE, AUTHOR OF DISNEYLAND SECRETS AND FOUNDER OF MICKEYVISIT.COM

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gavin Doyle has been a Disneyland enthusiast since his first visit at age four. His first memory is of a rainy day where the park was joyously empty. The bliss of walking onto any ride with no line fed his initial love for Disneyland. He continues to hope for the same luck on New Year's Eve, as he returns annually on the most crowded day of the year to celebrate his birthday.

Gavin is the editor of [DisneyDose.com](https://www.disneydose.com) and [MickeyVisit.com](https://www.mickeyvisit.com), two websites that focus on educating Disney fans and those planning their Disneyland vacations through exclusive interviews, breaking news updates, and planning guides about Disneyland. Gavin has received numerous features in outlets including *Forbes*, the *Huffington Post*, *Travel + Leisure*, the *Los Angeles Times*, ABC News, and many others.

Gavin also wrote *Disneyland Secrets: A Grand Tour of Disneyland's Hidden Details*. The book launched to wide acclaim among fans and rose to be a best selling travel book on Amazon. The book shares incredible facts and fascinating stories gathered directly from those involved with the creation of Disneyland. The book is a must have for any Disneyland attendee to pass the time in line.

For the last few months, Gavin has been busy working on this new *Step-By-Step Disneyland Planning Guide* to help others save money and improve their own Disneyland vacations.

Somehow he will continue to balance all of his Disney projects, as he heads off to college, at the University of Southern California, which is conveniently located less than an hour from Disneyland.



# INTRODUCTION TO STEP-BY-STEP DISNEYLAND PLANNING GUIDE

Thank you for downloading this book, I hope that you will find it to be a great guide to Disneyland that allows for a fun filled budget-conscious magical vacation.

Six years ago, I was returning home from a fantastic Disneyland vacation. I felt fulfilled and was brimming with information that I wanted to share. I realized that the internet lacked a true guide to the Disneyland resort.

Sure there were pieces of information here and there, but nothing was completely assembled to make planning a successful vacation as easy as possible.

The goal of this guide is to summarize and present the key information points about planning your Disneyland vacation. You will be able to navigate the parks with ease while finding the best discounts.

Throughout the book I will guide you through the entire planning process for Disneyland. Also, you can use our planning worksheet to keep track of your travel info.

**I present to you today, *Step-By-Step Disneyland Planning Guide*.**

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Gavin Doyle, Founder of [MickeyVisit.com](https://www.MickeyVisit.com) and [DisneyDose.com](https://www.DisneyDose.com)**

# DISNEYLAND RESORT OVERVIEW

The Disneyland Resort is a large, ever-evolving vacation destination. In the first chunk of this book, I will attempt to give you a good overview of each of the pieces that make up the parks.

There is no better way to get a sense of the parks than by actually seeing them. Watching the FREE Disneyland Vacation Planning videos are the perfect way to get oriented around the resort. You can request this video which provides a perfect overview of Disneyland [here](#).

You can watch the video online for free. It's all part of their ongoing efforts to improve the guest experience. Keep reading to read more about our tips for first time visitors to the Disneyland Resort.

**Continue Reading: If You Want More of An Overview Now**  
**Flip to Page 14: If You Want to Dive Into Trip Planning**



# LEGEND

- 1 Grand Californian Hotel
- 2 Disneyland Hotel
- 3 Paradise Pier Hotel
- 4 Mickey & Friends Parking Lot
- 5 Parking Tram Pickup
- 6 Parking Tram Dropoff
- 7 Disney Resort hotel guests private entrance to DCA
- 8 Anaheim Convention Center
- 9 Best Western Plus Park Place Inn and Mini Suites
- 10 Fairfield Inn Anaheim by Marriott at the Disneyland Resort
- 11 Hilton Anaheim
- 12 Howard Johnson Anaheim
- 13 Security
- 14 Park Entrance



## STEP-BY-STEP DISNEYLAND PLANNING GUIDE

### AREA MAP

The idea for Disneyland was born when Walt Disney wanted an amusement enterprise where adults and children could have a place to play and have fun together. This idea slowly grew from the original 107 acre park in 1955 to the over 300 acre resort destination we see now (you can see the full resort area on our custom map on the previous page).

Today the resort consists of two theme parks: Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure Park, three Disneyland Resort Hotels, and the Downtown Disney shopping district.

**In Disneyland Park today you will find a collection of nine themed lands all connected around the main hub. Upon entering Disneyland, you will be greeted by the charming Main Street USA area themed to small town America in the turn of the century. From this entrance area you can visit other areas: Adventureland, New Orleans Square, Critter Country, Frontierland, Fantasyland, Tomorrowland, Mickey's Toontown, and Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge.**

**Inside Disney California Adventure you will find a park paying tribute to California with Disney characters mixed in. Within the park there are countless attractions throughout the many themed areas that include Buena Vista Street, Grizzly Peak, Hollywoodland, Pixar Pier, and Cars Land.**

Walt Disney always believed in making things just a little bit better and said, "Disneyland will never be completed." The company followed Walt's theory when they expanded Disney California Adventure. They invested \$1.1 billion to add a new land themed to the movie *Cars* along with a brand new entrance that celebrates Hollywood during the time Walt Disney first started making movies.

Now, guests can look forward to experiencing another billion dollar expansion with the addition of Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, the largest themed area that has ever been built in any theme park. With all these additions, there are more reasons than ever to visit the Disneyland Resort. [Read our guide to Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge here!](#)

## **Disneyland Overview of Attractions and Experiences**

Here we break down the Disneyland resort via land so you know where to look for the new additions to the resort and where to find the classic rides that were there opening day!



### Main Street USA (leads you to the hub)

- Main Street USA is where you will find classic dining and shop options. Characters will sometimes do meet and greets here. The end of Main Street USA will lead you to the iconic Sleeping Beauty Castle

### Adventureland (Jungle Cruise, Enchanted Tiki Room)

- Adventureland is where you can find those famous Dole Whips you've seen all over Instagram. Make sure to grab one before you experience the Enchanted Tiki Room which was one of Walt's favorite attractions!

### New Orleans Square (Pirates of the Caribbean, Haunted Mansion)

- This charming area of the park has two of Disneyland's most iconic rides- Pirates of the Caribbean and Haunted Mansion. You can also find the popular Blue Bayou restaurant here which features New Orleans cuisine inside the actual Pirates of the Caribbean ride.

### Critter Country (Splash Mountain, Winnie the Pooh)

- Critter Country holds one of Disneyland's mountains- Splash Mountain! Make sure you don't miss it.

### Fantasyland (Peter Pan's Flight, "it's a small world")

- Fantasyland is where you will find plenty of options for toddlers in this area dedicated to the classic dark ride Disney attractions. Word of advice- some of these dark rides can be frightening for small children, especially Snow White's Scary Adventures! Don't forget to go meet the princesses in the Royal Hall.

### Toontown (Mickey's and Minnie's houses)

- Even if you don't have small children, don't miss Toontown! This is a great place to meet Mickey and Minnie Mouse.

### Tomorrowland (Space Mountain, Star Tours: The Adventure Continues)

- Thrill seekers and kids alike will love Space Mountain! If you're a Star Wars fan, you can also find Star Wars Launch Bay here and meet Rey, Chewbecca, Darth Vader, and Kylo Ren!

### Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge (Millennium Falcon, immersive shops and dining)

- This new land opened in 2019 as one of the largest expansions Disneyland has ever seen. Make sure you head there first thing in the morning, the lines get long later in the day as this is one popular area. This area is completely immersive- once you walk into the land you will feel like you walked into a Star Wars movie. The shopping and dining is all themed to the land including a build your own lightsaber experience!

## Entertainment at Disneyland

The two nighttime spectacles to enjoy at Disneyland are Fantasmic! and the evening fireworks.

**See our guide to Fantasmic! [here](#) and fireworks [here](#)!**

The fireworks show changes seasonally, so it's always recommended to check the Disneyland calendar prior to your visit so you know which one to expect. You can view the fireworks from the Rivers of America, in front of it's a small world, and of course, Sleeping Beauty's Castle. If you have your heart set on a castle view, I recommend getting a spot at least an hour or two prior to showtime.

Fantasmic! is an evening show that takes place on the Rivers of America and is a must see for guests! Mickey Mouse creates a spectacular show using his brilliant imagination. Mickey transforms into Sorcerer Mickey where he conjures up clips from some favorite Disney movies – Fantasia, Aladdin, The Lion King, Tangled, and Pirates of the Caribbean – all on streaming screens of water. This show is a perfect blend of technologies- featuring fascinating water effects, lasers, pyrotechnics, fireworks, and live action scenes. Be prepared to see Maleficent, fire, and a pirate ship too!

You can get a regular FastPass for Fantasmic (explained further in the guide) or you can reserve a dining package. Dining packages are popular at Disneyland- you basically pay for a higher priced meal that also comes with a reserved spot (separate from where you dine) to watch the show.

In addition to nighttime spectacles, you can also meet characters, view daytime shows like Mickey and the Magical Map, and enjoy parades.

**See our guide to parades at Disneyland [here](#).**

## California Adventure Attractions and Experiences

Buena Vista Street (guides you into the park)

- Buena Vista Street is set to the theme of the Los Angeles in the 20's and 30's. You can find Disney characters dressed in 1920's attire (think Minnie in a flapper dress!) and ride the Red Red Trolley. Carthay Circle can be found at the end of the street, themed after the theater where Walt Disney debuted Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. This is the main fine dining option in California Adventure.

Hollywood Land (Monsters, Inc., Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission Breakout!)

- Hollywood Land has gone over some transformations over the years, lately you will see a larger Marvel presence with the Guardians of the Galaxy ride and many Marvel characters to meet. If Marvel isn't your thing, you can watch Frozen: Live at the Hyperion! in this area- an amazing show for all Disney fans.

Cars Land (Radiator Springs Racers)

- This is hands down, one of the BEST areas of California Adventure. Don't miss it! This area is themed after the Disney's Cars movies and the detail in this area is extremely impressive. Radiator Springs Racers is also the most popular ride in California Adventure- don't forget a Fastpass for this one.

Grizzly Peak (Soarin' Around the World, Grizzly River Run)

- Grizzly Peak is an area dedicated to a more natural theme- think the beauty of California and sights to see around the world on the Soarin' attraction. Red Creek Trail is a great place to take a break on hot days.

Pixar Pier (Toy Story Mania, Incredicoaster)

- Pixar Pier underwent a huge renovation in 2017 and the Pixar theme has really made this a neat area to see. You can find the Lamplight Lounge here- a Pixar themed restaurant and lounge that is popular with all Disney guests.

## Entertainment at California Adventure

The main nighttime spectacular at California Adventure is the World of Color. This popular show is a must see for all guests visiting for the first time!

**See our full guide to World of Color [here](#).**

World of Color takes place in front of Mickey's Pal-A-Round and the Incredicoaster. The show uses nearly 1,200 fountains that are capable of shooting water 200 feet up into the air. These fountains are equipped with LED rings that

help create the colors that make up the show! Guests can watch the water dance along with perfectly timed pyrotechnics and momentous music as they enjoy memorable scenes from their favorite Disney and Pixar animated and live-action films.

You can get a regular FastPass for World of Color (explained further in the guide) or you can reserve a dining package. Dining packages are popular at Disneyland- you basically pay for a higher priced meal that also comes with a reserved spot (separate from where you dine) to watch the show. The most popular dining package for this show is the World of Color Dessert Party- a pricy option but the only reserved seating that provides table and chairs!

In addition to nighttime spectaculars, you can also meet characters, view daytime shows like Frozen: Live at the Hyperion, and enjoy short entertainment pieces throughout the park.

## **Picking Your Park**

Passes can be confusing for the first Disneyland visit. What's the difference between a one-park pass and hopper pass? How many days should you visit? Which is the cheapest?

- A single day, one-park pass is just that- one pass per park per day.
- A single day, hopper pass. This ticket lets you “hop” between Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure Park multiple times per day.
- Multi-day passes are available depending on how many days you plan to visit the Resort.

Most guests will want at least two days at Disneyland and at least one for California Adventure. There are some other main differences between attractions to consider between the two such as:

- California Adventure allows alcohol sales. Disneyland only allows alcohol inside Oga's Cantina in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge.
- Disneyland has more history as the only park that Walt Disney himself set foot in. If you're into history, take the Walk in Walt's Footsteps tour to see Walt's apartment and learn more about the history of the park.
- Disneyland is bigger than California Adventure so it makes sense to set aside more time for this park.
- Disneyland tends to have longer operating hours- opening earlier and staying open later. If you have a park

hopper, you can hop over to Disneyland when California Adventure closes!

## First Time Visiting Disneyland?

When it's your first time visiting Disneyland, planning a vacation of this magnitude can be overwhelming! Here are some tips for first timers so you can maximize your experience.

- Get up early for rope drop- Cast members will let you into the park 15-20 minutes prior to official opening time allowing you to line up at the 'rope' blocking off the park. This lets you get, literally, ahead of the crowd.
- Download the Disney Mobile App prior to your visit- You can check entertainment times, locations, line wait times, character meet-and-greets, and even make dining reservations.
  - **Bring snacks and water bottles- Bottles can be refilled at any restaurant location and there are two bottle stations in Disneyland Park- Mint Julep Bar in New Orleans Square, and Tomorrowland Terrace. You can also request a glass of ice water from any eatery.**
- Disneyland Resort Guest Services- Check-in with Disneyland Parks' City Hall or the Chamber of commerce in Disney California Adventure Park for all your needs. From first aid, to renting wheelchairs, to obtaining a disability pass, or finding the Baby Care Centers- they have you covered. This is also where you can get your "1st Visit to Disneyland!" complimentary button
- Learn how to use FastPass and MaxPass to beat the lines and maximize time! (Read more below)

**Continue Reading: If You Haven't Already Picked Your Disneyland Dates**

**Flip to Page 18: If You Already Know When You Are Visiting Disneyland**

# WHEN TO VISIT DISNEYLAND

Disneyland has over 17 million visitors per year and you will have the most pleasant vacation if you avoid as many of them as possible.

## Avoiding the Crowds

Two things affecting Disneyland crowd levels are the events happening throughout the resort and school holidays. So, let's dive into the question: "when will it be crowded at Disneyland?"

Most weekends will be busy no matter when you visit the resort. Disneyland has over 1 million annual pass holders who frequent the resort after school or work.

Because Disneyland is both a vacation destination and a local hangout, it can be difficult to judge when there will be the most crowds. In the sections below we have taken into consideration the schedule from the nearby convention center and the previous year's crowd trends to create a calendar that will help you to avoid the crowds at Disneyland.

## Disneyland Crowd Trends:

### *Most Crowded*

- The weeks before and after Easter: mid-March through mid-April, or Spring Break Season
- The week before Christmas through the first couple of weeks of January; Christmas Day and New Years Eve bring in some of the largest crowds the park sees all year long.
- July through early August, during the time that schools have summer break
- During June, most annual passholders are not blocked out yet (they are blocked for many peak summer days)
- If July 4th falls close to a weekend, then it will be extremely busy
- Check the [Anaheim Convention Center website](#) for large conferences. Busy in the late afternoon during these time periods.



### *Busy, But Not Overrun*

- End of August through Labor Day
- The month of December, leading up to Christmas week
- Weekends throughout October and beginning of November while the theme parks are decorated for Halloween

### *Not Crowded*

- Labor Day through Thanksgiving, except avoid weekends
- Late January through February
- Late April unless Easter falls at that time
- January through the beginning of May is what many call the “off season.” These weeks have the least amount of crowds, but a lot of the shows will not be running like Fantasmic! and the fireworks.
- Also, some rides will be closed for refurbishment at this time of year. So this time of year is a blessing and a curse.

**Be sure to check the [Disneyland calendar on the official Disneyland website](#) for more info on closures, entertainment schedules, and other info.**

## Disneyland Through the Seasons

Throughout the year there are a few huge special events that make the parks extra magical.

### **Christmas in Disneyland**

At Christmas time you will find Sleeping Beauty Castle lit up with icicles, Main Street laden with decorations, and the rest of the park beautifully decorated to celebrate the season. Regular shows and experiences are altered to match the holiday theme.

