

# How Using a Stroller Saved Our Disney Vacation: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Sandy Symianick, PassPorter Guest Contributor

On our last trip to Walt Disney World in December 2015, we were debating whether or not to rent a double stroller.

□ Our kids were 6 and 4 at the time, and had stopped using a stroller eons ago. Our daughter actually refused to sit in the stroller on our previous trip (January 2014) when she was 2 years old and spent the whole trip walking! We were totally past the stroller phase -- right? Wrong! Renting a double stroller was quite possibly the best decision of our trip for a plethora of reasons.

The first step, was to decide on a stroller for the trip. Our stroller at home is a single seat Baby Jogger City Elite model circa 2009. One of the features that drew us to this brand, was the ease of folding the stroller - with the pull of one handle, it folds up. Lugging our stroller through the airport and having the kids possibly argue over who would be allowed to sit in it, did not seem appealing. Instead, we opted to rent a double version of our stroller from Kingdom Strollers. The double version requires 2 hands to fold, but is still incredibly easy to use. It can also seat children up to 48 inches tall and up to 50 pounds in weight. Best of all, if you rent from a preferred Walt Disney World partner, your stroller is waiting for you for pick up at Bell Services of your resort!

□ There were a bunch of features of the rental stroller itself, that benefitted us during our trip. Firstly, the children each had their own compartment to sit in. Anyone travelling with more than one child knows that at, at least one point on any given day, one child will not want to be 'touching' the other, and if said child is 'touching' other said child, whining and complaining will ensue... Separate compartments = less 'touching' crises! Additionally, the sun canopies on the stroller had great coverage which on sunny Florida days, is a big bonus over the flat canopies of the park strollers, or an umbroller. The basket of the stroller also provides a great place to store non-essentials like a change of clothes and sweaters.

□ Most rental companies we shopped will also throw in a rain cover -- get the RAIN COVER! On our first trip to Walt Disney World in January 2014, temperatures were almost at the freezing mark, and it rained, and rained, and rained. The rain cover on the stroller kept the stroller itself dry in the stroller parking, but also acted as a windshield, and helped

the kids to conserve heat in their little stroller 'bubble'.

The greatest benefit of the stroller for us however, was as a receptacle for napping children. Having the stroller saved our trip for this one reason. Despite going back to the resort for a mid-day break almost every day (we stayed at Pop Century); the kids consistently fell asleep on the bus on our way back to the parks for dinner in the evenings. Some days one or both of them would wake up, but we had a few nights, where both of them slept through the ENTIRE evening, including supper. The seat backs of the stroller we rented reclined independently, and to almost flat. It also had a foot rest that could be put up to elongate the cabins of the stroller, allowing for more room for the kids to stretch out while they napped.

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□ Having the stroller with us afforded us the freedom of continuing to tour the parks into the evenings, rather than having to rush back to the resort to put already sleeping children to bed. On one of our Epcot days, both kids fell asleep on the bus on the way back to the park for our supper at restaurant Marrakesh. Despite trying to wake them up a couple of times, they just wouldn't budge. Luckily, Restaurant Marrakesh has bench seating as an option. We mentioned the sleeping children issue to the cast members at the podium, and they were able to seat us at a table with benches. Lying the sleeping kids on the bench, the 4 awake adults proceeded to have a lovely supper together! Also, we were able to tour places in the world showcase that I wouldn't dream of entering with my 'touch everything' kids - visiting the Department Store in Japan and the Christmas shop in Germany. We watched Illuminations - my sister and I sipping on Green Tea Sake Slushies, while our hubbies drank warmed sake, all with the stroller and sleeping children parked in front of us.

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□ Another occasion where the stroller benefitted us, was during Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party. Both children fell asleep that night at different intervals -- our daughter during the first showing of the parade, and our son after the parade and a couple of attractions. The stroller came in handy for establishing a buffer zone during the parade. We staked out a spot early on Main Street with a garbage can, backing the stroller up to the garbage can with about 2 feet from the curb to the stroller for us to stand. We grabbed a couple of hot dogs from Casey's Corner and had supper waiting for the parade with the kids using the stroller as their seats and trays as their tables for dinner. After a round of hot cocoa, our daughter snuggled up in the seat closest to us and slept through the whole parade, with the other compartment as a buffer to the crowds behind.

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□ Following the parade, we toured Adventureland and Frontierland. Did

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you know that you can carry a sleeping child in your arms onto the Jungle Cruise and Pirates of the Caribbean?? We swapped turns riding Big Thunder Mountain and Splash Mountain while one of us stayed with the stroller and sleeping child, munching on Snickerdoodles and hot cocoa! As his sister was sleeping, we let our son pick the attractions to visit. Our daughter woke up just before riding the Haunted Mansion, and my husband brought her to watch the second showing of the parade, while we were on the ride. Just after, it was our son's turn to hop into the stroller to sleep. As our daughter was then wide awake, we then let her pick out which attractions she wanted to visit. One round of The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, and four rounds of the Mad Hatter's Tea Cups later, it was time to close out the party and head back to the resort.

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□One difficulty however, was trying to manage getting the sleeping children on and off of the bus at the end of the night. For the portion of our trip when my sister and her husband joined us, it was a no brainer, 2 of us would carry the kids, one would have the bags and one of us would have the stroller. This was obviously more difficult for the portion of the trip that we were just our little nuclear family. My husband and I would leave the stroller outside the bus, while we each carried one of the kids to a seat where they could cuddle into me, and he would go back to get the stroller. On one occasion, there were no seats left, so we waited for the next bus.

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□Other evenings, we watched The Main Street Electrical Parade and walked through the Osborne Spectacle of Dancing Lights, all with sleeping children curled up in the stroller. The stroller was truly a trip-saver!

*About The Author: Sandy caught the Disney bug back in 2014 while visiting Walt Disney World on her family's first vacation there. Mom to Jakob (7), Evey (4) and wife to Thomas (~); she's constantly researching for the family's next trip to a Disney Resort, especially since becoming Disney Vacation Club Members! She loves to talk about Walt Disney World to anyone who will listen, and regularly gets asked by friends and family to help them with their trip planning.*

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