

K R I S T I E C A R O N

THE COMPLETE DISNEYLAND GUIDE



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PLAN A
TRIP THAT ACTUALLY FEELS GOOD

K R I S T I E . I N . T H E . P A R K S



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Disneyland Terms Made Simple

Disneyland has its own language, and it can feel confusing at first. Here are the terms you'll hear most often, explained simply.

Rope Drop

Arriving before park opening to be among the first on rides.

Lightning Lane Multi Pass (LL)

A paid system that lets you skip standby lines on select rides.

Individual Lightning Lane (ILL)

Pay-per-ride access for the most popular attractions.

Lightning Lane Return Time

Your assigned time window to come back and use the Lightning Lane.

Park Hopper

A ticket that allows you to visit both parks in one day.

Good Neighbor Hotel

Off-property hotels near Disneyland approved by Disney.

Esplanade

The area between Disneyland and California Adventure.



WELCOME

A Disneyland trip is exciting... but it can also feel like a lot.

There's so much to figure out. Where to start, what's worth it, and how to make sure it actually feels fun instead of overwhelming.

That's exactly why I created this guide.

I've been to Disneyland in so many different ways, with friends, with family, and with my kids. Over the years, I've helped families plan trips that feel calm, organized, and genuinely enjoyable.

For many people, it's not Disneyland that feels hard. It's the pressure, the pace, and not knowing what to do next.

You're in the right place.

You might notice this guide is a bit longer than others you've seen. That's intentional. I wanted to include everything you actually need to feel prepared, and I couldn't bring myself to leave the helpful details out. The good news is, you don't need to read it all at once. Each section is designed to be easy to skim, so you can jump to what you need, when you need it.

If questions come up as you work through this guide, I'm always happy to help. You can reach me anytime at hello@disneykristie.com.

Thank you so much for being here and trusting me to be part of your trip. 🧡

Kristie Caron

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OVERVIEW

1. GET ORIENTED

Get your bearings before you plan — understand how Disneyland is laid out, how the parks flow, and what actually makes or breaks your day.



2. WHEN TO GO + WHERE TO STAY

Learn how timing, crowds, and hotel location impact your trip so you can choose what works best for your family.



3. TICKETS + PARK OVERVIEW

Break down the key decisions — tickets, park hopper, and Lightning Lane — so you can plan with confidence.



4. DINING + EXPERIENCES

A realistic approach to food, reservations, and experiences so you don't waste time or money.



5. THE DISNEYLAND APP

A simple, step-by-step way to use the app so it actually helps you — not overwhelms you.



6. DISNEYLAND LOGISTICS

Everything you need to know once you're inside the parks — strollers, lockers, security, and more.



7. LIGHTNING LANE

A clear breakdown of how Lightning Lane works and how to use it strategically.



8. SKIP THE LINES STRATEGIES

The most effective ways to save time — without overcomplicating your day.



9. ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

How to experience shows, parades, and nighttime entertainment without the stress.



10. WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Final thoughts, favorite tips, and the tools that will make your trip easier.





RIDE HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Not every ride is for every height, and this is one of the easiest things to plan ahead for.

Disneyland Park

32 inches

Autopia (must be 54 inches to drive alone)

35 inches

Chip 'n' Dale's GADGETcoaster

38 inches

Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run

40 inches

Big Thunder Mountain Railroad

Space Mountain

Star Tours

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance

Tiana's Bayou Adventure

42 inches

Matterhorn Bobsleds

46 inches

Indiana Jones Adventure

Disney California Adventure

32 inches

Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters

Mater's Junkyard Jamboree

Redwood Creek Challenge Trail (selected areas)

40 inches

Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission BREAKOUT!

Jumpin' Jellyfish

Radiator Springs Racers

Silly Symphony Swings

Soarin' Around the World

42 inches

Goofy's Sky School

Grizzly River Run

48 inches

Incredicoaster

Cast Members will measure your child at the entrance of the ride.

Shoes must stay on for measurement

If your child is right at the cutoff, it can go either way.

Rider Switch is available if someone in your group cannot ride

If your child is close to a height requirement, I always prep them ahead of time. It makes a huge difference if they already know it might be a "maybe."

Please Remember: just because your child can ride the ride doesn't mean they should. Some of these rides are very thrilling and can scare younger kids.

CHAPTER

01

GET ORIENTED

Before you plan anything, it
helps to understand how
Disneyland actually works.



DISNEYLAND OVERVIEW

Disneyland is much smaller than Disney World — and that’s a good thing.

Everything is located within one main area, which makes it significantly easier to navigate, especially with kids.

At the Disneyland Resort, you’ll find Disneyland Park, Disney California Adventure, the three on property hotels (The Disneyland Hotel, The Grand Californian and Pixar Place Hotel) and Downtown Disney.

Around the resort, there are also many nearby hotels within walking distance.

The two parks sit directly across from each other — just a short walk through the esplanade.

This means:

- No buses between parks
- No complicated transportation
- Easy park hopping (if you choose that option)

Most guests are surprised by how walkable everything is. You can go from your hotel to the parks, back for a break, and return later without losing hours of your day.



PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

One of the biggest reasons Disneyland can feel hard is this: people try to do too much and end up exhausted by the middle of the day.

My goal with this guide is to help you have an incredible trip that feels manageable, not overwhelming.

That means planning your days in a way that actually works for your energy — not trying to do everything.

Here are a few simple guidelines to keep in mind:

- You don't need to do everything. Focus on your top priorities and let the rest go.
- Plan for a break during the day, even a couple of hours off your feet can make a huge difference.
- Take advantage of how close everything is. If you're staying nearby, going back to your hotel to rest is often easier than pushing through.
- Avoid stacking too many long days in a row, especially with kids.

A well-paced day will almost always feel better than a packed one.

PARK LAYOUT + FLOW

There are two parks at Disneyland Resort:

Disneyland Park

- More rides
- Classic attractions
- Typically needs more time than DCA

Disney California Adventure (DCA)

- Fewer rides
- More shows, food, and experiences
- Often takes one full day

Both parks share a central entrance area (the esplanade), which makes moving between them simple if you have a Park Hopper ticket.



Park hopping basics:

- You start your day in the park you reserved when you made your park reservations
- You can hop to the other park anytime and can go back and forth between parks as you wish

Because the parks are so close together, hopping is easy — but it's not required to have a great trip.



TRANSPORTATION BASICS

One of the biggest advantages of Disneyland is how simple transportation is.

For most trips, you'll rely on one thing:
Walking

Many Good Neighbor Hotels are located just outside the resort and are close enough to walk. Some are even closer to the park entrances than the Disneyland Hotel or Pixar Place Hotel.

What to expect:

- 5–15 minute walk from many nearby, Good Neighbour Hotels
- Easy access to both parks
- Ability to go back to your room mid-day

Security entrances:

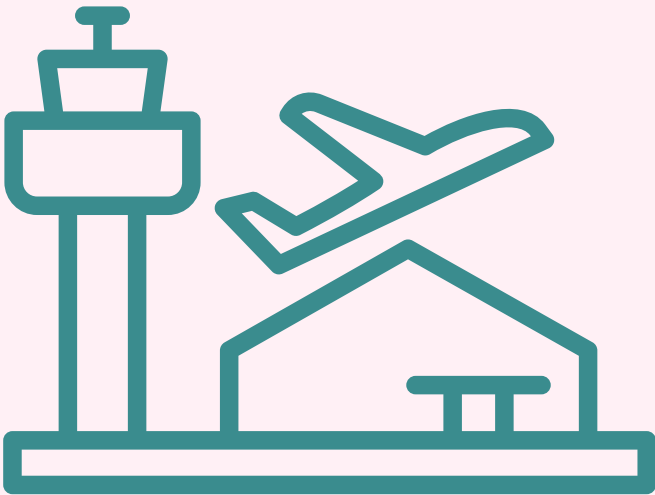
- Main entrance on Harbour Blvd
- Downtown Disney side - near the Disneyland Hotel
- Leaving the Grand Californian
- Parking structures

Security is quick but can back up in the mornings, so give yourself a little extra time. Once you pass security into Downtown Disney / Esplanade, you're done with security unless you leave that secure area.

AIRPORTS

When booking flights, you'll usually see Los Angeles (LAX) as the main option — but it's not always the best choice for a Disneyland trip.

LAX is about 40 miles from the parks, and depending on traffic, that drive can easily take 1–2 hours.



If you can, **look for flights into John Wayne Airport** (SNA, sometimes listed as Orange County/Santa Ana). It's the closest airport to Disneyland and by far the easiest to navigate — typically **about a 20–30 minute drive.**

Long Beach Airport (LGB) is another great option. It's small, simple, and very convenient for getting to the parks.

If you do end up flying into LAX, it's worth **planning your transportation in advance.** For families or larger groups, a private car or shuttle can sometimes be easier (and even comparable in price) than rideshare.

For more info about getting to and from the airport, check out the next page.



GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT

Once you land, getting to Disneyland is the next step — and this is one of those things that can either feel really easy... or really stressful.

The good news is: it's easy when you have a plan.

Your Options

You have a few ways to get from the airport to Disneyland:

- Rideshare (Uber / Lyft)
- Rental car
- Private transportation
- Group Shuttles

My Recommendation

Best Ride Transport

This is the company my family has used since 2019, and it's been amazing every time.

What I love: they track your flight, offer car seats and booster seats, have clean comfortable vehicles, and are reliable after a long travel day. And it's usually not that much more than Uber.

If you book with them, you can find them [HERE](#) and be sure to tell them Kristie in the Parks sent you.

A Note on Renting a Car

Renting a car can make sense — but this is where I see people accidentally spend way more than they planned.

When you're pricing it out, don't just look at the rental cost. You also need to factor in:

- Hotel parking fees (often nightly)
- Theme park parking if you're driving in each day

If you're staying farther away and need to drive to the parks daily, those parking costs can add up quickly — often more than the cost of staying within walking distance and covering your airport transportation.

If you're planning to visit other California attractions, it's worth comparing: Rental car + parking vs. Rideshare or private transportation to each location.

Sometimes the convenience of a car is worth it — but sometimes it's just an extra expense you don't actually need.

CHAPTER

02

WHEN TO GO + WHERE TO STAY

When you go — and where
you stay — will shape your
entire trip.

THE BEST TIMES TO VISIT

There's no perfect time to visit Disneyland — only trade-offs. Crowds, weather, pricing, and seasonal experiences all change throughout the year, so the best time to go depends on what matters most to your family.



Crowd Trends:

Busiest:

- Spring Break (March–April)
- Summer (June–Mid-August)
- Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's
- Mondays tend to be the busiest day of the week

Moderate:

- Weekends year-round
- Fall (especially Halloween season)
- Early December

Lower (typically):

- Mid-week during school months
- January, February, early May, September

Even during “slower” times, Disneyland is never empty — but with the right plan, any time of year can be a great trip.



PLANNING YOUR PARK DAYS

Before you even look at tickets, take a minute to think about how you actually want your days to feel.

Because Disneyland isn't hard...
but trying to do it all without a plan is.

There are only two parks — but they're packed. And the biggest mistake I see people make is assuming they'll just "figure it out" once they get there.

That's how you end up tired, overstimulated, and feeling like you missed things.



HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU REALLY NEED?

Here's the breakdown:

- 1–2 days: doable, but fast-paced and more about checking boxes
- 3 days: a great baseline and what most people book
- 4–5 days: this is my recommendation if you can swing it.



Here's why:
With my kids, we always take longer midday breaks.

Not just a quick sit — I mean actual rest.

And that changes everything.

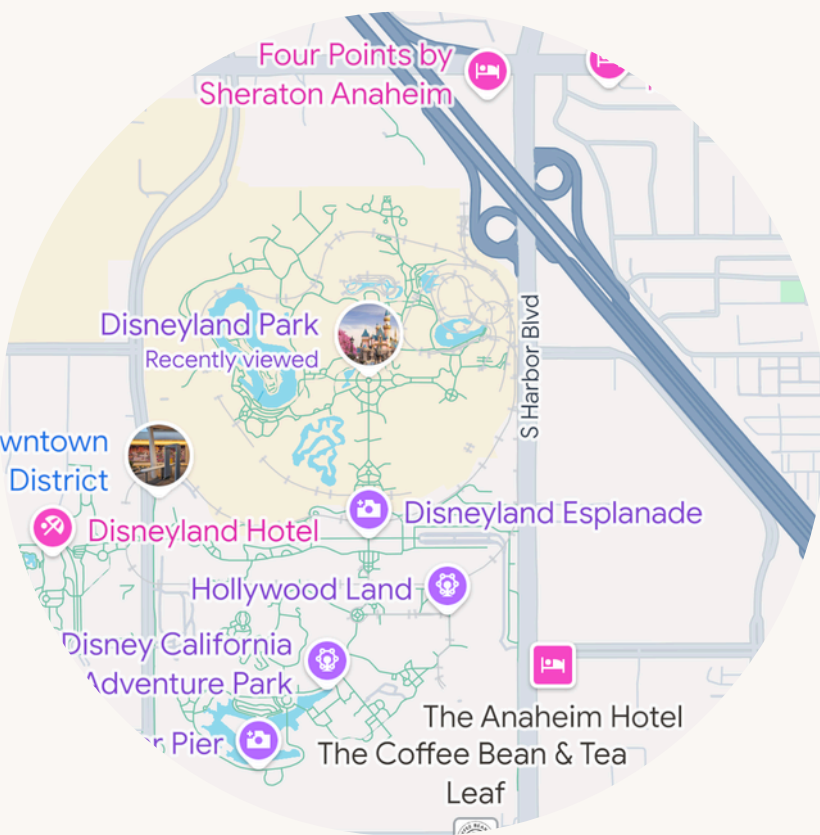
If you only have 3 days, you can get a lot done...

but it can still feel rushed — especially if you want to:

- redo favorite rides
- slow down and enjoy things
- or just not feel like you're constantly moving

More days = more flexibility
More flexibility = a calmer, better trip





WHERE TO STAY

Where you stay at Disneyland matters more than most people expect.