The Haunted Mansion and it's a Small World each receive holiday overlays that transform both attractions. The Haunted Mansion becomes the Haunted Mansion Holiday, which is themed to the “Nightmare Before Christmas.”

I highly recommend visiting during Christmas, but expect to be joined by lots of crowds if you are there the week of Christmas through the first week of January. The best time to visit and see the Christmas decorations is the first three weeks of December or the second week of January.

**[See our most current Christmas guide.](#)**

## Halloween at Disneyland

During Halloween time, the parks are decorated with jack-o-lanterns and the feeling of fall and Halloween is in the air.

Disney turns Space Mountain into Space Mountain: Ghost Galaxy. Space ghosts are added throughout this classic indoor roller coaster and also the soundtrack is switched to one a bit spookier. The Haunted Mansion is also transformed to be themed to Nightmare Before Christmas. This Haunted Mansion conversion runs from the end of September until the beginning of January.

### *Oogie Boogie Bash at Disney's California Adventure*

Disneyland hosts a separately ticketed party on select nights throughout October and into early November that features a special Halloween theme. The Halloween party runs from 6pm until 11pm, but your ticket to the party allows you to enter the park that day at 4pm. This year, the party will take place at California Adventure and will be called **Oogie Boogie Bash**. The Oogie Boogie Bash will take place on select dates through Sept. 6th-Oct. 31st at Disney's California Adventure. This party will run in conjunction with the Disneyland Halloween season. The party consists of fun entertainment, attractions, and candy, all while you wear your Halloween costume inside California Adventure at the Disneyland Resort.

During the Halloween party, Disney characters are out in full force with the classic characters like Mickey Mouse and the gang donning their own Halloween costumes and rarely seen villains creeping out. Regular park guests get to join in the fun by wearing their own costumes to the event. This is the only time that adults are allowed to wear costumes of any sort to Disneyland. In almost every land of the park, kids and adults alike can receive candy on the trick or treat trails. To finish off the night, the spookiest fireworks show of the year brings the castle to life. (Be sure to check the [Disneyland website](#) for current information)

### *Tips for enjoying the party:*

- Ride all the attractions that you want from entry time to 6pm.
- Don't forget to ride the Halloween themed rides at California Adventure during the party for shorter lines.
- Bring your own large bag for candy. Disney provides bags, but the bags are too small for the generous amount of candy provided.
- Come dressed up! This is one of the most fun things about the party.
- If you do visit during this time, make sure to book your tickets for the private party, Oogie Boogie Bash, which is an added cost to the park entry ticket and sells out quickly.
- Party tickets are less than regular tickets, so best to go to the party on the day you arrive and use regular

tickets when you have all day. See our full guide to Oogie Boogie's Bash [here!](#)

## Disneyland in Summertime

In Summertime, Disney often opens new experiences and attractions. This is the best time to “get em while they are hot,” but be careful because that is the same mindset of every visitor and new attractions often have long lines.

One major pro of visiting in summer as most rides will be up and running. There is likely to be fewer rides and attractions down for refurbishment in the summer and plenty happening to draw park visitors in. For instance, the fireworks go off every night and there are more showtimes available for fan favorites such as Fantasmic! and World of Color which gives your family plenty of touring flexibility.

Summer is also the time of year that has some of the longest opening hours at Disneyland which average from 8AM-12AM on weekends. You also have longer days in the summer for enjoying the sun.

One of the cons of visiting in summer for some guests can be the hot weather. The weather can be hot this time of year in Southern California so that's an important factor to consider if you have difficulty dealing with heat. The number of visitors to the resort increases in the summer with many schools being on break which helps make this time of year the most popular time to take a vacation.

The rest of the year Disney has shorter weekend events going on that celebrate certain cultures or smaller holidays like the Lunar New Year, high school graduation, or the 4th of July. In the past they have also held 24 hour days where the parks operate around the clock.

# HOW MANY DAYS TO VISIT DISNEYLAND

Disneyland sells two types of passes, a park hopper pass and a one-park pass. With the park hopper pass you are able to access both Disney California Adventure and Disneyland in the same day. You aren't limited and by choosing this option you can start the day in one park and end in the other. With the one-park per day ticket, you have to pick whether to visit Disneyland OR Disney California Adventure on any given day.

Three day and longer tickets also include one Magic Morning early entry admission into Disneyland Park to experience select attractions in Tomorrowland and Fantasyland one hour before the park opens on to the public on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, or Sunday.

With this information in mind, I strongly recommend visiting Disneyland for at least 2 and a half days in order to get the full experience (you need to purchase a three day ticket—there are no half day tickets for the general public).

Here are some more thoughts on the various length of stay tickets:

## One Day Tickets

I don't know anyone who can do everything in the Disneyland Resort in one day. In fact, it just physically isn't possible. There are so many attractions, shows, and types of fantastic food that you have to try, that one day just isn't enough. In fact, did you know that Disneyland Resort actually has more rides than Walt Disney World? The only big difference is that the Walt Disney World rides are spread out across four parks, while the Disneyland attractions are all pushed in close together.

The other great reason to avoid visiting for just one day is that one-day tickets aren't ever discounted to the general public. So, just think. You get more Disneyland magic and you save money by going for more days.

## Two Day Tickets

While I don't recommend visiting Disneyland for only two days, it is possible to get a good feeling of the resort in this amount of time. If you do choose to visit for two days, be sure to get the park hopper ticket. With this ticket you can get FastPass tickets in one park and then switch to the other park to get more FastPass tickets there (more information on this later). The two computer systems that control the FastPass machines aren't linked between the parks. Also, Disney California Adventure closes before Disneyland Park most nights, so to maximize your time, you'll want to switch parks and head to Disneyland to end the night.

## Three Day and More Tickets

As I already summarized above, three day tickets and beyond are the best option for maximizing your savings and time in Disneyland.

As you start to spend more and more time in Disneyland, there will be even more discounts available. The more days that you are thinking about spending, the lower your cost per day will be. Even without the discounts that begin to pop up, the daily rate of the ticket will be much lower in comparison.

What this means is that upgrading from three days with park hopper to four days to four days with a park hopper will start to get less and less expensive. If you are ever on the fence about whether to add a day, I always say to add. The more time that you have, the more you will be able to do and the more leisurely your pace can be. This is supposed to be a vacation, not an army covert landing after all.

Typically we spend 3-4 days in the parks. This seems to be the perfect amount of time to really get acclimated to the Disney lifestyle and take in all of the parts of the parks.

## Discounts on Disneyland Tickets

There are a couple of ways to get Disneyland discount tickets. But first a word of advice about Disneyland ticket discounts...

### *Warning and a Word of Advice*

NEVER buy Disneyland tickets from an online source that is not affiliated with Disney.

Used Tickets are often attempted to be resold. For example, someone might have a 4 day ticket and have only used half of it. It may sound like a good idea to purchase this and save a boatload of money, but Disney now has systems in place to stop purchases like this. With every ticket that is used, a picture of the ticket holder is taken so that it cannot be shared.

Ebay and Craigslist are filled with spammy tickets like we mentioned above. Be careful, don't buy tickets from them! There are stories every year about people's identity being stolen and Disneyland tickets being faked.

### ***Warning Signs For Spammy Sites:***

- Make sure that Disney is NOT in the original URL (ie www. disney discount tickets for sale .com). Disney doesn't allow affiliates selling tickets to have the Disney name in the URL. The authorized resellers are allowed to have Disney written in the url after the / (ex: www.getawaytoday.com/disneyland–discount–tickets)
- If the site wants to have you pick up the tickets the morning of, this is evidence that the tickets may already be used
- No sites may sell discounted 1 day tickets. Do NOT buy a discounted one day ticket.

- Do not ever pay with a debit card or cash, because these are both untraceable. If a site requires payment with either of these methods then DO NOT buy from them!

If any of this is true, this is a fake spammy website that is NOT affiliated with Disney! Do not buy tickets from them. Below is our recommended alternative to these spammy tickets.

### **Get Away Today Discount Tickets**

There is no savings if you book your tickets in advance on Disneyland's website or by calling them directly, however we have found a Disney-approved ticket reseller that has partnered with us to offer

**exclusive discounts just for MickeyVisit.com readers.**

***If the link does not work, you can directly access our private prices at <http://mickeyvisit.com/ticketsebook>***

The best discounts available for Disneyland park tickets are from the authorized ticket reseller Get Away Today. Not only do they have better Disneyland discounts than the other resellers, but the customer service and easy support is absolutely fantastic. They have an entire department dedicated to making sure every order has a 10/10 experience.





To offer these discounts, Get Away Today purchases huge blocks of tickets from Disney and breaks them up to sell to guests visiting the Disneyland Resort.

Through our exclusive partnership, we are able to offer the lowest priced Disneyland tickets sold to the public anywhere.

**Just for you we were able to bargain the prices down for any ticket two days or longer. You can access these exclusive Mickey Visit discounts via our private link.**

### PRO TIP: BOOK IN A PACKAGE

**Sometimes the lowest prices on Disneyland vacations can be found when you book a Disneyland package that includes both tickets and hotels. You can find more information on this on [page 21](#).**

For comparison, when you check the Get Away Today website, here is a chart of the current undiscounted Disneyland Resort main gate prices (*as of 5/11/19*). Info on one day tickets is below.

- 2-Day/1-Park Per Day Ticket – \$225 for adults (10 and older), and \$210 for children (3-9).
- 2-Day Park Hopper Ticket – \$280 for adults (10 and older), and \$265 for children (3-9).
- 3-Day/1-Park Per Day Ticket – \$300 for adults (10 and older), and \$280 for children (3-9).
- 3-Day Park Hopper Ticket – \$355 for adults (10 and older), and \$335 for children (3-9).
- 4-Day/1-Park Per Day Ticket – \$325 for adults (10 and older), and \$305 for children (3-9).
- 4-Day Park Hopper Ticket – \$380 for adults (10 and older), and \$360 for children (3-9).
- 5-Day/1-Park Per Day Ticket – \$340 for adults (10 and older), and \$320 for children (3-9).
- 5-Day Park Hopper Ticket – \$395 for adults (10 and older), and \$375 for children (3-9).

Another important piece of information to consider is that Disneyland has just switched to demand based pricing for one day tickets. Now, one day one park ticket prices will fluctuate based on whether the day you visit is deemed a “value” day (\$104), a “regular” day (\$129), or a “peak” day (\$149). There will be additional charges for adding park hopping to the tickets.

**[Click here to see our Disneyland flux pricing calendar.](#)**

Through the end of 2019 the value days typically fall on Mondays-Thursdays when school is in session. Then, regular days usually includes almost all weekends and days in summer. The peak days will fall on the extremely busy times at the resort including spring break, many summer dates and holidays such as the fourth of July, and all of the popular December Disneyland Christmas celebration.

## **Should You Buy a Disneyland Annual Pass Instead?**

If you are going to visiting Disneyland for more than seven days throughout a period of 365 days, it is probably worth it for you to get a Disneyland annual pass. Not only will you most likely save money on your tickets, but passes also provide a discount on food and merchandise. Some levels even include complimentary parking at the Mickey and Friends parking lot. Rather than just factoring in the amount of days in which a Disneyland pass would pay for itself, also include the discounts and parking benefits when making your decision. Consider just purchasing one annual pass so that you will receive these benefits and discounts wherever you go, but don't have to pay the high prices for all members of your party.

With the amount that we eat on our Disneyland vacations, the dining discount from having one pass comes in quite handy. Pick one person in your group who may return to Disneyland within the year and purchase an annual pass for them.

Currently I recommend purchasing your annual pass directly from Disneyland. These passes aren't discounted anywhere online. You can purchase vouchers at some Southern California supermarkets, but they cost the same amount as you would spend in park and you will still have to go through the same processing at Disneyland.

Compare all of the Disneyland Annual Pass options below:

### **Signature Plus Disneyland Annual Pass**

This is only pass with no blackout dates and you can be admitted to the parks all 365 days of the year. Included are discounts of up to 15% off at most dining locations and 20% off most merchandise. Included in this passport is also complimentary parking in the two main Disneyland Resort parking lots. Plus, you get unlimited Disney PhotoPass downloads with the purchase of this pass.

## **Signature Disneyland Annual Pass**

This pass allows admission into the parks on most days of year except for some busy blackout days—the two weeks surrounding Christmas and New Years.

Included are discounts of up to 15% off at most dining locations and 20% off most merchandise. Included in this passport is also complimentary parking in the two main Disneyland Resort parking lots. Plus, you get unlimited Disney PhotoPass downloads with the purchase of this pass.

## **Deluxe Disneyland Annual Pass**

This pass is valid for 315 days throughout the year. Almost every holiday and Saturday is blocked off with this pass (this can vary, so check on the Disneyland Annual Pass blackout calendar).

Included in this pass are restaurant and shopping discounts of 10% off. Guests who had this pass before 2/22/15 could have purchased a parking pass that is valid for the same days of the annual passport.

## **Southern California Select Disneyland Annual Pass**

This pass is only sold to Southern California residents and requires an ID to purchase. The only people who should consider this pass are those who want to only visit Disneyland during the week and not during summer. This Annual Pass has the most blackout dates with every Saturday and Sunday blocked, all of July, most of August, and December.

## **Disney Flex Passport**

This is a new passport and offers the option to make reservations in addition to being able to visit the park on days that aren't blocked out. Guests will be able to hold two reservation days up to 30 days in advance. This pass will include merchandise and dining discounts but no parking.

## **Blockout Dates**

Some Disneyland annual passes are blocked out on busy days, like Saturdays in the peak season. If you know that the annual pass that you will purchase is blocked out on a certain day that you want to visit, purchase the annual pass that day. The blackout dates don't apply the day that you purchase your pass. So, if you purchased an annual pass on a Saturday that would usually be blocked out, you will be able to use your pass at both parks on that day.

***(This makes sense, Disneyland would never sell you an annual pass and then not let you use it the first day.)***

**See the calendar for blackout dates for Disneyland annual passholders to make sure that you don't visit on a day that you may be blocked out.**

There are some other discounts to consider if you plan on visiting other attractions in the Southern California area.

### **For Universal Studios Hollywood and Harry Potter**

If you plan on visiting Universal Studios Hollywood and the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, then you will want to take a look at the new combo ticket that is being offered.

**[See our guide to Universal Studios Hollywood to help you plan your day.](#)**

This ticket put together by Get Away Today lets you pick two or three days at the Disneyland Resort and one or two days up at Universal Studios Hollywood at a very reasonable price.

There are also discount ticket options for military members, college students, AAA members, and other options similar to what you see in discount Disneyland

tickets. We still recommend checking the price of your tickets against those from our authorized reseller Get Away Today because often they will have the best price regardless of any of the discount options Universal may offer.

**Order this combo ticket here.**

Universal Studios Hollywood also offers a VIP Experience for guests looking to feel like royalty for a day. The **[Universal Studios Hollywood VIP experience](#)** includes a one day admission into the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park, a special small group guided tour of the Universal Studios backlot, access to restricted areas that normal tram tour groups don't go, light continental breakfast and big buffet lunch, valet parking, and unlimited front of the line access to all attractions in the theme park with VIP tour guide.

One Universal Studios Hollywood VIP Experience ticket ranges from **\$349-\$409**. This experience is only available for ages 5 and up.

Guests visiting Universal Studios Hollywood can also add an Express Pass option to their tickets. This allows guests paid access to separate lines that will move much faster than the regular line offered for rides.

If you know you are visiting on a weekend, holiday peak season, or have a limited amount of time, then you should definitely get the Front of the Line Pass. Otherwise, you can

usually navigate a successful day without it.

## Harry Potter at Universal Studios Hollywood

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is one of the biggest draws for families visiting Universal Studios Hollywood. You can find a variety of immersive experiences including dining, shopping, entertainment, and attractions.

There are main two attractions inside the Wizarding World of Harry Potter with the most popular and worthwhile being Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. The queue to lead to this ride is an experience in itself as it winds its way through Hogwarts and the ride mixes technology of both a classic dark ride and screens.

