



Magic Kingdom **VISUAL GUIDEBOOK**

A detailed guide to a planning a budget-conscious visit to Magic Kingdom without long lines.



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WELCOME TO THE MAGIC!

Sweaty in the parks researching for you

A visit to Magic Kingdom is complicated and expensive. That's why I'm so glad you've found me and this guidebook! I promise it will help you have the best possible experience at Magic Kingdom while not overpaying and waiting in long lines like most people do.

I've been traveling from my home in North Carolina to Disney World multiple times per year for the past 15 years and have been sharing Disney planning advice online for the past 10 years as my full-time job. You're in good hands now! I am happy to answer any questions that arise as you work through this guide - just shoot an email to support@thebudgetmouse.com.

Thank you so much for supporting my mission to help families have an incredible Disney vacation that doesn't break the bank.

Much love,
Leah Althiser
[@thebudgetmouse](mailto:support@thebudgetmouse.com)



SHORTCUTS

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2) LANDS OVERVIEW

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C H A P T E R

1

LOGISTICS

How to get to and around around Magic Kingdom, when to go, and how to get started with the My Disney experience app.



"May Walt Disney World bring joy and inspiration and new knowledge to all who come to this happy place."

-Roy O Disney

If Disney World is *"The Most Magical Place on Earth"*, then Magic Kingdom is surely its heartbeat. It's the **most-visited theme park on the planet**, and many people mistakenly think it *IS* Disney World!

Magic Kingdom opened outside of Orlando, Florida in 1971 and is modeled after Disneyland in California. It consists of **six lands arranged in a "hub and spoke" pattern** around its centerpiece, Cinderella Castle.

Though Walt Disney helped design the park, he passed away before it was built. He wanted it to be a place where **families could make memories together in a world of imagination and fantasy**. I hope that, armed with the information in this guidebook, you'll have the best day ever in this incredible place.



The biggest stumbling block people have when planning a visit to Magic Kingdom is the **size** of Disney World, which most underestimate (especially if they've been to Disneyland in California).

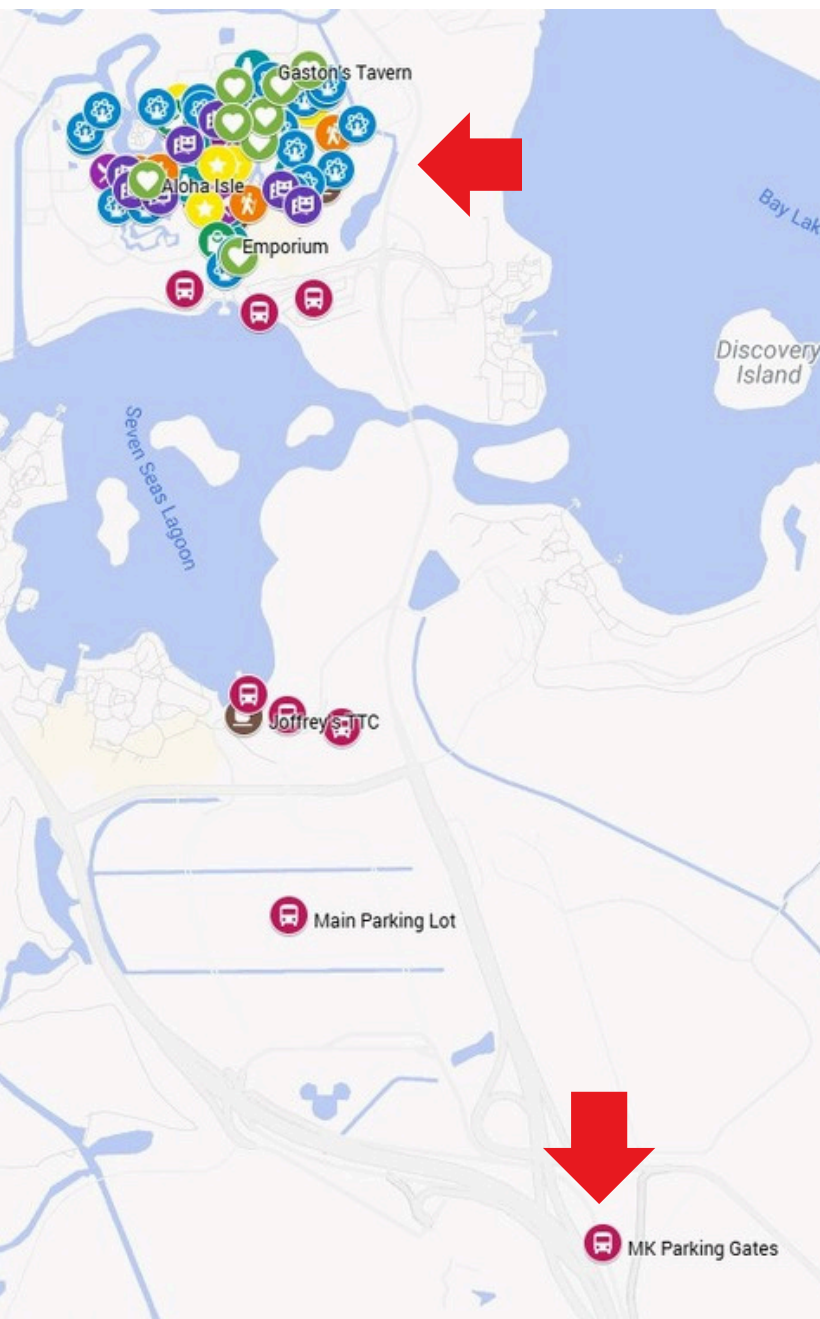
Disney World "property" is roughly **43 square miles** - twice the size of the island of Manhattan. It contains four massive theme parks, two water parks, 25 resorts, and a huge shopping/dining complex.

I suggest you take a minute right now to **study the map above to get your bearings** - understanding the layout will improve your trip immensely.

Note that **Magic Kingdom is quite far from other locations in Disney World**, which leads to people underestimating travel times.

The majority of people who visit Magic Kingdom drive themselves there, and most first-time visitors have no idea what to expect.

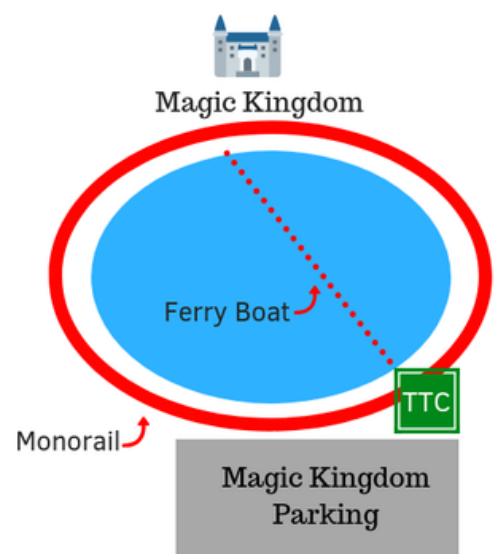
As you can see from the map below, the Magic Kingdom parking gates are VERY FAR from the attractions in the park!



When you drive to Magic Kingdom, you'll have to park across a lake from the park, walk or take a tram to the **Transportation and Ticket Center (TTC)**, then take either a monorail or ferry boat to get to the entrance to Magic Kingdom. Plan for this adding 20-30 minutes of travel time.

First-time visitors are often disappointed to learn that **rideshares (Uber & Lyft) and off-property resort shuttles also drop them off at the TTC.**

The only way to bypass the TTC entirely is to stay at a Disney-owned resort and use Disney transportation (buses, resort launches, or monorail), which drop you right at the entrance gates.





PARKING & TRANSPORTATION FAQs

If you aren't staying at a Disney resort, **here are the daily parking costs at Magic Kingdom:**

- **Standard parking:** car or motorcycle – \$35
- **Preferred parking:** car or motorcycle – \$50, \$55 or \$60
- **Oversized vehicle parking:** Camper Trailer, RV, Bus or Tractor Trailer - \$40

The parking gates open 90 minutes before the official "park opening".

Once you pay for parking for the day, **you can leave, return, and switch parks and not have to pay again** - just be sure to save your receipt.

You can pay for parking with a credit/debit card, mobile pay, cash, or even Disney gift cards.

I recommend using discounted Disney gift cards to pay for as much as possible, saving you 5-10% on many vacation costs.

You will take either a **Ferry Boat or the Monorail to get to the park entrance** (this was intentional, to make you feel like you are leaving reality behind). The ferry is slightly faster, though the monorail is arguably more fun.

Most off-property resorts' "free shuttle to the parks" depart after 9 am, well after you should arrive. Most aren't practical - I would rent a car or Uber.

Disney Transportation runs from every Disney resort to the theme parks, water parks, and Disney Springs, but NOT from resort to resort. It starts running 90 - 120 minutes before park opening every day.

To help you get the lay of the land, I've created a custom Google Map that you get access to with your guidebook purchase:

✨ [Click here for your map](#) ✨



It has every ride, show, regular character meet and greet, shortcut paths, hidden gems, transportation, shopping, and my recommended places to get food and snacks marked for you.

I suggest texting or emailing yourself this link to the map so it is easy to access on the go: <https://tinyurl.com/magic-kingdom-custom-map>



GUIDELINES FOR A MAGICAL TRIP

The number one reason people have a bad time at Disney World is this: **they try to see and do too much** and end up exhausted and broke.

My goal is to help you have an incredible Disney vacation (with very little waiting in line!) that doesn't break the bank. You will have to take my word for it that you need to factor time to rest into your vacation.

Rest will not only save your sanity, but also your feet (SO MANY STEPS) and your wallet.

Here is what I recommend as basic guidelines for trip planning:

- It is perfectly fine - and recommended - **to NOT visit every theme park.**
- Ideally take a **day off between park days.** If you are young and motivated you can swing two park days in a row - but I don't suggest more. See Chapter 9 for specifics.
- Take an **afternoon break on your park days.** This is MUCH easier if you are staying at a Disney resort and can hop on a bus to get to your resort and back again. But at a minimum plan for a few hours off of your feet in the air conditioning in the afternoon.
- **Don't pay for the "Park Hopper" ticket add-on.** There is SO MUCH to see and do in each park that there's really no reason to pay \$85 - \$100 per person to be able to switch parks during one day.

WHEN TO VISIT

Years ago Disney moved to **date-based pricing for EVERYTHING** related to a vacation - tickets, hotel rates, skip-the-line passes, and even food!

This is all to **encourage people to visit during the less-popular times of year** to better distribute crowds.

Don't underestimate how much more expensive it is to visit during peak times. Check out these costs:

LOW SEASON VALUE RESORT PRICING: **\$133/NIGHT**

PEAK SEASON VALUE RESORT PRICING: **\$305/NIGHT**

LOW SEASON MK TICKET: **\$144 EACH**

PEAK SEASON MK TICKET: **\$199 EACH**



As you can see, costs increase *up to 200%* during peak travel times. For this reason, I suggest visiting during **these lower-cost/less-crowded times of year if at all possible**:

- End of July through the end of September
- First two weeks of December
- 2nd week of January through the 1st week of February (avoiding holiday weekends)
- After Easter until the week before Memorial Day

How long you stay at Disney World will be dictated by 1) your budget and 2) how long you can be away from home. Contrary to what you've probably heard, **there is no minimum** - I've stayed anywhere from 1 to 10 days and had an amazing vacation each time!



Best Dates To Go To Disney World 2025

The Budget Mouse.com

Days highlighted in green are the best to visit based on crowds, cost, and weather

January						
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Best Dates To Go To Disney World 2026

Calendarpedia
Your source for calendars

recommended dates are highlighted in green

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BEST DAYS OF THE WEEK



Courtesy of [Thrill-data.com](https://thrill-data.com)

Crowds move in predictable ways at Disney World, including which parks people tend to visit on which days of the week.

As you can see from the chart above, **Magic Kingdom is most crowded on Mondays and Saturdays**. This has been true for YEARS simply because many people travel to Orlando on Fridays and Sundays and want to visit Magic Kingdom on the first day of their vacation!

Using data like this above, here are my recommendations for **what days are best to visit each park and a sample itinerary**:

MAGIC KINGDOM: Sunday, Thursday, Friday

EPCOT: Wednesday, Friday, Thursday

HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS: Wednesday, Thursday

ANIMAL KINGDOM: Wednesday, Thursday, Tuesday

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
MK	REST	AK	HS	REST	EP	TRAVEL

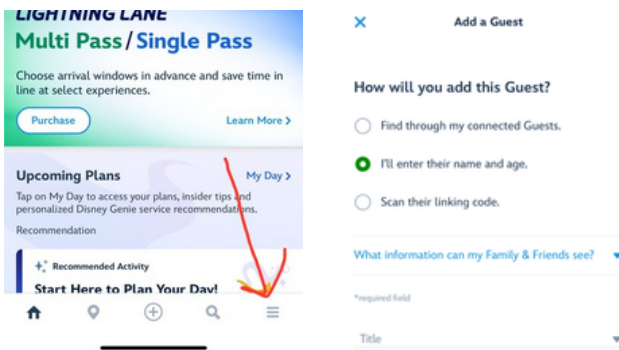
SUCCESS WITH MY DISNEY EXPERIENCE

My Disney Experience is both an app and a part of the Disney World website. **Knowing how to use it is essential to your Disney World vacation.** Here's how:

First, download the **My Disney Experience (MDE) app** and turn on notifications:

- MDE for iPhone
- MDE for Android

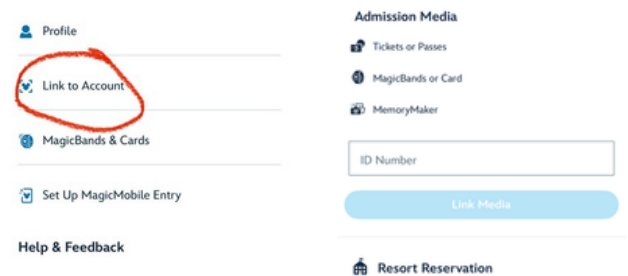
If you haven't already, you'll create a MDE account for yourself. Next, tap the "hamburger" menu (three horizontal lines), scroll down and tap **Profile**, tap **Family & Friends List**, then tap **Add A Guest**.



Everyone in your travel party age three and up will need to be added - kids' profiles are managed by an adult.