Unlike Disney World, everything here is close — which means staying within walking distance can make a huge difference in how your days feel.

Less walking, easier breaks, and a much smoother overall experience.

When figuring out how close a hotel really is to Disneyland, I always check the walking distance to the IHOP Anaheim Disneyland (right across from the entrance). It gives you a much more accurate idea of the actual walk.

Understanding Location

Many of the hotels located directly across on Harbor Blvd are actually closer to the park entrance than the Disneyland Hotel or Pixar Place Hotel.

This is important to keep in mind when booking:

- Harbor Blvd hotels → shortest walk to the main entrance
- Disneyland Hotel / Pixar Place → longer walk through Downtown Disney
- Grand Californian → closest overall (with direct park access)

Closer doesn't always mean "on Disney property".

On-Property vs Off-Property (What's the Difference?)

Disneyland Resort Hotels (On-Property):

- More immersive, resort-style experience
- Beautiful theming and service
- Access to a dedicated security entrance
- One extra Lightning Lane per person, per stay (excludes top-tier rides)

Things to consider:

- Typically more expensive
- Longer walk than some Harbor hotels (except Grand Californian)



Harbor Blvd Hotels

(Off-Property):

- Located directly across from the entrance
- Typically a 5–10 minute walk
- Often the shortest and easiest access to the parks

What to expect:

- More “motel-style” properties
- Clean, updated, and practical
- Less theming, more function

Katella / Convention Center Area:

- Slightly farther walk (10–20 minutes)
- Larger, more resort-style hotels
- More space and amenities

A Note on “Free Breakfast”

You’ll see a lot of hotels advertise free breakfast — but I don’t consider this a deciding factor.

Here’s why:

- It’s not truly “free” — it’s built into the price of your stay
- It adds time to your morning and mornings in the parks are the most valuable part of your day

I recommend:

- grabbing a few groceries (Target, CVS, or delivery) and keeping simple breakfast options in your room
- letting kids eat while getting ready — or even in the stroller on the way

This gives you more flexibility and helps you get into the parks earlier, when wait times are lowest.

What Actually Matters

When choosing your hotel, focus on:

- Walking distance
- Ease of mid-day breaks
- What will make your day feel easier

If it fits your budget, prioritize location over everything else. Being able to walk back to your hotel — especially with kids — can completely change how your day feels.

ON-PROPERTY DISNEYLAND HOTELS

DISNEY'S GRAND CALIFORNIAN HOTEL & SPA

Overview:

This is the closest hotel you can stay at — it's literally attached to Disney California Adventure.

Location:

- Direct entrance into California Adventure
- Quick access to Downtown Disney
- 5-minute walk (or less) to Disneyland Park

Theme & Feel:

- Craftsman-style design
- Warm, cozy, upscale atmosphere
- Feels calm and quiet compared to the parks

Rooms:

- Most rooms sleep up to 5
- Comfortable, slightly more understated Disney theming

Pool & Amenities:

- Beautiful pool area with a waterslide
- Multiple pools and hot tubs
- On-site spa



Price Range:

- Typically \$700–\$1,200+ per night depending on season
- Peak holidays and summer can exceed this

What Makes It Special:

- Unmatched proximity
- Private park entrance into DCA
- Feels like a true escape from the parks
- Character dining available here (more on that in chapter 4)

Things to Consider:

- Most expensive option
- Books up quickly



THE DISNEYLAND HOTEL

Overview:

The Disneyland Hotel is full of nostalgia and classic Disney magic — this one just feels special.

Location:

- About a 10–15 minute walk to the parks
- Walk is through Downtown Disney (which keeps you in the “Disney bubble”)

Theme & Feel:

- Classic Disney with a modern, polished feel
- Strong nostalgic elements throughout

Rooms:

- Most rooms sleep up to 5
- Iconic headboards with built-in fireworks that light up and play When You Wish Upon a Star

Pool & Amenities:

- Monorail-themed waterslide
- One of the most fun pool areas on property
- Multiple towers with different themes



Price Range:

- Typically \$500–\$900+ per night depending on season

What Makes It Special:

- The nostalgia factor is unmatched
- Feels the most “Disney”
- Fun details kids (and adults) love
- Character dining available here (more on that in chapter 4)

Things to Consider:

- Longer walk than many Harbor Blvd hotels
- Still a premium price point



PIXAR PLACE HOTEL

Overview:

Recently rethemed, this hotel is bright, fun, and fully Pixar-focused — and a great option if you want to stay on property at a slightly lower price point.

Location:

- Across from the Grand Californian
- Longer walk than the other Disney hotels
- Access through:
 - Grand Californian (to DCA)
 - Downtown Disney (to Disneyland)

Rooms:

- Updated rooms with Pixar touches
- Family-friendly layout
- Most rooms sleep up to 5

Pool & Amenities:

- Great pool area with waterslide
- Rooftop-style vibes
- Often character interactions (like Bing Bong in the lobby)
- Cute coffee shop in the lobby



Theme & Feel:

- Fully Pixar-themed throughout
- Fun, colorful, and more playful vibe

Price Range:

- Typically \$400–\$700+ per night depending on season

What Makes It Special:

- Strong theming kids love
- Still inside the Disney “bubble”
- More affordable than the other Disney hotels

Things to Consider:

- Elevators can be slow during busy times
- Longest walk of the three



GOOD NEIGHBOR HOTELS

These are some of my go-to recommendations based on location, cleanliness, and overall experience.

FAIRFIELD INN ANAHEIM RESORT

Location:

- About a 7–10 minute walk
- Straight shot down Harbor Blvd

Overview:

This is one of my top picks — it's clean, reliable, and the staff are consistently amazing.

Rooms:

- Recently updated
- No carpet (huge win for me)
- Certain rooms can accommodate 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

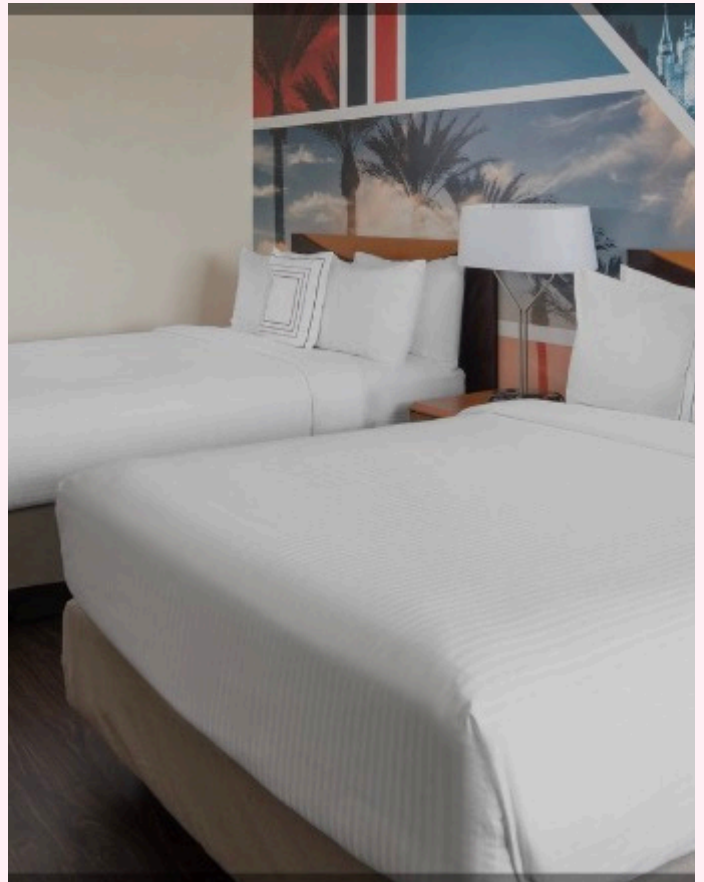
- Nice pool area
- Currently being upgraded
- Breakfast is being added soon

Price Range:

- Typically \$220–\$400+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Great value for the location
- Clean + comfortable
- Easy, stress-free stay



TROPICANA INN & SUITES

Location:

- Directly across the street from Disneyland entrance (2–3 minute walk)

Overview:

You truly cannot beat this location.

Rooms:

- More dated
- Some rooms have been updated
- Certain rooms can accommodate 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

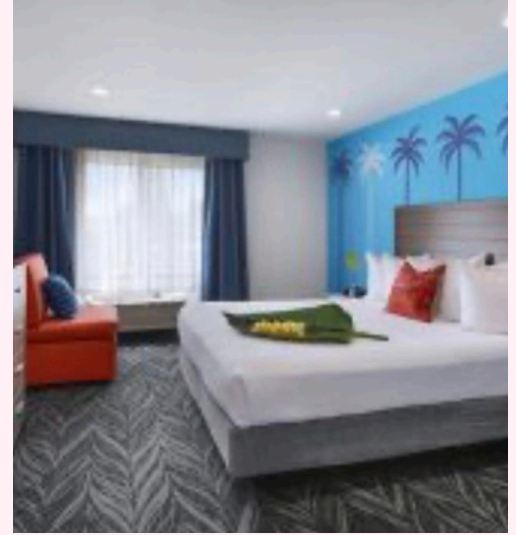
- Small pool
- Attached convenience store

Price Range:

- Typically \$200–\$350+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- One of the closest hotels you can get
- Perfect for mid-day breaks
- Easy in and out



THE ANAHEIM HOTEL

Location:

- About a 10–15 minute walk

Overview:

A great option if you want more space and a slightly more relaxed feel.

Rooms:

- Large rooms
- More spread out property
- Certain rooms can accommodate 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

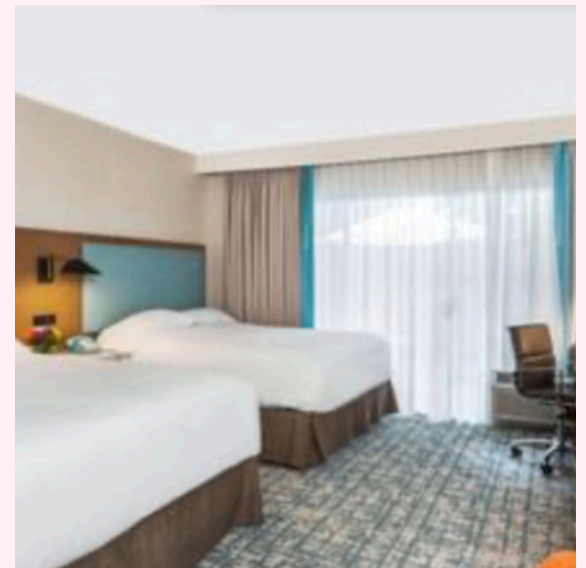
- Olympic-sized pool
- Pizza Press restaurant on-site (so good)

Price Range:

- Typically \$180–\$300+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Tons of space
- Great pool
- Good value for families



CASTLE INN & SUITES

Location:

- About a 5–7 minute walk

Overview:

A simple, no-frills option in a great location.

Rooms:

- A bit dark and dated
- Clean and functional
- Certain rooms can accomidat 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

- Small pool
- Basic but comfortable

Price Range:

- Typically \$180–\$280+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Location is excellent
- Staff and owners are incredibly kind
- Solid budget-friendly option



ELEMENT ANAHEIM RESORT

Location:

- About a 15–20 minute walk

Overview:

A newer hotel with larger, more modern rooms.

Rooms:

- Spacious
- Kitchenettes included
- Great for longer stays or families
- Certain rooms can accomidat 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

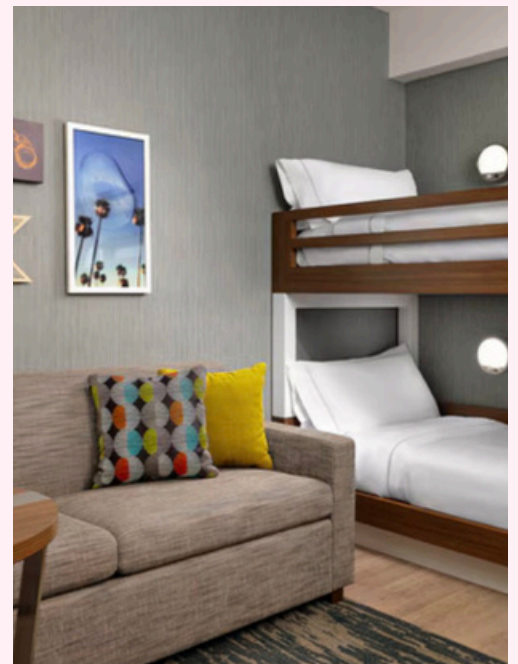
- Complimentary breakfast
- Clean, modern feel

Price Range:

- Typically \$250–\$400+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Extra space + kitchen
- Great for bigger families
- Feels newer and fresh



SUNCOAST PARK HOTEL ANAHEIM

Location:

- About a 15–20 minute walk

Overview:

A really solid option if you don't mind being slightly farther away.

Rooms:

- Clean and comfortable
- Recently updated

Pool & Amenities:

- Pool area
- Good overall value

Price Range:

- Typically \$180–\$300+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Great price for quality
- Reliable stay
- Good alternative to pricier close hotels



COURTYARD ANAHEIM THEME PARK ENTRANCE

Location:

- About a 5–10 minute walk

Overview:

One of the best options for families — especially with younger kids.