Guests love the immersive experience of being able to step into the Harry Potter books/movies inside this land. Universal has done a great job of providing rich detail that will make any Potterhead (and non-fans!) happy.

There are nightly shows on Hogwarts castle that vary in theme throughout the year. Some of the shows feature

classic songs and tributes to the Hogwarts houses while around the holiday season there is a special Christmas themed show that takes place.

[See our full guide to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter here.](#)

## Legoland and SeaWorld

If you want to get the full Southern California theme park experience, an Ultimate Combo Ticket is a fantastic option. The pass includes entry to Sea World (1 day), Disneyland (3 days-includes early entry), and Legoland (1 day). You can also upgrade the ticket to add the San Diego Zoo or Safari Park. The pass can be used on any day up until 14 days after the first use.

Get Away Today also offers exclusive low prices on both Legoland and SeaWorld which can be accessed [here](#).

Other discounts for groups include: military, teachers, education school group, government agency, and Disney Vacation Club.

**Continue Reading:** If Anything of These Things Describe You: Military, Teacher, Education School Group, Government agency, or Disney Vacation Club.

**Flip to Page 28: If You Aren't A Member of Any of These Groups**





## Disneyland Youth Education Series Ticket Discounts

Disney Youth Education Series (YES) is a program offered throughout the year that provides educational classes on topics ranging from leadership to marine biology that are taught inside of the Disney theme parks. As a side benefit to these cool Disney classes is the opportunity to purchase discount Disneyland tickets. The discount range varies for each type of ticket. The pricing is different for those taking the class and those simply going on the trip. There are lots of different rules and restrictions attached to these tickets, so they require third party booking. You can see all of the Disney Youth Education Series classes offered [here](#).

After checking out the class options, be sure to request concierge level help from a special group ticketing agent from Get Away Today. Simply **fill out our form** and get connected to an agent to help you immediately.

## Military Discounts

Members of the military, veterans, Department of Defense employees, and dependents of each of these groups have access to cheap Disneyland tickets.

Disneyland's current discount Disneyland ticket offer for active and retired U.S. military personnel is discounts on 3 and 4-Day Park Hopper Tickets.

Purchase from November 1, 2018 through December 18,

2019, and receive admission for 3 days for just \$178 or 4 days for \$198 from January 1 through April 13 and April 23 through December 21, 2019.

Active and retired U.S. military can also receive the Disney PhotoPass Collection for a discounted price of \$49 plus tax from January 1 through December 21, 2019. The collection includes all digital downloads of your photos, a voucher for a dining print package, and a Disneyland Resort Gallery Disc.

You may purchase discount Disneyland tickets for guests who do not fall into the category as long as you are with them when they enter the park. Disney Cast Members are supposed to check ID at the front gate for all military tickets.

## Corporate Government Agencies Discount

Disney offers discounts for entrance to Disneyland to large corporations and government agencies in Los Angeles.

Check with the Human Resources department of your agency.

Also, most Disneyland Corporate Sponsors are given tickets or sell tickets to employees for a big discount. Check with your Human Resources department for all of the information regarding the available Disneyland ticket discounts. Always remember to compare these ticket prices to the discounts available to the public (listed above).

## **Disneyland Ticket Discount For Teachers Unions**

Any teachers who are members of a union in the US or Canada are very likely to be eligible for heavily discounted tickets. Check with your union. These Disneyland discount tickets vary in the amount that's discounted from agency to agency.

## **Disney Vacation Club Member Discount**

Disney Vacation Club members get \$20 off of a purchase of a NEW annual pass. Discount doesn't apply to renewal of annual passes.

**Continue Reading: If You Need Hotel Recommendations and Discounts**

**Flip to Page 41: If You Already Know Where You Are Staying and Don't Need Discounts**

# DISNEYLAND HOTELS & RECOMMENDATIONS

At Disneyland there are two types of hotels, on-property and off-property “Good Neighbor” hotels. The on-property hotels are owned by Disney and run by the Walt Disney Company. They keep guests immersed in the Disney universe during the entire trip and provide the famous Disney customer service.

The off-property “Good Neighbor” Disneyland hotels are owned and operated by third parties that are nearby Disneyland and have paid a marketing fee to be considered associated with the Disneyland Resort.

## On-Property Hotels

There are three on-property Disneyland hotels and they are:

**The Grand Californian Hotel** is the best hotel in Anaheim and on property. Themed to the grand hotels of California built in the 1930s, staying here is a magical luxury experience. There's not much more that needs to be said.

**The Disneyland Hotel** was the original hotel at Disneyland. The hotel has a beautiful mixture of modern designs and nostalgic ideas. The Disneyland hotel has the best pool on property and has an awesome new water slide themed to the monorails.

**Paradise Pier Hotel** used to be owned by an outside company, but Disney purchased the hotel and upgraded it. The hotel is a nice option for a lower budget in the off season. Be sure to ask for a World of Color view and make sure that you are at least on the fifth floor or higher. I would recommend staying at one of our recommended top off property hotels over Paradise Pier.

### *The benefits of staying on-property are:*

- Proximity to the parks. No need to take buses, cabs, or endure long walks after a busy day in the parks or to take a break with younger children.
- Early Morning hours every day during your stay which includes early entry into Disneyland to ride select attractions on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and entrance into Disney California Adventure to ride select attractions on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. (Must have valid room key and ticket.)

- Special experiences provided by the concierge such as in park scavenger hunts that can be returned for a prize or a morning power walk before the theme park opens for the day.
- Guests can take advantage of charging purchases to their room with their Disney resort i.d. card.
- Packages and gifts purchased in the park can be delivered to your room.

If you have the opportunity to stay at the Disneyland Hotel or Grand Californian, I would highly recommend it.

### **Disneyland Resort Hotel Discounts**

The best way to save money while booking your Disneyland vacation is to book using a package.

There are quite a few Disneyland travel agents out there who promise to be the “perfect fit” for planning your Disneyland vacation, but many do not know the destination well or have poor customer service.

While most of the Disneyland packages can be booked directly on the Disneyland website, they rarely have the best discounts and their website is difficult to navigate.

For access to the constantly changing Disneyland discounts and easiest booking experience, make sure to book with a Disneyland authorized travel agent. I highly recommend **Get Away Today** who makes customer service and highest discounts for their customers top priority. They have over 28 years of experience and their agents really KNOW the Disneyland Resort. Unlike other agencies, Get Away Today agents visit the parks and experience the vacation before ever selling it to you.

They purchase Disneyland tickets and hotel rooms in blocks so that they can repackage them at much lower prices than anything that Disneyland offers. In fact, they were the first outside wholesaler to work with Disneyland, and they have been a top partner ever since. Their discounts are substantial and are truly the best way to book any Disneyland package vacation.

While other Disney travel agents can also book Disneyland packages, few other agencies have the ability to purchase the tickets in such large blocks to give these incredible Disneyland discounts. Most other agents sell directly through Disney and are paid with a small commission.

Get Away Today functions in a unique place as they are classified by Disney as a “Select Tour Operator,” a distinction only held by the top eleven companies working with Disney creating vacations. They also take the time to create an enjoyable experience for their customers by offering agents who are knowledgeable and ready to help plan any Disneyland vacation. Get Away Today agents stay in the hotels that they book for you, so that they always understand the property and aren’t just selling you something on a piece of glossy marketing material they received.

### **Disneyland Resort Hotel Package**

When you **book a Disneyland vacation package** based around accommodations at Disney’s Grand Californian Hotel, the Disneyland Hotel, or Disney’s Paradise Pier Hotel this is what will be included:

- Exclusive low prices on Disneyland Resort Tickets for MickeyVisit.com readers
- Extra Magic Hour — Special early entry into either Disneyland Park or Disney California Adventure park on every day of your vacation. You must have both a hotel key and park ticket for admission.
- Use of the private entrance to Disney California Adventure through Disney’s Grand Californian Hotel.

- Plus all of the other exclusive extras provided by Get Away Today for MickeyVisit.com readers (listed below)
- Ability to add in special discounted Disneyland character dining

### **Disneyland Good Neighbor Hotel Package**

You can also **book a package** with any of Disney’s recommended Good Neighbor hotels. This is what will be included:

- Access to the exclusive low prices on Disneyland Tickets for MickeyVisit.com readers
- Magic Morning access — If your package includes a three-day or longer Disneyland ticket, you get one Magic Morning special access to Disneyland park. You will be allowed into the park one hour before opening to experience popular attractions in Fantasyland and Tomorrowland.
- Also you will receive all of the exclusive bonuses from Get Away Today for MickeyVisit.com readers (listed below)
- Option to add on other perks such as discount tickets to local entertainment experiences like Medieval Times.

## Exclusive Get Away Today Amenities

Get Away Today has exclusive partnerships with local retailers to offer you hundreds in dollars in savings. These special benefits that come exclusively from Get Away Today include:

- **Exclusive Area Coupons:** When you book, you will receive a PDF of coupons that can be printed as many times as you wish. Included are coupons for 10% off at some of my favorite Disneyland Restaurants: La Brea Bakery, Catal, Naples, Tortilla Jo's and the Uva Bar in Downtown Disney. Also included are coupons for the chain restaurants located just outside of the resort area that include: Bubba Gump, Tony Roma's, McDonald's, Subway, etc. The coupons are sold as having a \$300 value, but when used with a big group (or a family that eats a lot like mine) you could save a lot more.
- Pin lanyard for each adult member of the group.
- Disney sling backpack for every child member of the group.
- Fun Free Printable Downloads – to get your family ready for the trip, they'll email you special printable sheets that include a number of games, vacation countdown chains, vacation reveal ideas, and more.

To start the process you should check out our [curated hotels near Disneyland page](#) on the Get Away Today website to decide which hotel is the right fit for you. The page features the three on property hotels and our four top recommended off property Good Neighbor Disneyland hotels.

Now, we will dive into my full review of the top four off-property hotels that you can find near Disneyland.

## Off-Property “Good Neighbor” Hotels

When Walt Disney opened Disneyland in 1955 he didn't purchase all of the land surrounding the park the same way that he did in Walt Disney World. The off-property “Good Neighbor” hotels owned by other companies have become family traditions for many and are a very valid option.

When we first started going to Disneyland I was inundated by an onslaught of messages and promotions for various hotels around Disneyland. At one point I almost booked a hotel with "Disneyland" in the description that turned out to be 3.5 miles away. Later I came across a hotel that had apparently had multiple cases of bed bugs.



We have attempted to curate a list of the top hotels that are actually near Disneyland that ARE NOT infested with bugs or in dire need of a renovation. The hotels are "Mickey Visit Approved." They will offer you the best savings and the best experience.

Below you will see our top choices for Good Neighbor Disneyland hotels. You should keep in mind that...

*Sometimes a room at an off-property hotel is closer than a room at the Disneyland hotel.*

I prefer a hotel that is within walking distance or has a good personal shuttle to get you to and from Disneyland each day. So, with that in mind, I included the top hotels within walking distance, because at the

end of the day I do not want to wait for the ART shuttle, which provides transportation to most of the hotels.

### **Discounts and Reviews For Off-Property "Good Neighbor" Hotels**

After each of the descriptions of the hotels, we provide the best place to find a discount for the hotel and any other information you need to know such as which room to request during your stay.

Sometimes the best discounts can be found at [Get Away Today](#), other times the best price is at [Expedia](#). We want to get you the lowest price that there is. Links to the hotel pages on both sites are provided.

See map below for hotel proximity to the parks.

# LEGEND

- 1 Grand Californian Hotel
- 2 Disneyland Hotel
- 3 Paradise Pier Hotel
- 4 Mickey & Friends Parking Lot
- 5 Parking Tram Pickup
- 6 Parking Tram Dropoff
- 7 Disney Resort hotel guests private entrance to DCA
- 8 Anaheim Convention Center
- 9 Best Western Plus Park Place Inn and Mini Suites
- 10 Fairfield Inn Anaheim by Marriott at the Disneyland Resort
- 11 Hilton Anaheim
- 12 Howard Johnson Anaheim
- 13 Security
- 14 Park Entrance



## STEP-BY-STEP DISNEYLAND PLANNING GUIDE

### AREA MAP

HOTEL	DISTANCE	BREAKFAST	POOL	PARKING	WIFI	NOTES
<b>Best Western Park Place</b>	5 minute walk	Complimentary	Yes	\$10/day	Free	In room coffee and refrigerator
<b>Fairfield Inn by Marriot</b>	8 minute walk	For Purchase	Yes	\$18/day	Free	In room refrigerator; Disney theme park view available
<b>Hilton Anaheim</b>	15-20 minute walk	For Purchase	Yes	\$16/day garage; \$22/day valet	Free for HHonours members	Lower weekend rates; convention center hotel; in room coffee
<b>Howard Johnson Anaheim</b>	10 minute walk	Mimi's location in the same parking lot	Yes	Free	Free	In room refrigerator

### **Best Western Plus Park Place Inn and Mini Suites**

The Best Western located right across the street from Disneyland is a perfect place for any family visiting the Disneyland Resort that doesn't want to splurge on either the Disneyland Hotel or Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, but still want to be right at the entrance to the parks. I recommend this hotel over the Disney-owned Paradise Pier.

The Best Western provides rooms with queen beds that sleep up to five and mini suites that sleep up to six. The hotel also has a continental breakfast that was recently

upgraded. In the room there are refrigerators, coffee makers, free Wi-Fi, and microwaves. These are amenities that you won't find at most of the other Disneyland Good Neighbor hotels.

The hotel is the closest of any of the off-property "Good Neighbor" hotels. In some cases it is even closer than the Disneyland on-property hotels. We have literally tested the distance from the Disneyland hotel's farthest rooms and the Park Place Inn's farthest rooms and the rooms at Park Place are much closer. All you have to do is walk across the street in the morning, and you are there.

The Best Western Plus Park Place Inn and Mini Suites can be booked via a [Get Away Today package](#) or [booked separately on their website](#). Also be sure to compare prices on [Expedia](#). I partner with Get Away Today because whenever I look, they have lower prices. But, it can't hurt to check.

### PRO TIP: REQUEST FIREWORKS VIEW

**Request a room with a fireworks view. This is a perfect way for those with young children to view the fireworks when you can't quite make it to stay out that late. Also, you will be ensured to be on the side of the hotel closest to the parks.**

#### **Fairfield Inn Anaheim by Marriott at the Disneyland Resort**

This hotel is located just a little ways down Harbor Boulevard from the entrance to Disneyland. The distance to the front gate isn't too far to walk in the morning and at night.

The Fairfield Inn by Marriott provides rooms with a maximum occupancy of five people. You can pay more

to upgrade your room to a Disney-themed room, but the regular rooms are quite nice.

There is a Seattle's Best Coffee and Pizza Hut in the lobby and McDonalds and Mimi's close by for any meals that you don't end up eating in the parks. There are refrigerators in the rooms and free Wi-Fi.

This hotel can only be booked with [Get Away Today](#) if you [book a package](#). This means you must also purchase your tickets from them. There's no reason not to purchase tickets from them as well, but if you just need to buy the hotel, [Expedia](#) definitely offers the best price for the hotel without tickets.

#### **Hilton Anaheim**

While it is a 0.8 mile walk from the hotel to the parks, we often stay at the Hilton Anaheim. For breakfast you will find the more upscale MIX restaurant and Starbucks in the lobby. The hotel has a heated pool and water play area.

This is a convention center hotel, which means it has lower weekend rates. The downside to this hotel is that when there are conventions in town, it can be booked months in advance.

To get from the hotel to Disneyland, walk down Harbor Boulevard and through the Grand Californian and Downtown Disney. Give 20-25 minutes to walk to Disneyland. This hotel can only be booked with **Get Away Today** if you **book a package**. This means you must also purchase your tickets from them. There's no reason not to purchase tickets from them as well, but if you just need to buy the hotel, **Expedia** definitely offers the best price for the hotel without tickets.

If you think you want a ride to and from the parks, you will want to purchase the Anaheim Rapid Transit passes for the shuttle that serves the Hilton Anaheim. This shuttle runs frequently between the hotel and the main entrance plaza for Disneyland.

