

TOP 50+ DISNEY WORLD INSIDER TIPS

Here is a compilation of the “underground” Disney knowledge that most regular park-goers have.

1. The Main St USA section of Magic Kingdom actually opens an hour before the posted park opening time. You can get pictures, shop, grab breakfast from the bakery, and enjoy the least crowded time of day at the castle.
2. Buy a souvenir popcorn bucket at the beginning of your trip and get refills for \$2.25 at any popcorn stand.
3. You can make Advance Dining Reservations (ADRs) for after the parks officially close. My favorite place to do this is at Oga's Cantina in Hollywood Studios. You'll enjoy Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge all to yourself and grab some amazing pictures.
4. You can add or remove one person from an ADR when you check into your reservation without any issues. So if you aren't able to find a reservation for three people, for example, grab a reservation for two and add another person at check-in.
5. The Disney Rewards Visa gives you a 10% discount at most merchandise locations in Disney World with no minimum purchase. In the recent past there was a \$50 minimum for the discount and not every cast member knows that was lifted, so you may have to ask for the discount when you pay with your card.
6. There are no discounts available anywhere on 1- and 2-day park tickets and the best available price on these tickets is through Disney. However you can pay for the tickets with Disney gift cards that you get at a 5% discount from Target (with a Target Debit card), essentially giving you a 5% ticket discount.

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7. Just because an attraction's Lightning Lane pass is "sold out" at the start of the day doesn't mean it won't become available during the day! There is solid data on "popup" availability, which is Disney adding more Lightning Lane availability during the course of the day. People also change, cancel, and move passes around which will cause availability to change. Don't think all is lost if you don't have the attractions you want going - keep refreshing or use Standby Skipper.
8. Resort Refillable mugs are good for 2 weeks at any resort. Take them with when visiting other resorts so you don't have to pay for drinks there.
9. There are two full service spas at Disney World, one at the Grand Floridian and one at the Disney Dolphin. Massages are also available at Animal Kingdom Lodge and the Yacht Club.
10. Room requests are great way to get the best possible room for your party. I often request ground floor rooms and those close to amenities or transportation. Now the best way to make a room request is through the chat feature in the My Disney Experience (MDE) app.
11. I always bring two pairs of walking shoes with me. Your tired feet won't feel as tired when you switch shoes midday or on consecutive days of lots of walking.
12. Don't miss the chance to try different sodas from around the world at Club Cool in Epcot (search for Club Cool in the map feature of the MDE app). It's one of the best freebies in the parks.
13. If you want fun ride photos, find out the locations of all of the cameras before your visit. Here's a guide from Kenny the Pirate.
14. PhotoPass photographers are happy to use your own device to grab pictures for you - just ask.

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15. When you purchase Lightning Lane Multi Pass you get free ride photo downloads for that day in any park. Just be sure to grab them within 45 days.
16. If you have a Disney Rewards Visa be sure to bring it with you to the parks and use it for a special photo op at Epcot and Hollywood Studios. You'll also get free PhotoPass downloads from this and you can bring up to 5 guests with you.
17. Kidcot Fun Stops are craft activities at each Epcot country led by a cast member from the host country. Pick up a book to get stamped at any country.
18. There is a grace period for redeeming a Lightning Lane pass of 5 minutes before your window opens and up to 1 hour 59 minutes after your window closes - most people don't know this.
19. You can check for Walk-up dining availability in MDE app and it is oftentimes plentiful. Click "Check Dining Availability", select the number in your party, then look at the bottom for "Join Walk-up List".
20. There a nice place to take castle pictures with no one else in the background. Just head to the small projection buildings on either side in the front of the castle and take a picture right in front of the fence.
21. There are also places in Animal Kingdom to take lovely pictures with the Tree of Life in the background. They are found on the pathway between Africa and Asia.
22. In addition to making Multi Pass selections for you, Standby Skipper can join Virtual Queues for you and get you the earliest Boarding Groups.
23. I use DoorDash or Instacart to have groceries delivered to my Disney World resort at the start of every trip. This saves a lot of money on pricey convenience items and breakfast food at the resort

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24. You can bring your own dress with you to Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique and save \$100 compared to the packages that include a dress. Choose the “Carriage package” which still includes lots of magic and fun without the dress.
25. I recommend Away We Go for private airport transportation. Their vans hold up to 11 people, they provide all carseats, and can drop you right at the parks and deliver your luggage to your resort’s bell services desk.
26. If you don’t want to buy a Magic Band, just use the Disney MagicMobile service and add your park ticket to your phone’s wallet or your smart watch.
27. If you do have a MagicBand+, be sure to look at it when you are exiting rides as some light up in colors that reflect the theme of the ride.
28. The mouse ear headbands sold at Disney World are heavy and some people get headaches from them. Buy headbands from Amazon or Etsy before your trip for lighter (and cheaper) options.
29. You can drive to the TTC or take Disney transportation to the Polynesian and watch the Magic Kingdom fireworks from beach there. Also be sure and catch the Electric Water Pageant (starts at 8:45 pm every night).
30. Weather changes quickly in Florida. I recommend having a radar app installed on your phone so you can dodge thunderstorms - I use MyRadar.
31. Also weather related - don’t be concerned if you see a weekly forecast that looks like rain every day. In the warmer months of the year a short afternoon shower is common. Don’t leave the parks and take advantage of lower wait times after the rain showers end.