Rooms:

- Large rooms
- Bunk bed options available
- Certain rooms can accomidat 5 people

Pool & Amenities:

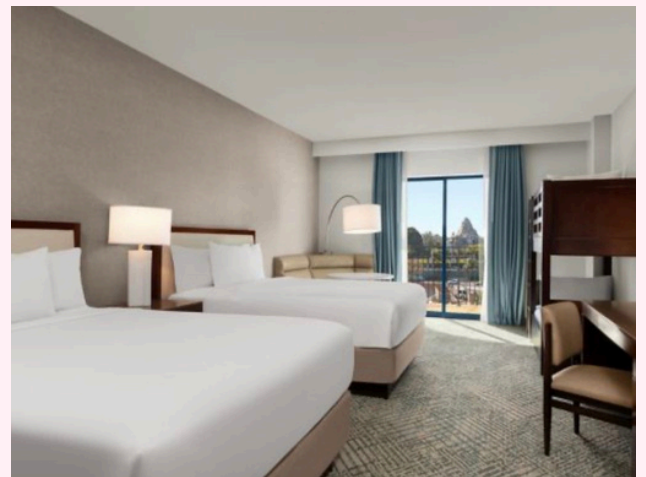
- Amazing water park (huge highlight)
- Family-focused layout

Price Range:

- Typically \$300–\$600+ per night

Why I Recommend It:

- Incredible water area
- Perfect for families
- Great balance of fun + convenience





BOOKING YOUR HOTEL

When it comes to booking your hotel, either on or off property, I personally always use Get Away Today — and it's what I recommend to my clients as well.

They consistently offer:

- great rates on hotels and ticket bundles
- excellent customer service
- flexible booking options

If you book a package through them and use code DISNEYKRISTIE, you'll save an extra \$10 and get access to their best available pricing.

Why I Recommend Them

One of the biggest advantages is flexibility.

You can add their Peace of Mind Plan, which makes your trip refundable (with the exception of the plan itself).

This means:

- if your plans change, you're covered
- if prices drop, you can call and adjust your booking

I do this myself — for example, I booked a trip months in advance, and when the price dropped later, I called and they refunded me the difference.

No hassle.

What This Means for You

You don't have to stress about booking "at the perfect time."

You can:

- lock in your trip early
- keep an eye on pricing
- and adjust if needed

Final Tip:

Book early for the best availability, then let flexibility work in your favor.

BOOK HERE

BEFORE YOU GO

You don't need to do everything before your trip — but doing a few key things ahead of time will make your days in the parks feel much easier.

Set Up the Disneyland App

Before you arrive:

- download the Disneyland app
- log in
- link your tickets
- add a payment method

Make Dining Reservations

Dining reservations open:

60 days before your trip at 6:00 AM Disneyland time (PST), regardless of whether you are staying.

Before that day:

- look at menus
- decide what actually sounds good to your group
- have a rough idea of which park you'll be in

Plan Your Food Ahead of Time

One of the easiest ways to simplify your trip:

- order groceries to your hotel
- or plan a quick stop at Target / CVS

This gives you:

- easy breakfasts
- snacks for the parks
- drinks on hand

Order What You Need Ahead of Time

If there's anything you know you'll want in the parks:

- portable chargers
- ponchos
- park bags
- water bottles

Order it before your trip and have it shipped to your home or hotel

You don't need a long checklist.

If you:

- set up the app
- make a few key reservations
- and have food + essentials ready

...you'll walk into Disneyland feeling prepared instead of overwhelmed.



CHAPTER

03

TICKETS + PARK OVERVIEW

Before you finalize anything, there are a few key decisions that will shape your entire trip.

PARK OVERVIEW

THERE ARE TWO PARKS AT DISNEYLAND RESORT:

Disneyland Park

- More attractions
- Classic Disney rides
- Typically needs at least 2 days



Disney California Adventure (DCA)

- Fewer rides
- More shows, food, and entertainment
- Usually one full day

☞ Most trips are structured:

- Disneyland
- DCA
- Disneyland again

This gives you time to experience the bigger park without feeling rushed.





BUYING YOUR TICKETS

Before you can finalize your plans, you'll need to choose your park tickets and there are a few decisions to make.

The good news: Disneyland ticketing is much simpler than Disney World.

TICKET LENGTH

You can purchase:

- 1-day tickets
- 2-day tickets
- 3-day tickets
- 4-day tickets
- 5-day tickets (maximum for most guests)

The more days you add, the lower your cost per day.

PARK HOPPER

When you purchase your tickets, you'll choose whether to add Park Hopper.

If you decide to add it later, it must be added to every day on your ticket — even if it's your last day.

Park Hopper lets you visit both parks in one day, starting at 11:00 AM.

Important:

You can only add Park Hopper for your entire ticket — not just one day.

1-DAY TICKET TIERS

If you're purchasing a single-day ticket, pricing is based on a tier system.

- Lower tiers = less busy days
- Higher tiers = peak days (holidays, summer, etc.)

Multi-day tickets do not use this tier system — they're priced differently and give you more flexibility.

LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS

You'll also decide if you want to add Lightning Lane Multi Pass.

This allows you to:

- skip standby lines on select rides
- book return times through the app

You can add it to your full ticket when purchasing, or buy it day by day after you scan into the park.

WHERE TO BUY YOUR TICKETS

You can purchase directly through Disneyland, but it's often the most expensive option.

I personally book through [Get Away Today](#), and recommend them to my clients.

They often offer: discounted tickets, fully refundable packages, and excellent customer service

If you book through my [link](#) and use code DISNEYKRISTIE or call and mention Disney Kristie, you'll get the best available pricing.



Park Hopping

A Park Hopper ticket allows you to visit both parks in the same day.

How it works:

- Start your day in the park you reserved
- Hop to the other park when it suits you
- Move between parks freely

When it makes sense:

- Shorter trips
- You want flexibility
- You like the idea of moving between parks

When you can skip it:

- First-time trips
- Traveling with younger kids
- You prefer a slower pace



Park Reservations

Disneyland requires a park reservation for each day of your visit. A ticket alone is not enough.

If you have a Park Hopper, you will choose your starting park when making your reservation.

You can make reservations up to 240 days in advance, so it is a good idea to book them once your plans are set.



THE 3 DECISIONS THAT SHAPE YOUR TRIP

Before you buy your tickets, you'll want to make three simple decisions:

1. How Many Park Days

How many days you'll actually be inside the parks

This sets your overall pace — fast vs flexible.

2. Park Hopper (Yes or No?)

This determines whether you can visit both parks in one day

- No Park Hopper:
- One park per day → simpler, less back-and-forth, great for most families
- Park Hopper:
- Lets you move between parks → great for flexibility, dining, and re-riding favorites

Because the parks are right across from each other, hopping is easy at Disneyland — not a big production like Disney World.

3. Lightning Lane Multi Pass

This is what helps you skip long lines

If you're going during busier times, or you want to ride more without waiting all day, this can make a big difference.

But it works best when it's paired with a plan — not just used randomly.

A SIMPLE WAY TO PLAN YOUR DAYS

You don't need a full itinerary yet — just a starting structure.

Because Disneyland Park has more rides and more to do than California Adventure, most trips will naturally center around it.

Here's what that usually looks like:

If You're Not Park Hopping

Plan for:

- Day 1: Disneyland
- Day 2: California Adventure
- Day 3: Disneyland again

This gives you time to:

- hit your must-dos
- go back for favorites
- and not feel like you missed half the park

If You Are Park Hopping

You'll still want to follow a similar flow — just with more flexibility built in.

I recommend:

- Start your trip in Disneyland
- Plan your second day around California Adventure
- Use hopping to revisit rides, shows, or dining you didn't get to

Even with Park Hopper, you're not trying to do both parks equally every day — you're just giving yourself options.

This kind of structure keeps your days from feeling scattered.

Instead of bouncing back and forth or trying to do everything at once, you're moving through the parks in a way that actually makes sense — and gives you room to adjust as you go.

PLANNING YOUR DAYS

You don't need every minute scheduled to have an amazing trip. You just need a simple way to think about your days.

Start With Your Priorities

Before your trip, decide:

- your must-do rides
- any shows or experiences that matter most
- anything your kids are really excited about

You don't need to do everything

You just need to do what matters most to your group

Choose Your Park Days

Decide which park you'll visit each day based on:

- your ticket type (park hopper or not)
- what you want to prioritize
- dining reservations or shows

Start your mornings in one park — don't overcomplicate it

Think in Blocks, Not Schedules

A good day at Disneyland usually looks like this:

Morning (High Energy)

- rope drop
- top rides

Midday (Slow Down)

- food
- shows
- break

Afternoon (Flexible)

- Lightning Lane
- lower wait rides

Evening (Fun + Flexible)

- entertainment
- park close strategy



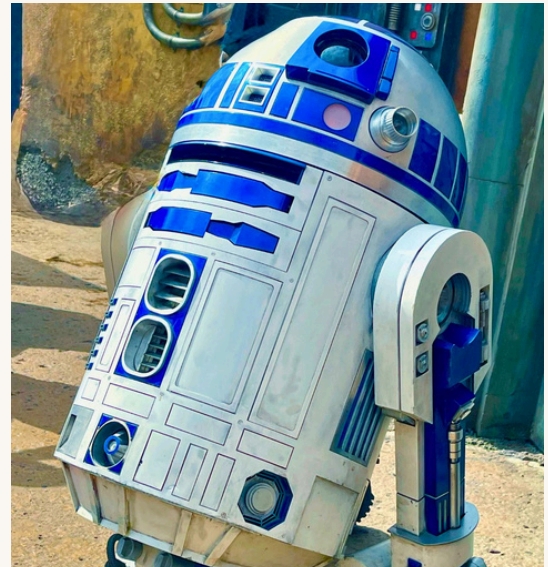
Plan for Breaks

Breaks are not wasted time.
They're what make the rest of your day work.

This might look like:

- going back to your hotel
- sitting down for a meal
- watching a show

Especially with kids, this matters more than anything



Don't Overpack Your Day

The biggest mistake people make is trying to do too much

- Give yourself space
- Leave room for flexibility
- Let the day breathe a little

You need enough structure to make good decisions in the moment.



WHAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED

There are a lot of extras at Disneyland, and it's easy to feel like you need all of them.

You don't.

What You Actually Need

✓ Park Tickets

This is your entry into the parks. Everything starts here.

✓ A Simple Plan

Just enough direction to feel confident going into your day:

- what matters most
- which park you'll be in
- how you want your day to feel

What's Optional (But Helpful)

Lightning Lane Multi Pass

- helps you skip lines and save time
- especially helpful on busy days or shorter trips

Stroller (if you have kids)

- this is about energy, not age
- long days and lots of walking add up quickly

Dining Reservations

- great for sit-down meals or experiences
- not required, but helpful if you want a built-in break

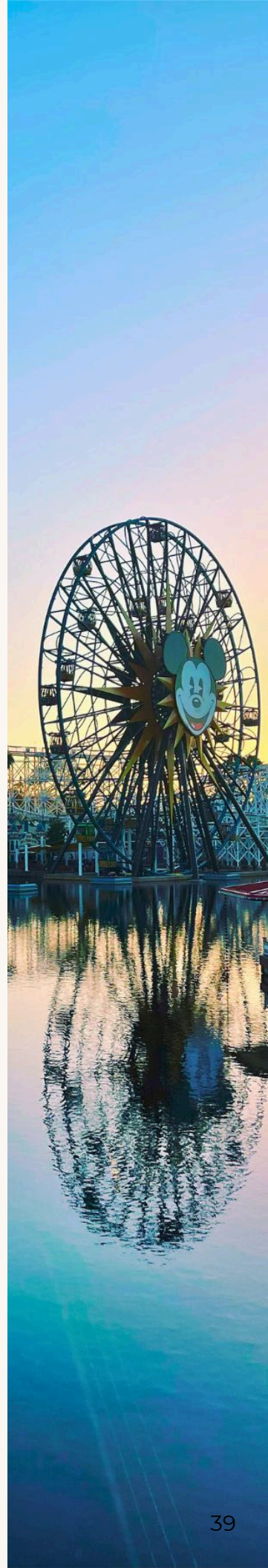
What You Don't Need (But Might Want)

MagicBands

- fun and convenient
- but not necessary at Disneyland

You do not need to buy everything, do everything, or plan every second.

The best trips are the ones that are built around your people, not pressure.



CHAPTER

04

DINING + EXPERIENCES

Food is a bigger part of your Disneyland trip than most people expect — and having a simple plan makes a big difference.



DINING AT DISNEYLAND

Food is a bigger part of your Disneyland trip than most people expect. And without a plan, it's really easy to: waste time figuring out what to eat, spend more than you planned or end up with food that's just... not great. You don't need to plan every meal — but having a general idea will make your days much smoother.

QUICK SERVICE VS SIT-DOWN MEALS

There are two main types of dining at Disneyland:

Quick Service

- order at a counter or through the app
- faster and more flexible
- best for most meals during park days

Table Service (Sit-Down):

- full-service restaurants
- more of a time commitment
- a great way to slow down and reset

How I Approach Dining:

I personally like to plan one sit-down meal per day.

It gives you:

- a real break
- a chance to sit, relax, and recharge
- consistently better food
- it's often not that much more expensive than quick service once you're already in the parks.

The rest of the day, I keep things flexible with quick service and snacks.

DIETARY NEEDS & FOOD ALLERGIES

Disneyland does an incredible job accommodating dietary needs, including food allergies, gluten-free, halal, vegetarian, and other preferences.

You are not limited here, you just need to know how to ask.

What Disneyland Does Well

- Allergy-friendly menus at many locations
- Vegetarian and plant-based options throughout the parks
- Halal-friendly options available at select locations
- Ability to speak with a Cast Member or chef
- Clear ingredient information when needed

Sit-Down Dining

When you make a dining reservation, you can note any dietary restrictions.

Before your trip, you will often receive an email asking for more details so the restaurant can prepare ahead of time.

When you arrive, your server will confirm your needs, and in many cases a chef can come speak with you directly.

This makes sit-down dining one of the easiest and safest options if you have specific dietary needs.

Quick Service Tips

- Ask for an allergy menu if you are unsure
- Mobile ordering may show allergy-friendly options
- When in doubt, always ask a Cast Member before ordering

Planning Ahead

- Check menus in the Disneyland app before your trip
- Make note of a few safe or go-to options
- Consider grocery delivery for snacks, breakfast, or backup options

If food is a big concern for your family, having a simple plan ahead of time makes everything feel easier. You don't need to stress about every meal, just know your options.