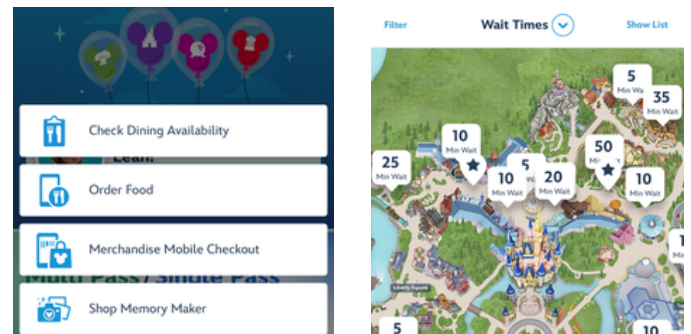
I suggest creating a profile for the other adults in your party and **inviting them to manage their account** - you'll just need their email address to invite them.

Spend some time exploring the app before your trip. There's a LOT there that will make your trip go smoothly!



If you've **purchased tickets or made hotel reservations through a third party**, you'll need to link them to your MDE account.

Click the hamburger menu, scroll down and click **Link to Account**, then select **Type ID** at the top. Enter the confirmation numbers you received via email here.



Tap the + symbol in the bottom center to make dining reservations (check walk-up availability there too) and place mobile orders at quick service restaurants.

The map feature within the app is super useful - tap the 📍 icon to access the maps. You can see wait times and find restrooms, dining, characters, and more by searching.

C H A P T E R

2

LANDS OVERVIEW

*An overview of what to see and do in each of
the six lands of Magic Kingdom.*



Main St USA

The first land you'll encounter when you enter Magic Kingdom.

Mostly shopping and dining, Main St USA opens an hour before the rest of the park and stays open well after "closing".

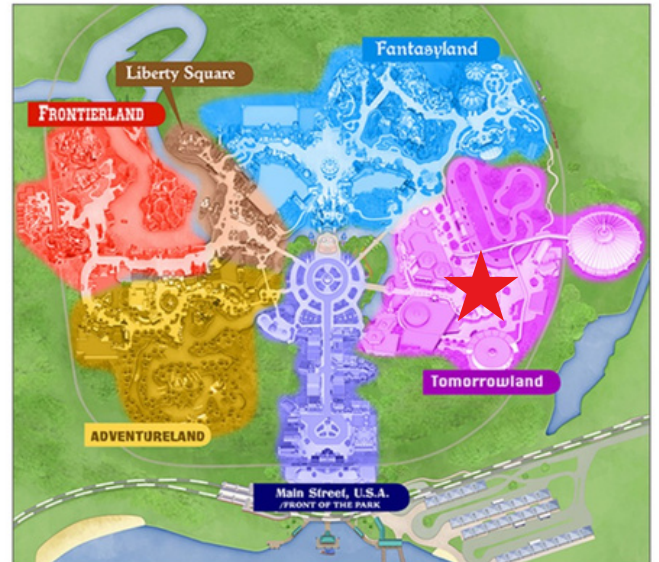
Things To Do:

1. Meet Mickey Mouse at Town Square Theater
2. Hop on the Walt Disney World Railroad for a trip to Fantasyland
3. Grab Starbucks coffee at the Main St Bakery
4. Ride the Main St Vehicles to the castle (look for bus stop signs around Town Square)
5. Shop in The Emporium, the largest gift shop in Magic Kingdom
6. Dine with Winnie the Pooh & Friends at The Crystal Palace



The Omnibus, a Main St USA Vehicle





Tomorrowland

Tomorrowland occupies the area to the right of the castle. It's a retro-futuristic land with lots of not-to-be-missed rides.

Things To Do:

1. Ride the popular "straddle" coaster TRON Lightcycle / Run
2. Let the kids drive you around the Tomorrowland Speedway
3. Experience the classic but rough ride of Space Mountain
4. Grab a Smoothie or Cold Brew Float at Auntie Gravity's
5. Take a relaxing ride around Tomorrowland on the Peppermint
6. Beat the high score on Buzz Lightyear Space Ranger Spin
7. Get incredible castle views from high up on the Astro Orbiter



Fantasyland

Fantasyland is both the largest land in MK and the one with the most attractions.

It has the most rides with no height requirement so families with small children will spend a lot of time here.



Things To Do:

1. Meet Disney Princesses including Cinderella, Tiana, Belle, and Ariel
2. Ride whimsical classics such as Dumbo, it's a small world, the Mad Tea Party, and Peter Pan's Flight
3. Grab breakfast at The Friar's Nook
4. Take kids on the perfect first coaster - Seven Dwarfs Mine Train
5. Meet Minnie, Donald & friends at Pete's Silly Sideshow
6. Take a spin on the carousel
7. Take a break in the AC to watch the 3D movie Mickey's Philharmagic





The Haunted Mansion



Liberty Square

Liberty Square is the smallest land with a few attractions and some excellent places to grab some food.

Things To Do:

1. Share a waffle or funnel cake covered in berries and whipped cream from Sleepy Hollow
2. Experience the “grim grinning ghosts” of the Disney classic The Haunted Mansion
3. Grab a quick lunch or dinner at Columbia Harbor House
4. Take a break (or a nap) in the AC of The Hall of Presidents
5. Enjoy a family-style American Thanksgiving dinner any day of the year at the Liberty Tree Tavern
6. Pick out a Disney ornament at Ye Olde Christmas Shop





Tiana's Bayou Adventure

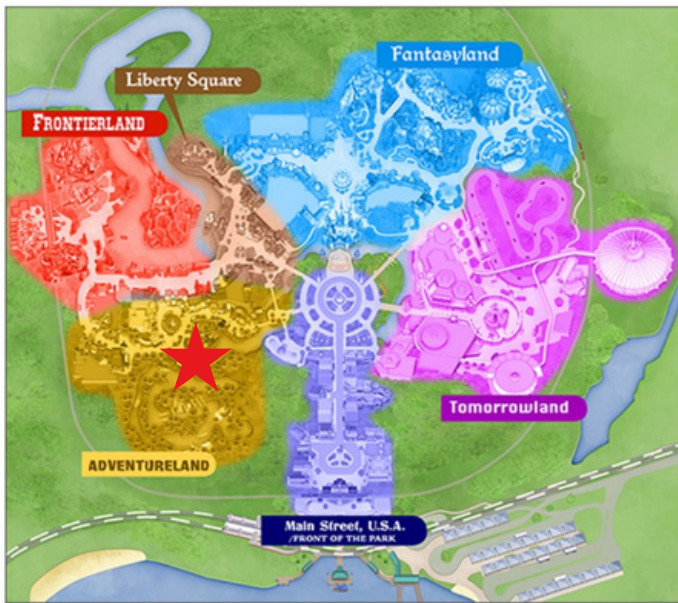
Frontierland

Frontierland is the “wild west” themed land located in the back left corner of the park. It is currently undergoing a large expansion with Big Thunder Mountain Railroad closed until 2026.

Things To Do:

1. Ride Tiana's Bayou Adventure, the fun re-theme of Splash Mountain (prepare to get wet)
2. Don't miss the recently re-imagined Country Bear Musical Jamboree audioanimatronic show
3. Grab a quick lunch or dinner at Pecos Bill, my favorite quick service restaurant in the park
4. Hunt for unique souvenirs at the Frontier Trading Post





Magic Carpets of Aladdin

Adventureland

The land to the left of the Castle with some classic Disney World attractions.

Things To Do:

1. Cool down with a Dole Whip from Aloha Isle (I recommend the pineapple-vanilla swirl)
2. Do Pirates of the Caribbean, the ride that inspired the films
3. Get your share of dad jokes on fan-favorite the Jungle Cruise
4. Meet Jasmine and Aladdin after you take a spin on The Magic Carpets of Aladdin
5. Grab a snack at the Spring Roll Cart (by the entrance sign close to the castle)



C H A P T E R

3

HOW TO SKIP THE LINES

An overview of seven different skip-the-line strategies that regular visitors use.

NOT EVERYONE WAITS IN LONG LINES

Most visitors to Magic Kingdom think that waiting 60 to 90 minutes for rides is just part of the experience. But Disney World regulars know that doesn't have to be the case!

In many ways, Magic Kingdom is like a machine that moves in predictable patterns. For example,

- The parks will always be the most crowded from noon- 4 pm.
- Magic Kingdom will always be the most crowded on Mondays and Saturdays.
- People tend to start with attractions at the front of the park and work towards the back.

It's also true that most people who visit the parks have no idea about these patterns AND **have no plan to avoid the predictable crowds.**

In this chapter, you'll learn the basics of dodging the crowds and **join the small group of insiders who never wait in long lines!**

“My family typically waits less than 10 minutes for every ride.”





An overview of seven strategies to limit wait times at Disney World:

RD

ROPE DROP

The strategy of arriving to the parks before they officially open in order to ride a popular attraction(s) with a shorter wait.

PC

PARK CLOSE

The strategy of getting in line for a popular attraction right before park closes in order to ride it with a much shorter wait.

RS

RIDER SWITCH

How to avoid waiting twice when your party has to split up to wait with a child who isn't tall enough or doesn't want to ride.

AH

AFTER HOURS EVENTS/PARTIES

Special "hard ticketed" events such as holiday parties can be a way to experience Magic Kingdom with greatly reduced wait times.

MO

MOBILE ORDER

How to avoid long waits at counter service restaurants and snack windows by placing your order in the app before you arrive.

VQ

VIRTUAL QUEUE

A free skip-the-line service offered for the newest attractions that allows you to return within a one-hour window to ride.

LL

LIGHTNING LANES

Paid skip-the-line services that allow you to enter a separate queue called a "Lightning Lane" for a much shorter wait for select rides.



SKIP THE LINES

Disney releases the **calendar with park hours 70 days in advance** and you can find it in the MDE app or [click here](#):

[Click here for the current calendar](#)

Sunday, January 05, 2025



Magic Kingdom Park
9:00 AM to 9:00 PM

Early Entry
8:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Park Hopper Availability
9:00 AM to 9:00 PM

EARLY BIRD ADVANTAGE

It's probably not surprising that most visitors find it difficult to get to the parks as early as they plan to, especially if they are driving there.

It's hard to get everyone out the door, then there's traffic to get there, the line to pay for parking, then taking the ferry or monorail over to Magic Kingdom.

For these reasons, **the first 1-2 hours the park is open offer the shortest waits of the day.**

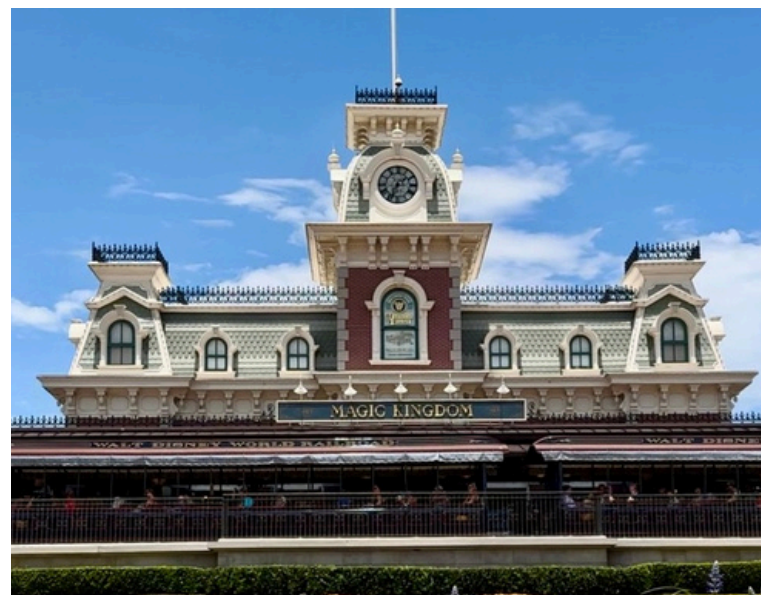
Now if you are taking my advice and a) taking days off between park days and b) staying at a Disney Resort, then getting to the parks on time should be a breeze!

First, you'll need to know what time the park opens on the day you're visiting (it changes regularly).

Guests of Disney World resorts get a perk called **Early Theme Park Entry**, which allows them to get into the parks and on certain rides 30 minutes before anyone else.

[Click here for Early Entry details](#)

Cast members (aka Disney employees) will scan your park ticket or Magic Band (more on those in chapter 9) to verify that you're a resort guest.





ROPE DROP

A term you'll hear a lot in Disney circles is "rope dropping".

It's shorthand for the strategy of arriving early to the parks and heading straight to rides **as soon as the "rope drops" to allow guests into the park**. Recently, Magic Kingdom has started allowing guests to head straight to whatever ride they want to do first, eliminating the physical rope.

What attractions you rope drop will depend on your priorities for the day and your plans for using Lightning Lanes. I'll give suggestions later.

For now, know that **rope dropping is one strategy for riding popular attractions with some of the lowest waits of the day**.

WHEN TO LEAVE

Most people don't know that Main St USA in Magic Kingdom is **open to ALL guests ~one hour before the posted park opening time**. You can take pictures, get some coffee and pastries, and get in line for your first ride.

Here's my suggested schedule if you are staying at a Disney Resort and *want to take full advantage of Early Entry*:

- If you are taking the monorail/resort launch, leave your room **75 minutes before park opening** (eg 7:45 am for a 9 am park opening).
- If you are taking a bus, plan to arrive at the bus stop **90 minutes before park opening** (eg 7:30 am for a 9 am park opening).

If you are staying off property, I suggest planning to **arrive at the Magic Kingdom parking gates 60 minutes before the official park opening**. Use a maps app to get a driving time estimate to the parking gates (adjusted for rush hour traffic) to calculate what time to leave your hotel.



CLOSING DOWN THE PARK

Another opportunity to get on rides with short waits is at the end of the night.

Most people don't know that parks stay open after the "official" closing time.

In fact, that time just represents **your last chance to get in line for rides**. You'll even notice on the park's daily schedule that the nighttime entertainment is often scheduled right at park close, or sometimes even after "park close".

I have gotten in line for some of the most popular attractions in all of Walt Disney World (such as Seven Dwarfs Mine Train) a few minutes before park close and **the wait was less than 10 minutes**.

Something to be aware of is that Disney is known to **inflate the posted wait times** in the last hour before the park closes. Posted wait times of 30 minutes often mean 5-10 minute waits.

Now I definitely *don't* suggest both rope dropping and closing the park down without taking an afternoon break!

WHAT'S RIDER SWITCH?

Rider Switch is a brilliant solution to the problem of traveling with a young child who is unable (or doesn't want to) ride certain attractions that others want to ride.