### **Howard Johnson Anaheim**

The most family friendly off-property "Good Neighbor" hotel is the Howard Johnson Anaheim. The amenities are outstanding. This hotel has a water play area similar to the Hilton's, free in room wifi, refrigerators, and queen size beds. The regular rooms can accommodate up to 5 people.

Give 10-15 minutes to walk the 0.5 mile distance to the entrance to Disneyland. Howard Johnson is recommended as one of the best places to bring a family to Disneyland. The service is outstanding and so are the amenities.

This hotel can only be booked with **Get Away Today** if you **book a package**. This means you must also purchase your tickets from them. There's no reason not to purchase tickets from them as well, but if you just need to buy the hotel, **Expedia** definitely offers the best price for the hotel without tickets.

## **More Discounts For Disneyland Hotels**

There are additional discounts to consider when booking the hotel for your Disneyland vacation. Below see all of the additional discount methods:

### **Annual Passholder Exclusive Disneyland Hotel Rates**

Annual pass holders to Disneyland receive special Disneyland hotel rates. Book by calling (714) 520-5006 or a travel agent. Sometimes it is a good deal to purchase a Disneyland annual pass for one member of your party to get discounts throughout your vacation. This discount is offered at the three Disney owned hotels.

This is rarely the best discount, but worthwhile to check when booking if you are a Disneyland Annual Passholder.

### **Disneyland US Military Discount**

Members of the US military can get a discount on most nights at the Disneyland resort. The member of the military or spouse must be present the entire length of stay and present a military ID upon check in. For details call (855)-643-5208.

The discount is solely offered at the Disneyland Hotel, Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, and Paradise Pier Hotel.

### **Private Newspaper Discounts**

You can call Disneyland directly at (714) 956-6425 and ask for the LA Times or the San Diego Union-Tribune discount. Both of these newspapers often advertise special Disneyland rates. These rates will most likely not be better than the Get Away Today rates, however it can be worth checking if you decide to stay on property.

This again only applies to on property hotels, Disneyland Hotel, Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, and the Paradise Pier Hotel.

**Continue Reading:** If You Need Help Picking Which Airport to Fly Into

**Flip to Page 36:** If You Already Have Your Air Transportation Figured Out



# WHICH AIRPORT TO PICK

The closest airport to Disneyland is the John Wayne Orange County Airport (SNA). I recommend flying into this airport due to its proximity to the resort. See our airport map at the end of this section for distances.

Your other option of flying to Disneyland is LAX, Los Angeles' huge airport. The drive from here to the resort is a long one especially during commute times but the deals are often better flying into LAX due to more flight options.

## **Airports Near Disneyland and the Anaheim Convention Center**

There are four options for airports when flying to Disneyland or the Anaheim Convention Center. These airports, listed in the order of nearness to the Anaheim Resort are the John Wayne Orange County Airport (SNA), Long Beach Airport (LGB), the Ontario International Airport (ONT), and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

### **John Wayne Orange County Airport**

The John Wayne Airport, located 14 miles from the Anaheim Resort, provides a simple flying experience with just one building that is split up into a Terminal A and Terminal B. Upon arrival at the airport, the walk from your gate to the baggage carousel and then upon your return from the check in to the gate is quick and easy.

The top airlines that provide service out of the Orange County Airport are:

- Alaska Airlines
- American Airlines
- Delta Air Lines
- Frontier Airlines
- Southwest Airlines
- United Airlines
- Westjet

The airport is second in the area only to the Los Angeles Airport for the amount of flights and destinations served each day. The airport serves over 740,000 passengers a month and services 240 arrivals and departures each day.

This is far and away our top recommendation for flying to the Disneyland Resort or the Anaheim Convention Center. However, flight fare can be much less expensive at other airports such as the Los Angeles International Airport. Be sure to compare prices.

### **Long Beach Airport**

The Long Beach Airport, located approximately 19 miles from the Anaheim Resort area, is a tiny airport that serves only Alaska Airlines, Delta Airlines, JetBlue Airways, and US Airways.

If you are able to find a good price with one of the four air carries, you will have an easy experience in this small airport.

### **Ontario International Airport**

The Ontario International Airport, located approximately 35 miles from the Anaheim Resort area, is the third largest airport in the Anaheim area. This is a quaint airport that is quick and easy to navigate.

### **Los Angeles International Airport**

The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), located 35 miles from the Anaheim Resort, is the bustling fifth biggest airport in the world. When visiting from anywhere outside of the US, you will most likely find the best rates and flight options flying into the Los Angeles International Airport. Every airline imaginable flies into LAX.



# DISNEYLAND GUIDE

## AREA MAP

# GETTING TO DISNEYLAND

There are quite a few options for getting from the various airports of southern California to the Disneyland Resort. My favorite transportation options are listed below.

## Using Uber to Disneyland

Whenever visiting Disneyland we fly into John Wayne Airport (SNA) and then use the Uber app to get from the airport to our hotel. Uber is a mobile app that you allows you to request a car from your smart phone.

I have an exclusive code for you that will give you a free

\$15 credit to use with your first ride. Use the code: "gavind714ue" in the app or [redeem right here](#). Find the "promotions" tab and enter the code to receive your free \$15 credit. A credit is given to me when you use the code, and once you sign up you can refer other people and earn more free rides for yourself.

You have a couple of different tiered options for the type of Uber car that you use coming to Disneyland. On the main screen of the app you will see the available cars nearby for each level of service. Each of the levels have pros and cons and vary in price.

**UberX** - this is the least expensive option and allows up to four passengers. These are the drivers that sign up for the app and use their own car.

**uberXL** - this level is designed for larger groups and allows up to 6 passengers. These drivers are also using their own (larger) cars.

**uberBlack** - consists of luxury sedans that fit up to four people. These drivers and cars are members of a luxury fleet that generally is a member of a limo/hired car service. These cars can pickup at any airport because they hold a specific license, however you do not need to use this level when flying into Orange County. This airport is ahead of the game and allows any Uber car to pick up.

Be sure to download the app before you leave for the trip. Baggage claim at the Orange County airport is usually

pretty fast, so plan on only about 10-15 minutes to get from the gate, to the luggage, and out on the sidewalk to be picked up.

Download the app and then insert your special code "gavind714ue" to save \$15.

## Taxi To and From Disneyland

There is taxi service offered to and from all of the airports, but it can get expensive. When you have a larger party, the taxi can be a better deal. There are two sizes of taxis, the four passenger sedan style and the seven passenger van. The rates are the same for both sizes. The van is a much better deal here than on Uber.

In California, car seats are required for children who are not yet eight years old or four feet and nine inches tall. Be sure to bring your own car seat if you intend on using a taxi.

Taking a cab, would cost you about \$40 dollars from John Wayne/Orange County or about \$100 from LAX with traffic and \$80 without. Most companies will have a standard fare to and from the resort.

Be sure to check in with your hotel in Anaheim to see if they offer a "concierge special" for taxi rides to and

from the airport. Our recommended hotels near Disneyland offer these discounts for transportation.

## Renting a Car

**Renting a car to enjoy the Southern California area can be quite helpful if you plan on enjoying day trips beyond the Disneyland Resort. *(If you are just planning on visiting Disneyland, there is no real reason to rent a car.)***

When making your decision about renting a car be sure to factor in not only the pricing of the rental, but also the pricing of parking while staying at the Disneyland Resort. Most hotels, Disney owned and Good Neighbor approved, charge for parking.

Rather than renting your car at the airport when you land, it is less expensive to rent the car just for the days when you need it. Most companies have kiosks scattered throughout the Disneyland Resort area.

The best way to save money on renting a car is to book via a third party company that purchases "rentals" in bulk from the rental companies to resell to the consumer and to constantly look to rebook your car rental.

I highly recommend taking a look at Expedia for the best pricing of car rentals from any of the car rental

companies near Disneyland. You can check out all [Expedia car rental specials here](#).

### **Disneyland Resort Express**

Use the Disneyland Resort Express which leaves from both LAX and John Wayne. The prices are very high and unless you are traveling by yourself or with just one other person, the taxi or Uber Car app is the least expensive option.

- Disneyland Resort Express is \$30 one way/ \$48 round trip for an adult from LAX and \$9 one way/ \$14 roundtrip for a child (ages 3-11) Three and under are free.
- From Orange County/John Wayne, the express costs \$20 one way/\$35 roundtrip for an adult and \$7 one way/\$11 roundtrip for a child (ages 3-11) Three and under are free.

### **Shuttles**

There are a variety of airport shuttles that offer shared ride service to and from airports. These can be a cost effective way of traveling but sharing a shuttle can be a pain. The shuttles are usually large vans and they pack

you in like little sardines.

But small groups, this is a worthy option to save a few bucks. Although, using our Uber code above will likely be cheaper than this. Especially if you have more than two people because the shuttles typically charge per person.

### **Super Shuttle Rates**

The most commonly used shuttle service in the area is Super Shuttle. The drivers will pick you up right at the airport, load your luggage, and drop you off right at the front of your hotel.

From Orange County/John Wayne, round trip tickets will cost about \$23 per person to the local hotels around the Disneyland Resort.

From LAX, round trip ticket will cost about \$34 per person to the local hotels around the Disneyland Resort.

Sometimes their website offers discount codes or promotions so watch out for those. This can be a convenient option for small groups but rather expensive for large groups of people.

# WHAT TO BRING TO DISNEYLAND

The items below go beyond the standard clothes you should know to pack to be comfortable touring in. When packing clothes, think about what you would wear during a city vacation to be comfortable walking for miles. However, remember that you will be constantly taking pictures that you will have forever, so you should pick a look you like.

Below I have compiled a list of all the extra items you wouldn't necessarily think to bring with you to Disneyland. These are the "hack" items that we discovered to improve our trips after years of visiting Disneyland. Mix and match the advice to come up with your own packing list.

## PRO TIP:

### SEND ITEMS DIRECTLY TO THE HOTEL

**Rather than pack all of these items, you can order them off the [Disney store website](#) or [Amazon](#) and send them directly to your hotel. Just make sure to have the name the package is addressed to match the name that is on your hotel reservation. Also, enter your hotel arrival date in address line 2.**

## Packing List

**Printed planning worksheet:** Hopefully you have been filling out our provided planning worksheet to keep track of all your trip information. Before you leave, be sure to print this out so that you aren't relying on electronic devices to keep this info for you.

**Extra Layers:** The weather will vary quite dramatically depending on the time of year that you are visiting. Be sure to check weather forecasts before your trip and plan accordingly. Even when it is forecast to be hot during the day, I always have a long sleeve pullover to put on when the temperature drops at night.

**Dress up clothes:** There is no dress code for the more upscale restaurants around the Disneyland Resort.



However, the meals feel more like a special occasion when you dress up and change your clothes. The fanciest I ever go is a button down shirt and pants. Sometimes the girls put on a nice dress for dinner.

**Two pairs of comfortable walking shoes:** During my last trip I only brought one pair of walking shoes and by the end of the trip I was really regretting it. When I am planning well, I bring two pairs of pre-broken-in shoes and switch off every day.

**Good bag or backpack to carry with you in the park:** Make sure you don't carry a drawstring with lots of stuff as the straps really start to dig into your shoulders by the end of the day. Bring a medium sized backpack that fits all of your stuff. Try not to bring too big of a bag, as you want to be able to fit it comfortably between your feet on the more intense attractions.

**Device Battery Packs:** When you are out of the room for such a long time, your devices will start to run low on power. We have used a variety of battery packs in the parks with us. Next trip we will be trying out one of Tom Bricker's recommended battery packs listed below.

**The KMASHI battery pack** works extremely well and holds about four phone charges. You can also easily charge any device that uses a USB plug with this device.

The powerful **Aukey charger pack** holds a whopping 6-8 phone charges and is about the size of an iPhone 6.

Both of these battery packs have been on sale recently. Check out their Amazon listings (linked above) for the current pricing and full info.

You can plug your phone into this pack and avoid a dead battery. Also, be sure to bring an extra camera SD card and battery if you intend on snapping pictures all day.

**Ziploc bags of all sizes:** Bring varying sizes of ziploc bags for leftover food, things you don't want to get wet on water rides, trading pins, and anything else you want to keep separate from the rest of your bag.

**Your own ponchos: Even when it is not rainy season, we will use the poncho to avoid getting wet on the water rides. You can [order these on Amazon](#).**

**Lanyards:** These work well to hold trading pins or any loose paper items like hotel key cards and Disneyland entrancetickets. Bring a thicker lanyard if you intend on putting pins on it.

**Sunscreen:** Make sure you are prepared for a sunny California day when you are in the parks. Bring a small tube to carry with you in your park bag.

**Large hat and sunglasses:** Keeping your face protected from the glaring California sun is very important. One of my favorite sunglass companies is Blenders Eyewear. Created as a durable option for surfers, they are a startup based in La Jolla, California that creates stylish inexpensive sunglasses.

**Bathing suit:** For those tiring summer days, there is nothing better than taking a break and swimming in the hotel pool. Along with this, bring flip flops or sandals to walk to the pool.

**Power strip:** If you are traveling with a large family, bring a power strip to add more plugs in your hotel room. It seems every hotel room I stay in has few outlets and I always seem to have more that I need to plug in. If each person is plugging in a phone and an extra battery pack, the amount of plugs needed adds up quickly.

**I really like the [Belkin Mini 5W 3-Outlet Swivel Travel Charger with Dual USB Ports](#) for using in your room. Not only is this outlet light weight, but it has built in USB**

ports so that you don't have to carry the Apple cord boxes.

**Autograph book: Bring a book for your kids to collect autographs when they meet characters. Rather than paying for the overpriced book in the parks, you can pick up a [discounted one from the Disney website](#) before you leave.**

**Aquaphor ointment:** Disneyland is filled with germs, thus you should be washing your hands or sanitizing them frequently. This keeps you germ free, however this, along with the drier Los Angeles weather chaps your hand quite quickly. I use Aquaphor on my hands to keep them feeling soft and moisturized. You can [order this on Amazon](#).

**Small pack of Kleenex:** The tissues and toilet paper in the restrooms around Disneyland are very scratchy on the nose. Be sure to bring your own small pack of Kleenex if you think you will be using some throughout your trip.

**Moleskin or band aids for blisters:** With the amount that you are walking in a day at Disneyland, blisters can develop in just one day. Moleskin can provide good coverage to prevent hurting during the rest of your trip.

**Pain reliever of your choice:** Be sure to bring along a pain reliever such as Advil in case old injuries flare up or something hurts after a long day of touring.

**Chromecast:** Sadly, most of the hotel televisions are quite lacking in selection. An easy fix is to bring your own content to watch. With the new **Chromecast media streaming device from Google**, you can connect your TV and personal device to watch anything you have on your device on the TV. Much better than turning on your hotel movie and starting halfway through.

**Your own glow sticks:** Before all of the nighttime parades and spectaculars, Cast Members circulate selling glow in the dark toys. Popping out a glow stick or necklace to give to your child right when they see the toys can be a good way to avoid this higher end purchase. You can **order these here**.

**Pennies and quarters:** If you plan on collecting pressed pennies during your trip at Disneyland. Bring along shiny pennies and quarters to operate the machines in the parks. Each machine costs 50 cents to press a penny.

**Pins for trading:** As we outline in the souvenir guide, you should purchase pins for trading before arriving at

Disneyland. These other pins are a fraction of the price and are just as worthy for trading.

**Stroller:** If your child needs a stroller during the day, I highly recommend either bringing your own or renting one from a third party. Disney's prices are higher and you may not bring the stroller back to your hotel with you. **City Stroller Rentals** provides an incredible rental experience at a great low price. They will even drop the stroller off at your hotel for you.

## Food to Bring With You

As we discussed in the food section, I highly recommend bringing your own snacks to the parks with you each day.

**Snacks:** Some of my favorite snacks for the parks are the various assortments of trek mixes, dried fruit, and granola bars from **Trader Joe's**. These really sustain me throughout the trip and keep me full between breakfast and lunch. You can **order these on Amazon** and have them sent directly to your hotel to be waiting for you.

