

# Comparing Walt Disney World and Disneyland Attractions: A Disney Parks Review

by Walter Haight, PassPorter Guest Contributor

It probably comes as no surprise that many favorite Disney attractions are shared by California's Disneyland and Florida's Walt Disney World.

□ What may be surprising are the differences between the Disneyland and Walt Disney World versions. There are also attractions with different names and themes, but with very similar design and technology. Today we look at duplicate attractions; in a future article we will look at similar attractions with different themes.

Big Thunder Mountain Railroad: While both feature the same number of climbs & drops, the two attractions operate on different tracks with different landscapes. Both are based on natural attractions in Utah: Disneyland's version is based on Bryce Canyon, while Walt Disney World's reflects Monument Valley. The Walt Disney World version has a better queue; it's covered & features fun and interactive mining props. The actual ride is better at Disneyland for three reasons: 1) New mine blast effects on the last hill climb 2) views of Star Wars Land construction at various points and of course 3) that irrepressible billy goat chawin' on a stick of dynamite.

□ The Haunted Mansion: The buildings housing the attraction are themed differently based on the Lands in which they're located. Disneyland's mansion, in New Orleans Square, is a southern antebellum home. Walt Disney World's, in Liberty Square, is an abandoned home in New York's Hudson River Valley. The attractions themselves are indistinguishable for eight months of the year. However, from September through December, Disneyland's version transforms into the wonderful "Haunted Mansion Holiday" featuring Jack Skellington & crew from "The Nightmare Before Christmas". For whatever reason, Walt Disney World has not implemented this. Though their version does have a better queue, with fun cartoon gravestones and spooky interactive props.

□ It's a small world: While Disneyland's queue & boarding area are completely outdoors, Walt Disney World's is partially enclosed, which is likely best given the less hospitable Florida Climate. Disneyland recently added characters to their version of the ride: Cinderella in France, Lilo & Stitch in Hawaii, etc. They're discreetly placed with the dolls and it can be fun for kids to try to spot them. The larger difference is that

once again Disneyland offers a holiday enhancement, "Small World Holiday", while Walt Disney World does not. There are extensive decorations on both the inside and outside of the attraction, along with a different (and slightly less addictive) soundtrack. Disneyland's holiday version runs well into January, perfect for those who just gotta have one last shot of Christmas Cheer!

**The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh:** The differences here are solely due to the placement of the attraction and resulting length of the queue. Walt Disney World's version is located in the heart of Magic Kingdom's Fantasyland between the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train and the Spinning Teacups. As a consequence it's usually mobbed and you have to choose between a long wait and a Fastpass Plus that might be better used elsewhere. Disneyland's Pooh is tucked away in Critter Country, in the shadow of Splash Mountain and underneath a railroad trestle. Unless Pooh or one of his pals is signing autographs, you literally have to look to find it. As a result it's usually a walk-on or a very short wait for the same ride as at Walt Disney World.

□ **The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror:** A big win for Walt Disney World here. Likely because there was more land to work with at Disney's Hollywood Studios, their version is simply more extensive and immersive. From the garden queue with the spooky old-time music, to the elevator track through the "fifth dimension" scene to the random drop sequences at the end it's a very complete experience. You'll also experience long waits, two hours or more at peak times, so Fastpass Plus is almost a must. Disneyland's version in California Adventure is no slouch but it's in a smaller space. Therefore the Fifth Dimension scene and the random drops are missing. Though I just learned (at [passporter.com](http://passporter.com) of course) that the Disneyland version will close after the 2016 holiday season. In its place will be a reimagined and re-themed attraction based on "Guardians of the Galaxy" that WILL have a random drop sequence. Can't wait!!

□ **Space Mountain:** This is without a doubt the attraction that gives the biggest win to Disneyland. After being refurbished several years ago, Disneyland's Space Mountain gives you a smooth and exhilarating ride despite all the twists, turns and drops. It's recently been re-themed, at least temporarily, as "Hyperspace Mountain". The images and sounds simulate a space battle from the original Star Wars Trilogy. Walt Disney World's Space Mountain, by contrast, really throws you around. I've never ridden without getting a bruise or two. It's a lot like Disneyland's Matterhorn, but even faster and jerkier. And unlike The Matterhorn it's dark so you can't see to brace yourself for dips and curves. All seats are single, so adults can't comfort their kids if the kids get hurt or scared. Finally, the moving walkway to the exit of Space Mountain takes longer

than the ride itself. Assuming you can still walk after getting off.

□ If you've been keeping track, it does appear that Disneyland gets most of the "wins". Though that's my personal opinion, it may be because of Disneyland's proximity to the Walt Disney Imagineering studios just up the road in Burbank. Bias alert: Even though I am a life-long Californian and currently live about five miles from Disneyland, I was actually a fan of Walt Disney World for several years before seriously discovering its West Coast counterpart. In a future article we'll cover similar attractions at Disneyland and Walt Disney World but with different names and themes, of which there are quite a few.

*About The Author: Walter retired last year after working for the IRS for 31 years. After retirement he moved to Anaheim, about 5 miles from Disneyland, and right on the ART shuttle line. He visits is an Annual Passholder at Disneyland and visits twice a month. He visits Walt Disney World at least once a year; usually in January/February.*

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