It works like this:

- Your whole group approaches the ride and **tells the cast member at the entrance that you want to use Rider Switch.**
- The cast member scans the ticket of the adult who will wait with the child unable to ride (let's call her/him "Adult B") while the rest of the party goes on the attraction.
- I suggest Adult B does something fun while waiting, such as taking the child on an attraction with no height limit or grabbing a snack.
- Once the others are done riding, they let Adult B know.
- Then Adult B **picks one other member of the group to ride with him/her** and returns to ride with no waiting.

The best part of this system is that one member of your party will get to ride twice in a row!



TRON Lightcycle/RUN offers Rider Switch

Most rides with height requirements (these will be covered in each park chapter) offer Rider Switch.

However, if you are using a Virtual Queue, Lightning Lane Multi Pass, or Lightning Lane Single Pass, **note that everyone who wants to ride (including Adult B) must have a pass or spot in the Virtual Queue.**

This isn't a way to avoid buying a LL pass for a ride - it just lets Adult B take someone with them for a bonus ride so they don't have to ride alone.

[Click here to view all rides that offer Rider Switch](#)



Nachos from Pecos Bill

MOBILE ORDER

Rides aren't the only thing that get long waits at Disney World. Unfortunately you'll also encounter long lines to order food and snacks, especially at peak times.

Years ago Disney released a solution to this problem - **the ability to Mobile Order food and drinks in the My Disney Experience app.**

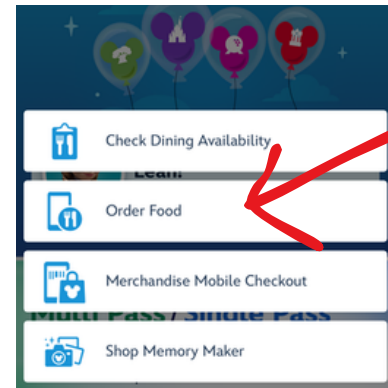
First, Mobile Order is offered at many (but not all) counter service dining locations in the parks and resorts. These restaurants are also known as "Quick Service" dining.

INSIDER TIP

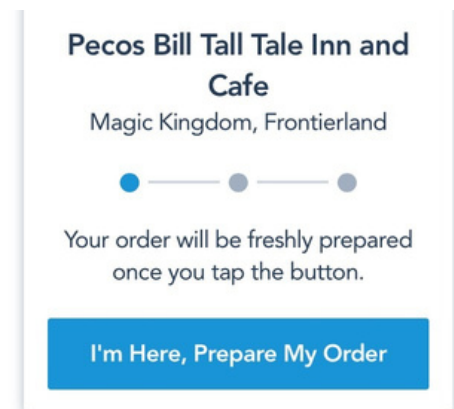
Mobile Order isn't just for restaurants - many snack locations also offer it. You don't have to wait in a long line for your Dole Whip - just order it in the app!

Here's how to Mobile Order in the app:

- Tap the + icon on the bottom of the home screen.
- Tap **Order Food**.



- At the top you can select either **As Soon As Possible** or **Schedule for Later**.
- Add items to your order and pay.
- Once your arrival window begins, you'll get a notification like this in the app:



If I am walking towards the restaurant, I will tap the button because I know it take a few minutes for my food to be prepared.

When your food is ready you'll get another notification - it may indicate the window to pick up your food.

Here are two other popular add-ons to Disney World vacations that can potentially help you avoid crowds and long wait times.



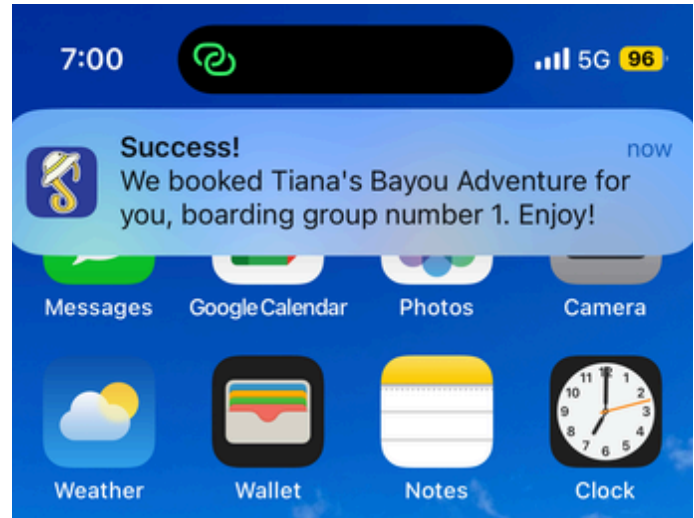
AFTER HOURS EVENTS

Free and paid opportunities to be in the parks after hours with much lower wait times.

A huge perk of staying at a Disney Deluxe Resort is **Extended Evening Theme Park Hours**. You'll get an additional two hours in the park after it closes to everyone else at no additional cost - check the daily schedule in MDE for parks/dates. You even get free access when you rent DVC points - [click here for info!](#)

Disney After Hours is a paid way to stay in Magic Kingdom, Epcot, and Hollywood Studios after they close to others. You get three additional hours but you'll pay - anywhere from \$155 to \$185 per person.

It's probably obvious that I suggest the free option here.



STANDBY SKIPPER

A third party app that makes Lightning Lane and Virtual Queue reservations for you.

I have become a huge fan of anything that keeps me off of my phone while in the parks. **Standby Skipper** is a third-party service that does just that.

After you check in for your first LL Multi Pass selection, **it begins making more selections for you one at a time.** It can secure VERY hard-to-get selections and all without you having to go into the MDE app.

The service costs \$25 for one-day or \$45 for up to 7 days, however it is good for up to 12 people. I think the price is worth it.

C H A P T E R

4

LIGHTNING LANES

How to navigate the Lightning Lanes with paid skip-the-line passes.

WHAT IS LIGHTNING LANE?

*The most powerful strategy for skipping the lines at Disney World is the **Lighting Lane system**. Here's how to master it.*

SOME BACKGROUND

25 years ago Disney introduced it's first alternative to physically standing in line for rides - **FastPass**.

Since then, the system has changed names multiple times and transitioned from paper tickets (really!) to being part of the MDE app.

The concept has stayed the same, though. You're able to "reserve" a time (actually a one-hour window) to show up and enter a separate queue to **ride an attraction with minimal wait** (typically 5 minutes or less).

THE PAID PASS ERA

The FastPass system was complimentary until 2021, when Disney renamed it Genie+ and started charging for it (causing an uproar, of course).

Everything transitioned to the app, and you got access to the separate queue by tapping your ticket or Magic Band (see Chapter 9) to a Mickey icon.

In 2024 the name changed again to **Lightning Lane**. The first question you might have is - *is it worth it to pay for this service?*

My answer is (almost always) yes.

If you know how to use it (and if you read this guide, you will), the Lightning Lane (LL) system has the power to **massively improve the quality of your vacation**.

This guide focuses on **LL Multi Pass** and **LL Single Pass**. There is a third option, LL Premier Pass, which I don't recommend because it's grossly overpriced - you can [read more about it here](#).



Two common sights when using Lightning Lane

LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS

The pass that allows you to skip the line for 18 different attractions in Magic Kingdom is now called *Lightning Lane Multi Pass*. The cost per person per day ranges from \$23 - \$39 (based on daily demand).

When you buy Multi Pass, you can make three advance LL selections before your visit - **but then you can make MANY more the day of your visit**. Here's an example for a day at Magic Kingdom:

 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

"it's a small world"

Redeem Between

Aug 2 from 9:05 AM - 10:05 AM



 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

Haunted Mansion

Redeem Between

Aug 2 from 10:05 AM - 11:05 AM



 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

**Tiana's Bayou Adventure
– New!**

Redeem Between

Aug 2 from 11:20 AM - 12:20 PM



When you get to **make** your advance selections depends on whether or not you have a Disney resort reservation.

WHEN CAN I MAKE MY ADVANCE LL SELECTIONS?

If you are staying at select Disney World resorts (those that start with the word “Disney’s”, plus the Swan, Swan Reserve, Dolphin, and Shades of Green) you can make LL selections for your entire trip at **7 am EST SEVEN days before you check in for your reservation**.

If you don't have a Disney resort reservation, you can make LL selections for your entire trip at **7 am EST THREE days before the first day on your park ticket**.

MULTI PASS TIERS

Now you know that you can make three advance LL selections for each of your park days.

However, only ONE of these advance selections can be from the most popular rides.

Disney does this to keep people from grabbing up all of the most desirable rides before others even get a chance.

Each park except Animal Kingdom has what we'll call **"tiers"** for LL rides. This is how it works:

The app will only allow **one of your advance selections** to be from the "Tier One" rides in the park. Your other two selections can be from the rest (Tier Two rides).

Here is a list of the Tier One rides that you can choose from in Magic Kingdom:

Choose up to 3 Lightning Lane experiences for your party at Magic Kingdom



Select up to 1 of your 3 from this group.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| ☐ | Big Thunder Mountain Railroad
40in (102cm) or taller |  |
| ☐ | Jungle Cruise
Any Height |  |
| ☐ | Peter Pan's Flight
Any Height
Currently Unavailable |  |
| ☐ | Space Mountain
44in (112cm) or taller |  |
| ☐ | Tiana's Bayou Adventure – New! |  |

TIER ONE RIDE LIST

MAGIC KINGDOM

- Big Thunder Mt Railroad
- Jungle Cruise
- Peter Pan's Flight
- Space Mountain
- Tiana's Bayou Adventure

MULTI PASS RULES

To get the most out of Lightning Lane Multi Pass (LLMP), you have to **know** how the system works. To review:

- You can make **three advance LL Multi Pass selections per day** at 7 am either three or seven days before your trip begins.
- You can **make your advance LL selections for every day you are visiting the parks at this time**, so be prepared ([use this cheat sheet](#)).
- Of your three selections per day, **only ONE can be from the “Tier 1” rides** ([listed here](#)).
- Your other two selections can be from the remaining “Tier 2” rides.

However, there are a few *more* rules:

- **All of your advance selections have to be in one park**, even if you plan to park hop later.
- Every time you use a LL on the day of your trip, you can **immediately make another selection in the app**.
- After you check in for your first LL of the day, you can **make LLs in any park**, regardless of tier.
- You can **always have three Lightning Lanes in your virtual “backpack” at all times**, until all of the LL passes have been claimed.
- You can **arrive up to 2 hours late** for your LL and it will still work! Most visitors don't know this. Pick times earlier rather than later.



Peter Pan's Flight Lightning Lane

WHAT'S A BURNER RIDE?

If you want to get the most value out of Lightning Lane Multi Pass, then I suggest you use the “burner ride” strategy.

Lines are typically short during the first hour the park is open and you likely won't *need* to use the LL.

However I still suggest you **make one of your advance LL selections for as early in the day as possible**. Ideally right when the park opens

The reason is once you tap in for your LL reservation **you can immediately make another “Tier One” selection** before anyone else. If a show is suggested as a burner ride, just tap in at the entrance and walk away (I promise it is fine - everyone can still see the morning show!)

MAKING LL RESERVATIONS IN THE APP - PART 1

GETTING READY

Before 7 am on the day you're able to make LL reservations, you'll want to **make sure you have already done the following**:

- ☐ Created a MDE profile for everyone in your travel party
- ☐ Linked any resort or ticket reservations and make sure everyone is showing up
- ☐ Added a payment method in the MDE app

Account

 Profile

 Link to Account

 MagicBands & Cards

To add a payment method, click the hamburger menu, scroll down and tap **Profile**, then add your info.

WHAT TO BOOK FIRST

There are two LL Multi Pass rides that often get completely booked up in a matter of minutes. They are:

- **Tiana's Bayou Adventure (MK)**
- **Slinky Dog Dash (HS)**

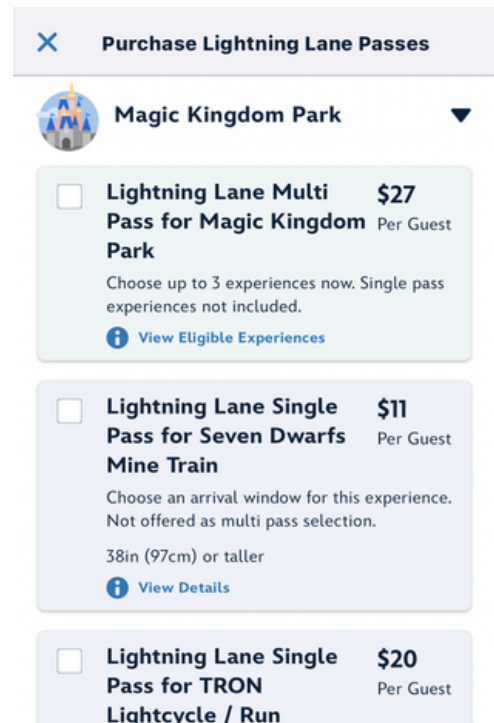
Since you can make your LL selections in any order, I suggest that you **make your selections at Magic Kingdom and Hollywood Studios FIRST**, regardless of when you are visiting.

IT'S GO TIME

Set an alarm and be sure you have printed your LL Cheat Sheet (in a few pages) and marked your selections. Before 7 am, open the app and tap **Purchase** here:



Select which day of your trip you want to make selections for first (should be the day you are visiting MK or HS), then select your park, then what passes you are buying here:



*****Note that you can and should do ALL of this before 7 am EST!**

MAKING LL RESERVATIONS IN THE APP - PART 2

Then as soon as the clock turns 7, tap **Continue**, and quickly select everyone you are buying passes for (use **Select All** if that applies):

Who's included?

Select everyone you want to include in your Lightning Lane Pass purchase.

 [Learn More](#)

☒ Select All

Your Eligible Party (1)

☒  Leah Althiser (Me)

Then you will be taken to the screen to make your LL selections. You'll pick your Tier 1 ride first:

 Selections Saved for 5 minutes

Choose up to 3 Lightning Lane experiences for your party at Hollywood Studios



Select up to 1 of your 3 from this group.

☐ **Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway**
Any Height



☐ **Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run**
38in (97cm) or taller



☐ **Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith**
48in (122cm) or taller



☐ **Slinky Dog Dash**
38in (97cm) or taller



Then make your other two Lightning Lane selections.

Next you'll be taken to a screen to review your selections. If the time of your reservations isn't what you want - **don't modify them right now.**

You can go back and modify the times later! It's more important to tap **Continue**, process the payment, and proceed to making selections for all of your park days first.

Tap **Purchase for Another Day** and repeat the process for all of your park days.