DINING STRATEGY

Food at Disneyland isn't just about what you eat — it affects how your entire day flows.

A good dining strategy will help you:

- avoid long lines
- save time
- and actually enjoy your meals

1. DON'T WING IT

You don't need to plan every meal — but going in with no plan is where things fall apart. Instead:

- pick a few places you're excited about
- have a general idea of where you'll eat each day

This keeps you from wandering, wasting time, or settling for something disappointing.

2. USE MOBILE ORDER

Mobile ordering through the Disneyland app is one of the easiest ways to save time.

You can:

- order ahead
- skip the line
- pick up your food when it's ready

During busy times, this can easily save you 20–30 minutes per meal.

Tip:

Place your order before you're hungry — especially at peak times.

3. TIMING MATTERS

When you eat can be just as important as where you eat.

Try to:

- eat lunch early (before 11:30) or later (after 1:30)
- avoid peak dinner hours if possible

This helps you avoid long waits and crowded dining areas.

4. BUILD IN A REAL BREAK

This is where sit-down meals shine.

Having one sit-down meal per day gives you:

- a chance to sit and recharge
- a break from the crowds
- a more enjoyable meal

It's not just about the food — it's about resetting your day.

5. DON'T CROSS PARKS FOR FOOD

Before you book reservations or plan meals, make sure you know: which park you'll be in that day

You don't want to:

- waste time walking back and forth
- or feel rushed trying to make a reservation

Keep your meals aligned with your park plan.

6. KEEP IT FLEXIBLE

Even with a plan, leave room to adjust.

Some days you'll want:

- a full sit-down meal

Other days:

- quick bites and snacks

Let your energy (and your group) guide you.

7. SNACKS ARE PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

Don't overlook snacks — they're a big part of Disneyland.

Instead of planning full meals all day:

- mix in snacks
- share items
- try a few fun things

It keeps things lighter and more fun.

FINAL THOUGHT

Dining doesn't need to be complicated.

A simple plan — plus a little flexibility —

will help your days feel smoother, easier, and a lot more enjoyable.

What I Actually Eat + Recommend

These aren't "top 10 lists."

These are the places I go back to
and what I actually order.



Sit-Down Restaurants I'd Book Again

Carthay Circle Lounge (DCA)

If I had to pick one place to eat every trip, it would be this.

- What I order: Bao buns (I literally dream about them) and a Tequila Daisy
- When to go: Lunch or evening break
- Why it's worth it:
- The food is consistently good, the drinks are amazing, and it's the perfect place to reset during the day

This is my non-negotiable stop.

Café Orleans (Disneyland)

A great mix of atmosphere + really good food.

- What to order: Monte Cristo (they also have an all-cheese version)
- Bonus: Fantasmic dining package available
- Why I love it:
- Better food (in my opinion) than Blue Bayou, and still feels special

Lamplight Lounge (DCA)

This one is all about the vibe.

- What to expect: Smaller menu, but great drinks
- When to go: Afternoon or evening
- Why I go: The atmosphere is fun, it feels like a break, and the drinks are always a win

Blue Bayou (Disneyland)

I have to include this — it's iconic.

- What it is: A restaurant inside Pirates of the Caribbean
- What my family orders: Prime rib
- Why it's worth doing (at least once):

The experience is incredible, the service is great, and it's one of those "only at Disneyland" moments

Also, there's a bathroom inside (which is rare and very appreciated)

Quick Service That's Actually Worth It

I don't rely heavily on quick service, but these are my go-tos:

- Red Rose Tavern (Disneyland) easy, reliable
- Jolly Holiday (Disneyland) great for lighter options, and treats! Home of the iconic raspberry rose macaron (be sure to order early as they sell out!)
- Award Wieners (DCA) quick and consistent
- Pym's Test Kitchen (DCA) fun and surprisingly good
- Hollywood Studio Catering Co. (DCA) rotating burritos that are actually really good

Hidden Gems

San Fransokyo Square (DCA)

- mix of Asian + Mexican options
- great variety for picky groups

Paradise Garden Grill area (DCA)

- multiple options in one spot (Mexican + Italian/pizza)
- easy to find something for everyone

Rancho del Zócalo (Disneyland)

- cafeteria-style
- AMAZING Mexican food
- Fantasmic dining package option



My "Perfect Food Day"

If I could eat everything (I can't, but let's pretend):

Breakfast: Breakfast chimichanga (near Big Thunder, in Disneyland)

Lunch: Carthay Circle Lounge

Snack: Pull-apart bread (DCA, Hawaiian sweet bread, changes seasonally)

Dinner: Lamplight Lounge (DCA)

Nighttime treat: World of Color

Dessert Party (DCA)

Eating with Kids (Real Talk)

There is no "one size fits all" here. Some kids want chicken fingers every meal. Some will eat everything.

Kids menus vary a lot by location

The best thing you can do is **read menus ahead of time**

Don't rely on recommendations, think about what your group will actually eat and base your choice on that.



Dining Reservations

Some restaurants at Disneyland require advance reservations and knowing how this works will make things much easier.

When Reservations Open

Dining reservations open 60 days before your trip at 6:00 AM Disneyland time (PST).

Popular spots can book quickly, so it's worth being ready.

Before You Book

Before your reservation window opens, you'll want a rough plan for your trip.

You don't need a full itinerary — but you should know:

- which park you'll likely be in each day
- which restaurants you're interested in
- what your group will actually enjoy eating

This helps you avoid booking something that doesn't fit your day.

How to Book

You can make reservations:

- through the Disneyland app
- or on the Disneyland website

You'll select:

- your party size
- date
- and preferred time



What's Worth Booking

Not every meal needs a reservation.

Focus on:

- one sit-down meal per day (if that's your plan)
- popular or hard-to-get locations
- dining packages or special experiences

Everything else can stay flexible.

Dining Packages & Experiences

Some restaurants offer dining packages tied to entertainment, like:

- Fantasmic dining packages
- World of Color Dessert Party

These can be a great way to:

- enjoy a meal
- and secure better viewing for shows

If you're going to splurge on one thing, the World of Color Dessert Party is absolutely worth it.

If You Don't Get a Reservation

Don't panic.

- People cancel all the time
- New times open up closer to your trip
- You can often find availability the day before or even same day

Keep checking — you'll usually find something or you can use services like Mouse Dining or Dream Table to get alerts when spots open up!

A Few Tips

- Book your most important reservations first
- Don't overbook your days
- Leave space for flexibility

CHARACTER DINING & DINING EXPERIENCES

There are several character dining options and dining experiences available around Disneyland Resort, including character meals, Fantasmic dining packages, and World of Color viewing experiences.

These are not just meals, they are experiences.

My Biggest Tip for any character dining reservations:
Do NOT book the very last reservation of the day
Those tend to feel rushed and you'll get less character interaction.

Try to book 1-2 time slots before the last seating.



GOOFY'S KITCHEN

A high-energy buffet inside the Disneyland Hotel with fun, over-the-top food that kids (and honestly adults) love.

Food Highlights:

- peanut butter & jelly pizza (yes, really)
- sundae/dessert station
- carving station (roast meats)
- classic breakfast + comfort foods
- The food here is FUN — and there's a lot of it

Characters:

- The headliner is Goofy, but you'll usually see a mix like:
- Minnie
- Chip & Dale
- other rotating characters

What to Know:

- Breakfast, brunch, and dinner
- Frequently themed (Halloween, spring, holidays)
- Very interactive
- Includes a PhotoPass photo with Goofy
- This is one where kids tend to eat a lot



STORYTELLERS CAFÉ

Storytellers Café is located inside the Grand Californian Hotel, just off the main lobby. It offers seasonal character dining experiences like Mickey's Tales of Adventure Breakfast and Daisy's Pajama Party.

Food:

- breakfast/brunch staples
- often themed menus (ex: fall = barbecue-style items)
- slightly more variety depending on season

The food changes more here than Goofy's

Characters:

The "headliner" character is what matters most:

- Mickey's Tales of Adventure → Mickey
- Daisy's Pajama Party → Daisy



From there, you'll usually see related characters:

- Chip & Dale
- Pluto
- Minnie
- Donald

The headliner is guaranteed, but the others rotate.

What to Know:

- breakfast/brunch AND dinner (depending on season)
- same energy level as Goofy's — not calmer, just different
- no PhotoPass photographer here



MINNIE & FRIENDS BREAKFAST

This is the only character meal inside Disneyland Park located at the Plaza Inn on Main Street.

Food:

- classic breakfast buffet
- very solid, familiar options

Characters:

This one has the largest variety:

Examples I've seen:

- Minnie
- Rafiki
- Max
- Captain Hook
- Winnie the Pooh
- Fairy Godmother
- Cinderella's mice

This one has the most random + fun mix

What to Know:

- breakfast only
- includes a PhotoPass photo with Minnie
- very convenient if you want to start your park day



PRINCESS BREAKFAST ADVENTURE

Located inside the Napa Rose in the Grand Californian, this is a premium, experience-focused character dining. At well over \$100 per person, I'd only recommend this if it's in your budget and your child is truly princess-obsessed. This is a great "one parent + one kid" experience if you want to split up.

Food:

- elevated, more refined menu
- not ideal for picky eaters

Experience:

- multiple princess interactions
- more time with each character
- storytelling + activities built in

Extras:

- PhotoPass photo
- keepsakes for kids (gift bag, signed postcard)
- glass of bubbles for adults



DINING PACKAGES & VIEWING EXPERIENCES

These dining packages pair food with reserved viewing, helping you skip the stress of finding a spot and saving you a significant amount of time. If you're paying for a show experience, plan for the first showing to get the most value. If you're not, the second show is typically less crowded — and a great time to hop on rides while the parks clear out.

Fantasmic Dining Packages (Disneyland Park)

What You Get

- a meal at your selected restaurant
- access to a reserved viewing section for Fantasmic

Viewing Setup

You'll be seated on the ground in one of three designated sections along the Rivers of America

- these sections are directly in front of the show
- seating is first come within your section
- you'll sit on the ground (they allow blankets)

Restaurant Options

Café Orleans (my favorite)

- has my favorite dessert of all time (the chocolate tart)
- great food + solid value

Rancho del Zócalo

- really good food
- great option if you want something easier + more budget-friendly

River Belle Terrace (Two Options)

Standard Package:

- meal included
- access to the ground seating sections like the others

Premium Package:

- reserved table seating on the terrace. Tables are assigned in order of booking, so if this is a priority be ready for 6:00 AM PST to book it 60 days out!
- you stay seated during the show

This is the only Fantasmic package where you don't sit on the ground.

DINING PACKAGES & VIEWING EXPERIENCES

World of Color Dining Packages

Available at select restaurants in Disney California Adventure

Restaurant Options

- Wine Country Trattoria
- Magic Key Terrace (must have or be with someone who has a magic key)

What You Get

- a pre-set 3 course meal
- access to a reserved viewing section for World of Color

What to Know

- viewing is standing room
- you'll still be in a designated section
- less stressful than standby, but not seated

This is a good option if you already want a sit-down meal
BUT... not my top recommendation for viewing

World of Color Dessert Party (DCA) ★

This is my FAVORITE way to watch World of Color
Paradise Gardens Park (seated viewing area)

What You Get:

- a reserved table
- desserts + drinks (unlimited non-alcoholic and 2 alcoholic for 21+)
- premium viewing location

Why I Recommend It:

You are seated the entire time

No saving spots

No standing in crowds

Pro Tips

- request a high-top table
- ask for a vegetarian box if you don't eat a ton of cold cut meat

(You lose the Rice Krispie treat, but get better overall option)

DINING PACKAGES & VIEWING EXPERIENCES

Fireworks Viewing — Skyline Terrace

What It Is:

A reserved fireworks viewing experience with a snack and dessert box in a special seated area above Tomorrowland.

What to Know:

- includes a meal + reserved viewing
- elevated vantage point for fireworks
- limited availability

My Take:

I don't recommend this experience.

Since it returned after closures, it has received consistently mixed to poor reviews, especially when it comes to the food and overall value.

On top of that, fireworks are canceled fairly often due to weather.

Which means you could be paying a premium price and not even get the show.

Better Options

Do a Fantasmic dining package and stay for the fireworks, it's a much better overall value.

This is one I would skip.

There are better ways to spend both your time and your money in the parks.

Alcohol at Disneyland & California Adventure



If you plan on having a drink in the parks, there are a few things to know — because Disneyland and California Adventure are very different.

Disney California Adventure (DCA)

Alcohol is widely available here, and you can walk around with it. You'll often hear people refer to drinks as being in a "yellow cup" — that just means it's an alcoholic drink you can carry around the park.

A few things to know:

- Many quick service locations serve drinks from cans, not freshly made

If you want a properly made cocktail, go to Lamplight Lounge Boardwalk Dining and ask the host if you can go to the bar and get a drink to go. One thing to note: you cannot order from the secret menu.

Sit-Down Restaurants (DCA)

If you're ordering alcohol at a sit-down restaurant, drinks are typically hand-poured and stronger. Just something to keep in mind.

Disneyland Park

Disneyland is much more limited when it comes to alcohol.

You can only purchase alcohol at select sit-down restaurants, including:

- Oga's Cantina
- Blue Bayou
- Café Orleans
- River Belle Terrace
- Carnation Café

What to expect:

- mostly beer and wine
- some pre-mixed cocktails
- Oga's Cantina offers more specialty drinks (and mixes them fresh)

You cannot walk around Disneyland with alcohol the same way you can in DCA.

EAT WHAT YOU ACTUALLY LIKE

This sounds obvious, but it's one of the biggest mistakes people make.
Just because something is popular doesn't mean you'll love it.
Look at menus.
Know your group.
Order what sounds good to you.



BIBBIDI BOBBIDI BOUTIQUE

Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique is a makeover experience inside Disneyland where kids can be transformed into a princess or a knight.

