

Disneyland

The Happiest Place on Earth!

There is no more true statement than that. The moment you reach the courtyard between Disneyland and California Adventure, you feel it. The Disney music starts to invade you and suddenly you smile. And you haven't even entered the gates.

Disneyland is best spent using a minimum of a 3 day pass, though I find 5 days suit me better. Even though I have been to Disneyland 4 times (including getting married in California), I still prefer 3 days for Disneyland and 2 days for California Adventure.

When you enter the park gates, be sure to pick up a Disneyland or California Adventure resort map which will provide you with the locations of the rides and restaurants. Together with the map is a listing of each park's special activities; the parades, character greetings and shows.

I would like to offer some tips that I have learned from my many visits to Disneyland. These few ideas help make my visits more enjoyable and I am sure you will find them useful & convenient too - making your Disney vacation one to remember!

Most importantly - get to the park early so you can take full advantage of your **'Fast Pass'** – which is part of your park admission ticket. The 'Fast Pass' is a great tool when used appropriately.

When you arrive at a ride that has a 'Fast Pass' option, you can determine whether or not it will be helpful to use the pass at that time. There will be a sign that has a waiting time on it. This is an approximate time based on a card system Disney uses to judge how long people have been waiting in line. It is not always exact but is generally a good estimate. The other sign will have a 'Fast Pass' return time posted. Keep in mind that you can only 'Fast Pass' ONE ride at a time. Once you use your 'Fast Pass', the machine will give you a ticket to use in your allotted time return. At the bottom of this ticket is a time in which you can 'Fast Pass' your next ride. You can decide if "Fast Passing" this ride or waiting in line is a better option for you. Remember each person has to swipe their pass for a ticket.

Once you've entered the gates, head down "Main Street USA" to a fork in the road. You can choose which road to follow. A right turn will take you to **Tomorrowland** – a land in which you will find rides such as "Space Mountain", "Buzz Lightyear's Astro Blasters" and "Finding Nemo Submarine Ride". A left turn will take you to **Adventureland, Frontierland and Orleans Square** – where you will find "Indiana Jones Adventure", "Splash Mountain", "Big Thunder Mountain Railroad" and "Pirates of the Caribbean". This is where expert 'Disney Strategy' kicks in!!

"Indiana Jones", "Finding Nemo" and "Space Mountain" usually fill up quickly. I usually get around this by "Fast Passing" one of these rides and heading for another to wait in line. If you use this strategy, you can ride the thrill rides a couple of times that day and then enjoy the less busy rides during the peak park times.

California Adventure Park also has some of its own popular rides that get quite busy. "California Screamin'", "Twilight Zone Tower of Terror" and "Soarin' over California" definitely fit this bill.

Another tip I can offer Disneyland visitors is to take advantage of the **2-parks in 1 day** part of your ticket. Disneyland Park usually opens before California Adventure. AND you can have 2 "Fast Passes" active at the same time only if you have one in each park. You could have a 'Fast Pass' for "Finding Nemo" and then have a 'Fast Pass' for "Soarin' Over California". Team work can be an excellent strategy - send one member of the family over to California Adventure when it opens to get a 'Fast Pass' for – I suggest – "Soarin' Over California". Then you can bring the entire family over when the 'Fast Pass' becomes valid. A great technique for enjoying as many rides as you please with less wait time!!



The 'Mouseketeer' Tourists
Entering the Gates to Disneyland!

Disneyland

There are excellent dining options both inside and outside the park. For fast food inside the park, try the **"Pizza Port"**. This restaurant not only serves different types of pizza but pasta dishes as well. For a sit down dinner, try the **"Blue Bayou"** restaurant located in the **"Pirates of the Caribbean"** ride. The meals are a little pricey but the experience is well worth it. Try to get seated by the water's edge.

For the full Disney experience (especially for the kids), you may want to try **"Character Dining"**. Your family can enjoy this for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The character breakfasts take place at the 3 hotels and inside Disneyland Park. You have a choice of: "Chip and Dale", "Goofy's Kitchen", "Lilo and Stitch" and "Minnie and Friends". Each one presents the characters listed as well as some special guests. For lunch and dinner there is "Ariel's Grotto" featuring the Disney Princesses, a wonderful fantasy for little girls' dreams – and "Goofy's Kitchen" where the children can visit with the many Disney characters - great for the entire family!

The **Disney Parades** last about 30 minutes and are a great way to enjoy the antics of the numerous Disney characters you have grown up with. Watch for crowds gathering along Mainstreet USA and join them as they choose their viewing positions curbside or on the benches. You can bet the Parade will be following soon and you'll be in for a real treat! Disney is the master of entertainment and their parades are wonderful sites to behold. Some parades actually stop their forward motion for a period of time to put on a street party/show. Disney parades are a perfect way to experience the wonder and fantasy that the Disney parks are famous for!

And, no one does **Fireworks** like Disney. The best place to view the fireworks is on Mainstreet USA. If you can get a spot facing the castle (in between the castle and the statue of Walt and Mickey) or at the centre square by the train

station when you enter Disneyland Park, you will experience the full affect of this exciting spectacle. Remember to let the little ones have a nap during the day as they will want to be awake for the fireworks. The display usually starts at about 9:25pm and last for 30 minutes.

After the fireworks, head down to the **"Rivers of America"** for the **"Fantasmic"** show. There is an earlier show, but the reason I suggest to see Fantasmic after the fireworks is because you run the risk of not being able to access one of the prime fireworks viewing areas if you're not there early enough and could miss a part of the overall fireworks display. The crowds normally dissipate after the fireworks and it's a little easier to make your way over to the Rivers of America and enjoy Fantasmic! Also, at the end of the show, the riverboat cruises around with the characters offering everyone an 'encore bow' and I find that there are more characters on the boat for the second show. There isn't really a poor spot for viewing as long as you can see one of the water shows. They do make their way around the entire water surface and the center with Mickey is big enough to enjoy from most vantage points. Remember, this show is a must see!!

Don't forget an autograph book for the children. Character greetings are throughout the parks for the kids to get autographs. The times of the greetings are posted on your resort map. Ariel has her own seashell, Mickey has his own house, so does Minnie, and you can find Alice and the Mad Hatter running around by the teacups. Remember to keep your eyes open as the characters could be anywhere at anytime!



Alice in Wonderland's Wonderful, Wacky 'Mad Tea Party'



**'Herbie' The Love Bug
The enchanted Volkswagen Beetle!**

Disneyland is not the only attraction in Southern California. If you have a few extra days, why not try Universal Studios, Sea World, the San Diego Zoo, Medieval Times, Knott's Berry Farm or shopping at the Block at Orange. Or you can spend a day at one of the beautiful beaches close by. It truly is the **"Happiest Place on Earth"** – absolutely!!

Our Leisure Travel Consultants will be pleased to help you plan your Disneyland or Disney World Vacation!