 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

"it's a small world"
 Redeem Between
Aug 2 from 9:05 AM - 10:05 AM



 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

Haunted Mansion
 Redeem Between
Aug 2 from 10:05 AM - 11:05 AM



 Lightning Lane Multi Pass

Tiana's Bayou Adventure – New!
 Redeem Between
Aug 2 from 11:20 AM - 12:20 PM



You'll see all of your LL reservations on the home screen of the MDE app (or tap the hamburger menu and see them there). Now you can **tap each one and modify the time** to earlier or later depending on your plans.

ULTRA IMPORTANT: HOW TO MODIFY

The real power of LL Multi Pass is the ability to change the timing of your selections after you make them.

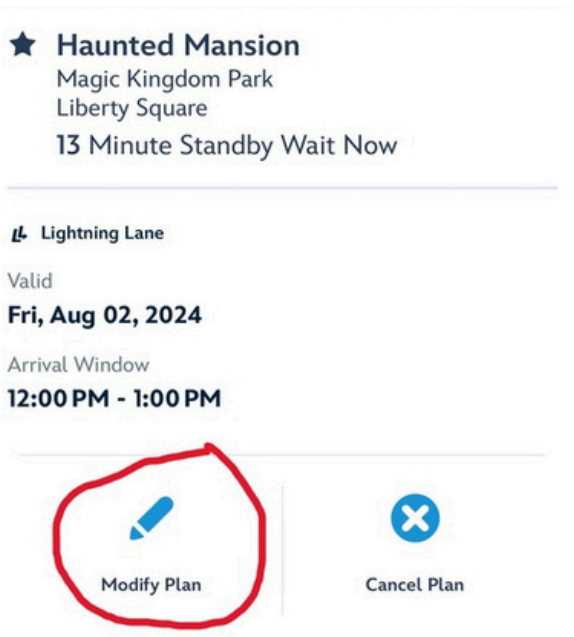
The default time the app gives you for a ride will likely NOT be the best time for your plans.

You'll want to know how to modify your selection times to make them work for you!

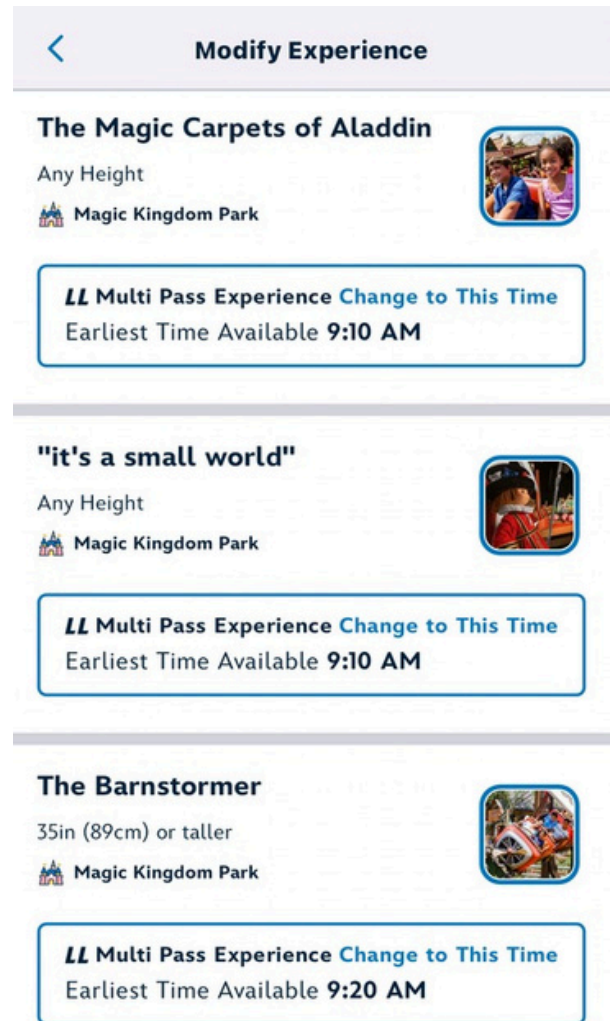
Tap on the LL reservation and select Modify Time here:



Or here:



Then you will see a screen like this:



If you want to see the available times for any attraction, click **Change to This Time** (even if it isn't a time you want). Then you will be able to see *all available return times, even those later in the day!*

This is very helpful when you are taking an afternoon break, and want to “**stack**” three LLs for **after you return to the park in the evening**. This trick will make Multi Pass SO MUCH more valuable.



WHEN SHOULD I BUY?

These are the two attractions in Magic Kingdom that have a Lightning Lane, aren't included with Multi Pass, and require the purchase of a Single Pass to skip the line.

Here is my advice for each:

TRON Lightcycle/Run (MK) is one ride I usually buy Single Pass for. It is NOT open during Early Entry and gets a long line at park close so it is worth it to buy the Single Pass. *Price per person: \$19 - \$22*

Seven Dwarves Mine Train (MK) can be ridden at park close with a very short wait or during Early Entry (though the crowds at rope drop are not fun). I don't buy SP unless I can't do either of these. *Price per person: \$10 - \$14*

LIGHTNING LANE SINGLE PASS

Some attractions are NOT included with LL Multi Pass. These are **the most in-demand rides in the parks** and Disney has figured they can charge an additional premium to skip the line on these rides.

I tend to NOT buy Lightning Lane Single Pass (SP) for these rides and instead use other approaches to avoid long waits, such as:

- Virtual Queue (if offered)
- Rope Drop/Early Entry
- Park Close
- Rider Switch

However, sometimes it does make sense to spend the extra money. Here's when I suggest it.



C H A P T E R

5

ATTRACTIONS

An overview of the rides, character experiences, and shows at Magic Kingdom.

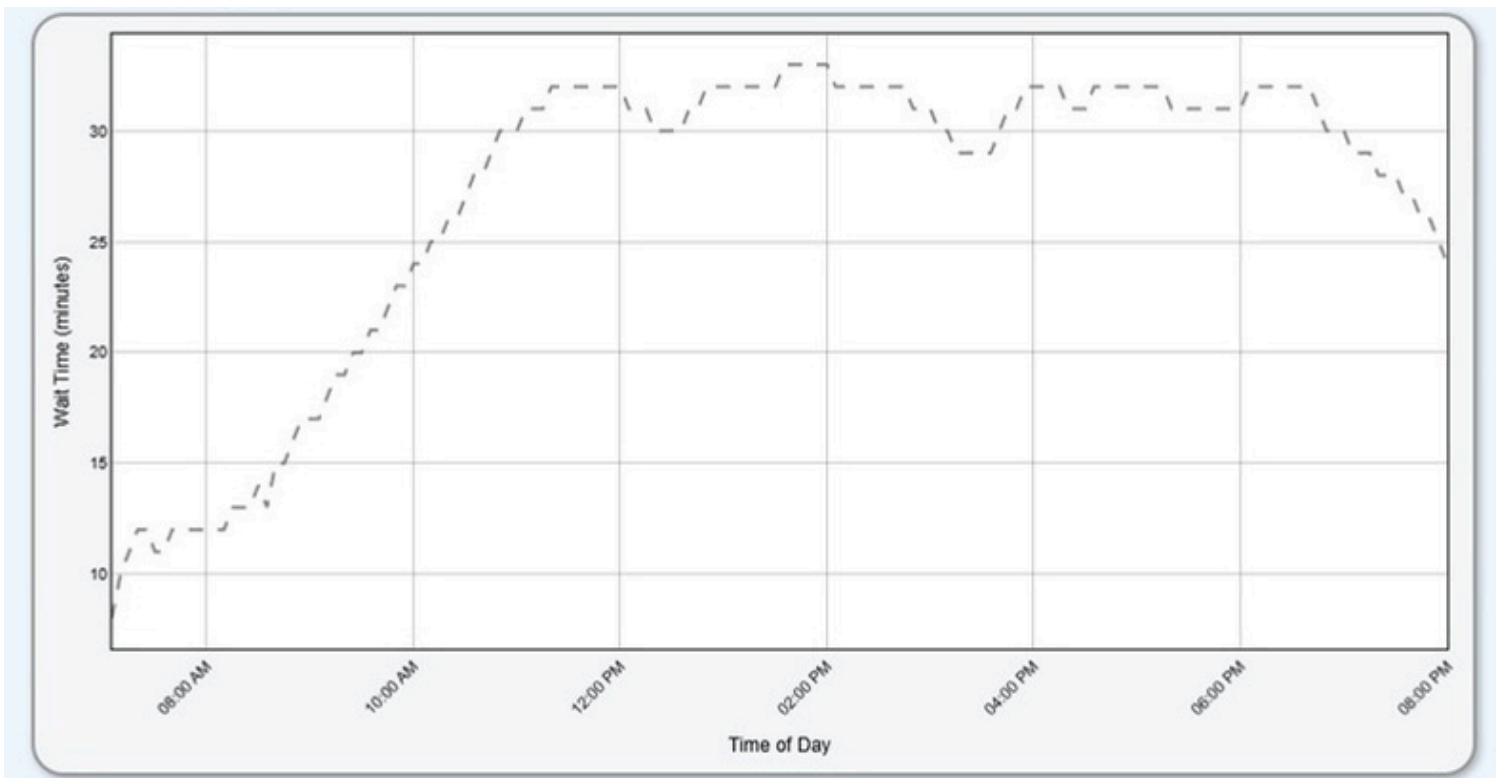
Magic Kingdom is both the most popular AND the smallest theme park at Disney World. This unfortunately leads to it being **the most crowded park**.

However, it is completely possible to dodge the crowds and never wait in long lines at Magic Kingdom! It does require having a plan, though. I'll start with familiarizing you with the park's "attractions" (Disney-speak for rides, shows, and character meet-and-greets).



Don't miss classics like Dumbo

HOW IMPORTANT IS ARRIVING EARLY?



I hope this graph says it all. It is **SUPER important to arrive early** if you don't want to wait in long lines at Magic Kingdom! Wait times start low and build until around 11 am each day. Waits stay high until about 7 pm when they start to drop again.

Prioritizing an early arrival at Magic Kingdom is the key to dodging the crowds.



A REALITY CHECK

Many people think they will be able to see and do everything in Magic Kingdom in one day, not realizing this:

There are over 50 attractions in Magic Kingdom, including rides, character meet and greets, parades, and shows.

It really helps if you understand going in that even if you have two full days in Magic Kingdom, you aren't going to see and do it all.

You will have to choose and prioritize what you do there. I will give you suggested itineraries that will help you see and do more than most guests, who on average only get to 10 attractions in one day.

My goal is to help you experience 15-20 attractions and not feel like you are being run into the ground.

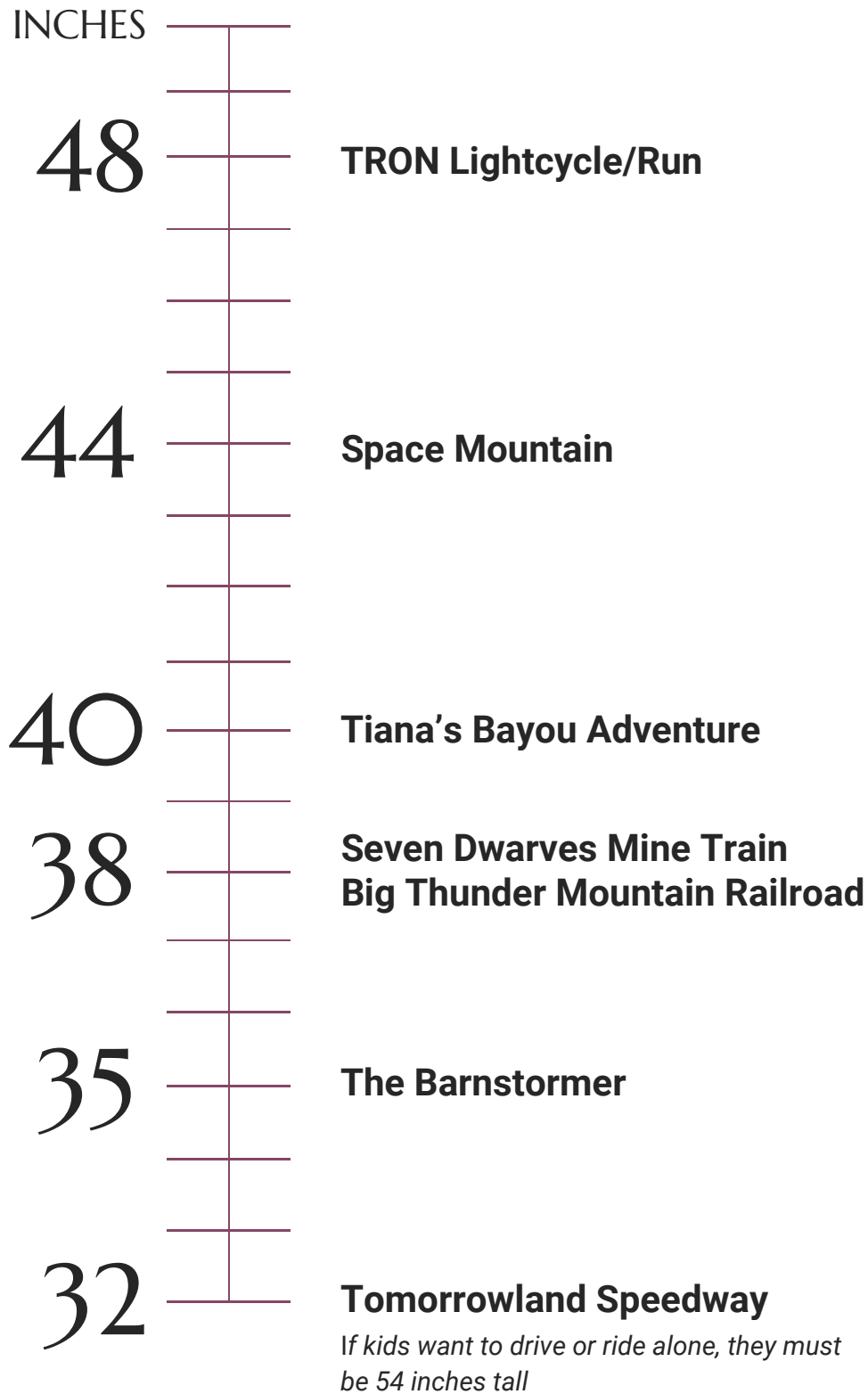
This works well as long as you understand that there will be things you will miss.