**Case of water:** If you find you don't like the taste of LA water, there are Walgreens and CVS locations within walking distance on Harbor Boulevard, just a block from

the park entrances. Consider picking up a jug of water or a case of water bottles. I have never had a problem with the taste of the in-park water, but never liked the water that comes out of the faucet in the hotel room.

**Chewing gum:** Disneyland does not sell gum anywhere in the resort. If you need to chew gum, be sure to bring your own.

**Via Powdered Starbucks Coffee:** To avoid spending money on coffee at Disneyland, you can bring your own powdered coffee with you. Get hot water from your hotel or ask for a free cup of hot water from any counter service restaurant in Disneyland. You can [order this on Amazon](#).

**Tums or Pepto:** If any of the food you have a Disneyland disagrees with you stomach, you will be happy you packed these upset stomach relievers.

## What to Bring In the Backpack to the Park

Below I have put together a list of everything that you should have with you when headed out to Disneyland for the day.

- Your park tickets
- Backpack
- Sunscreen, sun glasses, and hat
- Jacket (perhaps a poncho too if it is supposed to rain or if you don't want to get wet on the water rides)
- Trading pins
- Wallet
- Snacks: Granola bars, fruit, trail mix. Something to tide you over to your next snack or meal.
- Phone charger and phone battery pack
- Water Bottle

**Continue Reading:** [Our Best Touring Tips, Important for All](#)

# MAXIMIZING TIME IN DISNEYLAND

More important than what date to visit Disneyland is what time to visit Disneyland. Disneyland opens at 8am most days, you should be waiting at the gate at 7:55am - this means getting to security by 7:20am. The best way to get a lot done in Disneyland is to get there in the morning EARLY and power through as many attractions as you can. Most times you will be able to get more attractions done the first two hours of the morning than you will the rest of the day combined.

## Magic Morning at Disneyland

If you have a three day or more park ticket, ticket with “bonus” status, Universal Combo Ticket or CityPass Ticket, you also get a Magic Morning that allows for you to enter Disneyland park an hour before it’s official opening.

Magic Morning is available on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday.

The attractions included in Magic Morning are mostly in Tomorrowland and Fantasyland. Magic Morning is the perfect time to knock out all of Fantasyland or to ride Space Mountain or Star Tours many times. I have experienced times in the past where I have just stayed

on attractions during Magic Morning more than five times in a row.

Be sure to show up to the entrance to Disneyland about an hour and fifteen minutes before the official opening time. See our full advice on how to utilize this time best at the end of the FastPass section below.

If you are a Disneyland Resort hotel guest then you also have access to Disney California Adventure an hour before opening on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

## Cutting the Lines Legally

Every once in awhile, a park guest will attempt to cut the lines and hop onto the attraction in front of you, this is obviously not allowed. But, there are a couple ‘legal’ ways to jump the line and save a ton of time while doing so.



## Disney's FastPass

Through the use of Disneyland FastPass you can minimize the amount of time you wait in line and maximize the amount of Disneyland rides you experience. A FastPass is like getting a reservation for a particular time for Disneyland's most popular attractions.

With these FastPass tips you will be able to maneuver the crowds and allow your group to experience more popular Disneyland attractions in a shorter amount of time.

## Disneyland FastPass Overview

The FastPass system may seem complicated from the outside, but these simple tips and tricks should help you to become a true FastPass master capable of building a perfect day at Disneyland.

### **What is a Disneyland FastPass?**

It is a ticket for a specific attraction, show, or experience that allows park guests to skip the line and go into an express line to experience the fun faster. FastPass tickets are available at the most popular attractions. This ticket can be obtained at distribution machines located at the entrance to the attractions or via the Disneyland app using the paid MaxPass (more below) service.

### **How do you get a FastPass?**

To receive a FastPass ticket, you stick your park ticket into the FastPass machine located near the entrance to the attraction, and it will spit out a FastPass reminder. The actual FastPass itself is linked electronically to your park ticket. Don't forget to retrieve your park tickets! To save time, especially if it is crowded, you can send one person ahead with everyone's tickets (as long as they are already in the park) to get FastPass tickets for everyone in the group.



## ***How to Use a FastPass?***

Once you retrieve a FastPass, you will be given an hour long return window to come back and experience the attraction. When the time on your FastPass card arrives, simply go to the attraction and get in the FastPass line. You will then scan your Disneyland park tickets so that you can get into the line. This line is typically much shorter than the main Standby queue.

## **Important FastPass Tips to Know**

- FastPass is included with the price of admission.
- Only select Disneyland and Disney California Adventure attractions offer the FastPass service (listed below).
- The printed FastPass is now just a reminder- your actual FastPass is electrically linked to your park tickets. To save time, have your park tickets ready to scan when you enter the line.
- New FastPass tickets may only be obtained after you have either used the FastPass that you are holding or enough time has passed that you can retrieve a new selection. Be sure to check the time on your FastPass reminder to see when you are eligible to book a new FastPass.

- FastPass tickets can be obtained during Extra Magic Hour or Magic Morning but the return time won't be until after the park officially opens.
- There are only a set number of FastPass tickets for each hour of operation at Disneyland. On busy days, FastPass tickets run out quickly at the most popular attractions (listed below).
- You can enter the FastPass return line 5 minutes prior to your official arrival time and up to 15 minutes after your arrival time ends.

## **Disney's MaxPass**

Disneyland MaxPass is a paid variation of the classic Disneyland FastPass system. The MaxPass system allows guests to book their FastPass selections from their smart phone on the Disneyland app rather than walking to and from each attraction to secure reservation times.

MaxPass also includes unlimited Disneyland PhotoPass downloads through the Disneyland app so you will have access to all your photos taken on rides and by the PhotoPass photographers in Disneyland.

The cost of MaxPass is \$15 per person, per day. You can purchase it once you enter the park from the Disneyland app or buy Disneyland tickets with MaxPass already included at an extra cost.

*Is MaxPass worth the price?*

Yes, MaxPass is definitely worth the price because of the amount of time it saves guests and how quickly guests can reserve their FastPass reservations. Add in the unlimited



photo downloads, which is much more reasonable in price than purchasing PhotoPass packages, then it is definitely worth the cost.

MaxPass works in the same way the FastPass system described above does with the main difference being able to book those reservations from your phone rather than having to walk all over the parks to get them.

### Important MaxPass Tips to Know

- You can scan everyone's park tickets into one phone and manage all the reservations within the app. You can make choice for the entire group or select separate attractions for each person. More than one person can manage reservations for the tickets as long as MaxPass has been paid for.
- One benefit with using MaxPass is that guests can book FastPasses that other guests have canceled. Keep checking the app if FastPass reservations run out, sometimes some will pop up but be sure to grab it quick!
- Another benefit of MaxPass is that you can cancel a reservation for an attraction at any time for one person or the whole group. This way if your plans change, you can cancel old reservations in order to make new ones.
- Once your park ticket is scanned for the day and you've purchased MaxPass, you can start booking reservations right away. If you are present in the parks before rope drop- Disney typically lets guests in 20 minutes prior to opening and blocks entry to the lands with ropes- you can reserve your first reservation. This also works if you leave the park and go back to your hotel for a break in the midday, you can keep booking your reservations from

your hotel so you have a list of FastPass times for when you return.

- You can also book the two entertainment shows (more below) via MaxPass. This allows guests to get ahead of the crowd on getting the best reserved seating for Fantasmic! and World of Color.

Now your two options are to either use the free Disneyland FastPass system or the new paid Disneyland MaxPass service. It is entirely possible to have a great day using the classic and free FastPass system but there are some real advantages for spending the money on MaxPass.

### Disneyland Attractions With FastPass

The attractions listed below all utilize the Disneyland FastPass system to allow guests to save time and avoid the long lines.

#### *In Disneyland:*

- Fantasmic! (*This FastPass machine is disconnected from the system and can be held even while you are using another FastPass. This FastPass reserves you seats for the popular Disneyland show and can be obtained behind Big Thunder Mountain*)
- Big Thunder Mountain Railroad
- Indiana Jones Adventure (*Also offers Single Rider*)
- Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin
- Space Mountain
- Splash Mountain (*Also offers Single Rider line*)
- Haunted Mansion

- Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters
- Star Tours (*Available across from the attraction near Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters*)
- it's a small world
- Matterhorn Bobsleds

### ***In Disney California Adventure:***

- World of Color (*This FastPass machine is disconnected from the system and can be held even while you are using another FastPass. This FastPass reserves you seats for the popular water show in California Adventure and can be obtained near the Little Mermaid ride*)
- Incredicoaster (*Also offers Single Rider line*)
- Goofy's Sky School
- Grizzly River Run (*Also offers Single Riderline*)
- Radiator Springs Racers (*Also offers Single Rider line*)
- Soarin' (*Also offers Single Rider line*)
- Guardians of the Galaxy- Mission: BREAKOUT!
- Toy Story Midway Mania!

## **Disneyland FastPass Strategy**

You will be unable to get another FastPass ticket until the time indicated at the bottom of your FastPass ticket. If you arrive in the morning and focus on FastPass reservations, it's possible to start stacking those reservations as you move quickly through the park. Typically, once your arrival window comes for a

FastPass, you are eligible to book another even if you haven't used it yet.

The downside to this is if you grab a FastPass for an attraction with a really late start time (usually those that are the most popular) it will also delay your time to begin retrieving additional FastPass reservations.

So with that in mind, there is some strategy to how you use FastPass. Some attractions will run out everyday for popular attractions.

## **Assorted FastPass/MaxPass Tips**

Make sure that you bring a portable battery pack for your phone- using MaxPass can drain your phone battery. If you're using paper FastPass, put someone in charge of all the FastPass reservations and only send one person in the area to get FastPass times- this way you don't clog up the distribution walkways!

Never let kids hold onto their tickets- you will need your physical Disney ticket to get your FastPass and use them in lines- make an adult in charge of these.

Always arrive early and with a strategy, keep reading to read our top strategies for both theme parks at Disneyland!

## **Disneyland and California Adventure Touring Strategies**

### Step One: Arrive at Rope Drop

Thirty minutes before park opening, cast members will begin letting guests into the parks. This helps control the flow of crowds and it can be a huge advantage for morning park visitors! There will be ropes (guarded by cast members) that block off access points of the lands until the official park opening time. Being one of the first groups positioned at those ropes can be a huge advantage for your morning strategy for Disneyland! You can also begin booking MaxPass once you enter the gates so this is also a great plus for groups that plan on purchasing MaxPass. To be there at Rope Drop plan to arrive at least one hour prior to the park opening.

### Step Two: Plan Ahead

Make the decisions about which rides you want to do first and in what order BEFORE you arrive to the parks. This will save time spent head scratching and figuring out where to go next throughout the morning. Mornings are the best times at Disneyland to get things done- don't waste them.

### Step Three: Purchase MaxPass

I can't stress enough how helpful MaxPass can be for booking those FastPass reservation times. You get access to canceled times, you can do it within seconds from your phone, and plus you get all those photo

downloads. It's a must, especially when the park is busy.

### Disneyland Touring Strategy

Check out our general touring strategy below on how to start your day off right at Disneyland.

- Grab **Space Mountain FastPass** with MaxPass when you enter the park
- Ride **Peter Pan**. (This ride is one of the most popular attractions in Fantasyland. The downside of that is the ride is slow loading and the lines for this ride move slowly as a result. If you are present at Rope Drop, line up facing Sleeping Beauty's castle. The entrance to Peter Pan will be on the right once you walk through the castle. Walk as quickly (no running, Disney rules!) as you can to snag a place in line. If you are not present at Rope Drop, save this ride for the evening rather than spend precious morning hours waiting in this line.)
- Ride **Star Tours- The Adventures Continue**
- Ride **Space Mountain** with FastPass
- Grab **Indiana Jones Adventure FastPass** or if you plan on park hopping to Disney California Adventure get a **MaxPass reservation for Radiator Springs Racers** as they run out quickly.
- Ride **Matterhorn Bobsleds**
- Grab a **snack** from the many food carts on the way to Adventureland when you pass through the park hub
- Ride **Haunted Mansion**
- Ride **Indiana Jones Adventure** with FastPass

- Grab **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad FastPass** with MaxPass
- Ride **Pirates of the Caribbean**
- Ride **Jungle Cruise**
- Grab a snack from the **Tropical Imports Stand** right across from the Jungle Cruise
- Walk around towards Big Thunder Mountain to the right side of the Tropical Imports Stand building to access the **restrooms** on the way
- Ride **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad** with FastPass
- Grab **Splash Mountain FastPass** with MaxPass
- Break for **lunch** and ride **Splash Mountain** with FastPass after lunch

As you can see, I always plan for snack breaks and bathroom breaks for my morning plans. Be realistic in what you can expect to get done. This morning strategy for Disneyland will take you through some of the most popular rides before lunchtime. Spend the afternoons doing the attractions with lower wait times and keep grabbing those FastPasses along the way!

This strategy doesn't take into account Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, that's a whole other plan! Read further in the guide to find out what the best strategy is for experiencing that land in a galaxy far, far away.

### California Adventure Morning Strategy

Check out our general touring strategy below on how to

start your day off right at California Adventure.

- Grab **Incredicoaster FastPass** with MaxPass once you enter the park
- Ride **Soarin'**
- Ride **Toy Story Midway Mania**
- Ride **Pixar's Pal-A-Round (Swinging or Non-Swinging)**
- Ride **Goofy's Fly School**
- Ride **Golden Zephyr**
- Ride **Silly Symphony Swings**
- Ride **Incredicoaster** with FastPass
- Grab **Radiator Springs Racers FastPass** with MaxPass
- Ride **Grizzly River Run** (This ride may get you WET! Prepare to ride this early in the morning if you have a rain poncho to throw over your clothes. If not and you don't want to get wet, skip this for later since FastPasses are usually available. But keep in mind ride wait times for this ride are extremely short in the morning and you can get cheap rain ponchos at the Dollar Store!)
- Ride **Mater's Junkyard Jamboree**
- Grab a quick healthy snack at **Fillmore's Taste-In** or if you prefer churros for breakfast grab a churro at the **Cozy Cone Motel**
- Take a bathroom break, if needed, along the way by **Flo's V8 Cafe**
- Ride **Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters**
- Ride **Radiator Springs Racers** with FastPass
- Grab **Guardians of the Galaxy- Mission: BREAKOUT! FastPass** with MaxPass
- Ride **Monsters, INC. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue!**

- Meet some **Marvel characters in Hollywood Land** if your group is interested in Marvel.
- If Marvel isn't your thing, break for **lunch** and ride **Guardians of the Galaxy-Mission: BREAKOUT!** after lunch.

As you can see, I always plan for snack breaks and bathroom breaks for my morning plans. Be realistic in what you can expect to get done. This morning strategy for California Adventure will take you through some of the most popular rides before lunchtime. Notice how I don't recommend bolting straight for Radiator Springs Racers? That's what most people do making that line chaotic in the morning- grab a FastPass for it and work through other low wait time rides instead. Spend your afternoons crossing other rides off your list and enjoying the entertainment options in the park.

### **Popular Rides with FastPass Options**

Even if you don't follow a touring strategy step by step, it's important to know which rides are likely to run out of their FastPass reservations and about what time they run out. This way you know what to prioritize and you don't miss out on anything!

The attractions most likely to run out of FastPass tickets, in order of popularity, are:

#### *In Disneyland:*

- Indiana Jones Adventure
- Space Mountain
- Matterhorn Bobsleds

- Star Tours
- Big Thunder Mountain
- Splash Mountain
- Haunted Mansion
- Roger Rabbit
- It's a small world
- Buzz Lightyear

#### *In Disney California Adventure:*

- Radiator Springs Racers
- Toy Story Midway Mania!
- Guardians of the Galaxy-Mission: BREAKOUT!
- Incredicoaster
- Soarin'
- Grizzly River Run
- Goofy's Fly School

**At the Disneyland Resort it is easy to jump back and forth between parks most days, so going in between parks multiple times to see parades or find shorter lines is not uncommon.**

## Using SingleRider Pass

### *What is SingleRider?*

Single Rider is basically a way to jump the lines of the best attractions at Disneyland. Your party is split up and put into individual ride cars for the attraction. This is the only downside to using the SingleRider line.

