Walt Disney World: Guide Sheet

Introduction

Walt Disney World is the most visited entertainment resort in the world. Its theme parks have amazing attractions, themed restaurants, shows, and varied shopping and tour experiences. Additionally, there are water parks, amazing themed resort hotels, and sporting and recreational facilities.

Location: Approximately 25-40 minutes west of Orlando International Airport (travel time is dependent on what resort you are staying). The entire resort covers an area of 47 square miles near Orlando, Florida.

Four theme parks: Magic Kingdom
Epcot
Disney's Hollywood Studios
Disney's Animal Kingdom

Two water parks: Typhoon Lagoon
Blizzard Beach

Additionally, there are five championship golf courses, a motor racing circuit, mini-golf, baseball stadiums, and boating on the many lakes.

A large shopping and entertainment area called Downtown Disney features restaurants, nightclubs, theatres, Cirque de Soleil, Disney Quest interactive centre and much more.

Accommodation: There are 24 Disney themed resort hotels with more than 30,000 rooms available on site, plus a further eight non-Disney hotels on site. Additionally, there are many hotels outside of the WDW Resort area; however you will need a car to aid in your transportation, whilst those staying on site can use the Disney World Transportation Service to and from their resort.

Length of stay recommendation

We recommend a *minimum* seven day stay for non–Disney fans and 14 days for Disney fans to have any chance of experiencing and enjoying its myriad of attractions.

Other Notes

In each of its theme parks, Disney uses a technique called preshow in a number of attractions. This is often used to set the context and atmosphere of the attraction. It is worth noting that if you are not physically sitting in a ride vehicle or seated in a theatre, you have not yet arrived at the attraction! Do not leave after the preshow thinking that you have experienced the attraction!

Must see attractions (Magic Kingdom)

Adventureland

- Jungle Cruise – classic attraction.
- Pirates of the Caribbean – classic attraction.
- Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room – a good midday attraction to get out of the heat!

Frontierland

- Splash Mountain – where you may get wet!
- Big Thunder Mountain Railroad - a moderate rollercoaster.
- Country Bear Jamboree – another midday attraction.

Liberty Square

- Hall of Presidents – a midday attraction
- Haunted Mansion – the classic attraction as seen in other parks although the WDW has unique features and an interactive queue.

Tomorrowland

- Buzz Lightyear – this is the original Buzz Lightyear attraction and features fixed guns rather than cabled guns.
- Space Mountain – a unique Space Mountain featuring two different tracks and no soundtrack – this is the original *Space Mountain*.
- Walt Disney's Carousel of Progress – this is a midday attraction but should not be missed.
- Tomorrowland Transit Authority – another fast loading midday attraction to relax on.
- Monsters Inc Laughing Floor – comedy club featuring characters inspired by Monsters Inc.

Fantasyland

In December 2012, the *New Fantasyland* opened its first phase featuring all new attractions and an expanded area, taking in the former *Mickey's Toontown Faire* area. Fantasyland now has these must see attractions:

- Mickey's PhilharMagic – 3D film featuring Donald and Mickey.
- It's a Small World – classic attraction.
- Peter Pan – classic attraction.
- The Little Mermaid – dark ride based on Ariel's adventures.
- Dumbo – in fact, two Dumbo rides flying side by side!

Must see attractions (Epcot)

Epcot is a partial mix of World's Fair and new technology areas. It also hosts a number of seasonal events each year including the International Flower and Garden Festival in Spring (March-May); and the International Food and Wine Festival in Autumn (Oct-Nov).

Future World

- Spaceship Earth – this is the signature attraction of Epcot as it is housed in the giant geodesic ball that is visible for miles around Walt Disney World.
- Universe of Energy – a dark ride through the history of energy.
- Test Track – high speed car proving ground – recently fully re-themed with the help of Chevrolet and reopened in December 2012.
- Mission Space - an intense space simulator based on centrifuge technology. Keep your head looking straight ahead on the ride to avoid spatial disorientation! A non-spinning version of the ride also exists for those with a lighter constitution!
- The Seas with Nemo and Friends – is a large aquarium featuring exhibitions of sea life, and omnimover ride through the aquarium, and the Turtle Talk with Crush attraction.

- The Land Pavilion is a horticultural exhibition space featuring:
    - Living with the Land – a boat ride through Epcot's greenhouses.
    - Soarin' – Epcot's version of Soarin' over California.
- Imagination Pavilion – features Journey into the Imagination with Figment (midday attraction to clear the heat!). Michael Jackson's Captain EO also features at this pavilion.

World Showcase Pavilions

The World Showcase is a permanent mini-world expo with a small number of fixed countries having pavilions. Some pavilions have themed attractions and all have restaurants with appropriate food. They are listed below in clockwise order.

Mexico (Mayan pyramid theme)
Grand Fiesta Tour Starring the Three Caballeros – a boat ride through Mexico.

Norway (Norweigian village theme)
Maelstrom - boat ride through Norway's history

China (Temple of Heaven and pagoda theme)
Reflections of China - 360 degree Circlevision movie

Germany (German village)
Germany was originally designed to have a Rhine boat cruise attraction and whilst the show building was constructed, the German government failed to fund the costs and the project was cancelled. As a result, no attraction exists – only German restaurants.

Italy (Venice theme)
As with the German pavilion, Italy was to have a boat ride based on a venetian gondola followed by a walkthrough of Roman ruins. Construction was not completed and no attraction exists – only Italian restaurants.

USA (US colonial architecture theme)
The American Adventure – takes place in a Broadway size theatre following preshow featuring the Voices of Liberty. The American Adventure takes guests through the history of the United States.