Here are my general guidelines for maximizing your time at Magic Kingdom before I dive into specifics:

- If you only have one day at Magic Kingdom, I suggest **only eating Quick Service food and snacks**. Table Service dining is a time suck (an exception follows).
- **An afternoon break is pretty much essential.** If you can't return to your resort, then eat a lengthy table service meal or ride the monorail to a resort to chill out there (the Contemporary is my favorite spot for this).
- **The evening parade and fireworks shows are outstanding.** There is no need to stake out a spot more than 30 minutes in advance. If you can see the projections on the castle for the fireworks, you'll get the full effect.
- **Eat a substantial breakfast before the rides open** so you don't waste time in those precious first two hours tracking down food.
- **Main Street USA opens to everyone one hour before the official park opening.** This is the ideal time for castle pictures.

HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Here are the seven attractions with a height requirement in Magic Kingdom. If a ride is not listed below it has no height requirement and anyone can ride.



Magic Kingdom Attractions

LL Multi Pass Attractions = 🦄

LL Single Pass Attractions = ✦

Height Requirement = HR

Fantasyland Rides

Prince Charming Regal Carrousel

"It's a small world" 🦄

Peter Pan's Flight 🦄

Seven Dwarfs Mine Train ✦ HR=38in

The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh 🦄

Under the Sea - Journey of the Little Mermaid 🦄

Dumbo the Flying Elephant 🦄

Walt Disney World Railroad Station

The Barnstormer 🦄

Mad Tea Party 🦄

Casey Jr Splash 'N' Soak Station (water play)

Fantasyland Shows & Characters

Mickey's PhilharMagic 🦄

Enchanted Tales with Belle

Pete's Silly Sideshow Character Meet

Meet Cinderella & A Visiting Princess

Meet Tiana & A Visiting Princess

Meet Ariel at her Grotto

Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique (\$)

Tomorrowland Rides

TRON Lightcycle/RUN ✦ HR=48in

Space Mountain 🦄 HR=44in

Tomorrowland Speedway 🦄 HR=32in

Astro Orbiter

Tomorrowland Transit Authority PeopleMover

Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin 🦄

Tomorrowland Shows & Characters

Monster's, Inc. Laugh Floor 🦄

~~Carousel of Progress~~ closed for refurbishment

Meet Stitch

Adventureland Rides

○ Swiss Family Robinson Treehouse (walk through)

○ Jungle Cruise 🦄

○ The Magic Carpets of Aladdin 🦄

○ Pirates of the Caribbean 🦄

Adventureland Shows & Characters

○ The Enchanted Tiki Room

○ A Pirate's Adventures - Jack Sparrow Meet

Frontierland Rides

~~Big Thunder Mountain Railroad 🦄 HR=38in~~

~~closed thru May 2026~~

Tiana's Bayou Adventure 🦄 HR=40in

~~Walt Disney World Railroad Station - closed thru 2026~~

Frontierland Shows

Country Bear Jamboree

Liberty Square Rides

Haunted Mansion

Liberty Square Shows

Hall of Presidents

Main Street, USA

Meet Mickey at Town Hall

Festival of Fantasy Parade

Walt Disney World Railroad Station

MAGIC KINGDOM MUST-DOS

Families
with
Toddlers

Winnie the Pooh
Meet Mickey Mouse at Town Square Theater
Dumbo
Peter Pan's Flight
Under the Sea-Journey of the Little Mermaid
Buzz Lightyear Space Ranger Spin
Walt Disney World Railroad
Tomorrowland Transit Authority PeopleMover
it's a small world
Jungle Cruise
Magic Carpets of Aladdin

Enchanted Tales with Belle
Meet the Princesses at Fairytale Hall
Under the Sea-Voyage of the Little Mermaid
Festival of Fantasy Parade
Meet Ariel at her Grotto
Prince Charming Regal Carousel
Tiana's Bayou Adventure
Cinderella's Royal Table (dining)
Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique (additional cost)

Princess
Fans

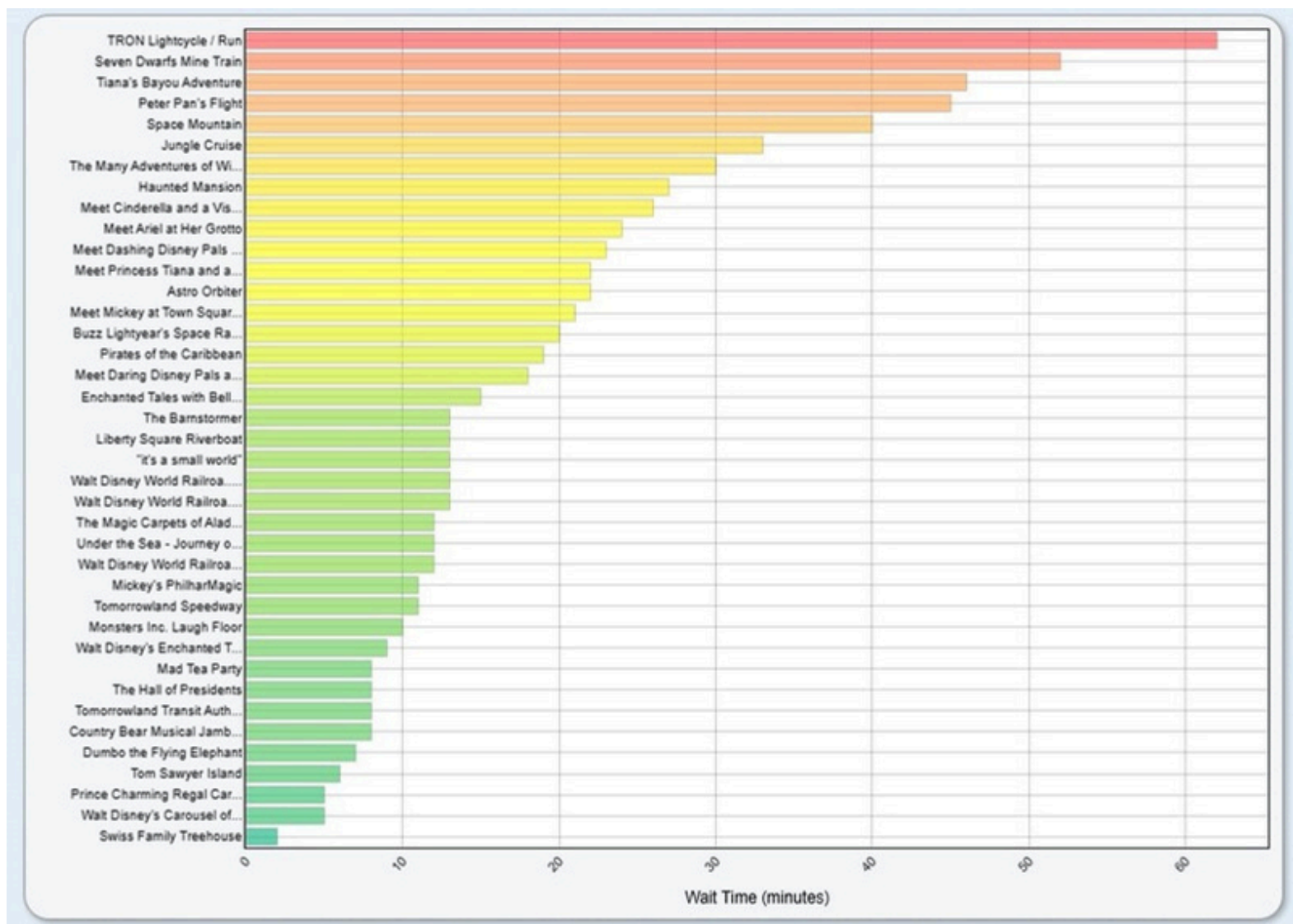
Teens
and
Adults

TRON Lightcycle/Run
Space Mountain
Tomorrowland Transit Authority PeopleMover
Big Thunder Mountain Railroad
Haunted Mansion
Pirates of the Caribbean
Peter Pan's Flight
Jungle Cruise
Country Bear Jamboree
Happily Ever After Fireworks Show

ATTRACTIONS BY POPULARITY

Here's a super useful graph of **average wait times by attraction** in Magic Kingdom from our friends over at [Thrill Data](#).

Understanding which rides usually have the longest waits will help you prioritize what you ride when (and what you may want to skip).

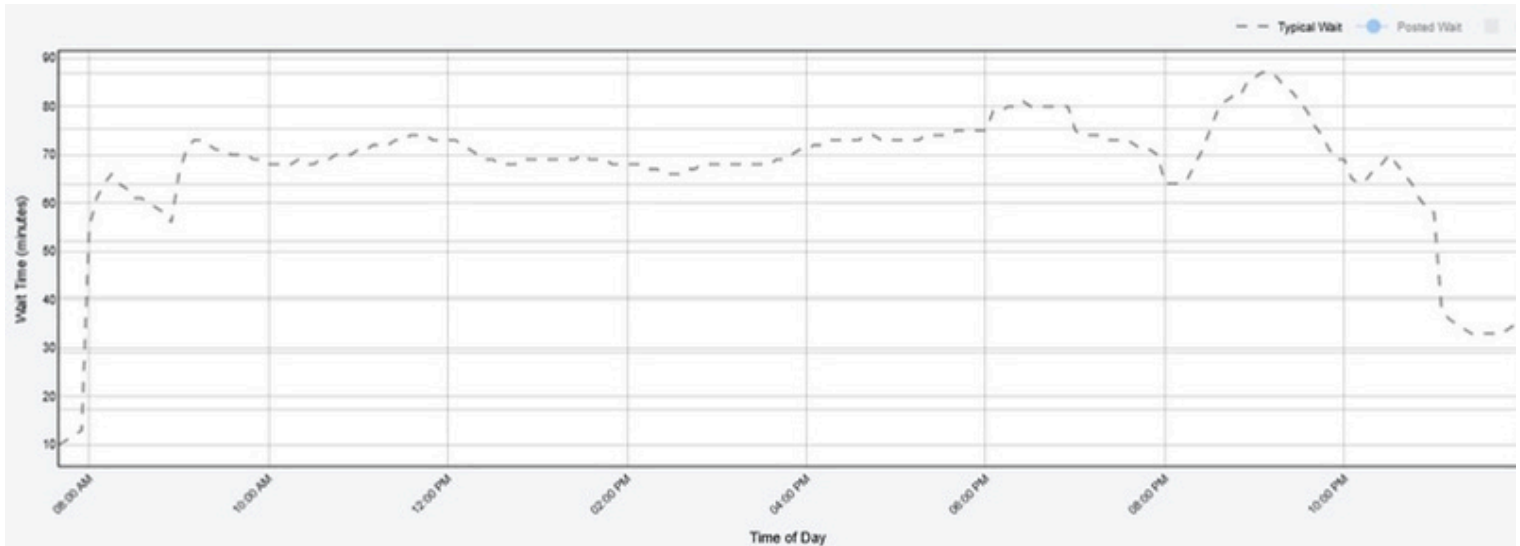


Here are the top ten most-popular attractions in Magic Kingdom:

1. TRON Lightcycle / Run
2. Seven Dwarves Mine Train
3. Tiana's Bayou Adventure
4. Peter Pan's Flight
5. Space Mountain
6. Jungle Cruise
7. The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh
8. Haunted Mansion
9. Meet Cinderella & A Visiting Princess
10. Meet Ariel at Her Grotto

TRON LIGHTCYCLE / RUN

The ride with the longest wait every day in Magic Kingdom is TRON Lightcycle / Run. It's a fun "straddle" style coaster - your only complaint will likely be that it's too short. Many prefer to ride after dark for the lighting effects.



This graph shows that wait times build VERY quickly in the morning and stay high until after 10 pm. My advice to ride this with a short wait is to **buy Single Pass** (I like to book after dark and before fireworks). Rope dropping this is tricky - **it's not included in Early Entry**, so you'll want to arrive at least 45 minutes before park opening to get in line. If you have Early Entry, I suggest using that time to knock out a bunch of rides and buying Single Pass for TRON.

The exposure to heights and speed are what makes this ride intense (keep in mind all coasters at Disney World are tame compared to mainstream amusement parks).

The height requirement for TRON is 48 inches, the highest of all rides in the park. This is the average height of a 7-year-old, and I think that is a good gauge for the lower age limit - **UNLESS** you have an adventurous and tall 5- or 6-year-old, then I say go for it.

This ride generally doesn't cause motion sickness, but of course this varies.





SEVEN DWARFS MINE TRAIN

The second most-popular ride at Magic Kingdom is the family coaster Seven Dwarfs Mine Train. It's a smooth ride and fun for everyone.

- The height requirement is **38 inches**, which means you'll see plenty of four- and five-year-olds on this ride.
- Most kids don't find it scary, so if your child is tall enough, I say go for it.
- There are three options for riding with a short wait:
 - **Rope Drop** - if you have Early Entry and can get to the gates well before it begins, this is a good option. Get in line as early as possible.
 - **End of the night** - my preferred time to ride if you can hang.
 - **Single Pass** - though the pass isn't crazy expensive (\$9-\$12 each), I prefer to save the money and ride one of the two above times. If you haven't bought ahead of time and decide you want it the day of, fear not - more passes almost always "drop" during the day.

TIPS FOR RIDING AT NIGHT

Disney will exaggerate wait times at the end of the night to discourage people from getting in line. I have ridden Seven Dwarfs Mine Train at the end of the night when the posted wait time was 40 minutes and it was a 5-minute wait.

Since this ride is geared towards families with young kids, you'll be able to ride it with a MUCH shorter wait after 8 pm, and virtually no wait after fireworks. So if you have night owls save this ride for then!

The next most popular rides are both “Tier 1” Multi Pass selections:



TIANA'S BAYOU ADVENTURE

The Disney classic “Splash Mountain” was reborn in 2024 as Tiana's Bayou Adventure. I think the retheme only improved the ride, though the storyline is vague.

This is **the most popular Tier 1 Multi Pass selection**, so I suggest you grab it as your Tier 1 advance selection if possible. If you aren't able to fear not, many more passes are added throughout the day - [click here for times](#).

If you aren't using Multi Pass, this should be a rope drop priority (note it is NOT open during Early Entry) or in the evening after parade and fireworks.



PETER PAN'S FLIGHT

Peter Pan's Flight may be the quintessential Disney “dark ride”. This whimsical ride continues to get long wait times every day, even though it is remarkably low-tech.

It is a short but charming journey through the story of Peter Pan. If you are using Multi Pass (hopefully I have convinced you to at this point), it is easy to **grab this as your first in-park selection of the day** after you tap into your first ride.

If you aren't, this is a good option for Early Entry or for riding later in the day, either during/after the evening parade or after fireworks.



Here's the lowdown on the next six most popular attractions:

[Space Mountain](#)

This almost totally in-the-dark coaster is a rite of passage. It's easy to grab as **an additional day-of Multi Pass selection** or ride in the evening when waits have died down some.