### *Why was it created?*

Disney created the single rider line in order to make sure that every time they sent a ride vehicle into an attraction, it would have every seat filled. Because people often go to Disneyland in large groups, the numbers don't always match the amount of people that fit into a ride vehicle. Therefore, Disneyland would fill up the ride vehicles with extra people or single riders that have are in the single rider line.

### *How to Use it?*

Meet the Cast Member at the front of the attraction entrance and request to use SingleRider for the attraction. They will more times than not walk you over to the exit of the attraction or gesture to the SingleRider entrance. They'll give each person a card then you walk to be seated on the attraction.

SingleRider is offered here:

### *In Disneyland:*

- Splash Mountain
- Indiana Jones Adventure
- Matterhorn Bobsleds
- Indiana Jones Adventure

### *In Disney California Adventure:*

- Incredicoaster
- Grizzly River Run
- Goofy's Sky School
- Radiator Springs Racers

## Using Rider Swap Pass

The Rider Swap service was created to allow guests with young children to trade off watching the child with one adult riding the more intense attraction and the other waiting with the child. Then, the roles will be reversed. This way all adults who meet the height requirement and desire to can experience top attractions like the Indiana Jones Adventure, which is too scary for younger members of the group.

When you walk up to the attraction, tell the Cast Member at the front of the queue that you want to use Rider Swap. The Cast Member will have your entire group walk up through the line after handing you a



Rider Swap card. Once you reach the loading point, one adult will enjoy the attraction while the other one stays with the child. Then, they can switch.

A third adult or child who fits the requirements for the attraction, can ride the attraction twice. Once with each switching adult. Rider Swap is available at these attractions:

### *In Disneyland:*

- Autopia
- Big Thunder Mountain
- Gadget's Go Coaster
- Indiana Jones
- Matterhorn
- Space Mountain
- Splash Mountain
- Star Tours

### *In Disney California Adventure:*

- Incredicoaster
- Goofy's Sky School
- Grizzly River Run
- Guardians of the Galaxy-Mission: BREAKOUT!
- Radiator Springs Racers
- Silly Symphony Swings
- Soarin'
- Jumpin' Jellyfish
- Luigi's Rollick Roadsters

- Mater's Junkyard Jamboree

## **Using Official Disneyland Social Accounts**

Also be sure to check out the official Disneyland social accounts designed to help guests in the parks. These accounts give out information and are a direct link to Disneyland Guest Relations. The [@DisneylandToday](#) twitter account is meant to improve your guest experience. They will answer any question that you Tweet their direction.

## **Disneyland App For You**

Disney offers a **free app** that has the official Disneyland wait times and FastPass return times constantly updating. This app is perfect for planning your next steps throughout the day when you don't want to waste time walking to all corners of Disneyland and Disney California Adventure to check out wait times and FastPass return times. This is the app you use when you purchase MaxPass too, it's essential to have!

## **Game to Play In Line**

There are a few attractions throughout Disneyland that will always have a line, regardless of when you show up to enjoy them. We have found that a great way to pass the time in line is to whip out the Heads Up app. This fun app is verbal charades with one member of the group trying to guess an item, while the rest of the group acts out that item. This is a race against the clock to see how



many items you can guess before time runs out. The game is extremely fun and sometimes others in line even end up joining in.

The app is 99 cents in the app store. This purchase is totally worth the fun it provides in line. There is a free add on pack of Disney characters and attractions you can download once you are in Disneyland. [Purchase the app.](#)

## Disneyland Books to Make Lines Go By Faster

While you are waiting in line at Disneyland often times people need things to do. Especially if you hit a long long line, which you undoubtedly will. We love these books that help us to pass the time as we wait in Disneyland's lines.

My personal favorite book is Steven Barrett's *Guide to Disneyland's Hidden Mickeys*. Inside of the book you will find information on the camouflaged images of the Mickey Mouse the Walt Disney Imagineers hid throughout Disneyland as they were building it. (Great read!) [Purchase it here.](#)

Also checkout *Lots to Do in Line: Disneyland Edition*, which provides activities for

everyone to do in each specific line. The goal of the book is to keep everyone in the group interested while pointing out the specific details of the different parts of the park. [Purchase the book here.](#)

### PRO TIP:

#### DISCOVER SECRETS OF DISNEYLAND

I would be remiss if I didn't mention my own book: *Disneyland Secrets: A Grand Tour of Disneyland's Hidden Details*. The book features stories and secrets from each land of the resort. You will learn fun facts and history that will help you appreciate the parks even more and enhance the magic.

You can find the book on Amazon.

[Purchase the book here.](#)

(If you are a Disney fan and want more recommendations, check out my [full Disney fan library book list.](#))

# STAR WARS: GALAXY'S EDGE

## What is Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge?

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is the largest expansion the Disneyland Resort has ever seen. Walt Disney Imagineering, the group that designs all Disney theme parks, has worked tirelessly to make Star Wars Land the most impressive step forward in theme parks we have seen in years. The new land will be fully immersive into the canon and story of Star Wars. The new land will feature two new attractions, new dining options including the first ever restaurant to sell alcohol inside the Disneyland resort, and plenty of shopping experiences. This new land is situated behind the Rivers of America and Frontierland inside the Disneyland resort.

### *What are the rides like inside Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge?*

The first ride that opened inside the new land is called the Millennium Falcon: Smuggler's Run. On this interactive Millennium Falcon ride, aspiring pilots can test their skills and maneuver Han Solo's beloved ship through a mission while shooting blasters and thrusting into hyperspace. Just like other Disney interactive rides, such as Toy Story: Midway Mania, guests will be rated on how well they pilot. Guests get time to explore the inside of the Millennium Falcon before their group is called to pilot the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy.

The other ride, Rise of the Resistance, has been delayed to opening later in 2019. This trackless ride is said to be on a scale of that Disney has never seen before as guests are caught between a battle between the First Order and the Resistance. Guests will feel like they are hurtling through a massive Star Destroyer as they are being pursued by the First Order. In one scene of the experience they will face massive two story tall AT-AT figures and dodge through their legs below. Watch out for Kylo Ren!

### *What dining is available?*

Disney's dedication to immersive storytelling is clear when you look at the shopping and dining experiences available in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge. The main restaurant, Docking Bay 7 Food and Cargo, features an out of the world 'farm to table' inspired experience with unique food options like smoked country sticky pork rib with blueberry corn muffin, sustainable Dijon crusted fish,

and a vegetarian 'meatloaf' option. The main talk of the town in Black Spire Outpost, the name of this village guests can visit, is Oga's Cantina. The theme of this cantina is inspired by Tatooine's Mos Eisley Cantina and features the only place in the Disneyland park where you can buy alcohol. Listen to a droid DJ play tunes while you enjoy a variety of alien drinks including non-alcoholic version along with beer and wine made specially for the land. You will also find stands around the land featuring pork wraps and jerky, popcorn, and the famous Blue Milk featured in the Star Wars films.

*What shopping options are available?*

The shopping options in this land are endless- you may want to plan ahead before you blow your souvenir budget in one swoop. Guests can make and purchase customized droids, adopt alien creatures, find authentic Star Wars inspired outfits and gear. The biggest seller in this land is Savi's Workshop that seeks to offer an immersive experience of guests learning the ways of the Force as they create their own lightsaber. This workshop is in a secret location- you must find the clues in the land to prove your worth!

### **Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge Strategy**

**Continue Reading:** If You Need Recommendations on Food  
**Flip to Page 75:** If You Already Have Your Dining Figured Out

# SAVING MONEY ON FOOD

One of the most expensive parts of a Disneyland vacation is the food costs. Our strategy to minimize the food costs by only enjoying one sit down meal per day in Disneyland and relying on counter service or hotel food for the rest of the time.

To do this we bring breakfast items from home or purchase breakfast in the coffee shop of our hotel as well as bringing snack and protein bars so that a large sit down lunch isn't always required. The other benefit to carrying snacks is taking advantage of the short attraction lines that often exist during the lunchtime timeframe of 11am-1pm.

## ***What about the policy?***

Officially there is a no outside food policy that states "with the exception of food items for Guests with specific dietary restrictions, food or beverage items are not permitted into either of the Disneyland Resort theme parks." This policy is very loosely enforced. Feel free to bring in small items that fit inside of a backpack and can be stored inside of a plastic bag. Think: trail mix, sandwiches, granola bars, juice boxes, plastic water bottles.

No Disney Cast Member will mention anything to you about your food so long as you avoid making a mess and taking up tables and chairs from restaurants in the parks. Generally we eat our mid morning snack food in line as we are walking. You definitely want something easy to eat quickly and nothing time consuming to eat.

There are a couple of items that are absolute NOs in the parks. You will not be allowed to bring in large coolers, glass containers, alcoholic beverages, loose ice, or hard-sided coolers. If you would prefer to completely follow the rules, there is a picnic area outside of the main gate with lockers nearby that can accommodate food and coolers.

With the amount that we save by not eating breakfast in the parks and only having a limited lunch, you can feel justified in a more relaxed dinner when the lines are longest and when you need a break.

Also, make sure to bring a water bottle with you. You can fill this up throughout the day with any of the easy water bottle fillers or with free ice water. Inside Disneyland Park you can find water bottle fillers at Tomorrowland Terrace, Rancho Del Zocalo, the French Market, and the Plaza Inn. Disney California Adventure Park does not have any water bottle fillers. I have found that the best place to fill water bottles with cold water is the Wine Country Trattoria bathroom. At any of the counter service restaurants, you can request a free large cup of water with ice. If you need the taste of a flavored beverage, you can bring flavor packets to dump into your water to avoid the exorbitant soda costs.

### PRO TIP: FREE SODA REFILLS

**If you are a soda drinker, be aware that the Plaza Inn, Rancho del Zocalo, and Pizza Port all give free refills on soda and a to-go cup for after the meal is over.**

It is easy to spend quite a bit on meals out at night. The Disneyland Annual Pass provides discounts of at least 10% that pays for itself if you are spending enough on dining and souvenirs over the course of your trip.

Consider purchasing an Annual Pass for just one member of your group.

Keep in mind that restaurants inside of Disneyland Park do not offer any alcoholic beverages at any restaurant. All other locations outside of Disneyland Park sell alcohol at all sit down restaurants.

Based on our recommendation of eating breakfast at your hotel, below are our suggestions for restaurants for both lunch and dinner at the Disneyland Resort.

## Disneyland Park

- \$ Hungry Bear Restaurant- Very good fried food, chicken fingers, burgers, fast food type.
- \$ Rancho de Zocalo Restaurante- Fantastic Mexican food. Good salads and variety of types of Spanish cuisine.
- \$ Bengal Barbecue– Great roasted food. Includes skewered chicken and pork. Bacon wrapped asparagus are one of our three favorite Disneyland treats.

## Disney California Adventure Park

- \$\$ Wine Country Trattoria- Great sit-down lunch with a view over Cars Land.
- \$ Cocina Cucamonga Mexican Grill- food is similar to the Rancho de Zocalo in Disneyland
- \$ Corn Dog Castle– No trip to Disneyland is complete without a Corn Dog from Corn Dog Castle.
- \$-\$\$ Flo's V8 Cafe- Pretty good sit down meal with food similar to that which you would find along Route 66. Lots of gravy and home style cooking.
- \$ Boardwalk Pizza and Pasta- Offers a great variety of salads, pizza, and pastas that are a great break from the fried food. Stay and sit in the shaded garden seating area adjacent to Goofy's Sky School.

### PRO TIP: ORDER À LA CARTE

**During my last visit to Disneyland I was appalled to see a child who had just received his order of corn dog with a side of apples throw away the apples with the rest of the container. If only the child knew he was throwing away almost three dollars. Disneyland menus only present full meals, however you can purchase individual items à la carte.**

## Downtown Disney District and Disneyland Hotels

- \$ Earl of Sandwich– Exquisite sandwiches in the widest of varieties. Also, Earl of Sandwich is a great place to sit down in Downtown Disney as it has covered seating.
- \$ White Water Snacks- Inside of Grand Californian Hotel, just outside of the hotel entrance to Disney California Adventure. Good variety lunch, also has convenience store.
- \$ La Brea Bakery- Located just outside of the main security checkpoint to enter the esplanade, the La Brea Bakery is an awesome deli with great hot soups, sandwiches, and flat breads. This is a great lunch option just a few steps from the parks.

The Disneyland restaurants mentioned above are great quick service and counter service restaurants. Below we have included the best sit down restaurants at the Disneyland Resort.

## Disneyland Park

- \$\$\$ Blue Bayou– The only restaurant worth mentioning from Disneyland is the Blue Bayou. It is located inside of the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction. The atmosphere is a little dark and the food is not as good as it used to be. Go to restaurants in the other park and hotels instead.

## Disney California Adventure Park

- \$\$\$ Carthay Circle Restaurant– Fantastic restaurant that was built during the Disney California Adventure renovation. It is a combination of the finest restaurants in the US. If you are ready for a fancy meal, this is the perfect place.

## Downtown Disney

- \$\$ Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen- Often times has a live jazz band playing and features southern dishes. Very good dinner spot. Sometimes is very loud.
- \$\$ Catal Restaurant- Very good Spanish tapas type cuisine, but with big portions. The food is unique, but delicious.

- \$\$ Naples Ristorante e Pizzeria- Quiet sanctuary with fantastic Italian food and hand thrown pizzas. Very good thin crust pizza.

## Disneyland Hotel

- \$\$\$ Steakhouse 55- Rivals the best steakhouses across the US in flavor and cut of beef. While they aren't on the menu, request onion rings. These were the best onion rings I've ever had.

## Disney's Grand Californian Hotel

- \$\$\$ Napa Rose- One of the finest restaurants on Disneyland Resort property. Variety of the best food in the world. Sit at the Chef's table to have a unique experience designed to fit the needs of each person.
- \$\$ Storyteller's Cafe- Great dinner buffet that serves food that is good for adults and children. Fun spot to eat.

Once you make up your mind on where you want to eat, be sure to make a reservation. You may either call Disney Dining directly at (714) 781-3463 or make the reservation online.



Be aware that there is a cancellation fee if you do not cancel the reservation within 24 hours of your scheduled meal time. The fee is \$10 per member of the party.

## You can also reach these restaurants directly at the numbers below:

### Catal Restaurant: (714) 774-4442

- Crossroads at House of Blues: (714) 520-2334
- La Brea Bakery Cafe: (714) 490-0233  
Phone reservations may only be made for same day bookings.
- Naples Ristorante e Pizzeria: (714) 776-6200
- Rainforest Cafe: (714) 772-0413 Reservations may be made for lunch or dinner.
- Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen: (714) 776-5200
- Tortilla Jo's: (714) 535-5000

## Mobile Ordering at Disneyland

One of the unexpected ways you can end up waiting in line when the parks are crowded are when you are getting food! Learning how to use mobile ordering is another great way you can maximize your time at Disneyland. All you need is the Disneyland app and a Disney account. Make sure you link a credit card to the account in advance, so you're all set to go when you arrive.

- So you can find the mobile ordering feature by clicking the + icon at the bottom of the screen and it will bring

up a menu.

- Click on 'Order Food' and this will take you the list of restaurants that offer Mobile Ordering at Disneyland. Now you are brought to a new screen that allows you to choose a restaurant that offers Mobile Ordering.
- Now select the restaurant of your choice and your return window. The return window is basically the time you want to be able to pick up your food.
- Tap the food items that you want and this will bring you to a second page and with some items (burger/sandwiches/etc) where you can ask for modifications (like no onions, hold the cheese, etc.)
- Once you're finished with your order, you will be taken to the order summary page where you can review your order and the cost. If you're an AP holder, this is where you will enter your discount.
- If everything looks good, just tap 'Purchase' and you'll be good to go!