Located in Fantasyland inside Disneyland Park, near Sleeping Beauty Castle.

Depending on the package you choose, this experience can include:

- hairstyling
- makeup
- accessories
- a dress or costume

Some packages also include:

- a photo shoot with the Fairy Godmother

This experience is for kids ages 3–12

The experience takes about 45 to 60 minutes

Reservations open at midnight (12:00 AM Disneyland time/PST), 60 days before your visit date. You will pick your package on the day of your appointment, not when you make your booking.

If this is important to your trip:

- be ready right when reservations open
- popular times go quickly

I recommend booking between:

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

This allows you to:

- take advantage of shorter morning ride lines first
- have your child dressed up for most of the day
- avoid colder early morning temperatures

*While packages are offered for princesses and knights, the experience is also available for boys and girls.



AFTER HOURS EVENTS

After-hours events are special ticketed events that take place after the park closes.

They are NOT included with your regular park ticket.

HOW THEY WORK

On event days:

- the park typically closes around 6 PM to regular guests
- event ticket holders can usually enter around 3 PM
- you'll receive a wristband if you're attending

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

If you do not have a ticket to the event:

- your park day will end at 6 PM

If you DO have a ticket:

- you can stay for the event and enjoy a lower-crowd experience

On event nights:

the other park gets busier

Because:

- guests without event tickets go there instead
- especially if they don't have Park Hopper

This can make the non-event park feel more crowded than expected



DISNEYLAND AFTER DARK EVENTS

This guide is updated regularly, so if an event is being offered, you will see it here.

It is important to check the events calendar when choosing your travel dates so you can avoid being in the parks on a day that closes early if you are not attending the event.

Each event includes:

- themed entertainment
- rare characters
- specialty food + merchandise
- PhotoPass downloads from the event

SWEETHEARTS' NITE

Late January – February
(multiple nights)

A romantic, slower-paced event.

What to expect:

- couples-themed photo spots
- live music and dancing
- unique character pairings
- themed desserts and drinks

70 YEARS OF FAVORITES

March 3 & 5, 2026

A special nostalgia event celebrating Disneyland's history.

What to expect:

- rare characters
- throwback entertainment
- classic Disneyland-inspired experiences

DISNEY CHANNEL NITE

April 12, 14, 16, 2026

A high-energy, nostalgic event.

What to expect:

- throwback music and dance parties
- Disney Channel characters
- themed entertainment and food

STAR WARS NITE

April 28 & 30, May 4 & 6, 2026

One of the most popular events.

What to expect:

- rare Star Wars characters
- themed entertainment
- specialty food and drinks
- interactive experiences (like lightsaber moments)

PRIDE NITE

June 16 & 18, 2026

A celebration of inclusivity and community.

What to expect:

- dance parties
- themed entertainment
- colorful photo ops
- exclusive food and merchandise

DISNEYLAND AFTER DARK EVENTS

OOGIE BOOGIE BASH (DCA)

Late August – October (multiple nights)

This is the biggest and most popular after-hours event at Disneyland.

What to expect:

- trick-or-treat trails throughout the park
- incredible villain interactions (a highlight)
- the Frightfully Fun Parade
- rare characters and costumes
- exclusive snacks and merchandise
- everyone can wear costumes
- lower crowds than a normal park day

Important:

- sells out quickly
- DCA closes early on event nights

After-hours events are:

- fun
- unique
- a completely different park experience

But they are also:

- an extra ticket
- late nights (which can be tough with kids)
- not necessary for a great trip

I only recommend adding one if it genuinely excites your family

These events can be amazing, but they can also completely change your park day if you don't plan for them.

Knowing how they work ahead of time makes everything feel a lot easier once you're there.

CHAPTER

05

THE DISNEYLAND APP

The Disneyland app is one of
the most important tools
you'll use during your trip.

WHY THE APP MATTERS

The Disneyland app is one of the most important tools you'll use during your trip.

It's how you:

- access your tickets
- check wait times
- mobile order food
- book and manage Lightning Lanes
- find bathrooms, water bottle refill stations, characters, PhotoPass photographers, and more

You do not need to master every feature before your trip.

You just need to know the handful of tools that will make your day easier.

What You'll Actually Use:

You don't need every feature.

Here are the ones that matter most:

- Tickets & Entry
- Wait Times + Map
- Mobile Order (food)
- Lightning Lane bookings

That's it. Everything else is optional.



Set It Up Before You Go

Before your trip, take a few minutes to:

- download the Disneyland app
- create or log into your Disney account
- link your park tickets
- make sure everyone in your party is connected the way you want
- add a payment method
- spend a few minutes clicking around before you're actually in the parks

Doing this ahead of time saves stress at the gates and makes everything else feel easier.

THE MAP + SEARCH FUNCTION

There are two main ways to find things in the Disneyland app and they work differently.

Using the Map

(Best for Browsing + Planning)

The map is what you'll use most throughout the day.

At the top of the map, you can scroll through categories like:

- Attractions
- Dining
- Entertainment
- Characters

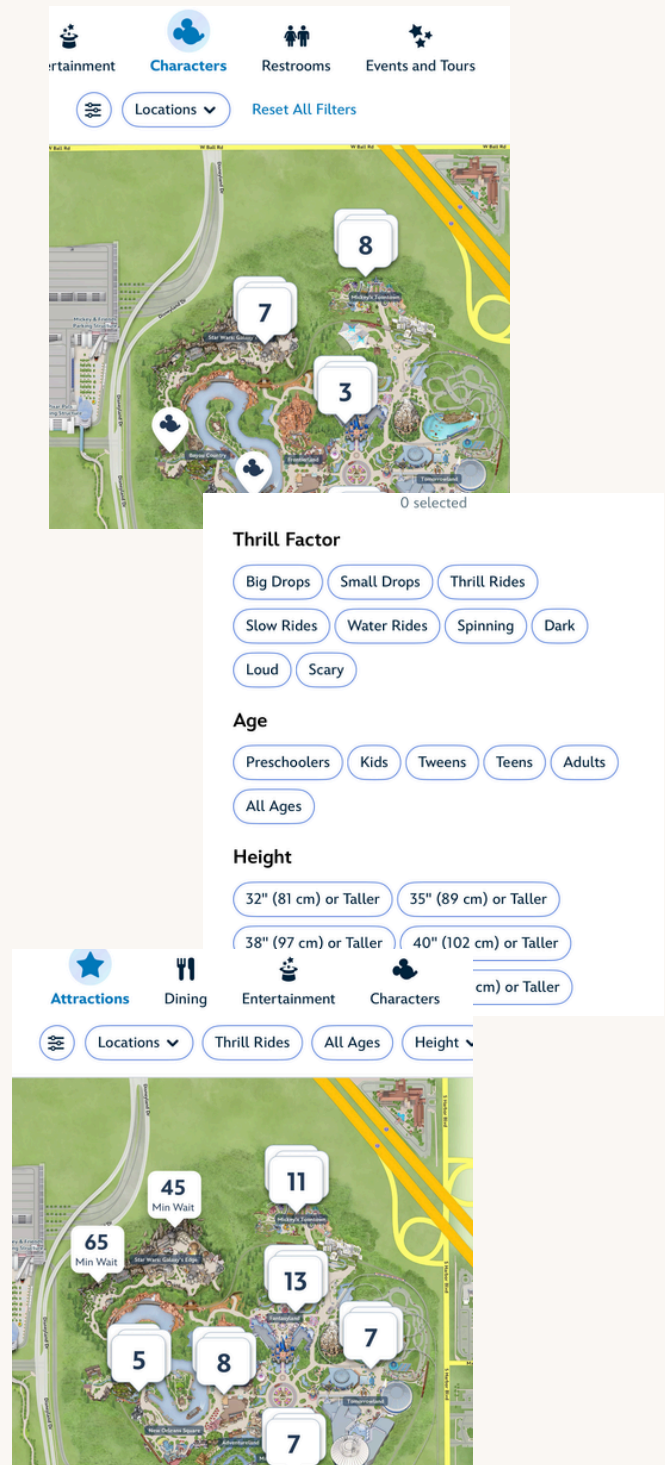
You can also use filters to narrow things down.

For example:

- filter rides by height requirement
- filter by thrill level
- filter by age group
- view only locations that offer mobile order

This is the easiest way to:

- see what's nearby
- compare options
- and plan your next move



Using the Search Feature

(Best for Specific Items)

If you know exactly what you're looking for, use the magnifying glass icon at the bottom of the app.

This is perfect for searching things like:

- churros
- coffee
- bubble wands
- specific snacks or items

Instead of wandering, you'll instantly see where to go.

Take a few minutes before your trip to play around with the map and filters.

You'll:

- learn where things are
- understand how to find what you need quickly
- feel way more confident once you're in the parks

When you know how to use the app, it becomes so helpful.

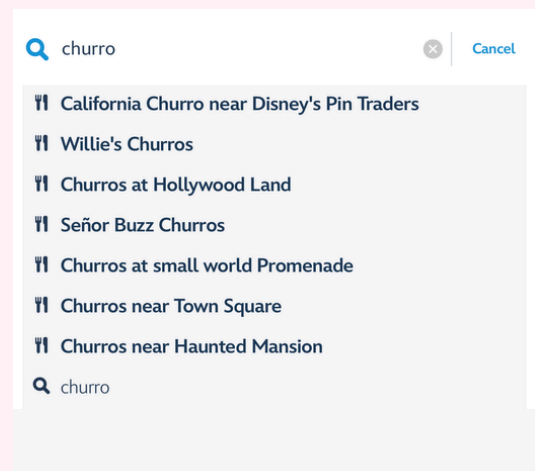
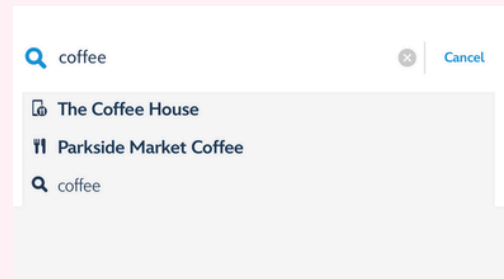
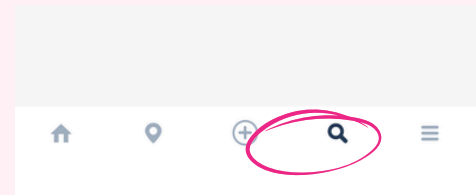
Pro Tip

Have your tween or teen learn the app too

They can:

- check wait times
- find snacks
- help navigate

It's surprisingly helpful to have an extra "app expert" in your group.



WAIT TIMES + TIP BOARD

The app is the fastest way to check what's actually happening in real time.

Use the app to:

- see current wait times
- compare nearby rides
- decide what to do next
- check Lightning Lane availability

This is especially helpful when you're trying to avoid:

- long waits at the wrong time
- unnecessary backtracking
- wandering without a plan

You don't need to constantly stare at your phone — just check it when you're deciding your next move.

Viewing Wait Times on the Map

You can see wait times directly on the map.

- Zoom in to see individual ride wait times
- Or select "Show List" to view everything in one place

This is the quickest way to see what's nearby and make a decision on the go.

Using the Tip Board

The Tip Board gives you a more detailed view.

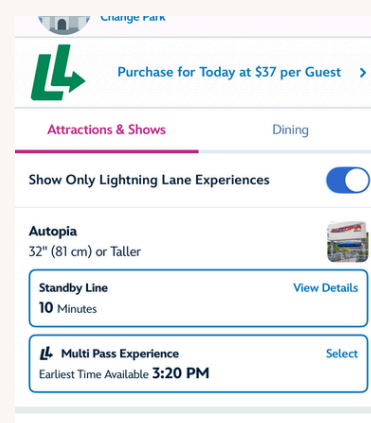
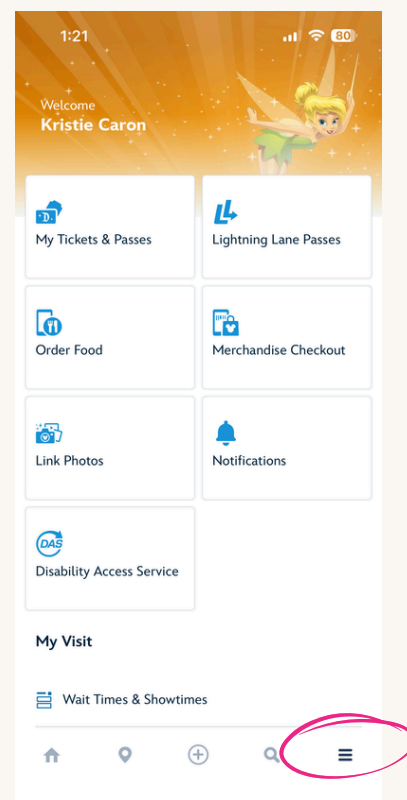
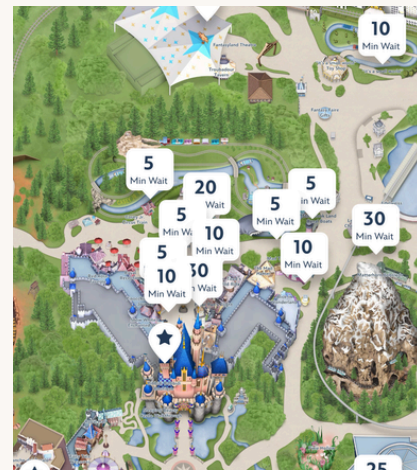
To access it:

1. Tap the three lines at the bottom of the app
2. Select "Wait Times & Showtimes"

This will bring up:

- all attractions
- current standby wait times
- Lightning Lane return times

You can also book Lightning Lane from here (we'll walk through that step-by-step later).