[Jungle Cruise](#)

A boat ride with a "skipper" who will pepper you with corny jokes - a classic Disney experience. Grab as **an additional Multi Pass selection** (be quick about it during popular [Jingle Cruise](#) dates) or ride as soon as Adventureland opens.

[The Many Adventures of Winnie The Pooh](#)

Popular with the toddler crowd, but older kids can skip. Grab as a **Tier 2 Multi Pass advance selection**, ride during Early Entry, or ride before 10 am for the shortest standby wait.

[Haunted Mansion](#)

One of my personal favorites but can scare littles (watch a ride-through on YouTube to decide if it's too much for yours). Grab as a **Tier 2 Multi Pass advance selection** or ride as soon as it opens.

[Meet Cinderella & A Visiting Princess](#)

A must-do for princess fans. **No Lightning Lane** so I suggest doing this before 10 am if possible, before long waits ensue.

[Meet Ariel At Her Grotto](#)

The only place to meet Ariel in her mermaid form. Shortest waits are before 10 am, but rarely get above 40 minutes. **No Lightning Lane**, so it's worth waiting until later in the day to do this to prioritize attractions that get longer waits.

OTHER FAVORITE ATTRACTIONS

I've highlighted the ten attractions with the longest wait times, but there are more I'd consider fan favorites:

Pirates of the Caribbean (Adventureland) - quintessential Disney - I ride this EVERY time I'm in MK. Boat ride with audioanimatronic pirates that inspired the film franchise.



Tomorrowland Transit Authority PeopleMover (Tomorrowland) - my nostalgic favorite ride in MK. A relaxing 10-minute tour through Tomorrowland - please don't miss!

Dumbo the Flying Elephant (Fantasyland) - another classic ride. There's a fantastic indoor playground that you access via the queue - leave some time for the littles to play.



Country Bear Musical Jamboree (Frontierland) - this 12-minute audioanimatronic stage show reopened in 2024 and is now recommended - it's so much fun.

Astro Orbiter (Tomorrowland) - a fun, nostalgic spin high above Tomorrowland. No Lightning Lane but open during Early Entry, so I like to ride then.



Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin (Tomorrowland) - a fun dark ride with "laser cannons" to shoot targets to try to get the highest score.



Big Thunder Mountain Railroad (Frontierland) 40 in. - a favorite with kids and adults. A coaster-style train ride through the wild west.

Mickey's PhilharMagic (Fantasyland) - "4-D" movie with nods to lots of favorite Disney films; guaranteed to make you smile.

MEETING CHARACTERS

Character meet-and-greets no longer offer Lightning Lanes. This makes strategy and prioritizing even more important.

Be aware that meeting characters is time-consuming. If you want to do more than two meet-and-greets, plan to miss out on some rides.

CHARACTER EXPERIENCE TIPS

- The PhotoPass photographers will take pictures with your device (just ask), but only one device per party.
- Most characters sign autographs! Bring an autograph book or a photo mat for them to sign (bring a pen and Ziploc bag).

MICKEY & FRIENDS

The only place to meet **Mickey Mouse** in Magic Kingdom is at the Town Square Theater. It is immediately on your right when you enter the park. Wait times dip right after noon and again around 3:30 pm, making these good times to visit if this is a top priority for you.



You can meet **Minnie, Daisy, Donald, and Goofy** in adorable circus outfits in Fantasyland at Pete's Silly Sideshow. There's one line for Donald & Goofy and a separate line for Minnie & Daisy. If you want to meet everyone, you'll have to wait twice. They often don't start meeting guests until an hour or two after the park opens, so check the app for times.

CINDERELLA & FRIENDS

Meet Disney princesses in a royal setting in Fairytale Hall right behind the castle. There are two separate lines for two experiences. One is to Meet Cinderella and a Visiting Princess (usually Elena of Avalor), and the other line is to Meet Tiana and a Visiting Princess (usually Rapunzel). You'll have to wait twice to meet all four, so it's best to pick one pair to meet.



MEETING MORE CHARACTERS

ARIEL

Another very popular experience is to Meet Ariel at Her Grotto. This is located right next to the Little Mermaid ride. It's the only place to meet Ariel in her mermaid form, and it's very well-themed - a must-do for Ariel fans. Often doesn't open until an hour after the park opens, so check the app for times.



BELLE

One of the most unique character experiences is at Enchanted Tales with Belle. You are magically transported from Maurice's Workshop to Beast's castle - it's more of a show than a standard meet-and-greet (you can get pictures with Belle afterwards, but no autographs). I think it is a must-do for any princess fan - check times in the app because they are always changing.



OTHER CHARACTERS

Many other characters make appearances throughout Magic Kingdom. The best way to find them and what times they are meeting people is in the app in the map section. *Note that people often begin lining up for meet-and-greets as much as 30 minutes early.*



Here are the regulars and where to find them:

- Meet Mirabel at Fairytale Garden (across from Cosmic Ray's)
- Meet Winnie the Pooh & Tigger at The Thotful Spot (next to Winnie the Pooh ride exit)
- Country Bears - roaming in Frontierland
- Chip & Dale, Stitch - Buzz Lightyear Exit Courtyard
- Elena & Mulan - Town Square Theater Porch (in afternoons, some days)
- Anastasia & Drizella - Cinderella fountain behind the castle
- Meet Jasmine & Aladdin - wandering close to Flying Carpets ride
- Captain Jack Sparrow - wandering close to Pirates of the Caribbean

ENTERTAINMENT

For the first time in nearly a decade, there is a nighttime parade at Magic Kingdom. **Disney Starlight** takes place nightly as long as there isn't a holiday party - [click here for the current showtimes](#).

There's also a short afternoon parade called **Festival of Fantasy** that's fun, but not worth sticking around for if you'd rather take an afternoon break. [Click here for showtimes](#). This is a good bet for party days if you're leaving at 6.

Both parades follow the same route (see below). Disney Starlight starts on Main St USA and heads towards Frontierland, and Festival of Fantasy goes in reverse:



©Disney

I prefer to watch parades from less-crowded areas such as Liberty Square or Frontierland.

For the evening parade you might want to watch from "the hub" so you are nearby when it's time to stake out a spot for fireworks 20-30 minutes ahead of time.

CASTLE STAGE SHOW

At scheduled times throughout the day, there is a ~20-minute live show on the stage in front of Cinderella Castle called **Mickey's Magical Friendship Faire**. It's fun to watch if you happen to catch it, but I never plan a day around it. [Click here for the current showtimes](#).



HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Magic Kingdom fireworks can be the highlight of a trip to Walt Disney World.

The current show, Happily Ever After, includes amazing projections onto both Cinderella Castle and the buildings on Main St USA.

Many people ask me for advice on fireworks viewing, so here are my tips:

- My preferred viewing location is in the hub area in front of the castle. Anywhere with an unobstructed view of the castle is great!
- During less crowded times of year, I arrive 20 minutes before the show. Make this 30 minutes during peak times.

There are other great places to view, depending on what you plan to do after the show:

- If you want to hop right in line for Seven Dwarfs, watch from the middle of Fantasyland (less crowded but not recommended for first timers since you'll miss the castle projections)
- If you want a quick exit from the park, watch from the middle of Main St USA.

I try to stand behind people who do NOT have little kids with them so my view doesn't get blocked when they inevitably put their kids on their shoulders.

C H A P T E R

6

DINING

*Where to eat for the best and cheapest food in
Magic Kingdom.*

FOOD & DINING OVERVIEW



You'll want at least a loose plan for dining in order to **avoid sticker shock and gross theme park food** (it does exist). Here are my tips:

- **Bring food along:** Unlike most tourist destinations, you ARE allowed to bring your own food and drinks into Magic Kingdom! Just no alcohol, no glass, no loose ice, and no hard-sided coolers.
- **Buy a souvenir popcorn bucket:** Get refills for only \$2.25 at any popcorn cart.
- **Bring a water bottle:** There is now (good tasting) filtered water available at refilling stations in the park - search for locations in the app's map. You can also get free ice water at any quick service dining location.
- **Eat breakfast in your hotel room** before you head to the parks. To dodge sky-high resort prices, I have groceries delivered to my resort with breakfast items such as cereal, fruit, yogurt, and pastries. [Get details on grocery delivery here.](#)
- **Eat mostly Quick Service/snacks on park days** so as to not waste time in the parks. But beware - the quality varies tremendously (see recommendations).
- **Do a Character Meal at a resort on a non-park day:** Disney resorts have great character dining and you'll have more time in the park for rides. Book the latest breakfast reservation possible and make it your big meal of the day.

SHOULD YOU GET A DISNEY DINING PLAN?

The only situation in which the Disney Dining Plan makes sense financially is **if you plan to buy an alcoholic beverage with lunch and dinner**. If that applies to you, [click here for my tips!](#)

ADVANCE DINING RESERVATIONS

Advance Dining Reservation (ADR) is Disney-speak for restaurant reservations. They are recommended for any dining experience that you are sure you don't want to miss.

In general, the ADR booking window opens up **60 days in advance at 6 am EST**. However, if you are staying at a Disney resort, you can **make dining reservations for the entire length of your stay (up to 10 days) at 6 am EST 60 days before the day you check in**.

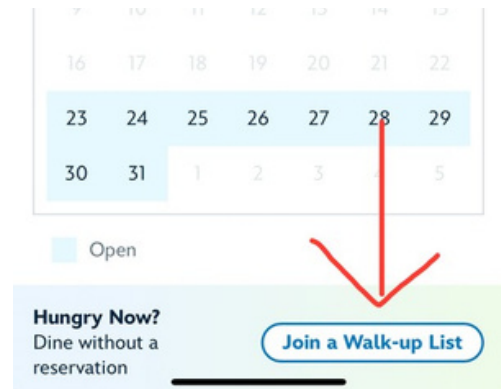
You can make ADRs in both the MDE app (tap the +) or on the website (I prefer the app).

The most in-demand ADRs in Magic Kingdom are by far the fireworks dessert parties. But the good news is I don't recommend them anyway! Everything else is pretty easy to get if you can be flexible with your time.

I try to limit lengthy sit-down meals in the parks, unless I am staying all day and need a break. And I always **avoid table service meals before 11 am** - that is the BEST time to do rides with short wait times - don't waste it at a table service meal.

If you aren't able to secure the ADRs you want before you leave, fear not. Many people change/cancel their ADRs in the days leading up to their trip, so the day before MANY spots will open up.

There are also free and paid services for ADR alerts: Thrill Data and Add More Magic are recommended.



If you're willing to be flexible, you can often find **same-day walk-up availability** at many restaurants in the MDE app.

Just start to make an ADR, then look for **"Join a Walk-Up List"** at the bottom of the screen. I've been able to walk up to even the most in-demand places. Just don't expect this to work during peak season - there won't be anything then.

DINING BEST BETS

PECOS BILL TALL TALE INN & CAFE ★★★★★

Quick Service - Frontierland (L,D)

Large quick service restaurant themed like an Old West Saloon that accepts Mobile Order. Close to Pirates of the Caribbean and Tiana's Bayou Adventure. Create-your-own rice bowls and nachos, plus salads and burgers. Consistent and affordable.



LIBERTY TREE TAVERN ★★★★★

Table Service - Liberty Square (L,D)

Reservations or walk-up availability required. American Thanksgiving food (turkey, beef, mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, green beans) served "family style" shared among the table. Consistent food and delicious dessert.



CRYSTAL PALACE ★★★★★

Character Dining/Bufferet -Main St USA (B,L,D)

Dine with Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet, and Tigger in a lovely setting close to the castle. Expensive and moderately chaotic, but the buffet food is above average and character interactions very fun.



COLUMBIA HARBOR HOUSE ★★★★★

Quick Service - Liberty Square (L,D)

Large restaurant that accepts Mobile Order. Lots of upstairs seating with nice views down onto Liberty Square. Close to Haunted Mansion and Peter Pan's Flight. Seafood, chicken, and salads. Consistent and budget-friendly.



SLEEPY HOLLOW ★★★★★

Quick Service/Snacks - Liberty Square (B,L,D)

Small window with Mobile Order, outdoor seating only with excellent castle views. Serves all-day waffles with various toppings, corn dogs, and funnel cakes. Waffle with berries and cream is a favorite.





WHERE TO AVOID

Yes, there is gross and overpriced food at Magic Kingdom. But if you stick with my recommendations, you'll avoid it! Places I skip are:

- **Be Our Guest** - very expensive for mediocre food, only go for the setting (if you must)
- **Pinocchio Village Haus** - dodge the sad pizza and fries
- **Cosmic Ray's** - below average burgers and chicken
- **Skipper Canteen** - inconsistent quality and overpriced
- **Cinderella's Royal Table** - some people adore it, but I just can't stomach the price tag (dinner for a family of four can push \$400)
- **Tony's Town Square** - average Italian food, probably better in your hometown

BEST SNACKS

Magic Kingdom shines in the snack department! Here are some favorites:

- **Dole Whip**: Aloha Isle, Adventureland
- **Creme Brulee Croissant**: Gaston's Tavern, Fantasyland
- **Mini Corn Dogs & Loaded Fries**: Casey's Corner, Main St USA



Cheshire Cat Tail



Dole Whip

- **Waffles with Toppings**: Sleepy Hollow, Liberty Square
- **Rice Crispy Treats, Candy Apples**: Big Top Souvenirs, Fantasyland
- **Pizza or Hamburger Spring Rolls**: Spring Roll Cart, Adventureland
- **Cold Brew Float & Smoothies**: Auntie Gravity's, Tomorrowland
- **Cheshire Cat Tail**: Cheshire Cafe, by Mad Tea Cups, Fantasyland

COFFEE & BREAKFAST

Find good coffee at the **Main St Bakery** and the **Joffrey's Kiosk** in **Tomorrowland**. Grab a huge breakfast sandwich at **The Friar's Nook** in Fantasyland or waffles at **Sleepy Hollow**.

QUICK SERVICE DINING CHEAT SHEETS

These pages list every restaurant in Magic Kingdom with a link to the current menu (just click on the restaurant name).

Quick Service (aka Counter Service) dining at Disney World mostly involves ordering at a counter and picking up your own food. At some locations, you order at a counter and the food is delivered to your table (tipping is not expected).

* An asterisk denotes that the location accept [Mobile Ordering](#).