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32. If you rent a car, find the Visitor Toll Pass vending machines at the airport before you pick up your car. You'll get a hangtag for your rental car and will save up to 80% compared to the rental car company's rates.
33. Rent Disney Vacation Club points for stays at Deluxe resorts to save 30-70% compared to Disney's prices. The cheapest month is September.
34. If you rent DVC points you can take advantage of Extended Evening Theme Park Hours. This gives guests of Deluxe resorts an extra two hours in a theme park with VERY low crowds.
35. The Disney Swan and Dolphin also get this benefit and can almost always be found as "Mystery Hotels" on Priceline.
36. If you buy a ticket to either of the "hard-ticketed" parties at Magic Kingdom (Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party) you can get into the park as early as 4 pm, even though the party doesn't technically start until 7 pm.
37. The daily park hours calendar is released 70 days in advance on the Disney website and in the app.
38. The Disney World lounges are a great way to eat at the best restaurants without reservations. Most are walk-up only and many offer the full menu.
39. The BlueZoo Lounge at the Disney Dolphin has excellent Happy Hour specials on drinks and appetizers. The Edison in Disney Springs also has happy Hour specials with big savings!
40. The only thing that can make the Disney Dining Plan worth it financially is if you were going to buy an alcoholic beverage with lunch and dinner anyway. If so you'll save money with the plan.

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41. Starting in 2025 all guests of Disney resorts will get free Water Parks admission on check-in day. Consider staying off property for your arrival night then heading straight to the water parks the next day. This will only be available for summer dates in 2026.
42. When you use the Direct-to-Room service you'll get a text notification when your room is ready along with a map of the resort so you can find your room.
43. Sometime the notifications aren't working so as a backup I check for my room number in the "My Resort" section of the MDE app.
44. The Baby Care Centers in every park are an incredible place to get out of the heat and nurse your child or change their diaper away from the crowds.
45. Pool hopping (using the pool at a resort you aren't paying to stay at) is off limits. But there are some "sister resorts" that allow guests staying at one resort to use the amenities at the other. If you are staying at one All-Star Resort you can use the pools at the others. The Port Orleans resorts (Riverside and French Quarter) work the same way, as do the Animal Kingdom Lodge resorts (Jambo House and Kiandi Village).
46. There is nightly free marshmallow roasting at every resort and you don't have to be staying there to participate.
47. Rooms with a "fifth sleeper" bed can be found at two Moderate resorts (Port Orleans Riverside and Caribbean Beach) and many Deluxe resorts.
48. You can bring a tent and camp at Disney's Fort Wilderness Campground with a maximum of 8 guests per campsite.
49. There are four dog-friendly resorts at Disney World: Port Orleans Riverside, Art of Animation, Yacht Club, and Fort Wilderness.

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50. The resorts that have water play areas are Art of Animation, Caribbean Beach, Port Orleans French Quarter, Animal Kingdom Lodge, Polynesian Village Resort, Grand Floridian, Saratoga Springs, and Wilderness Lodge.

51. There are old-timey cars and a double decker bus (aka the Main St Vehicles) that run up and down Main St USA in Magic Kingdom all morning. It's free to ride them, just wait just inside the entrance in the Town Hall area and you'll see them pull up. You'll be dropped off right in front of the castle.

52. There are two parades at Magic Kingdom and they follow the same route - BUT the afternoon parade starts in Frontierland and ends on Main St USA and the nighttime parade runs in reverse. The best place to watch both with lower crowds is the Frontierland/Liberty Square area.

53. Guests are let into the Disney Water Parks 30 minutes before official park opening, then held behind ropes inside the park until official opening. You can use this time to grab towels and use the lockers and restroom.

54. Add More Magic is an affordable dining/experience reservation service. They get the most difficult reservations for you.

55. Many resorts not owned by Disney offer access to Early Entry. Those in Disney Springs can be especially affordable.

56. Cast members start letting people into the park well before Early Entry officially begins (usually 30 minutes before). You can head right to the ride you want to do first and will often (but not always) be let on the ride before Early Entry actually starts.