

Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio: An Amusement Park Review

by Michelle Clark, PassPorter Guest Contributor

As a family of coaster addicts, our excitement level increases every time we see Cedar Point Amusement Park featured on the Travel Channel. [Cedar Point](#), considered to be the Promised Land among thrill riders, is the location of the biggest, tallest, fastest, and most extreme rides. Our dreams came true when we planned a trip to Sandusky, Ohio, home to Cedar Point.

Our first views of Cedar Point lay just beyond the shorelines of Lake Erie, and what a view - coasters of every shape and size with colorful loops, drops, and falls! As we lowered the car windows we were greeted by the sound that is music to thrill-seekers' ears: shrieks and screams of fear and laughter. I've ridden coasters galore at many different parks, but I have to admit that my first views of Cedar Point left me a little weak in the knees. But I had to save face in front of my teenagers-I didn't want them to think Mom was "old!"

While we knew Cedar Point was the place to find the most extreme attractions, we underestimated Cedar Point as a vacation destination. There are six different and unique lodging choices located on Cedar Point. We opted to stay in the historical Hotel Breakers which has the shortest walk to the park--just a few minutes from our hotel.

Hotel Breakers was originally built in 1905. Walking into the lobby transports you back in time with the turn-of-the century decor. The rotunda behind the lobby is three stories tall and is a charming place to relax with coffee and a newspaper. Snoopy is a frequent visitor in the lobby and loves to pose for pictures! The newest sections of Hotel Breakers are the Breakers East and Breakers Tower. I recommend either of these sections over the Bon Aire Section, as the Bon Aire rooms are quite a bit older and smaller. One floor of the Tower section has "Peanuts" themed family suites that appeal to younger visitors.

Besides having plenty of lake-front beach area for water activities, Hotel Breakers has two outdoor pools, one indoor pool, shops, and restaurants at the "Boardwalk", the walkway fronting the beach area. 1950s Boardwalk-themed music can be heard in the background. Beaches 'N' Cream is themed as a 1950s soda shop complete with booths made from '50s cars. TGI Fridays, Pizza Hut Express, and a Japanese restaurant are among the other onsite dining options. You don't have to be a Breakers hotel guest to enjoy these restaurants, as they are easily accessible from the park.

Besides being within walking distance of the action, another perk of staying onsite is admission to the parks one hour prior to opening to the general public. Hotel guests can also get discounts on park admission.

But let's get to the point of this whole trek to Sandusky, the coasters! Cedar Point has 76 rides and 17 coasters in all. Here is our must-do list :

Top Thrill Dragster: By far the tallest attraction in the park, Top Thrill Dragster stands 420 feet tall. Themed as a drag-racing vehicle, Top Thrill takes riders from 0 to 120 mph in 4 seconds, straight up 420 feet, then straight down in a 270-degree twist--all in 22 seconds! At its completion in 2003 it was the tallest and fastest coaster on Earth. Top Thrill got the most votes from our group as their favorite in the park. Extreme and fun!

Millennium Force: When it debuted in 2000, Millennium Force was the first coaster to break the 300-foot height mark. Since then taller and faster rides have been created but that doesn't hamper the fun to be found on Millennium, which has several banked turns but no complete inversions. The first hill provides some magnificent views of Lake Erie. Millennium Force was my favorite coaster by far. A tip for non-riders: if you stand at the exit walkway you can get some awesome photos of riders as they race right by you.

Wicked Twister: This is the most unique coaster I've ever seen, consisting of two spiraled tracks pointing straight up 215 feet tall. The trains embark in the station between the two spirals and travel back and forth between them at top speeds of 72 mph. If you are brave enough to keep your eyes open, you get some unique views of the beach. I wouldn't eat before riding!

Maverick: One of the newest attractions in the parks, Maverick was voted best new ride in 2007 by the Golden Ticket Awards. Maverick's claim to fame doesn't lie in its speed or height, but on the first drop which falls at a 95 degree angle. While Maverick is definitely a fun ride, the lines for this coaster were the longest we encountered in the entire park, nearly two hours.

Magnum XL-200: The opening of Magnum XL-200 in 1989 helped establish Cedar Point's reputation as the coaster capital of the world. Its 205-foot-tall hill and 72 mph top speed has been outdone by newer coasters in recent years, but it can still draw out the screams!

Raptor: Raptor is a hanging coaster with a unique "cobra roll" aspect-an inversion with a 180-degree spiral, then the whole thing in reverse! Raptor has a total of 6 inversions, the most of any Cedar Point coaster.

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This is not the newest, tallest, or fastest ride in the park but it still draws the crowds as we experienced long waits here.

Max Air: Max Air isn't a coaster, but it ranks as one of our favorites thrill rides. Imagine a swinging, flying dutchman-type ride coupled with a spinning wheel and you've got an idea of what Max Air feels like! It's actually more intimidating to watch than to ride. I found it incredibly smooth and I really enjoyed the bird's eye views from its top elevation of 140 feet.

Power Tower: Nearly every park has an attraction with a long drop. Some climb slowly to the top with a quick drop while some have a speedy ascent with a slower decline. Power Tower offers both: two sides of the tower quickly blast riders up 240 feet while the other two sides offer a quick drop down. The slow climb really got my heart pounding!

Cedar Point is geared toward thrill-seekers, but there is plenty for the younger crowd to enjoy as well. There are over 30 children's attractions and tranquil rides including the railroad, antique cars, and Ferris wheel. Frontier Trail, the most themed area of the park, contains authentic log cabins and local craftsmen. The petting zoo is a favorite for kids. There are three carousels in the park, more than any other amusement park on the planet. Four shows are performed daily as well as a nightly fireworks show and patriotic tribute.

If you want a change of pace from the park, Cedar Point also offers Challenge Park which includes mini-golf, go-carts, and ripcord jumping. Soak City is Cedar Point's on-site water park. Challenge Park and Soak City require separate admission tickets.

If you're considering a trip to Cedar Point, here are a few recommendations:

- * The available information for trip planning is limited. One online guide, [Experience the Point - Unofficial Guide to Cedar Point](#) by Andrew Hyde gives good information on the attractions themselves but only brief summaries of the resorts.

- * Stay onsite! The convenience of being so close to the park is "priceless."

- * Check out Cedar Point's website (<http://www.cedarpoint.com>) for admission specials. Request a Getaway Guide on their website, which has some valuable coupons.

- * This next tip is for Disney lovers like me: Don't try and compare the two. After I learned to appreciate Cedar Point for its own qualities I grew to love it. The parks and resorts are very clean and the employees

are friendly.

* It would be difficult to enjoy all the major attractions in one day. In two days we didn't experience half of the attractions.

* The majority of the park is not shaded. Wear plenty of sunscreen and a hat to protect from the sun. Our visit to Cedar Point was a nice change of pace from our previous Orlando theme park trips. We hope to plan a return visit in the future with more time to enjoy all that Cedar Point has to offer! (While I'm still brave enough to do it!)

About The Author: Michelle Clark is a self-professed thrill ride junkie and the mother of three teens who share in her obsession. Her goal is to experience as many theme parks as possible and stay in every Disney resort before she dies!

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