Highlighted locations are my personal favorites

QUICK SERVICE DINING

Restaurant Name	Location	Meals	Menu
Pecos Bill *	Frontierland	L,D	Southwest and burgers
Gaston's Tavern	Fantasyland	B,L,D	Sandwiches, snacks, pastries
Pinocchio Village Haus *	Fantasyland	L,D	Italian
The Friar's Nook *	Fantasyland	B,L,D	Breakfast, hot dogs, mac & cheese
Columbia Harbor House *	Liberty Square	L,D	American, seafood & chicken
Liberty Square Market	Liberty Square	L,D	Turkey Legs, snacks
Sleepy Hollow *	Liberty Square	B,L,D	Waffles, sandwiches
Main Street Bakery	Main Street	B,L,D	Starbucks
Casey's Corner *	Main Street	L,D	Hot Dogs
Cosmic Ray's *	Tomorrowland	L,D	Burgers, hot dogs, chicken
Tomorrowland Terrace *	Tomorrowland	L,D	Burgers & chicken
(open seasonally)			
The Lunching Pad *	Tomorrowland	L,D	Hot dogs & roast beef sandwiches

TABLE SERVICE DINING CHEAT SHEETS

Table service restaurants at Magic Kingdom include:

- Character Dining at Crystal Palace, Cinderella's Royal Table, and Be Our Guest (The Beast meets guests at dinner only)
- Meals served "family style" with platters of food shared among the table at Liberty Tree Tavern and Diamond Horseshoe
- Typical table service restaurants where you order off a menu

The last column indicates how many credits are required on the Disney Dining Plan.

Highlighted locations are my personal favorites

TABLE SERVICE DINING

Restaurant Name	Location	Meals	Menu	DDP
Cinderella's Royal Table	Fantasyland	B,L,D	Upscale American with Disney princesses	2
Be Our Guest	Fantasyland	L,D	French-inspired American	2
Jungle Navigation Co. Skipper's Canteen	Adventureland	L,D	Eclectic international	1
Liberty Tree Tavern	Liberty Square	L,D	Family-style American Thanksgiving	1
Diamond Horseshoe	Liberty Square	L,D	Family-style American Thanksgiving	1
Plaza Restaurant	Main Street	L,D	Sandwiches, comfort food	1
Crystal Palace	Main Street	B,L,D	Buffet with Pooh & friends	1
Tony's Town Square	Main Street	L,D	Italian	1

C H A P T E R

7

ITINERARIES

*Step-by-step itineraries for the perfect day at
Magic Kingdom.*

ABOUT THE TOURING PLANS IN THIS GUIDEBOOK

Every theme park chapter contains suggested “Touring Plan” itineraries for different travel parties.

Though they are backed by data and tested, they are meant as **suggestions/inspiration for your day**, NOT hard-and-fast plans. Inevitably, the following things will throw off your well-made plans:

- Rides will go down (unfortunately, this is a common occurrence)
- Lightning Lanes will unexpectedly sell out early
- Someone will need to get food or go to the restroom (again)
- A ride will have a much longer wait time than expected

I suggest staying flexible and understanding that **you likely won't get to do everything you want to in a day** (I rarely do). If a ride is down, try to find a nearby attraction (or snack) to experience while you wait.

Remember that there is a **2-hour grace period for LLs**, so I suggest making them for earlier rather than later to have more flexibility in your day.

These age ranges are estimates and depend on the height/interests of your kids. Take these plans with a grain of salt and remember to go with the flow!



LIGHTNING LANES: KIDS UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

*Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with any **kids >32 inches and <38 inches tall**. Assumes you qualify for **Early Theme Park Entry**.*

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Peter Pan - 12 pm
- 2) Winnie the Pooh - 11 am
- 3) Dumbo or Barnstormer: as early as possible

LIGHTNING LANE SINGLE PASS: Seven Dwarves Mine Train - after lunch



EARLY ENTRY & EARLY MORNING

- Arrival: Ride **Main Street Vehicles** and get pictures
- Early Entry: Tomorrowland for **Astro Orbiter**, **Buzz Lightyear & Tomorrowland Speedway**
- Fantasyland: **Barnstormer**, **Dumbo** (make new LL for it's a small world after 11) **Little Mermaid**, **Tea Party**

REMAINDER OF MORNING

- Meet **Princesses** at **Fairytale Hall**, **Disney Pals** at **Silly Pete's**, **Ariel**, or **Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check time in app)
- Use LLs for **Winnie the Pooh** and **"it's a small world"** (make new LLs for Jungle Cruise and Pirates of the Caribbean for after 5 pm)
- Ride **Prince Charming Regal Carrousel**



LUNCH & AFTERNOON BREAK

- Eat lunch at **Columbia Harbor House**
- Use LL for **Peter Pan** (book LL for Magic Carpets for after 6 pm)
- Use LL Single Pass for **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train**
- Head to exit. On your way out of the park, **Meet Mickey at Town Hall Theater** if wait is under 30 minutes
- Take Disney transportation to your resort for nap/pool



RETURN FOR DINNER & MORE

- Use Disney transportation to return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm.
- Eat dinner at **Pecos Bill** in Frontierland and use LLs for **Pirates of the Caribbean**, **Jungle Cruise**, and **Magic Carpets of Aladdin**.
- If time permits, take in **Country Bears**, **Enchanted Tiki Room**, **Monsters Inc. Laugh Floor** and/or **the Peppermover**
- Watch parade from **Liberty Square** then get spot for fireworks 20 minutes early - anywhere with view of castle is great



LIGHTNING LANES: KIDS 5 TO 9 YEARS OLD

*Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with **kids >38 and <48 inches**.
Assumes you qualify for **Early Theme Park Entry**.*

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Big Thunder Mountain or Tiana's Bayou Adventure - earliest possible
- 2) Haunted Mansion - 11 am
- 3) Burner ride: Mickey's Philharmagic

LIGHTNING LANE SINGLE PASS: Seven Dwarfs Mine Train - 1 pm

EARLY ENTRY & EARLY MORNING



- Arrival: Ride **Main Street Vehicles** (if running) and get pictures
- Early Entry: **Astro Orbiter, Buzz Lightyear, and Tomorrowland Speedway**.
- Tap into Mickey's Philharmagic (immediately book LL for Big Thunder or Tiana's or Peter Pan) ride **Journey of the Little Mermaid, Dumbo, Tea Party, and it's a small world** standby

REMAINDER OF MORNING



- Meet **Princesses at Fairytale Hall, Disney Pals at Silly Pete's, Ariel, or Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check time in app)
- Ride **Prince Charming Regal Carrousel**
- Use LL for **Haunted Mansion**. Book LL for Peter Pan (asap) or Jungle Cruise after 5 pm

LUNCH & AFTERNOON



- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House
- Use LL Single Pass for **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train**
- Use any LLs (book Pirates for after 5 pm and Space Mountain for after 7 pm next)
- **Meet Mickey at Town Hall Theater** (if wait is <30 minutes)
- Take Disney transportation to your resort for nap/pool

RETURN FOR DINNER & FIREWORKS



- Use Disney transportation to return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm.
- Use remaining LLs and eat dinner at Pecos Bill in Frontierland
- Ride **Pirates** with LL or standby if needed.
- If time permits catch the **Country Bear Jamboree** and **Tiki Room**.
- Go to Tomorrowland to ride **Space Mountain** and **PeopleMover**.
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20 minutes early with view of castle

LIGHTNING LANES: AGE 10 TO ADULT

Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with **kids taller than 48 inches and adults**. Assumes you are staying at a Disney resort that offers **Early Entry**.

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Big Thunder Mountain or Tiana's Bayou Adventure -earliest possible
- 2) Haunted Mansion - 11 am
- 3) Burner ride: Mickey's Philharmagic

SINGLE PASS: TRON (after dark/before fireworks)



MORNING

- Early Entry: Get in line for **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train** immediately
- Tap into Mickey's Philharmagic (book LL for Big Thunder Mountain/Tiana's or Peter Pan ASAP) then ride **Dumbo, Mad Tea Party, Journey of the Little Mermaid, and it's a small world**
- **Meet Princesses at Fairytale Hall, Disney Pals at Silly Pete's, Ariel, or Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check opening time in app)
- Use LL for **Haunted Mansion** (book LL for Peter Pan or Jungle Cruise)
- If time permits before lunch: **Carrousel & Mickey's Philharmagic**



LUNCH & AFTERNOON

- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House (use Mobile Order)
- Use any LLs (book Jungle Cruise for after 5 pm and Buzz Lightyear for after 7 pm)
- **Meet Mickey at Town Hall Theater** (if wait is under 30 minutes)
- Take Disney transportation to your resort for nap/pool by 2 pm



RETURN FOR DINNER & FIREWORKS

- Use Disney transportation to return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm.
- Use remaining LLs (book Space Mountain and Pirates next) and eat dinner at Pecos Bill's in Frontierland (use Mobile Order)
- Watch **Country Bear Jamboree** (if time permits)
- Use LL for **Pirates of the Caribbean** or ride standby
- Tomorrowland: **Peppermover, Space Mountain, Buzz Lightyear, and TRON**
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20 minutes before with view of castle. Ride anything you missed after fireworks.



LIGHTNING LANES: HOLIDAY SEASON

Here's a plan of action when you're visiting during the holiday season with **kids >40 and <48 inches**. Assumes you qualify for **Early Theme Park Entry**.

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Big Thunder Mountain or Tiana's Bayou Adventure - earliest possible
- 2) Jingle Cruise - 11 am
- 3) Burner ride: Mickey's Philharmagic

SINGLE PASS: TRON (after dark/before fireworks) & **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train** (5 pm)

MORNING



- Early Entry: Get in line for **Peter Pan's Flight** immediately
- Tap into Mickey's Philharmagic (book LL for Big Thunder Mountain/Tiana's or Haunted Mansion ASAP) then ride **Dumbo, Mad Tea Party, Journey of the Little Mermaid, and it's a small world**
- **Meet Princesses at Fairytale Hall, Disney Pals at Silly Pete's, Ariel, or Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check opening time in app)
- Use LL for **Jingle Cruise** (book LL Haunted Mansion)
- If time permits before lunch: **Carrousel & Mickey's Philharmagic**



LUNCH & AFTERNOON

- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House (use Mobile Order)
- Use LLs (book LL for Buzz Lightyear for after 7 pm)
- **Meet Mickey at Town Hall Theater** (if wait is under 30 minutes)
- Take Disney transportation to your resort for nap/pool



RETURN FOR DINNER & FIREWORKS

- Use Disney transportation to return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm.
- Use LLs (book Space Mountain after 7 pm and Pirates next) and eat dinner at Pecos Bill's in Frontierland (use Mobile Order)
- Ride **Pirates** with LL or standby
- Watch **Country Bear Jamboree** (if time permits)
- Tomorrowland: **Peppermover, Space Mountain, Buzz Lightyear, TRON**
- Watch parade then find a spot for fireworks 30 minutes before with view of castle. Ride anything you missed after fireworks.



NO EARLY ENTRY: 48 INCHES AND UP

Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with **the 48 inches and taller crowd**. Assumes you are **NOT** eligible for Early Entry and **ARE** buying Lightning Lanes.

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Tiana's Bayou Adventure or Big Thunder Mountain (earliest possible)
- 2) Haunted Mansion - 11 am
- 3) Burner ride: Mickey's Philharmagic

SINGLE PASS: TRON (after dark/before fireworks) & Seven Dwarfs Mine Train (5 pm)



MORNING

- Tap into Mickey's Philharmagic (book LL for Big Thunder Mountain/Tiana's or Peter Pan ASAP) then ride **Dumbo, Mad Tea Party, Journey of the Little Mermaid**, and **it's a small world**
- Meet Princesses at Fairytale Hall, Disney Pals at Silly Pete's, Ariel, or Enchanted Tales with Belle (check opening time in app)
- Use LL for Haunted Mansion (book LL for Peter Pan or Jungle Cruise)
- If time permits before lunch: Carrousel & Mickey's Philharmagic



LUNCH & AFTERNOON

- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House (use Mobile Order)
- Use any LLs (book Jungle Cruise for after 5 pm and Buzz Lightyear for after 7 pm)
- **Meet Mickey at Town Hall Theater** (if wait is under 30 minutes)
- Take Disney transportation to your resort for nap/pool by 2 pm



RETURN FOR DINNER & FIREWORKS

- Use Disney transportation to return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm.
- Use remaining LLs (book Space Mountain and Pirates next) and eat dinner at Pecos Bill's in Frontierland (use Mobile Order)
- Watch **Country Bear Jamboree** (if time permits)
- Use LL for **Pirates of the Caribbean** or ride standby
- Tomorrowland: **Peppermover, Space Mountain, Buzz Lightyear**, and **TRON**
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20 minutes before with view of castle. Ride anything you missed after fireworks.



NO MULTI PASS: KIDS UNDER 7

*Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with **kids <40 inches**. Assumes you are NOT eligible for Early Entry and aren't buying Lightning Lane Multi Pass. A Single Pass For Seven Dwarfs Mine Train is recommended.*



ROPE DROP & EARLY MORNING

- Arrive at the gates a half hour before opening to ride **Main Street Vehicles** and get pictures.
- Ride **Jungle Cruise** and **Pirates of the Caribbean** in the first hour.
- At the start of the second hour, get in line for **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad** (wait should be <50 minutes) or **The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh**.



REMAINDER OF MORNING

- Spend the rest of the morning in Fantasyland. Meet either **Princesses at Fairytale Hall**, **Disney Pals at Silly Pete's**, **Ariel**, or **Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check open time in app) and ride as many of these as possible before lunch: **Dumbo**, **Barnstormer**, **Mad Tea Cups**, **Journey of the Little Mermaid**, "it's a small world".



LUNCH & AFTERNOON

- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House (use Mobile Order)
- Ride **Prince Charming Regal Carrousel** and any other Fantasyland must-dos that you missed in the morning.
- Experience **Mickey's PhilharMagic**, **Country Bear Jamboree**, **Enchanted Tiki Room**, and/or **Haunted Mansion** (all in the AC) or take an afternoon hotel break.
- Use Single Pass for **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train** if riding.



EVENING

- Eat dinner at Pecos Bill, Crystal Palace, or Liberty Tree Tavern
- Ride **Magic Carpets of Aladdin**
- Head to Tomorrowland to ride the **Peppermint Patty**, **Tomorrowland Speedway**, and **Buzz Lightyear** (if time permits)
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20-30 minutes before with view of castle
- If possible after fireworks ride **Peter Pan** and **Tiana's Bayou Adventure**. Get in line up to the minute before the park "closes".

NO MULTI PASS: AGES 7 AND UP

Here's a plan of action when you're visiting with **the 44 inches and taller crowd**. Assumes you are **NOT** eligible for Early Entry and aren't buying Lightning Lane Multi Pass. Purchasing Single Pass for TRON or Seven Dwarfs is recommended.