Japan (Pagodo and courtyard theme)
Japan is another pavilion where a show building was built for an attractions (Meet the World) but was never completed and opened. At present, the only Japan attraction is an art exhibition. There are also Japanese restaurants at the pavilion.

Morocco (Moroccan desert city theme)
The Moroccan pavilion was not built with a specific attraction in mind, rather it was designed to give an insight into life in Morocco, including a typical Moroccan house. There are also Moroccan restaurants at the pavilion.

France (Paris neighbourhood theme)
Impressions de France – is a film providing a panoramic view of France.
The pavilion is also host to a number of French restaurants.

United Kingdom (country village theme)
There are no attractions within the UK pavilion as it is designed to give a feel for living in an English village. Instead, it features English shops (including an English sportsman's shop selling football shirts; a local pub (The Rose and Crown); and a fish and chip shop.

Canada (Canadian outdoors theme)
O'Canada! – is a 360 degree Circlevision movie of Canada's cities, scenery and people. The pavilion also features the highly regarded restaurant, Le Cellier Steakhouse.

Fireworks
Night time fireworks show: IllumiNations - on the lagoon in World Showcase at 9.00pm every evening and is not to be missed!

Must See Attractions (Disney's Hollywood Studios)

Hollywood Boulevard
Great Movie Ride – a unique dark ride through Hollywood movie scenes. Note that there are two versions, determined by whether you take the left or right hand queue!

Echo Lake
The American Idol Experience – become a superstar!
Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular – amazing live show featuring stunts from the Indiana Jones movies.
Star Tours: The Adventure Continues – the latest version of the Star Tours attraction.

Streets of America
Muppet Vision 3D – 3D film

Lights, Motors, Action! Extreme Stunt Show – stunt car show featuring cars and motorcycle movie stunts.
Studios Backlot Tour featuring Catastrophe Canyon – a tram ride through an effects laden movie set.

Animation Courtyard
Voyage of the Little Mermaid – glow in the dark puppet attraction (very nice).
One Man's Dream - walk through exhibit on Walt Disney
The Legend of Jack Sparrow – a special effects attraction based on the adventures of Captain Jack.

Pixar Place
Toy Story Midway Mania – interaction 3D dark ride attraction.
Don't miss the animatronic Luxo Jr lamp that is also found in Pixar Place!

Sunset Boulevard
Rockin Roller Coaster - a very fast indoor rollercoaster with multiple inversions.
Twilight Zone Tower of Terror – a high rise elevator drop ride with amazing special effects.
Beauty and the Beast Live on Stage – retelling of the tale as old as time.
Fantasmic! – live show at night based on the Disneyland classic.
You can get excellent Fantasmic Dinner packages which can save 1.5 hours in a queue.

Must See Attractions (Animal Kingdom)

Animal Kingdom is the newest theme park in Walt Disney World, having opened in April 1998. It features a large safari with real animals, and is dedicated to animal conservation.

Oasis
Oasis is the park's main entrance and also home to over 25 animal habitats – keep your eyes open alongside the paths!

Discovery Island
It's Tough to be a Bug – 3D movie featuring characters from A Bug's Life.
There are also another 20+ animal habitats here, along with the magnificent *Tree of Life*, the park's centrepiece icon.

Camp Minnie Mickey
The Lion King – a stage show spectacular telling the story of The Lion King.

It is rumoured that Camp Minnie-Mickey will be replaced with the recently announced Avatar-based land at some point in the near future.

Africa

Kilimanjaro Safari – a wonderful safari ride in purpose built trucks where you will have many animal encounters (including lions, hippos, warthogs, giraffes etc). It is wise to ride at various times of the day as animals are in different locations depending on time.

Pagani Exploration Trail – a walking trail the a forest featuring many animal habitats (including gorillas, meerkats, snakes, lizards and birds)

Train for Conservation Station (Rafiki's Planet Watch) – train takes you to the veterinary areas where you can talk to the staff looking after animals. There are also more animal habitats in this area.

Asia

Kali River Rapids – a river rapids ride which will get you very very wet.

Maharajah Jungle Trek – a walking trail that will lead you through more habitats including Bengal Tigers and Komodo Dragons.

Expedition Everest - a fast rollercoaster inside a mountain – the signature attraction of Animal Kingdom.

DinoLand USA

Dinosaur – a drive back in time to when dinosaurs ruled the world. Ride is based on the same technology as Indiana Jones in Disneyland.

Notes

Explore all the trails within the Animal Kingdom. Disney planted over 4 million shrubs and trees to create this park and the results are spectacular.

An afternoon parade is held each day.

Transport to and from the Resort

Disney has made travel to the WDW Resort very easy for anyone flying into Orlando International Airport and staying on Disney property with their amazing bus transfer service *Disney's Magical Express*. On disembarking from your flight, just collect your baggage and head downstairs to the Disney counter. Cast members will check you in, collect your luggage, guide you to your bus, and take you to your resort.

The same service will return you to Orlando International at the end of your stay. In addition, if you are travelling onto the Disney Cruise Line, a similar service will collect you and take you to Port Canaveral.

Weather and time to go

Florida has a tropical climate similar to mid-north Queensland. Most of June, July and August averages temperatures over 32C with high humidity. Expect afternoon thunderstorms during this time. These months are also high season for hurricanes, although very few have struck the Orlando area directly. WDW is a dedicated hurricane safety zone.

More comfortable periods to visit include late September, early October (during the Epcot Food and Wine Festival), or April and May during the Flower and Garden Festival. Be wary of long weekends.

WDW often hosts special events, including triathlons, marathons, and festivals of all kinds. These may be of interest to visitors or something to avoid at all costs, depending on your tastes. Be sure to examine the calendar of events at the official website.