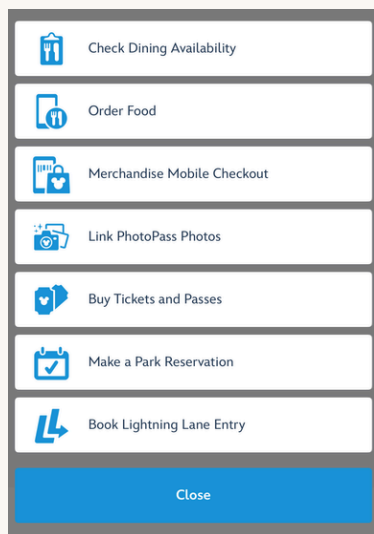


MOBILE ORDER

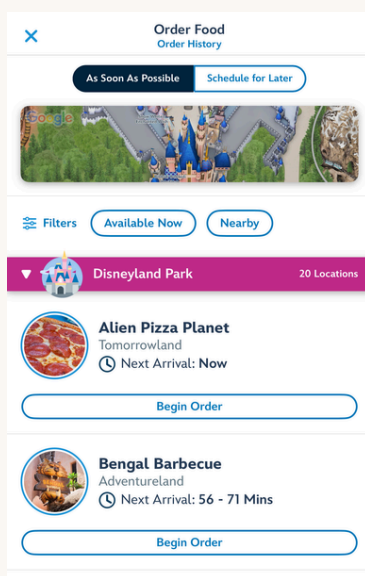
Mobile ordering is one of the easiest ways to save time in the parks.

How to Mobile Order

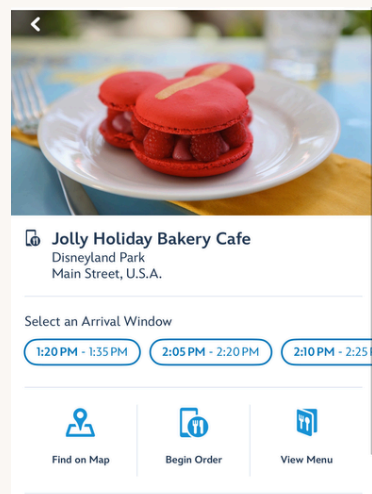
1. Open the Disneyland app
2. Tap the “+” at the bottom of the screen
3. Choose Order Food



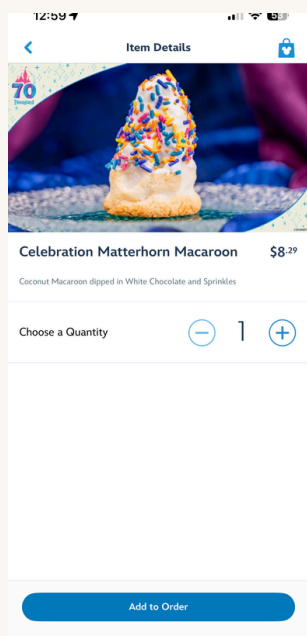
4. Select the restaurant you want



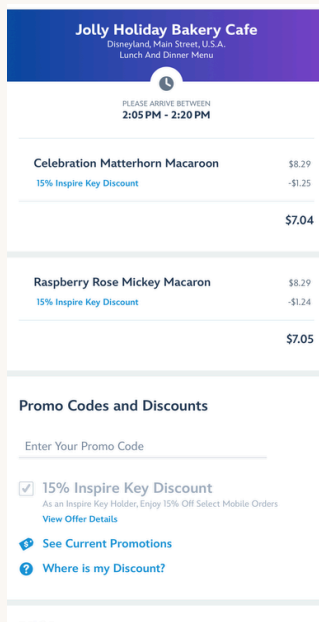
5. Pick your arrival window / pickup time



6. Add your items to the cart



7. Pay in the app



8. When you get there, tap “I’m Here, Prepare My Order”

9. Wait for the pickup notification, then go get your food

*If you navigate away, your order won’t disappear. You can return to it in the app under Mobile Orders, Order History, or the My Plans section.”



Best mobile order tips

- Order before you're starving.
- Order early to avoid missing out on your favorite meals/treats!
- If you're really organized, you can pre-order multiple meals before leaving the hotel
- Use it whenever possible to skip long food lines

Mobile order is one of those little things that can make your day feel much smoother.

Use It to Preview Food

Mobile order isn't just for ordering — it's also a great way to preview what food actually looks like.

As you're deciding where to eat, you can:

- browse menus
- see photos of the food
- get a better idea of what you're ordering

This is especially helpful when you're planning ahead or traveling with picky eaters.

A Few Things to Keep in Mind

- If an item is sold out, it won't appear in mobile order
- If you're outside a meal window (like breakfast), those items won't show either

So if you don't see something, it doesn't always mean it's gone — it may just not be available at that time.

Using mobile order this way can help you:

- avoid ordering something you won't like
- make quicker decisions in the park
- feel more confident about where you're eating



LIGHTNING LANE IN THE APP

You'll use the Disneyland app to both purchase and manage Lightning Lane throughout your day.

Don't worry, once you do it once or twice, it becomes very simple.

How to Buy Lightning Lane Multi Pass

You can purchase Lightning Lane in the app in a few different ways:

Option 1: Before your trip (when buying tickets)

- Add it directly to your ticket purchase

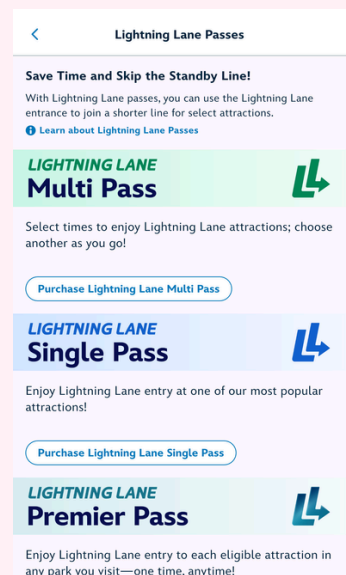
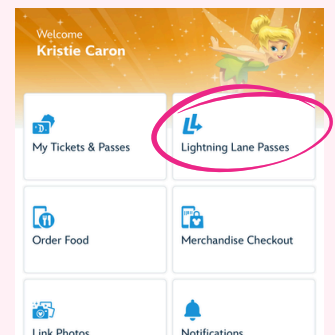
If you did not purchase Lightning Lane Multi Pass with your tickets, or you only want it for certain days of your trip, you can purchase it once you have scanned into the park that day.

Option 2: In the app on the day of your visit

1. Open the Disneyland app
2. Tap the three lines at the bottom
3. Select "Lightning Lane Passes"
4. Choose Purchase Lightning Lane Multi Pass (this is also where you would purchase your single pass)
5. Select your party and confirm purchase

You'll need to be scanned into the park before you purchase or can start booking rides.

To purchase Lightning Lane Premier Pass, follow the same steps as Option 2 and select Premier Pass. This can usually be purchased up to one week before your visit.



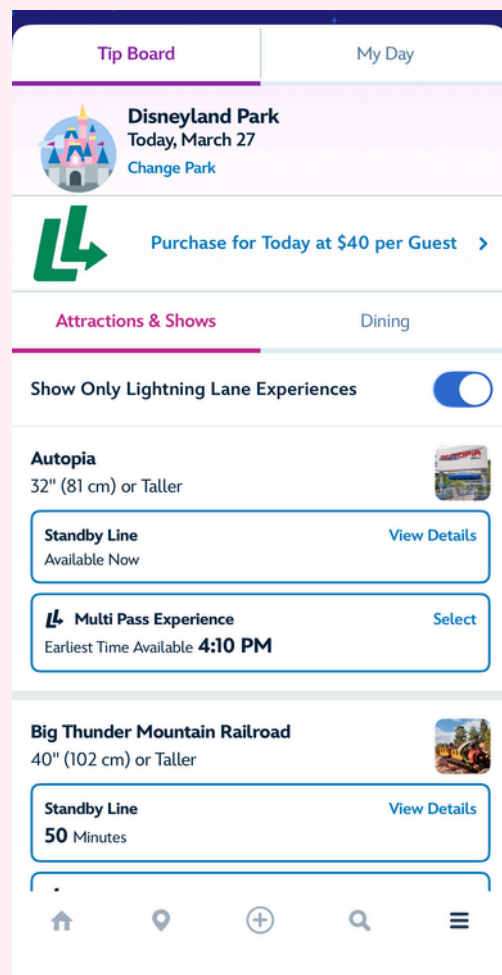
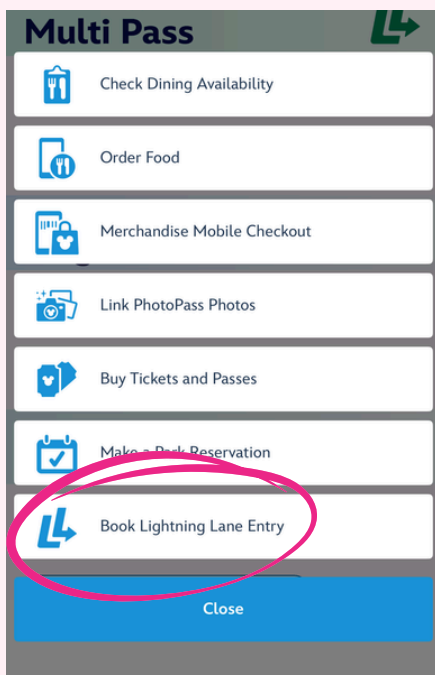


How to Book Your First Lightning Lane

Once you're in the park:

1. Open the app
2. Tap the "+" button at the bottom
3. Select "Book Lightning Lane Entry"
4. Choose your ride
5. Select your return time
6. Confirm your booking

You'll now have a return window (for example: 10:30–11:30 AM)



YOUR TICKETS IN THE APP

You'll use the Disneyland app to access and scan your tickets throughout your trip.

Where to find your tickets

1. Open the Disneyland app
2. Tap the three lines at the bottom
3. Select My Tickets & Passes

You'll see:

- a barcode for each person
- names linked to each ticket
- your ticket details

This is what you'll use to enter the parks and scan into Lightning Lanes.

How to scan into the parks

- Have your barcode ready before you get to the gate
- A Cast Member will scan it at the entrance
- You'll take a quick photo the first time, which links the ticket to you

After that, you'll use that same ticket barcode each time you re-enter.

Tips for a smoother entry

- Screenshot your tickets in case service is spotty
- Turn your screen brightness up
- Have everyone's tickets pulled up before you reach the front

You do not need to overthink this — just know where to find your tickets and have them ready.



MAGICBANDS

MagicBand+ are available at Disneyland, but they're not as useful as they are at Disney World.

What They Do

MagicBand+ can be used to:

- scan into the parks
- scan into Lightning Lanes
- link PhotoPass photos

They connect to your Disneyland app and are rechargeable.

What to Know

- completely optional
- everyone in your group does not need one
- your phone can do almost everything a MagicBand+ does



You do not need a MagicBand+...

But,

- they're fun for kids
- they make scanning quick and easy
- and they can simplify things if you don't want to pull out your phone constantly

I LOVE using MagicBand buddies.

You take the puck out of the magic band and pop it into the buddy, then attach to your bag or clothing — so it won't fall off your wrist.

I've put together a MagicBand list with:

- MagicBand buddies
- accessories
- things that make them easier to use in the parks

You can find it on my Amazon Storefront [HERE](#)

MagicBands are one of those “nice to have” extras, not a must. If they sound fun or helpful for your family, go for it. If not, you're not missing out on anything.



PHOTOPASS

PhotoPass is included with Lightning Lane Multi Pass and it's one of the easiest ways to capture your trip without constantly using your own phone.

How to find your PhotoPass code

1. Open the Disneyland app
2. Tap the three lines at the bottom
3. Select Link Photos
4. Pull up your PhotoPass code

Disney photographers can scan this code to link your photos to your account. If you have a MagicBand+ they can tap that instead.

Screenshot your PhotoPass code and save it as your phone wallpaper while you're in the parks.

That way:

- it's easy to pull up fast
- photographers can scan it quickly
- you're not digging through the app every time

A few things to know:

- If you have Lightning Lane Multi Pass, your PhotoPass downloads are included for that day
- You can also link ride photos through the app
- If a photographer is taking your picture, have the code ready before you step up
- PhotoPass can also be purchased separately if you are not using Lightning Lane Multi Pass.



Disney PhotoPass photographers are located throughout the parks and can take:

- castle photos
- character photos
- family pictures
- magic shots (with added effects)

All of these photos are linked to your account in the app

How to Link Ride Photos

After certain rides, you'll see a photo screen with a code.

Take a picture of the code.

If you have an iPhone:

- you can copy and paste the code directly from your photo
- paste it into the "Link Photos" section in the app

This is the easiest way to link your ride photos without typing everything in

Helpful Tips

- stop for photographers when you see them
- they're usually quick and worth it
- ask for "magic shots" → they'll add fun effects to your photos

You'll never regret having more photos from your trip — especially ones that include you in them.



CHAPTER

06

DISNEYLAND LOGISTICS

These are the real-life details
that make your day smoother
once you're inside the parks.

STROLLERS

Disneyland involves a lot of walking.

And this is one of the biggest things people underestimate.

I recommend a stroller for kids 8 and under
(sometimes even 9, if they'll fit)

This isn't about age — it's about energy.

Your Options

Bring Your Own

- most comfortable
- easiest if you already have one

Rent in the Parks (Not Recommended)

- hard plastic
- not comfortable
- you can't take them outside the parks. This is a bigger con than most people realize

Disneyland has strict stroller restrictions. Strollers cannot be larger than 31 inches (79 cm) wide and 52 inches (132 cm) long. Wagon-style strollers are strictly prohibited (unless medically exempt), and children must be removed from strollers on parking lot trams.