ROPE DROP & EARLY MORNING



- Arrive at the gates a half hour before opening to ride **Main Street Vehicles** and get pictures.
- Ride **Jungle Cruise** and **Pirates of the Caribbean** in the first hour.
- At the start of the second hour, get in line for **Big Thunder Mountain** or **Tiana's Bayou Adventure** (wait should be <50 minutes).

REMAINDER OF MORNING



- Spend the rest of the morning in Fantasyland. Meet either **Princesses at Fairytale Hall**, **Disney Pals at Silly Pete's**, **Ariel**, or **Enchanted Tales with Belle** (check open time in app) and ride as many of these as possible before lunch: **Dumbo**, **Barnstormer**, **Mad Tea Cups**, **Journey of the Little Mermaid**, "it's a small world".

LUNCH & AFTERNOON



- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House (use Mobile Order).
- Ride any other Fantasyland must-dos that you missed in the morning.
- Experience **Mickey's PhilharMagic**, **Country Bear Jamboree**, **Enchanted Tiki Room**, and/or **Haunted Mansion** (all in the AC) or take an afternoon hotel break.
- Use Single Pass if applicable.

EVENING



- Eat dinner at Pecos Bill, Crystal Palace, or Liberty Tree Tavern.
- Head to Tomorrowland to ride the **Peppermint Patty**, **Space Mountain**, and **Buzz Lightyear** (if time permits).
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20-30 minutes before with view of castle.
- If possible after fireworks ride **Peter Pan** and/or **Tiana's Bayou Adventure/Big Thunder Mountain**. Get in line up to the minute before the park "closes".

FAMILIES WITH LITTLES DAY 1

*Here's day one of a two-day plan of action when you're visiting with **kids <35 inches and do not qualify for Early Entry.***

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Peter Pan's Flight - early evening
- 2) Winnie the Pooh - late morning
- 3) Dumbo - morning



EARLY MORNING

- Arrive at park by 8:30 am and ride **Main Street Vehicles** and get pictures
- Rope drop: **Meet Princesses at Fairytale Hall**
- Fantasyland: **Mad Tea Party, Barnstomer** (if 35 inches), use LL for **Dumbo** (make after-lunch LL for "it's a small world")

REMAINDER OF MORNING

- **Meet Disney Pals at Silly Pete's** (opens at 10 am) or snack break
- Ride **Under the Sea - Journey of the Little Mermaid**
- **Enchanted Tales with Belle** (usually opens at 10:30)
- **Prince Charming Regal Carrousel**
- Use LL for **Winnie the Pooh** (make after lunch LL for Tomorrowland Speedway)

LUNCH & AFTERNOON

- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House
- Use LL for **"it's a small world"** (book LL for Monster's Inc Laugh Floor for evening)
- Experience **Mickey's Philharmagic**
- Use LL for **Tomorrowland Speedway**
- Afternoon break

RETURN FOR DINNER & FIREWORKS

- Return to Magic Kingdom by 5 pm
- Grab dinner at Casey's Corner or Crystal Palace
- Use LLs for **Peter Pan's Flight, Buzz Lightyear, and Monster's Inc**
- Ride the **Tomorrowland Transit Authority Peoplemover**
- Watch parade from Liberty Square then find a spot for fireworks 20-30 minutes before with view of castle



FAMILIES WITH LITTLES DAY 2

*Here's day two of a two-day plan of action when you're visiting with **kids <35 inches and do not qualify for Early Entry.***

IDEAL ADVANCED LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS SELECTIONS

- 1) Jungle Cruise - afternoon
- 2) Pirates of the Caribbean - morning
- 3) Magic Carpets of Aladdin - as early as possible

EARLY MORNING



- Arrive at park by 9 am
- Rope drop: **Meet Mickey Mouse at Town Square Theater**
- Use LL for **Magic Carpets of Aladdin** (make LL for Haunted Mansion for after lunch)
- Experience the Enchanted Tiki Room

REMAINDER OF MORNING



- Use LL for **Pirates of the Caribbean** (make LL for after lunch for any ride you want to repeat from day 1)
- Watch **Country Bear Jamboree**
- Take launch to **Tom Sawyer's Island**
- Ride the **Walt Disney Railroad** around the park

LUNCH & AFTERNOON



- Eat lunch at Columbia Harbor House
- Use LL for **Haunted Mansion**
- Use LL for **Jungle Cruise**
- If time permits, check out **Swiss Family Robinson Treehouse** and/or **Liberty Square Riverboats**
- Watch the 3 pm **Festival of Fantasy** parade from anywhere in Liberty Square
- Head out of the park

Disney Trip Daily Plan

TODAY'S PARK/FOCUS

PARK HOURS

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

NIGHTTIME ENTERTAINMENT

RESERVATIONS

LIGHTNING LANE SELECTIONS

DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

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C H A P T E R

8

OTHER VACATION DETAILS

*Everything else you need to know to have
success at Disney World.*



WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

There are many other moving parts to a Disney World vacation and things you **COULD** spend money on. When trying to get the most bang for your buck you need expert help to decide what's worth it and what isn't!

Here are some topics I'll cover in this chapter to help you be completely prepared for your trip:

- PhotoPass & Memory Maker
- Magic Kingdom Parties
- After Hours Events
- Strollers
- Souvenirs
- Magic Bands

“

I'm able to visit Disney World four+ times per year because I know exactly where to spend and where to save.

”



PHOTOPASS & MEMORY MAKER

The PhotoPass service at Disney World refers to both ride photos and live photographers at character meet and greets and stationed around the parks.

There are several options for taking advantage of the PhotoPass service:

- You'll get **free downloads of all ride photos** if you purchase LL Multi Pass for the day. This is a great perk and we always get a kick out of our photos. You'll get notifications in the app when there's a photo to view.
- PhotoPass photographers will **take pictures with your own device** - just politely ask and they are happy to do this.
- If you want to offload taking pictures on your trip, you can purchase a **Memory Maker package** that will give you unlimited access to all PhotoPass pictures. Many people share the cost since you'll get downloads for up to 25 people linked in your MDE account.
- **Individual PhotoPass downloads** are \$17 each. This makes sense if you just want one or two professional photos from your trip.

ACCESSIBILITY AT DISNEY WORLD

Disney World is committed to providing an inclusive environment and accessible experiences for guests. [Click here for an overview of all the services they offer.](#)



May Remain in Wheelchair/ECV

Review a list of attractions that allow Guests to remain in their wheelchair or Electric Conveyance Vehicle (ECV).



Must Transfer from ECV to Wheelchair

Review a list of certain attractions Guests may be required [to transfer from their ECV to a wheelchair, or from their ECV to a wheelchair and then to a ride vehicle.](#)



Must Transfer from Wheelchair/ECV to Ride Vehicle

Review a list of certain attractions Guests must transfer from their wheelchair or ECV, either by themselves or with assistance from someone in their party.



Must Be Ambulatory

Review a list of attractions that require Guests to walk by themselves or receive assistance from members of their party while enjoying an experience.

Rides are divided into four different categories based on how guests with mobility devices access the ride - [click here for more details](#). Many guests opt to rent a motorized scooter (ECV) to get around the parks. You can [rent ECVs for just inside the parks from Disney](#) or for your entire vacation (you park and charge it at your hotel room) [from a private company such as ScooterBug](#).

For neurodivergent guests, Disney has [this 22-page guide planning guide](#) that is very helpful. They also have a [Disability Access Service \(DAS\)](#) to support guests who, due to a developmental disability like autism or similar, are unable to wait in a conventional queue for an extended period of time. There have been recent changes to who qualifies for DAS so be sure to [get the latest guidelines here](#).

Disney World excels at accommodating those with special dietary requests, including those with common food allergies or intolerances. There are special "Allergy-Friendly" menus available at most restaurants. [Click here for more information on visiting with special dietary requests.](#)

MICKEY'S NOT-SO-SCARY HALLOWEEN PARTY

The Magic Kingdom Halloween party has become so popular is now begins in August. It runs from 7 pm - 12 pm on select nights during spooky season.

Even though the official festivities don't start until 7 pm, **you can enter Magic Kingdom as early as 4 pm with just a party ticket** (regular admission not required). People will begin lining up in front of the gates starting at around 3:30 pm.

You'll be given a special wristband to identify you as a party guest. Those without a wristband will be escorted to the gates at 6 pm when the park closes to day guests.



This party is popular for good reason - it is a lot of fun. There are **trick or treating stations** around the park - you'll get SO MUCH CANDY.

It features special stage shows, a Halloween parade (featuring the Headless Horseman), special "Boo To You" fireworks, attraction overlays, as well as some very popular character meet and greets.

Also, the party is the only time adults are allowed into Magic Kingdom in costume. The people watching is excellent!

It is pricey at \$111-\$198 per person, but since **you're able to arrive early and enter the park at 4 pm with your ticket**, you'll get up to 8 hours in the park. The cheapest dates are those in August and September.

MICKEY'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Magic Kingdom Christmas party takes place from 7 pm to midnight on select nights in November and December.

Similar to the Halloween party, it involves:

- Special stage shows
- Character meet-and-greets (in their holiday attire)
- Mickey's Once Upon A Christmastime parade
- Special holiday fireworks, and
- Complimentary treats (Christmas cookie and hot chocolate stations around the park).

It is also more expensive, with tickets ranging from \$169-\$219.

Similar to the Halloween party, the cheaper dates fall earlier in the season.

Though I love Christmas, I prefer the Halloween party to this one. It costs significantly more, and I feel there is less added value.

There are so many things to do around Disney World for holiday fun (many of which are free) that I find the additional cost of the party isn't worth it for me.



INSIDER TIP

Magic Kingdom tends to be significantly LESS crowded during the day on party days because it closes at 6 pm to non-party-goers. If you don't mind missing the fireworks and ending your day early, head to Magic Kingdom on party days for lower crowd levels.

ENCHANTING EXTRAS

Disney groups many “add-on” experiences into a category called **Enchanting Extras**. These require reservations which can be made 60 days prior (+10 days in with a resort reservation). .



BIBBIDI BOBBIDI BOUTIQUE

A special princess makeover experience that takes place inside of Cinderella Castle. Recommended for ages 5-10.

The least expensive option is \$99 plus tax and requires that you bring a dress from home. Dress packages start at \$199.

This is one of the most difficult reservations to get in all of WDW. Consider getting help from Add More Magic to secure a reservation. Doing this after 11 am is best in order to take advantage of low morning crowds in the parks.



FIREWORKS DESSERT PARTIES

Several different parties offer a chance to enjoy the Happily Ever After fireworks show with all-you-can-eat desserts.

There are many places to stand to get great views of the fireworks at no additional cost. For that reason I don't recommend these parties.

If you want to try one, I suggest the Sweets & Seats Party. You'll get dedicated seating for the show plus beer and wine. Reservations are VERY difficult to snag, so be ready as soon as your window opens.

STROLLERS

Since you will likely walk 5-8 miles per day, you'll find that kids who have long outgrown strollers at home will want one on this vacation.

I've found that a lightweight, easy-to-fold stroller brought from home works best. Kids can even take turns riding in it.

Other options are to rent a stroller there, but the strollers at the parks are hard plastic (i.e. uncomfortable) and expensive. Your best bet is to rent from a company that delivers to your resort, such as [Stroll Along Rentals](#) (save 40% when you [join Neverland Travel Club](#)).



T-SHIRTS & EARS

I love a cute pair of Minnie Mouse ears, but the headbands sold at Disney World are expensive (\$35+) and heavy, which means they sometimes give me a headache.

Also, buying t-shirts for a family of four at Disney World will set you back at *least* \$150.

I always buy these vacation essentials at Target, Etsy, or Amazon before my trip. This saves hundreds of dollars and you'll be more comfortable to boot.





MAGIC BANDS

Magic Bands are adjustable, waterproof wristbands that have a small radio frequency (RF) chip inside. While they aren't necessary, they are convenient and fun.

When you are at Disney World, you can use a Magic Band to:

- Unlock your resort hotel room
- Use your park tickets to enter the theme parks (as long as you've purchased a ticket, of course)
- Use your Lightning Lane reservations
- Charge purchases and dining back to your resort hotel
- Link Disney PhotoPass pictures to your account
- Redeem your credits on the [Disney Dining Plan](#)

You tap the Mickey symbol on your Magic Band to a receiver on your room door, at the turnstiles, at checkout registers, etc., to use your band.

MagicBand+ interacts with rides and shows in the parks by lighting up and vibrating.

The MagicMobile feature in the MDE app has made it possible to essentially use your phone as a Magic Band. [Click here to learn how to set it up.](#)

For this reason, **I only suggest purchasing a MagicBand for kids who don't have their own device.**

Keep in mind that the bands need recharged each night to light up, but always have basic functions such as acting as your park ticket.



RESOURCES

General Tips

[The Best Dates to Visit Walt Disney World + Free Printable Calendar](#)

[15 Tips For Disney World First Timers](#)

[Disney Magic Bands 101: Everything You Need To Know](#)

[Disney World Reservation Date Calculator](#)

[My #1 Favorite Travel Card](#)

[Chase Disney Visa Pros and Cons](#)

[Guide to Visiting Disney World at Christmas](#)

Visiting The Theme Parks

[Disney Lightning Lane Ultimate Guide & Cheat Sheet](#)

[How To Make Lightning Lane Reservations](#)

[Where to Get the Cheapest Disney World Tickets](#)

[What To Pack In Your Disney World Park Bag](#)

[Disney World Halloween Guide](#)

Food & Dining

[How To Use Mobile Order at Disney World + Tips](#)

[Disney World Grocery Delivery Guide](#)

[Disney Dining Plan 101](#)

[Disney Dining Plan Tips & Tricks](#)

[Best of Disney World Quick Service Dining](#)

Accommodations

[How To Rent DVC Points to Save Thousands at Walt Disney World](#)

[What to Expect at the Disney Value Resorts](#)

[Best & Worst of the Disney Value Resorts](#)

[Rooms That Sleep 5 at Disney World](#)

[How to Save up to 40% at Disney World With Priceline](#)

[The Best & Worst of the Disney Moderate Resorts](#)

THANK YOU!

I truly hope you found this guide helpful. Thank you so much for supporting my efforts to help families experience all of the magic of Disney World while staying within their budget.

If you have any feedback or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me - I love hearing from readers. Email me at Leah@thebudgetmouse.com or find me over on Instagram - I'm [@thebudgetmouse](https://www.instagram.com/thebudgetmouse).

I hope you have an incredible vacation!

XO, Leah

