

Adjusting Your Expectations for Your Walt Disney World Vacation: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Susanna Bucci, PassPorter Guest Contributor

In October of 2013, my mother and I decided to go to Walt Disney World for my birthday.

We had a lot of research to do in terms of resorts to stay at and rides to make a beeline for. Eventually, we settled on Port Orleans: French Quarter (POFQ), and from the moment we set foot in the lobby, everything we had planned went off with out a hitch. Our room was not only ready, the requests we made had been met as well. POFQ was also one of the resorts testing out MagicBands at the time, so we felt rather special going through the parks with our cool 'bracelets'. My mother and I had a wonderful time, and upon returning home, we couldn't think of a single negative experience we'd had.

Fast forward to October 2014. The 'Disney Bug' had officially bitten us, and we headed back to Walt Disney World for another trip. Since we'd had such a 'perfect' experience the previous year, our expectations were quite high, although we kept trying to remind ourselves that this would be a different trip. Well, when we checked into POFQ, our high hopes for perfection were dashed. We were told that, if we wanted a room that met our requests, we were going to have to wait a while before settling in. At first, we were pretty annoyed, and a bit surprised as well! However, we took the time to get some lunch, and when we returned, our room was ready. Throughout our trip, we noticed that the parks seemed a bit busier than in 2013. We were visiting a week earlier than the year before, and hadn't realized that the schools were having fall breaks. It wasn't enough to be upset about, but it was slightly frustrating.

□ It can be hard when things don't go as planned in life, but this is especially true for trips to Walt Disney World. You want everything to go just right, to be perfect, because goodness knows you're paying a lot of money for the experience! Perhaps you've read this far, and are thinking 'This doesn't even compare to the experience I had with my resort/crowds/food, etc.' With that in mind, I'd like to mention some things that will help keep you have realistic expectations the next time you head to Walt Disney World:

□ Resort Check In. Like most other hotels in the United States, Walt

Disney World resorts have guests checking out by 11am, and checking in starting at 3pm. This means that your room doesn't HAVE to be ready until 3pm. If you get to your resort before this time, and your room IS ready, that's a pleasant surprise. However, it should not be expected each time you visit. If you do have to wait, store your luggage at the resort, and take some time to grab a bite to eat, go for a swim, or head right to the parks!

Crowds. Common knowledge in the Disney community is that when school is out, the crowds are in. Spring breaks, summer time, and Christmas/New Years are the busiest times to visit Walt Disney World. However, as my mom and I found out last year, the parks can busier than expected during low crowd times due to local school breaks and special events in the parks. Do some checking around online to see what will be going on in the parks during your stay. Additionally, try to find out what school breaks/athletic competitions are happening as well. This will help you adjust your expectations for crowd levels and general noise at your resort.

☐ Reservations. When it comes to planning a trip, there are usually two dates that you must be aware of: the 180 day mark for dining reservations, and the 60 day mark for FastPass reservations (30 day mark if you are staying off site). It could be that on your first trip, you were able to get everything you wanted in terms of dining and FastPasses. However, the trip you are planning now isn't going quite as perfectly as last time. The restaurant you loved doesn't have any openings for the times you want, and that FastPass you scored is now unavailable. Disappointing as this may be, use the opportunity to try something new! Couldn't get a reservation at Be Our Guest restaurant? Give Crystal Palace or Cinderella's Royal Table a try. Weren't able to get that coveted FastPass to meet Anna and Elsa? Use the extra slot for a ride you had to previously skip.

☐ Maybe you had a perfect first trip like me, or perhaps it didn't go so well at all. Whatever the case, return trips to Walt Disney World can be different from that first experience, and that's okay! On our 2013 trip, my mother and I knew that the Food and Wine Festival was going on in Epcot, but we had no interest in taking part. In 2014, we felt the same way, until someone raved about a dish served at the kiosk in France. There were a few rides that we skipped (and tried) in 2013, feeling that they weren't worth our time or that they were must-do's. Now, we skip Test Track and head straight for Mission Space instead.

☐ I hope you find this article helpful, and use the information to be as

prepared as possible for your next stay!

About The Author: Susanna is a graduate of Huntington University with a degree in Digital Animation. She hopes to one day work for Disney or Pixar, but enjoys going to Walt Disney World in the meantime. Susanna spends her time drawing, animating, and doing anything else that entertains children. You can find her work at https://www.behance.net/susanna_bucci.

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