

Trader Sam's at the Disneyland Hotel: Disneyland Dining Review

by Jennifer Lambert, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Are you a fan of Adventureland? The Jungle Cruise? Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room? Walt Disney World's Polynesian Resort? Pirates of the Caribbean? The Adventurer's Club?

If you answered "yes" to any of those, then you need to visit Trader Sam's at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim where mystery, romance and adventure await you! Trader Sam's is located on the grounds of the Disneyland Hotel, between the Adventure Tower and the Frontier Tower, adjacent to the Monorail Pool and is a land of enchantment all its own. Opened as part of a major refurbishment to the Disneyland Hotel in 2011, Trader Sam's is a wonderful lounge and bar with truly detailed theming; you don't know where to look first.

Your adventure begins upon walking up to Trader Sam's. You are welcomed by a sign made from what looks like a rum barrel that was once lost at sea. You have your choice of sitting outside on cushy couches and chairs in an area by lit tiki torches when the sun sets, or to come inside. While sitting alfresco is normally my location of choice, you must go inside to experience why Trader Sam's is called an "enchanted" tiki bar. Once you step inside, your eyes work hard to adjust to the soft red lighting. There is seating both at the bar and surrounding tables. You will likely be warmly greeted by the 'adventurous' bar staff when you enter (who may also ask you to "shut the door"). The decor is the main event here. There are relics from all over the globe, many from Trader Sam himself. Who is Trader Sam? The story is that Trader Sam, the "head salesman" of the Jungle Cruise has decided to collect all of the artifacts that he has collected through his 55 years of world traveling, put them in one place, and invite all of his friends in for a snack and a drink. Trader Sam is the bar's proprietor. The walls are covered in photographs and souvenirs, both collected by and sent to Sam by his many globe-trotting friends. One could spend hours here looking at all of the details; there is so much to see. On a recent trip, we even spotted a familiar glass jar with the label "Paradise Falls" on it. Seems like Up, Se, Carl and Ellie Fredrickson are also friends of Sam.

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□ While the atmosphere is the star attraction, the food and especially the drinks are also draws themselves. Trader Sam's offers a full bar including soft drinks and Sam's No-Booze Brews, but the real fun comes from their specialty drinks (known as 'boat drinks' to you Parrotheads).

Be sure to read the drink descriptions on the menus, as they sound like the Jungle Cruise skippers have authored them, with their witty sense of humor. These specialty beverages include (with thanks to the menus at www.allears.net):

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☐"Uh Oa! - Whoever is brave enough to conjure up this concoction cursed by Uh Oa, the tiki goddess of disaster, must be forewarned: When you mess with Polynesia, the tiki gods will squeeze ya (often with a lime)! -- Light and Dark Rums, Orange, Passion Fruit, Guava, and Grapefruit Juices, Falernum, Cinnamon, and Freshly Squeezed Lime Juice. Recommended for Two or more Guests."

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☐"Krakatoa Punch - There's no escaping falling in lava with this exotic eruption of flavor! -- Reserve and Spiced Rums, Tropical Juices, Orgeat (Almond) Syrup, Sam's Gorilla Grog, and Hibiscus Grenadine. Served in a souvenir Tiki Glass."

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☐"Hippopotomai-Tai - Dare to enter this hippo pool with...Bang! Bang! Two shots of Rum! Don't worry this drink is only dangerous when you start to wiggle your ears! -- Light and Dark Rums, Orange Curacao, Orgeat (Almond) Syrup, Organic Agave Nectar, and Freshly Squeezed Lime Juice. Served in a souvenir Tiki Glass."

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☐"Tiki Tiki Tiki Tiki Tiki Rum - Welcome to our tropical hideaway, you lucky people you! If you have one of these starting right away you may be ordering two! -- Reserve Rum, Cream of Coconut, and Pineapple and Orange Juices dusted with Cinnamon and Nutmeg."

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☐"Shipwreck on the Rocks - Have too many of these and you'll be setting a course for Davy Jones' Locker! -- Bourbon with Freshly Muddled Lemon and Mint with Organic Agave Nectar."

Many drinks come with a souvenir Tiki glass, which is reason alone to visit the bar. Some drinks also come with a "show." For example, I ordered the Krakatoa Punch and not only did it come in a souvenir glass, but the whole place started to get darker, bells rang, and a volcano erupted as my drink was served; quite an experience! The bartenders are also jokers in their own right; be careful which bar stool you sit on as you may find yourself pulling up to the bar a little closer than you had expected! In addition to drinks, Trader Sam's does have a good menu with offering including an Angus cheeseburger, chicken-lettuce wraps, cheese flatbread and a pu pu platter. During the day there are always patrons; but the real fun happens at night when visitors return from the parks and want to end the night right. Children and families are most welcome (and would likely enjoy the selection of no-booze brews), but a 21-and-over policy takes effect after eight in the evenings

and the lounge becomes quite crowded, with standing room-only availability.

□ Adjacent to Trader Sam's is Tangaroa Terrace, a counter service dining location that shares a porch with Trader Sam's, and offers similar dining options including family-friendly choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For those who want a drink while lounging poolside at the Disneyland hotel, drinks come right from Trader Sam's to your deck chair, but it's just as fun to put on your cover-up and head over for some fun inside. Trader Sam's is a wonderful vacation in itself with a great atmosphere for anyone who is a fan of adventure, pranks, and the tiki way of life. My fingers are crossed that Trader Sam's comes to Orlando's Disney Springs (as Downtown Disney will be known)! Kungaloosh!

About The Author: Jennifer Lambert is a Disney veteran and self-admitted Disney "geek," having visited Walt Disney World for the first time when she was just 6 months old. Jennifer and her husband Dave has been to Walt Disney World several times, on the Disney Dream in 2012, and to Disneyland. She is looking forward to her next trip to Walt Disney World in September 2013 and visiting Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party for the first time.

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