Rent from a Company

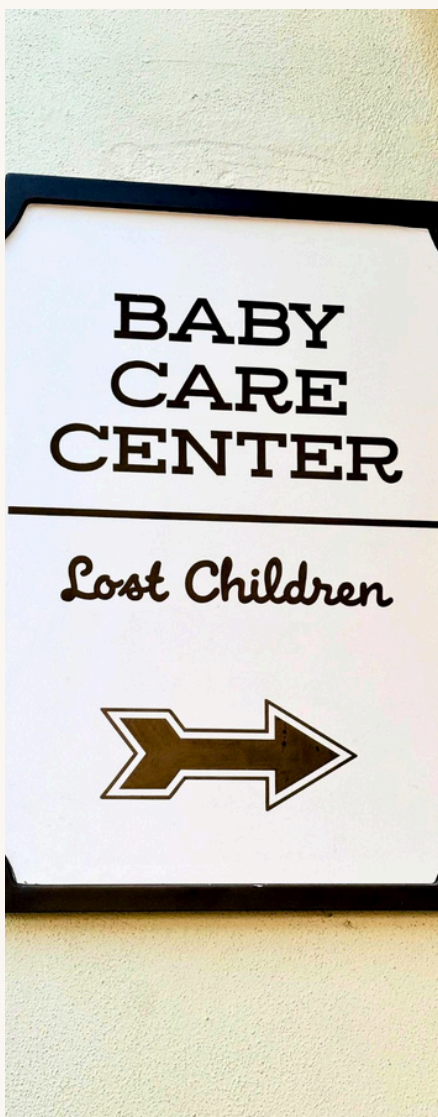
(My Recommendation)

BabyQuip

- delivered directly to your hotel
- high-quality, comfortable strollers
- way better than park rentals

If you use [THIS LINK](#) and mention my name, you'll get a little VIP upgrade.





Both parks have Baby Care Centers — and they are one of the most helpful (and underrated) spots in Disneyland. They're quiet, air-conditioned, and perfect for a reset during a long day.

Locations

Disneyland Park

Located at the end of Main Street, U.S.A., near First Aid and Plaza Inn. As you head toward the hub (castle area), it's off to the right-hand side.

Disney California Adventure

Located in San Fransokyo Square, near Ghirardelli and the Bakery Tour. It's slightly tucked off the main walkway, but easy to find in the app.

What You'll Find Inside

- changing tables
- nursing areas
- toddler-sized toilets
- feeding areas with high chairs
- a calm place to sit and take a break

ACCESSIBILITY (WHEELCHAIRS + DAS)

Wheelchairs & Ride Access

You'll find:

- wheelchair rentals
- ECV (scooter) rentals
- accessible entrances and accommodations throughout the parks

Disney California Adventure (DCA)

DCA was built more recently, with accessibility in mind.

- Most queues are wheelchair accessible
- You will typically wait in the standard standby line

Disneyland Park

Disneyland is older, and many of the queues are smaller.

- Wheelchairs cannot access all standard queues
- In these cases, you'll speak with a Cast Member at the ride

They will:

- give you a return time
- direct you to an alternate entrance (often the exit)



DAS (Disability Access Service)

DAS is available for guests who are unable to wait in a traditional queue due to a disability.

With DAS:

- you'll receive a return time for attractions instead of waiting in the physical line.

This service is designed to make the experience more manageable, not to skip lines entirely.

If you're unsure whether DAS is right for your situation, feel free to reach out — I'm happy to help answer questions.



LOCKERS

Lockers are a great way to make your day easier — especially if you don't want to carry everything with you.

Where to Find Lockers

There are three main locker locations:

- Esplanade (between the two parks). Ideal for park hopper days
- Inside Disneyland Park
- Inside Disney California Adventure

You can access your locker as often as you'd like throughout the day.

Lockers are great for:

- jackets and sweatshirts
- snacks and drinks
- souvenirs and shopping bags
- anything you don't want to carry all day

Free Lockers are located near Grizzly River Run in California Adventure.

- available for up to 2 hours
- perfect for storing your belongings while you ride

Having a locker means:

- you don't have to carry everything
- your day feels lighter and more comfortable

SECURITY

Before entering Disneyland Resort, everyone goes through a security screening.

This includes bag checks and metal detectors — whether you're entering from the street, a hotel, or the parking structures.

Security Locations

You'll go through security before reaching the Esplanade (the area between the two parks).

Main entry points include:

- Harbor Blvd entrance (most common for off-property guests)
- Downtown Disney entrances (used by Disneyland Hotel, Pixar Place, and walking guests)
- Parking structures (Mickey & Friends / Pixar Pals)
 - includes tram access after security

What to Expect

- you'll walk through a metal detector
- bags will be checked by a Cast Member
- strollers will be inspected

It's usually quick, but can back up during busy mornings.

What You Can Bring

- snacks and food
- refillable water bottles
- soft-sided coolers

What's Not Allowed

- alcohol
- loose ice (use ice packs instead)
- glass containers
- large wagons or pull-style carts
- selfie sticks

For a full list of security rules stay up to date [HERE](#)

How to Get Through Faster

A few small things make a big difference:

- open all bag zippers before placing them on the table
- remove all bags and bulky items from your stroller
- keep your bag organized and easy to search
- avoid overpacking

The simpler your setup, the faster you'll get through.

Security is straightforward — and once you're through, you're in the Disney bubble.

A little preparation here makes the start of your day feel much smoother.



WATER + REFILLING

You do not need to buy bottled water all day — it's expensive and adds up quickly. Just bring a refillable water bottle and drink for free all day!

Your Options

- ask for free cups of water at quick service locations
- use water refill stations throughout the parks

Pro Tip

Use the app search to quickly find:

- water bottle refill stations
- nearby quick service locations

The tap water in California doesn't taste great, so I like to bring water flavoring for my kids — or we'll bring our own bottled water into the parks.

Staying hydrated makes a huge difference in how your day feels — especially in the heat.



CHARGING YOUR PHONE

Your phone is a huge part of your Disneyland day.

What to Do

- bring a portable charger
- charge everything overnight

You'll be using your phone for:

- tickets
- Lightning Lane
- mobile ordering
- wait times

If your phone dies, your day becomes a lot harder.

FuelRod (Easy Park Option)

You'll see FuelRod stations at select locations around the parks.

These are portable chargers you can:

- purchase once
- then swap for a fully charged one throughout the day

Once you have a FuelRod, you can keep exchanging it as needed — you don't have to keep buying new chargers.

I've had mine since 2020 and still use it every trip.

Money-Saving Tip

FuelRods are more expensive in the parks, but you can order one on Amazon before your trip and save money.

CHAPTER

07

LIGHTNING LANE

If you're going to use
Lightning Lane, this is where
your strategy matters most.



LIGHTNING LANE OVERVIEW

There are three different Lightning Lane options at Disneyland.

Understanding the difference is the first step to using them correctly.

- Individual Lightning Lane
- Lightning Lane Multi Pass
- Lightning Lane Premier Pass

They all work differently — and you do not need all of them.



INDIVIDUAL LIGHTNING LANE



This is a pay-per-ride option for the two highest-demand rides in the parks:

- Radiator Springs Racers (DCA)
- Rise of the Resistance (Disneyland)

How It Works

- you pay per person, per ride
- you select a return time
- you enter through the Lightning Lane

What to Know

- you can only purchase once per ride, per day
- pricing varies by day and time
- availability is limited and can sell out
- Individual Lightning Lane selections are not as flexible as Multi Pass, so double check your return time before purchasing.



This is best used selectively, not automatically.

If one of these rides is a must-do and you don't want to wait in a long standby line, it can be worth it.



LIGHTNING LANE MULTI PASS

This is the main Lightning Lane system most people will use — and when used correctly, it can save you hours of waiting in line.

How It Works

Lightning Lane Multi Pass is a paid add-on that allows you to:

- book return times for select attractions
- skip the standby line
- continue booking rides throughout the day

You'll use the Disneyland app to:

- select a ride with a return time
- and come back during your assigned window

What It Includes

- access to multiple attractions
- the ability to book throughout the day (one at a time)
- PhotoPass downloads included for the day

You are not booking everything at once — you're booking one ride at a time, throughout the day

INCLUDED ATTRACTIONS

Disneyland Park

- Autopia
- Big Thunder Mountain Railroad
- Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters
- Haunted Mansion
- Indiana Jones Adventure
- "it's a small world"
- Matterhorn Bobsleds
- Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway
- Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run
- Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin
- Space Mountain
- Star Tours – The Adventures Continue



Disney California Adventure

- Goofy's Sky School
- Grizzly River Run
- Guardians of the Galaxy – Mission: BREAKOUT!
- Incredicoaster
- Monsters, Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue!
- Soarin' Around the World
- Toy Story Midway Mania!
- WEB SLINGERS: A Spider-Man Adventure

Not Included:

- Radiator Springs Racers
 - Rise of the Resistance
- (these use Individual Lightning Lane)

What to Know

- popular rides can run out of times for the day
- you can only hold one active Lightning Lane at a time (with exceptions based on timing — we'll cover this next)



HOW TO BOOK + TIMING

This is the part of Lightning Lane that feels confusing at first, but, once you understand it, it's very simple.

How to Book a Lightning Lane

1. Open the Disneyland app
2. Tap the "+" button at the bottom
3. Select "Book Lightning Lane Entry"
4. Choose your ride (it will show the return time available)
5. Confirm your selection

You'll now have a return window (for example: 10:30–11:30 AM)

When You Can Book?

You can book your first Lightning Lane once you are scanned into the park.

After that, you can book your next one:
As soon as you scan into your current ride
OR
After 2 hours (whichever comes first)



Return Window + Grace Period

When it's time for your ride, you'll have a one-hour return window.

Disney also allows a small grace period:

- you can check in 5 minutes early
- and up to 10 minutes after your window ends

This gives you a little flexibility if things don't go exactly as planned.

If you have a Park Hopper, you can book Lightning Lanes for either park after you've scanned into your starting park for the day. In the app, toggle between Disneyland Park and California Adventure at the top of the screen to see each park's available Lightning Lane rides.

STACKING - WHAT IS IT?

As Lightning Lane return times get pushed later in the day, you can continue booking rides every 2 hours — even if you're not using them right away.

This is called stacking

How It Works

- book a Lightning Lane
- set a timer for 2 hours
- book another when your time opens
- repeat throughout the day

You can do this even if you leave the park for a break

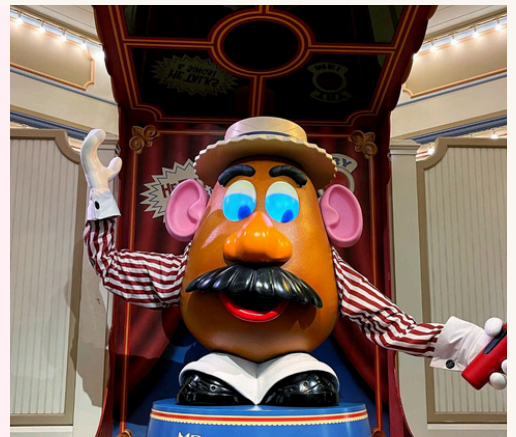
Example:

- If you book at 9:00 and scan into that ride at 9:40, you can book again right after scanning. If you haven't scanned in yet, you can book again after 2 hours.

What This Does

By the afternoon, you can have:

- multiple Lightning Lanes booked
- back-to-back return times
- a much easier, less stressful second half of your day



Modify — Don't Cancel

This is important.

Always modify your Lightning Lane — do NOT cancel it.

- If you cancel, your 2-hour window resets
- If you modify, your timing stays the same

This keeps your momentum going and allows you to keep stacking

LIGHTNING LANE PREMIER PASS



This is the highest tier Lightning Lane option — and the simplest to use.

How It Works

With Premier Pass:

- each person gets one-time access to every Lightning Lane ride
- this includes both Multi Pass rides AND Individual Lightning Lane rides
- you do not need to book return times

You simply show up and use the Lightning Lane when you're ready

What to Know

- pricing is very high
- typically ranges from \$300–\$500 per person, per day
- this is in addition to your park ticket

When to Consider It

If you:

- only have one day
- want the easiest, most flexible experience
- and don't want to think about timing or strategy

this can be a good option

My Take

For most families, this isn't necessary.

Depending on your group size and budget, it may be worth comparing this to a VIP Tour, which can offer even more value and flexibility.

This is about convenience — not necessity.

If you want the simplest day possible and budget isn't a concern, it's a great option.

Otherwise, Lightning Lane Multi Pass with a little strategy will get you very far.

CHAPTER

08

SKIP THE LINES STRATEGIES

A lot of people wait longer than they need to, this is where you fix that.



YOUR TOOLS

There are several ways to skip or reduce wait times:

- Rope Drop
- Lightning Lane
- Single Rider
- Rider Switch
- Mobile Order
- Park Close Strategy
- A few lesser-known tricks

You don't need to use all of these — just the right ones at the right time.

ROPE DROP

Rope drop is one of the most effective ways to avoid long lines. It means arriving at the park before it officially opens to be some of the first few on the rides.

This is the first 60–90 minutes after the park opens — and it's when wait times are at their lowest.