**So now you're ready for the final step- picking up your food! Once you arrive at the restaurant, pull up the Disney app, and tap on the 'I'm Here, Prepare My Order' prompt that will show Your order won't be made until you arrive and tap this button so no worries about your food being made too far in advance and sitting out to get old.**

**Every restaurant that offers Mobile Ordering will have a clear sign that says 'Mobile Ordering'- once your order is ready, your app will buzz, and you can head to the counter to pick up your food.**

**You can also cancel a Mobile Order or change the arrival window easily through the app so if you get held up or change your mind- no worries!**

### **Mobile Ordering Option at Disneyland**

**Here are the quick service dining options at Disneyland that offer mobile ordering via the Disneyland app.**

- Bengal Barbecue
- Edelweiss Snacks
- Galactic Grill
- Gibson Girl Ice Cream Parlor
- Harbour Galley
- Jolly Holiday Bakery Café
- Hungry Bear Restaurant
- Red Rose Taverne
- Refreshment Corner
- Royal Street Veranda
- Stage Door Café
- Tiki Juice Bar
- Milk Stand- Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge
- Docking Bay 7 and Cargo- Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge
- Ronto Roasters- Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

### **Mobile Ordering at California Adventure**

**Here are the quick service dining options at California Adventure that offer mobile ordering via the Disneyland app.**

- **Award Wieners**
- **Bayside Brews**
- **Clarabelle's Hand-Scooped Ice Cream**
- **Cocina Cucmonga Mexican Grill**
- **Corn Dog Castle**
- **Flo's V-8 Café**
- **Lucky Fortune Cookery**
- **Paradise Garden Grill**
- **Pacific Wharf Café**
- **Smokejumpers Grill**

**Mobile ordering is just another way to maximize time at the Disneyland resort. When the parks get crowded then the food lines get long!**

**It always pains me to see so many guests standing in line for quick service food when they could easily utilize mobile ordering options.**

**Read our full guide on mobile ordering [here](#) to see step by step with screenshots from the app.**

**Flip to Page 63: If You Want to Skip Info on Character Dining**

## Character Meals

The final option for eating in the parks is to have a Character meal. In Disney Character meals, Disney characters circulate to each table to say hello, sign autographs, and pose for pictures.

Character Dining is one of the quintessential experiences of a Disneyland vacation. During the character meal, different characters move from table to table mingling with the guests, signing autographs, and posing for pictures. Disneyland offers multiple character experiences centering around different themes. The different restaurants vary in serving style with some offering buffet service and others providing table service. The characters at each character dining meal are based on the overall theme of the restaurant.

Below you will find information on every Disneyland character dining experience, my top tips on how to get the most out of the characters at each of the Disneyland character meals, and how you can get at least 10% off the bill.

### *Should You Book a Disneyland Character Dining Meal?*

Disneyland Character Dining is more expensive than other restaurants on resort property and more difficult to

reserve. However, these character meals are the perfect way to meet quite a few characters without waiting in long lines inside the parks. You will also have much more quality time with the characters during the meals, because they spend quite a bit of time at each table.

Keep in mind that small children may be overwhelmed by characters who wear masks. If you know this will be the case, I recommend checking out some of the other non-character dining options.

### *Disneyland Character Dining Restaurants*

Below you will find Disneyland Character Dining reviews of each restaurant explaining where the experience is located, what food they serve, which meals are offered, which characters you will find, and who will enjoy the meal options.

Each Disney Character Dining experience is graded as either premium or regular. Aside from a difference in price, these ratings simply define the difference in meals, with breakfast considered “regular.”

There are five character dining experiences throughout the

Disneyland Resort. There is one located in Disneyland and one in each hotel.

### **Disney Princess Breakfast Adventures**

*Where?* Napa Rose at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel.

*What do they serve?* This will be a three-course breakfast option featuring cold starters, hot offerings for kids like house made mac & cheese or Princess waffles, hot offerings for adults like shephard's pie or slow braised short ribs, and side dishes such as roasted seasonal vegetables, heirloom potatoes, artisan breakfast sausage, bangers, and more. Also includes is a large dessert menu featuring chocolate princess cake pops, white chocolate slipper with strawberry ganache, petite fruit tarts, and more.

*What characters are here?* During breakfast Princesses such as Belle, Tiana, Ariel, Jasmine and others arrive to greet and make memories with families.

After breakfast, Princesses will share storytelling moments featuring tales of empowerment out on the patio.

The experience concludes with a photo portrait opportunity with the Princesses and premium keepsakes for guests to remember this inspirational day. Children will receive character autograph books and pens along with a choice of princess crown necklace or sword. Adults will get the gift of chocolates to take home.

*Who Should Go?* This is a high cost character experience- only the most devoted Princess fans should partake. This is a great option for special occasions like birthdays, first visits, or anniversaries.

*What costs are involved?* The price for this meal is \$125 per person (adults and children) not including tax or gratuity. Since it is at a Disneyland Resort Hotel, no park admission is required.

### **Goofy's Kitchen at Disneyland Hotel**

*Where?* In the Disneyland Hotel located just a couple steps from the lobby and next to Steakhouse 55.

*What do they serve?* Goofy's Kitchen is a buffet style meal with food that appeals to kids and adults alike. The food changes between dinner and lunch. I highly recommend the peanut butter pizza.

*Who should go?* Everyone! This is our favorite Disney character meal. This meal can be a great mid-day break

from visiting Disneyland. The best time to visit Goofy's Kitchen is when you are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or something else special. But, as Disney recently said, there is always something worth celebrating. Any visit to Goofy's Kitchen is a good one.

*What characters are here?* Goofy's Kitchen is home to Goofy and a variety of other random characters. In the past we have seen characters including Pluto, Baloo from the Jungle Book, Aladdin and Jasmine, Alice from Alice in Wonderland, Chip or Dale, and Pinocchio. In the evening, Minnie Mouse might be found here.

***What costs are involved?* This Disneyland character dining experience is a “premium character dining experience,” however it does not require park admission because it is located inside the Disneyland hotel.**

### **Breakfast With Minnie and Friends**

*Where?* Right off of the hub in Disneyland park, on the Tomorrowland side, at the Plaza Inn. (Must have theme park ticket to visit this character dining experience.)

*What do they serve?* The Plaza Inn serves a hot breakfast buffet, a step up from what you would find at a Doubletree or other hotel.

*Who should go?* Many people really like Breakfast With Minnie and Friends, but I would prefer to eat at one of the other character dining experiences. I would recommend eating at Chip and Dale's Critter Breakfast for the same price instead. Remember though, the morning is the best time to get on attractions character breakfasts take up precious time. Checkout other character dining options on this page.

*What characters are here?* A whole mixture of characters can be found here including Minnie Mouse, Eeyore, Gepetto, Captain Hook, Genie, and Rafiki.

*What costs are involved?* This restaurant is located inside Disneyland Park and requires park admission.

### **Mickey's Tales of Adventure Breakfast at Storyteller's Cafe**

*Where?* Disney's Grand Californian Hotel in Storyteller's Cafe.

*What do they serve?* Mickey's Tales of Adventure Breakfast is a buffet style meal that has food that appeals to kids and adults alike. The buffet is great here. The best of the Disneyland Character Breakfasts. Great Caramel French Toast.

*Who should go?* This is the only breakfast where you can meet Mickey Mouse. This is a great reason to go, simply

because you will avoid the long lines to meet Mickey Mouse in Toontown. It is a good idea to have an early breakfast here before hitting the parks or a late breakfast on the final day of your trip when you don't purchase park admission.

*What characters are here?* The only confirmed character you'll see at Mickey's Tales of Adventure Breakfast is Mickey Mouse himself, who'll take you through immersive tales through his magical Adventurer's Journal. You will likely also see Minnie Mouse, Chip n Dale, and Pluto.

*What costs are involved?* This Disneyland character dining experience does not require park tickets as it is located in the Grand Californian Hotel.

### **Donald Duck's Seaside Character Breakfast**

*Where?* Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel at the PCH Grill.

*What do they serve?* This breakfast buffet features a wide variety of breakfast items, including build-your-own parfait stations, signature flatbreads, egg white frittatas, and more high-end breakfast items for adults, as well as more traditional options like Mickey waffles and Bananas Foster French Toast for younger visitors.

*Who should go?* Fans of Donald and Daisy Duck will definitely enjoy the experience, which puts them at the forefront of the Breakfast. As for big Stitch fans, this is the only way to meet him outside of the Visa Meet and Greet in California Adventure.

*What characters are here?* You will be guaranteed to see Donald, Daisy and Stitch at this breakfast.

*What costs are involved?* This Disneyland character dining experience doesn't require park tickets as it is located in the Paradise Pier Hotel.

### ***When to Enjoy a Disney Character Meal?***

Schedule your Disney Character Dining as either a late breakfast or lunch. For years, our tradition was enjoying Goofy's Kitchen to celebrate a birthday. On these days, we would go into the park early using Extra Magic Hour or Magic Morning and then exit the park right around 9:30 or 10 am just as the huge crowds were arriving. As I tell you in our guide to maximizing your time at Disneyland, these first couple of hours in the parks are extremely valuable for riding the most popular attractions in the parks. Lunch is a perfect option to escape the crowds and weather during the busy months of the year. Actually, I always recommend booking a meal to escape the crowds.

## ***Booking a Disneyland Character Dining Meal Voucher***

First, make your reservation for your Disneyland character meal. Reservations are highly recommended for the character dining experiences. While I prefer to call—the number is (714) 781-3463—you can book all Disneyland restaurant reservations online. (See tip #7 below for other advice when booking.)

The only higher discount for dining comes with the purchase of the two top tier Disneyland annual passports where the passholder receives 15% off at most dining locations throughout the Disneyland Resort. (See info on the other Disneyland annual pass benefits at the bottom of our tickets page.)



## 9 Tips To Make the Most of Your Disney Character Dining Experience

These are a couple of my top tips to make the most of your character dining experience.

- **Respect The Character's Time:** Be on the lookout for the characters as they are coming around the room. If you see a character approaching, wait to take another trip to the buffet or restroom. Get ready for the character by having cameras on and autograph books out. The more you have ready, the more quality time you will have with the Disney character.
- **Autograph Book:** Be sure to bring an autograph book with you to the character dining meal you choose. These books really engage your children and will have them looking forward to seeing each character. After purchasing the book, this is something free they can collect to really make the experience that much better. You can purchase a Disney autograph book in advance to save money over the prices charged at the parks. See all of our tips on souvenirs [here](#).
- **Consider MaxPass:** If just one person in your party purchases MaxPass for \$15 per day, you can get unlimited access to photo downloads which can be great for getting your photos at a lower cost from your character dining experience.
- **Don't Promise Any Character:** The only characters that are guaranteed to appear at any one Disney Character Meal are the ones who the experience is named after. I don't think I have ever been to Goofy's Kitchen and not seen Goofy, but just in case, I wouldn't get too excited about any one character.
- **Tell Them What You Want:** Be sure to let the character know what photos and signatures you want from them right when they arrive at your table. This will ensure that they don't leave before you have gotten all of those different groupings of people in photos and each autograph book signed.
- **Don't Freeze Up:** For some reason I will often freeze up around characters and just stop talking. Interact like it's a regular conversation and join into the story with them. This is especially fun for the face characters who will get into big conversations with you. We have had quite fun conversations with Peter Pan and the Fairy Godmother once I loosened up.
- **Remind the Character If You Have Met:** If you have met the character previously, remind them of your previous meetings. Ask them how they have been and really get the conversation going. This will start them along the path of checking in with you about how you have been since your last meeting.

- **Tell Your Waiter If You Are Celebrating Or Need Anything:** Let your waiter know if you have any special circumstances. This can mean that you are enjoying a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, or first visit to the parks or could be that you need special care because of a certain allergy or food preference. In both of these situations, the restaurant staff will be especially helpful. Keep in mind that you can also make special notes when booking your dining reservations (info above).
- **Costumes Are Just Fine For Most:** The character meal is the perfect time to break out the costume if your son or daughter wants to dress as their favorite characters. It can go either way, a majority of those in costume are young guests dressed like princesses. *(Disneyland recently updated their costume rules to state that costumes are allowed for anyone under the age of 14.)*
- **Bonus:** If you are looking for any other specific characters, check out the Disneyland App, which is now available to track characters in the parks. This will help you to find characters you didn't get to meet at your character meal.

## Dietary Constraints

Guests with severe allergies, those requiring kosher meals, or those on restricted diets can arrange assistance at City Hall in Disneyland or the Chamber of Commerce at Disney California Adventure. Gluten Free options are also listed there. If you are dining at a Disneyland Resort Restaurant, then call the restaurant at least one day in advance for assistance at (714) 781-3463.

## Booking a Meal at Disneyland

To book a meal reservation at the Disneyland Resort, head to the official Disneyland website or call the reservation hotline at (714) 781-3463.

### PRO TIP:

Read our full guide to dining at Disneyland [here](#) to read about dining packages, dietary restrictions, reviews, and more!

**Continue Reading:** For Souvenir Recommendations and Money Saving Tips

**Flip to Page 79:** If You Don't Plan on Buying Souvenirs

# DISNEYLAND SOUVENIRS

The Disney Store website sells Disneyland items at a discounted price. Purchase some early and use the items to get your family excited about your trip. See the Disney Store [here](#).

Below we have listed out what we believe are the best Disneyland souvenirs. They include items for every price range.

## Disney Pin Trading

Disney pins are small metal images with a pin back depicting characters or Disney attractions from the parks typically displayed on a lanyard worn around your neck. Disney pin trading is a program where guests interact with cast members and other park guests.

To participate, one must purchase an official Disney pin and then find a cast member with a set of Disney pins of their own. Approach the Disney cast member and request to trade pins. Indicate the pin that you would like to trade for and give them the one you would like to exchange. Cast Members honor all trading requests whereas other guests may only trade for a pin they want.

## At Pin Trading Locations

Pin Trading Cast Member's will be wearing a lanyard and are always happy to see what you have to trade. All you have to do is find a pin that they have that you want and exchange it for one of your pins. But never reach out and grab a lanyard for a closer look! Always ask the CM to present the pin you want to see for a closer look. A CM will never say 'No' and so you'll soon have a new pin to add to your collection! Just remember that the pin you want to trade should not already be on the Cast Member's lanyard.

While at a merchandise location, if you don't see a Cast Member with a pin lanyard, ask at the checkout instead. Sometimes they will have a pad under the counter with a selection of pins for trading. You can follow the same process to obtain one of these. And I do mean 'one'. It's generally the rule to trade only one pin from a Cast Member's lanyard or pad, although some Cast Members who aren't too busy may bend this friendly rule for a

polite Guest. I have heard this rule bent often from some Cast Members that I have talked to.

Cast Members may refuse to trade if your pin is not part of the Pin Trading program. Pins that qualify should be a cloisonné, semi-cloisonné, or of hard-enamel or an acceptable operating participant pin that represents a specific Disney event, place or location, character or icon. ESPN and ABC pins are also tradable. But remember: The Cast Member will make a final decision, which it is only good trading etiquette to accept! No arguing, please.

### **Classic Disneyland Mouse Ears**

Since the beginning of Disneyland, the classic black Mickey Mouse ears have been the perfect souvenir. While Disney does sell crazy looking themed ears, I suggest sticking with all black. Have the entire family purchase ears, and for no additional charge get each of your names embroidered.

### ***Get your name embroidered on your hat at:***

*The Mad Hatter Shop:* This crazy hat store actually has two locations. One on Main Street just as you enter the park, and the second in Fantasyland adjacent to the Mad Tea Party.

*Hatmosphere:* This small hat shop in Tomorrowland is another great place to get your pair of Mickey Ears and have them embroidered.

### **Disney Silhouettes**

On Main Street in Disneyland, visit the Disney Silhouette Studio and get a hand-cut a silhouette of you or your child's head. For \$9.45 a person you get two identical copies of your silhouettes.

The skill of the artisan Cast Members is absolutely amazing. They can outline any head with a hat or without to create an inexpensive souvenir that you will want to to keep forever.

### **Disneyland Pressed Pennies**

Around the park there are machines that will press your penny into a design representing Disneyland. For

example, in the shop next to Pirates of the Caribbean a guest can get a penny stamped out to have the “Dead Men Tell No Tales” saying imprinted.

