

# Touring Disney Parks As Part of a Large Group: A Disney Parks Planning Article

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

We usually go to the Disney parks as a couple, as we don't have any children.

□ However, our most recent trip to Disneyland Paris was very different, as we went with family. In total, there were eight of us. We travelled with my parents-in-law and my sister-in-law and her family, which is made up of her husband and her two children. <

I've had limited experience of touring Disney as part of a big group, as often we meet up with friends when we go to Walt Disney World, and sometimes those groups get as big as 20 people. However, with those groups, we were all staying at different resorts, and would meet up as and when we felt like it, and people would equally drift off if the next attraction the group was going to do didn't appeal to them.

□ It's a little bit different when you're a family group. There's more expectation that you will spend more time together, but that's perhaps the most important thing to work out before you go. Set the expectations, and if needs be, explain that you won't be together 24/7. We were staying at a different hotel, and we had booked some meals for just the two of us, which helped, as they knew we'd have to be on our own each evening we were there.

□ Fortunately, we have toured with my parents-in-law before, so they know our style, and they know we tend to do more than them -- unsurprisingly, given they're now both into their 70s. They were fine with us, and sometimes the remaining six of us going out without them. Time apart is valuable, as too much time together can lead to family (or friend!) arguments, and no-one should ever feel bad about going their separate ways on vacation. After all, it's your time and you need to be able to enjoy it.

We were also touring with some newbies to Disneyland Paris, which made things interesting, given we'd been a number of times before. There was some discussion before our trip about the attractions they wanted to do, but in all honesty, we didn't get much of a steer. That was fine, as we had some ideas of the best Disney attractions to show them, and they were happy to go with the flow, but again, it's good to establish things like that before you set out on your trip. In the end, the absolute

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winner was Buzz Lightyear Laser Blast, and what a surprise that was! I would never have imagined two girls would have enjoyed that so much. The runner-up turned out to be Phantom Manor (also known as Haunted Mansion in the American parks), only because it broke down while we were on it, and they thought it was a huge adventure! Who knew? It just goes to show that you should never assume.

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□We did have some moments of "what do we do next?" or "I want to do that", which can be a problem in a big group, as you stand there and debate that. However, in a way, it worked better not to have any plans in advance, as it meant we could just divert at a moment's notice. After all, who were we to deprive children of their wish to go on the Carousel or Dumbo or get their face painted?

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□We did run into one issue on our final day in the parks, when one of our party (and no, it wasn't one of the adults!) suddenly decided she wanted to meet the characters, which was fine with us. In fact, we took the opportunity to do the same thing. It meant an extra ride on Buzz Lightyear Astro Blast for two of our party (I told you it was popular!), but we lost my father-in-law, as he decided to "go for a wander". Despite having a cell phone on him, he wasn't picking up, or answering texts, and it was pure luck we found him by the castle. It's definitely worth having a back-up plan, and perhaps a meeting point, just in case your group does get split up.

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□You may also have to adjust your pace of touring, particularly if you have different generations in your group. Consider maybe having a break and grabbing something to eat or drink for those who are a little less able to keep up, while the younger members may want to go off and enjoy another attraction. That's something we found really useful, and ensured we were all in a fit state later on in the day to keep going.

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□It's also important to explain to others in your group how long it might take to get to a meeting point. That's something we learnt this trip, when the rest of them nearly missed the afternoon parade, as they hadn't realised how long it would take to get into the park. We naturally leave longer than most people would, after many years of experience at Disney parks, but we're also a couple and can move quicker than bigger groups. That's something we didn't take into account.

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□We were also very lucky that we were visiting Disneyland Paris at a relatively slow time of year, and could generally manage without Fastpasses (I think we got one for the whole trip -- you still pick them up at the park there). If we were going at a busier time, we would definitely plan ahead more, and ensure the rest of our party were on the same page as us.

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□It was certainly a different way of touring a park for us, but the enjoyment we got out of sharing Disney magic with our family was well worth it. Would I do it again? Definitely, but this experience would help us prepare for any future such trip with a bigger group&hellip; and talking of bigger groups, we'll be meeting up with a slightly bigger one on our next trip to Walt Disney World&hellip; now that will be interesting and a lot of fun too!

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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