How to Do It

Before your trip, decide:

- your top 3–4 must-do rides
- or
- the area of the park you want to focus on first

Then start with your highest-priority ride first

Why This Works

- you'll get your most important rides done early
- you'll avoid peak wait times later
- your day starts off ahead instead of behind

A Few Things to Know

- Rise of the Resistance does not always open right at park opening. I don't recommend rope dropping it
- Peter Pan's Flight fills up very quickly unless you are at the very front, you'll likely spend most of your rope drop time in that line. It often sits around a 45-minute wait for most of the day

Keep It Simple

Rope drop is not about doing everything. It's about:

- starting strong
- hitting your priorities
- and setting the tone for the rest of your day



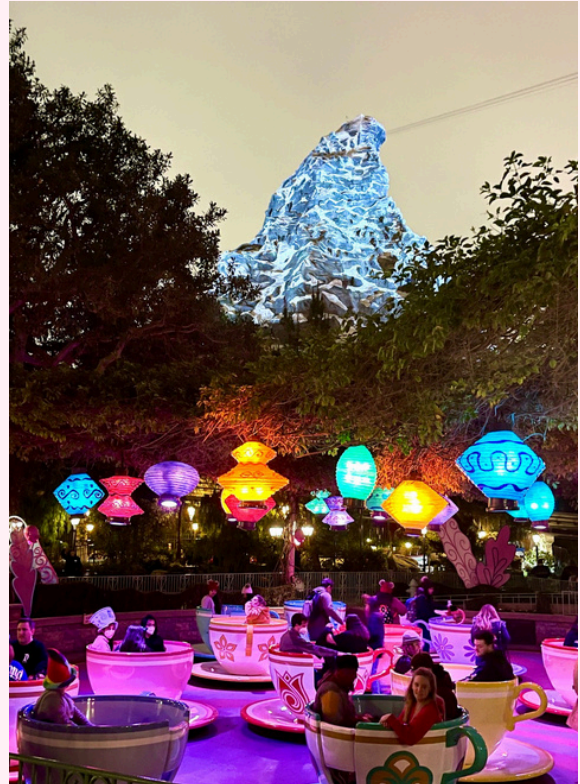
PARK CLOSE STRATEGY

The last 1–2 hours of the night are almost as powerful as rope drop.

Why It Works

- crowds leave for shows or head home
- lines drop significantly
- you can get multiple rides done

If you can stay late, it's one of the easiest wins



SINGLE RIDER LINES

Some rides offer a Single Rider line, which can significantly reduce wait times.

How It Works

- you'll be split from your group
- you fill empty seats on rides

Best Rides for This

- Radiator Springs Racers
- Incredicoaster
- Matterhorn
- Indiana Jones

This is a great option for

- older kids (must be 7 or over)
- teens
- adults
- kids comfortable riding alone



RIDER SWITCH



Rider Switch is used when someone in your group can't ride — usually because a child is too short or doesn't want to ride.

It allows the rest of your group to still experience the attraction without waiting in line twice.

How It Works

- your group goes to the ride entrance together
- let the Cast Member know you'd like to use Rider Switch
- they will set it up and give you a return time

What Happens Next

- Group 1 rides first
- Group 2 waits with the child who isn't riding

When Group 1 is finished:

- Group 2 returns using their Rider Switch
- they enter through the Lightning Lane or alternate entrance
- they do not need to wait in the standby line

Important to Know

- the return time does not expire like a regular Lightning Lane
- the waiting adult can bring one additional rider with them
- everyone must be present when requesting Rider Switch

Why This Matters

This allows:

- both adults to ride
- while one stays with the child
- without doubling your wait time

INSIDER TIPS

TWO LESSER KNOWN WAYS TO SKIP THE LINES

Roo Pass (Winnie the Pooh)

Winnie the Pooh often has a longer line than you'd expect — but there's a lesser-known option that can help.

How It Works

- ask a Cast Member at the ride entrance if they are offering a Roo Pass
- if available, you'll be given a Roo Pass
- you'll enter through the exit

What to Expect

- you'll be seated in the back row of the ride vehicle
- it's typically used to fill empty seats
- usually available for groups of 2

Why It Exists

This helps move the line faster by filling unused space on the ride.

Buddy Pass (Monsters, Inc.)

Monsters, Inc. sometimes offers a Buddy Pass, which works very similarly.

How It Works

- ask a Cast Member at the ride entrance if they are offering it
- if available, you'll receive a pass
- you'll return and enter through the exit

What to Expect

- you'll fill empty seats on the ride
- you may be separated from your full group
- typically best for groups of 2

Why It Exists

Just like Roo Pass, this helps maximize ride capacity and move more people through.

CHAPTER

09

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Entertainment is a huge part of what makes Disneyland feel magical — and it's worth planning for.



Disneyland's nighttime fireworks show combines music, projections, and fireworks (when weather allows).

Where It Is

- centered around Sleeping Beauty Castle
- projections extend down Main Street, at "it's a small world", and along the Rivers of America

Best viewing areas:

- Main Street, U.S.A.
- full projections + classic experience (most crowded)
- "it's a small world" mall
- great projections, more space, easier viewing
- Rivers of America
- projections + more relaxed viewing
- Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge
- unique experience with themed music and a different perspective

When It Shows

- typically Friday - Sunday, except during peak seasons when it shows nightly
- usually between 9:00–9:30 PM

Important to Know

- fireworks are often canceled due to wind
- projection-only shows will run nightly and when it's too windy



PAINT THE NIGHT PARADE (DISNEYLAND PARK)

What It Is

A high-energy nighttime parade with glowing floats, music, and characters.

Where It Runs

- along the main parade route
- typically from “it’s a small world” → Main Street or reverse

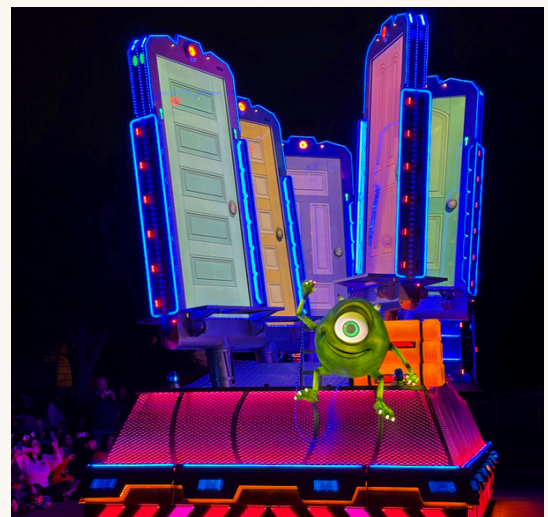
Where to Watch

- Main Street → best atmosphere, most crowded
- “it’s a small world” → more space, easier viewing

When It Shows

- usually twice per night (example: ~8:45 PM & ~10:45 PM)

Second parade is usually less crowded



The last day you can watch Paint the night is August 20, 2026.



WORLD OF COLOR

(CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE)

What It Is

A nighttime water show featuring fountains, projections, music, and lighting effects.

Where It Is

Paradise Bay (in front of Pixar Pier)

Where to Watch

- along the waterfront viewing areas
- reserved sections (with dining packages or dessert party)

When It Shows

- typically 1–2 shows per night
- often around 9:00 PM and/or 10:15 PM

Virtual Queue (Free Viewing Option)

World of Color uses a virtual queue system for its main viewing areas.

How It Works

- you join through the Disneyland app
- distribution usually opens at 12:00 PM (noon)
- you'll be assigned a color-coded viewing section

What to Know

- it's free, but limited
- sections are standing room
- you'll still need to arrive early to get a good spot within your section

Important to Know

- you may get wet depending on where you stand.
- If you miss the virtual queue, you can still watch World of Color from non-reserved viewing areas. Your view may not be as ideal, so arrive early and be flexible.

World of Color is one of the best shows at Disneyland — but how you watch it matters. A little planning here makes a big difference in your experience.



FANTASMIC

(DISNEYLAND PARK)

What It Is

Fantasmic is a nighttime show that brings Disney stories to life.

The show follows Mickey as he uses his imagination to battle villains and create different scenes along the Rivers of America.

Where It Is

Rivers of America
(New Orleans Square / Frontierland area)

Where to Watch

- along the waterfront viewing areas around the river

When It Shows

- typically twice per night on Friday-Sunday
- usually around 9:00 PM and 10:30 PM (varies by season)

Important to Know

- viewing is ground seating in most areas
- people will sit to hold their spot before the show
- it fills up quickly

Strategy Tip

- first show = more crowded
- second show = easier to find space

Fantasmic is one of the most unique shows at Disneyland.

BLUEY'S BEST DAY EVER



What It Is

A live stage show featuring Bluey and friends — fun, interactive, and especially popular with younger kids.

Where It Is

Fantasyland Theatre

Where to Watch

- seated outdoor theater
- plenty of space, but it can fill up quickly

When It Shows

- runs multiple times throughout the day (check the app or Disneyland website for current show times)
- showtimes alternate between two different versions

Important to Know

- the first show (and every other show after that) is the livelier version
- this is typically the best one to aim for
- it's very popular and can draw long lines
- earlier shows in the day tend to be easier to get into

If Bluey is important to your family, plan for it — this is one of the most in-demand daytime shows.



STORYTELLING AT ROYAL THEATRE (DISNEYLAND PARK)

What It Is

A live, humorous retelling of Disney stories (Tangled, Beauty and the Beast, etc.)

Where It Is

Royal Theatre (Fantasyland)

Where to Watch

- small outdoor theater with bench seating

When It Shows

- multiple times per day (check the app or Disneyland website for showtimes)

Why It's Worth It

- interactive
- funny for both kids and adults
- easy to fit into your day



MICKEY'S PHILHARMAGIC (CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE)

What It Is

A 3D musical show featuring classic Disney songs and characters.

Where It Is

Hollywood Land (indoor)

When It Shows

- runs continuously throughout the day

Why It's Great

- air-conditioned
- great break from walking
- no long waits





DISNEY JUNIOR DANCE PARTY (CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE)

What It Is

An interactive dance show for younger kids.

Where It Is

Hollywood Land (DCA)

When It Shows

- runs multiple times throughout the day

Why It's Great

- perfect for younger kids
- high-energy
- a good mid-day reset

CHAPTER

10

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Now you have everything you need — here's how to actually enjoy it.

YOU'RE READY

At this point, you have everything you need to plan a really incredible Disneyland trip.

One that feels:

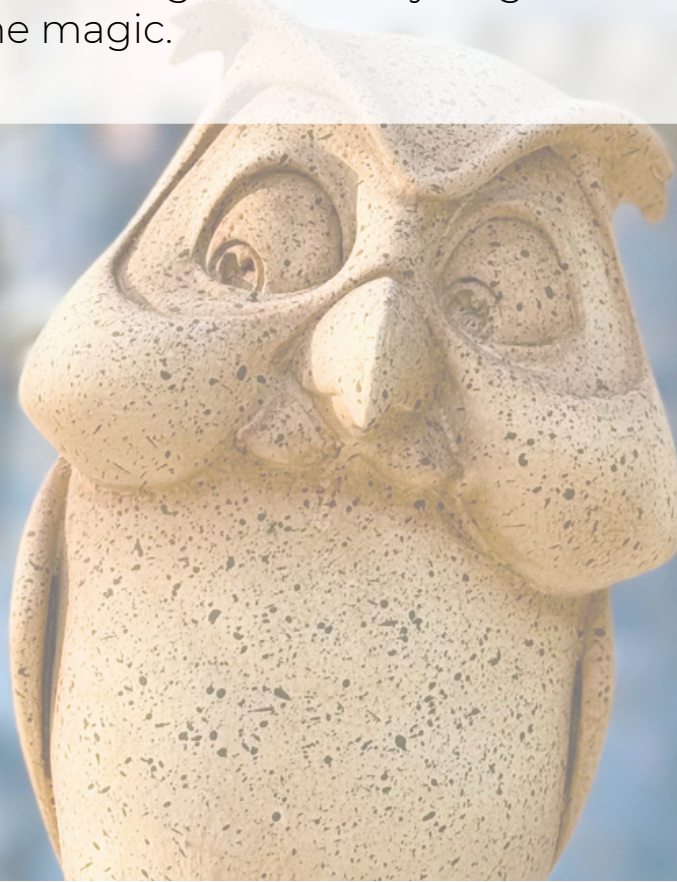
- fun
- smooth
- and actually enjoyable for everyone

The goal was never to do everything.

It was to:

- know what matters
- feel confident in your decisions
- and enjoy your time together

The rest? You'll figure out as you go — and that's part of the magic.



MY FAVORITE PARK ESSENTIALS

If you want to make your days easier (and cut down on stress), these are the things I personally use and recommend.

Amazon Storefront

I keep my storefront updated with everything I use for Disneyland trips, including:

- park essentials
- hotel room must-haves
- outfit ideas
- unique autograph ideas

You can shop everything [HERE](#)



Small Shops I Love

These are shops I personally use and love:

Designer Park Bags

These are my go-to park bags — they are literally designed for Disneyland.

- built-in ear holders (game changer)
- pin display sections
- different sizes and colors
- easy to stay organized all day



They're cute, comfortable, and actually functional

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE10

Ears Addiction Design

→ some of the most comfortable ears I've ever worn, super well made and I always get compliments when I wear her ears!

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE10



Darling Dream Co

→ hand drawn pixie dusted style. Some of my favorite Tee's and sweatshirts come from here.

Shop [HERE](#) for an exclusive discount

Bashfully Ever After

→ sprinkle a bit of fairy dust on your outfit with her Park-inspired jewelry collections- from stacks to necklaces- there is always something to love.

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE10



Five and Dime on Main

→ the most adorable bangles! You can find one to match every outfit.

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE25

Beautiful Boutique

→ adorable handmade accessories! Her earrings are my FAVE!

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE15



TNT Apparel

→ the BEST park inspired shirts!

Shop [HERE](#) and use code KRISTIE15

Capture with Click

→ Disposable cameras that you ship back to them and they email you the digital pictures! Perfect for kids!

Shop [HERE](#)

A Quick Note

Some of these are affiliate links or codes, which means I may earn a small commission, but, I only recommend things I actually use and love.



THANK YOU!



I know how overwhelming planning can feel.
I also know how special these trips are.
And getting to be even a small part of that for you?
That means everything to me.

At the end of the day, this trip isn't about doing everything.
It's about being present, making memories, and actually enjoying your time together. If you walk away from this guide feeling more confident and excited, then I did my job.

Want More Support?

If you'd like help planning your trip, I offer:

- 1:1 Planning Calls to talk through all your questions
- If you want a way to turn this into your exact park plan, my step-by-step Blueprint is the next best step.
- and pre-made park day plans

You can find everything HERE

💌 Have Questions?

You can always reach out to me at hello@disneykristie.com — I'm happy to help.

I hope your trip is magical, smooth, and filled with moments you'll never forget. And when you're there, I hope you're not stressed. I hope you're not overthinking. I hope you're just enjoying it.

Kristie