To get a pressed penny it costs 51 cents. One penny to get pressed and two quarters to pay. Make sure that you have shiny pennies, because the designs look the best on those. There are also pressed quarter machines that cost more.

Purchase a pressed penny book in Disneyland to collect pennies from all of the machines around the parks.

If you visit Guest Relations at Disneyland, you can pick up a map of all of the different locations to get a Disneyland pressed penny.

### **Disneyland Name Paintings**

In Disneyland adjacent to the Matterhorn and at a kiosk in Downtown Disney, Disney sells watercolor paintings of your name.

The price is about \$5 per letter. Each letter is illustrated to look like a certain Disney movie or Disney character. One letter name squares are also available.

***Where to put the souvenirs once you have them....***

- Lockers are available at both parks for \$7-\$15 per day in both of the theme parks.
- If you plan to spend at least 2 more hours in the theme park, have your purchase be sent to the front gate at Package Pickup. Just stop by Package Pickup as you leave the park at the end of the day. In Disneyland, packages can be picked up at the newsstand on the Downtown Disney side (right side) of the area between the turnstiles and the train station. In Disney California Adventure, packages can be picked up at the front of the park. You can also just walk the packages here yourself to check them for the rest of the day. You must have a receipt for the purchase and the item may not be limited edition.

### **Disney Character Autographs**

Throughout Disneyland and Disney California Adventure you will see Disney characters. These characters are all available for photographs and most will also give you their autograph.

The Disney Characters will give you a fun Disney autograph. It is a very good idea to have a Disney autograph book to keep all of your autographs in. Autograph books can be found on [DisneyStore.com](http://DisneyStore.com). I suggest purchasing one online in advance to save time and to choose the perfect one. Here is a [direct link to the autograph book options](#).

When you are in the parks ask the characters to only sign their autograph on the right page and leave the left side pages open. Take a picture of your child with the character and add it to the left page. It makes for a great way to keep your photographs.

### **Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge**

The shopping inside Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is truly amazing and any Star Wars fan must dedicate time to seeing the store experiences. One fan favorite is Savi's Workshop where you can build high quality and custom lightsabers in an interactive experience of discovering the Force. These tend to be a bit pricey though so if you're looking for more affordable options, building a customized droid is a more moderate option or check out the Toydarian Toymaker for items like wooden stormtroopers or dice/card sets.

### **Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique - Makeovers For Your Girls**

The Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique is a princess salon meant just for young girls and boys. At the boutique a fairy godmother in training will transform them into a princess or prince complete with costume and fantastic hair-do.

Also included in a visit is a FastPass to cut the line at the Princess Fantasy Faire to meet with three Disneyland Princesses. (Check on current information at the time of

**Continue Reading: If You Are Celebrating a Birthday During Your Trip**

**Flip to Page 69: If You Aren't Celebrating Anything Special**

booking.)

### **Some Quick Tips**

1. Make a reservation up to 60 days before the time that you want to have their makeover done. This experience is very popular. Be sure to make a reservation before your trip.

#### **PRO TIP:**

#### **BRING YOUR OWN DRESS**

**Bring your own princess costume to avoid paying the high prices in the parks. When you arrive at the salon, be sure to let them know that you have your own dress.**

2. Sadly adults can't enjoy this fantastic service because there is a rule banning any adult from dressing up at Disneyland because they will look too much like the Disneyland Cast Members.

3. Be sure to take lots of pictures and enjoy the experience through their eyes.

**To book your visit to the salon call: 1-714-781-DINE .** You can now make reservations online for the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique up to 60 days in advance by clicking [here](#).



# CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY AT DISNEYLAND

Disneyland is the perfect place to celebrate anything from a wedding anniversary to birthday. When you are booking your trip, don't be shy about what you will be celebrating during your trip. Make sure that the front desk agent, your travel agent, waitress, and any other Cast Members know that you are celebrating a special birthday. There is no guarantee that anything will happen, but sometimes miracles occur on people's special days.

## Disneyland Birthday Celebration Button

Make sure to pick up special buttons proclaiming what you are celebrating like a Birthday button, Anniversary button, or even a 1st visit to Disneyland button.

You can find a buttons at the front desk of your Disneyland Resort hotel or by visiting City Hall or Guest Relations upon entering Disneyland park.

Throughout the day, you will hear Cast Members congratulating you on your special day. Special surprises may follow. In the past we have been given free ice cream sundaes, sung Happy Birthday by the Dapper Dans, and called up to star in park shows. Magic might happen when you wear your button.

## Cakes, Gift Baskets, and Special Surprises

Guest of the Disneyland Resort hotels can order cakes, gift baskets, and floral arrangements to be sent to the hotel room from the **Disney Dream Makers**. The cakes can be served at any of the Resort Hotel restaurants. The cakes can't be served at any Downtown Disney or Disney Theme Park Restaurants.

**Call 714-300-PLAN (7526) or room service upon arrival to order.**



## Special Birthday Hat

Every time that we visit Disneyland for my birthday, we pull out our big Disneyland birthday cake hat. Decorated with candles that actually blink this is always one of my favorite ways to celebrate my birthday.

## Special Autographs

Bringing an unsigned birthday card can make a fantastic souvenir if you take it to one of the many Disneyland character meet and greets and have a character like your pal Mickey Mouse sign it.

**Continue Reading: If You Have Children**

**Flip to Page 73: If You Aren't Travelling With Children**

# TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

It is very easy to lose a child while touring the Disneyland parks. In the short guide below we outline some of the simple steps to use to keep everyone together and avoid losing kids at Disneyland.

The most crowded time of the day is right before or after a special parade or show where lots of people have been bunched up. Before leaving the show, take your little kids by the hand and keep them close to you. Especially during the mad rush to leave the parks right around 8:30-9:30pm be sure to know right where your kids are.

## PRO TIP: TATTOO YOUR CHILD

**Make sure your child has your phone number with them at all times. There are incredible new temporary tattoos that let you easily put your phone number directly on your child without hurting their skin or having it wash off.**

**SafetyTat** is my favorite of these services.

**You should check this out.**

## Tips to Avoid the Loss of Children

- Wear bright colored unique clothing that is easy to locate in a crowd. Have everyone in the group wear the same unique hat or Mouse Ears.
- Set up a meeting place for the entire family at the beginning of the day for both parks. Make sure that the meeting place is within the gates of each park. Physically walk to that place and pick out an exact spot. Most of the big landmarks like the castle have many different areas so your child could be confused if you just say, "Big Thunder Mountain." Make sure they know to go to the exact bench you want to meet at.
- Introduce your child to a Disneyland Cast Member when you first enter the park, point out their Cast Member name badge and explain that anyone who has these badges could help them if they were to be lost.
- Program cell phones to vibrate and keep them in your front pocket. Disneyland is very loud and noisy and

some areas have bad reception. Tomorrowland has the best cell reception—so if you need to make an uninterrupted phone call head here.

- Attach clothing labels to the children’s clothing with their name and contact info.
- Make sure that your child has your business card or phone number with them at all times. This will make it much easier for them to locate you if they are lost.
- If you do lose your child, here is the protocol that is followed by all Disneyland Cast Members if your child is lost inside of the parks.

### **Disneyland Lost Child Protocol**

If a Disney Cast Member encounters a lost child under the age of 11 years old, then they are escorted to the Baby Care Center (Disneyland) off the Central Hub at the end of Main Street or the Baby Care Center (Disney California Adventure) in the Pacific Wharf area of the park.

If you have lost contact with your child that is 12 years or older then they can either wait for you at Disneyland’s City Hall or leave a message for you there.

If you stick to the efficient process that Disney has put in place you will find your child in no time.

The first place to check is ALWAYS City Hall if you are inside Disneyland or at the Chamber of Commerce if you are at Disney California Adventure. At these locations, all information regarding current lost children can be accessed.

## **Height Restrictions**

Disneyland imposes height restrictions on some of the attractions. The Cast Members are very diligent with enforcement. Even if your child is tall enough, they will be checked multiple times if they even look remotely too short.

Check out the list below to establish in advance which rides your child will not be able to experience. This will be much easier to avoid increasing expectations for those rides that they just won't be allowed to ride.

### **32 inches or taller**

- Autopia - Disneyland
- Mater's Junkyard Jamboree - Disney California Adventure
- Luigi’s Rollickin’ Roadsters- Disney California Adventure

### **35.inches or taller**

- Gadget's Go Coaster - Disneyland

### **38.inches or taller**

- Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run

### **40 inches or taller**

- Big Thunder Mountain Railroad - Disneyland
- Jumpin' Jellyfish - Disney California Adventure
- Radiator Springs Racers - Disney California Adventure
- Splash Mountain - Disneyland
- Guardians of the Galaxy-Mission: BREAKOUT! -  
Disney California Adventure
- Silly Symphony Swings - Disney California Adventure
- Soarin' - Disney California Adventure
- Space Mountain - Disneyland
- Star Tours — The Adventures Continue – Disneyland
- Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance- Disneyland

### **42 inches or taller**

- Goofy's Sky School - Disney California Adventure
- Grizzly River Run - Disney California Adventure
- Matterhorn Bobsleds - Disneyland

### **46 inches or taller**

- Indiana Jones Adventure - Disneyland

### **48 inches or taller**

- Incredicoaster- Disney California Adventure

## **Baby Care Centers**

If you are traveling with a baby, there are two Baby Care Centers, one in each park, that are there to cater to your needs.

Complimentary amenities include a nursing room with chairs, changing room with tables, feeding area with highchairs, kitchen with microwave and sink, main TV room with tables and chairs, and baby shop selling formula, baby food, juice, diapers, wipes, sunscreen, over-the-counter medications, and pacifiers.

The Disneyland Park Baby Care Center is located on the Tomorrowland side at the end of Main Street U.S.A. The Disney California Adventure park center is located next to the Ghirardelli Soda Fountain and Chocolate shop in the Pacific Wharf area.

## **Replacement Items**

Throughout your trip you are sure to purchase souvenirs and food items. Occasionally accidents happen and ice cream cones end up on the ground, balloons pop, or souvenirs break. Disneyland Cast Members are more than willing to help you replace items if you keep the receipt and return to the store where you purchased the item. If your balloon pops, bring the remnants to any Disneyland balloon Cast Member and they will easily replace the balloon free of charge.

Always ask for help from the Disneyland Cast Members, as they are extremely accommodating. The worst they can do is say no.

# SAVE MONEY BEFORE YOU LEAVE

There are a couple of ways to save money when purchasing anything at the Disneyland Resort.

This next hack can be used to get you a discount of 10% off all of your purchases in the Disneyland Resort. To utilize this to the best of your ability, try to price out how much you will spend on food and souvenirs. (These are most likely the only two things you will be purchasing from Disney directly if you take our other money saving advice for hotels and tickets.)

Through all of the applications thrown at us for new credit cards and discount deals, there is a specific strategy that has emerged to work the system and get Disney gift cards for about 10% off. These gift cards can then be used to purchase anything on Disneyland Resort property including hotel stay and food.

These tips may seem a little complicated so I have put them into a simple list format. You just need to follow this step by step list to accomplish a great savings on your vacation.

1. Register for the **Target Red Card**, either Credit or Debit works.
2. Register for a **Raise.com** account (and get a free \$5 referral bonus when you register with this link).
3. Now, search for Target gift cards and filter by the percentage of the discount. A good value of discount on the gift card saving is about 3.5%.
4. Add gift cards to the check out basket. Enter coupon code RAISE75AF during check out to save an additional \$5 off every \$75 purchase.
5. After paying the order the gift cards will be emailed to you.
6. Now, go to Target .com and sign in. Your Red Card should already be connected to your account.
7. This connection between your Red Card and Target .com account entitles you to 5% off of all gift cards even if you don't use the Red Card as payment.
8. Now, find the Disney gift cards on the Target website and add them to your cart.
9. Enter your Target gift card information that was emailed to you as your payment method.

10. After you enter your Target gift card info the 5% off discount should be applied to the purchase. Make sure to verify the details as the Target website can sometimes drop the discount. In this case, try refreshing the page, reentering the gift card info, and then if nothing works contact customer support.

11. Now, hit submit and you will have just saved almost 10% off of your Disney gift card purchase. Make sure that you purchase the initial Target gift card with a credit card that has a high rewarding loyalty program.

Before purchasing the gift cards, plan out your budget for meals and souvenirs. These gift cards effectively give you a discount on anything purchased at the resort.

Most of the restaurants in Downtown Disney are chains and have restaurant deals club emails. These are completely worth joining and provide discounted food coupons, often right when you join or on your birthday.

To save the most money on food during your vacation, join these restaurant deals clubs. Do not join these clubs more than two weeks before you vacation as most send out specific introductory coupons.

**Earl of Sandwich** - This is one of our favorite lunch spots in Downtown Disney. Here you will find great

sandwiches and salads. When you join their online **eClub**, you will immediately be rewarded with special bonus coupons.

This club also sends you a FREE sandwich on your birthday. They do not check ID for your actual birth date.

**Patina Group** - This restaurant management company operates the Catal, Tortilla Jo's, and Naples restaurants. When you subscribe to their **online Patina Restaurant Group List**, you will be sent special offers and a \$30 discount coupon for use on your birthday at any of the three restaurants.

The coupon is sent about a week before your listed birth date and can be used for 60 days. The restaurant will check your ID to verify your birthday and that you are over 21. Reservations must be made for after 5pm for the coupon to be used.

**Mimi's Cafe** - This chain restaurant located just across Harbor Boulevard from Disneyland offers nice breakfast food and a great deal for members of the eClub. This is a nice option for breakfast if you are staying on Harbor and don't like the food offered at your hotel. When entering information, use the zip code 92802 to get specific deals for the Disneyland cafe.



When you join the **Mimi's eClub**, you will immediately receive coupons for free food upon signing up and on your birthday. These coupons do expire, so be sure to wait until 1-2 weeks before your vacation to register.

**Jamba Juice - has an **insider program** that sends out deals frequently if you are in need of a snack.**

There are a few other chain restaurants in the area that provide eClub deals, however during your travels I highly encourage you to branch out and either just have food on Disneyland Resort property, or take a look at the top restaurants around Disneyland on Yelp. Try the local food! It does not disappoint.

## CLOSING WORDS FROM GAVIN

**Congratulations! If you've made it this far, you are rocking it with the planning of your Disneyland vacation.**

### Final Checklist

Have all of the items below checked off and then your vacation will be planned and ready to go.

- Disneyland tickets purchased
  - Hotel booked and confirmed
  - Air travel or car travel planned
  - Transportation from the airport to the hotel planned
  - Restaurant reservations confirmed
  - Planning worksheet filled out and printed
  - Extra items and food ordered from Amazon and sent to hotel
- 
- Discount Disney gift cards purchased for 10% off using strategy presented

With all of these items locked in at a low price, you are ready to roll. I hope you have enjoyed this eBook as much as I enjoyed researching for it for you. Thank you for reading.



### Let me know your trip stories!

If this guide helps to bring any additional joy or savings to your Disneyland vacation, then it has served its purpose. Each morning I love opening up my email inbox to find stories of incredible fun from your vacation.

Please shoot me an email at [gavin@disneydose.com](mailto:gavin@disneydose.com) to share stories from your vacation. If you give us permission, you may even be featured in future versions of this book.

### **One More Book You'll Like**

**My first book, [Disneyland Secrets: A Grand Tour of Disneyland's Hidden Details](#), is a perfect book to bring with you to Disneyland to enjoy in line. In this Amazon best selling travel book, you will find fascinating facts and stories diving into the hidden trivia of each attraction and part of Disneyland.**

Inside you will discover stories answering questions including:

- Why is the address of Disneyland 1313 Harbor Boulevard?
- What's up with the Jewish menorah on Main Street?
- Why is there a fake book called "Walt & You" at City Hall?
- Where can you find Sherlock Holmes at Disneyland?
- Is there really a pet cemetery at the Haunted Mansion?

**Order your copy of the book at [DisneyDose.com/book](https://disneydose.com/book) and also receive bonus Disneyland secrets.**

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