

The Disney Details - My Favorite Part of a Disney Vacation: A Walt Disney World Resort Review

by Amy Jones, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Someone recently asked me what my favorite part of Walt Disney World was. My answer was simple: "The details."

I think I disappointed (or at least surprised) the person who asked me that question, because the answer he expected was probably along the lines of a particular park, resort, restaurant, or ride. And I probably could have chattered on ad nauseum about what a treat it is just to be on vacation at all, how pampered I feel at Disney, how awesome the food is, or any number of general topics.

But the truth is that, without a trace of a doubt, my favorite part of Walt Disney World is the details.

□ I am detail-oriented. You know the forest that some people can't see for the trees? I'm too busy noticing a spot of moss on a piece of bark to bother with any other plant life. When I saw Forrest Gump as a teenager, all I could talk about for days was that Forrest had caught an anachronistic Mello Yello can in his shrimp net.

□ Ok, maybe I'm nuts, and I'm happy in my nuttiness, because, as with so many other issues Disney has me covered. Disney does details like no other place I've ever visited, and finding the details is, for me, a big part of the fun.

□ When I enter a Disney park, I immediately begin scanning around for any hidden name, image, or reference that I might miss if I just power-walked by. I don't just mean Hidden Mickeys, which are certainly fun to find. I mean finding the names of past Imagineers, partners, and Disney family members etched into the windows on Main Street. I mean hearing music from 1960's live-action Disney films that I didn't think would be familiar to anyone but me (like "The Ugly Bug Ball" from Summer Magic). I mean being more excited about the statue of Cinderella's dress on Castle Couture than about the shop itself.

(I will note, however, that I walked past DiVine (the Tree Lady) at Animal Kingdom several times before I noticed her. Maybe she's from that proverbial forest I keep missing.)

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□ When I walk through a resort I'm certainly not disappointed where details are concerned. The seahorse chandelier at Beach Club. Mrs. Potts and Chip in the flooring at the Grand Floridian. The soundtrack from *How the West Was Won* at Wilderness Lodge. The retro-style artwork, created just for a resort. Baked goods on display, created in-house (like the mouth-wateringly beautiful chocolate works of art at the Grand Floridian).

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□ The details in each resort room at Walt Disney World have offered me plenty of enjoyment. At Old Key West, our first-ever Disney resort, while the children were locating the Mickey heads on the bannister and on the sidewalk, I was snapping photos of the Pinocchio/Jiminy Cricket-themed safety exit instructions by the door. I love the smell of the varieties of soap, different at each resort we've tried, like Blushing Orange and Grapefruit, and the Mickey heads on the shampoo bottles. Artwork in each room is intrinsically Disney, from a salute to 1950's Disney movies at Pop Century to the lovely Dumbo tribute inside the Murphy bed at the Grand Floridian.

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□ My favorite room so far for details, by the way, is the Royal Guest Room at Port Orleans Riverside. While not the biggest or most luxurious space we've tried, details abounded enough to keep me happy for the entire stay. The faucets look like the Genie's lamp, the ottoman looks like Ottoman from *Beauty and the Beast*, there's a Flying Carpet printed on the floor, and princess portraits and silhouettes of princes adorn the walls. Best of all, we lay on our backs and watched images of Tiana's Bayou come to life with fireflies and fireworks (you push a button for this effect).

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□ The restaurants don't disappoint when it comes to details either. When we had Afternoon Tea at the Grand Floridian, I don't know whether my favorite part of the meal was the diverse palette of flavors presented to us on a tiered tray, the roses (gifted to our girls) whose scents were designed for the resort, or the fact that, while we were eating, the live band was playing "I'm Going to Go Back There, Someday," a song that Gonzo (yes, Gonzo) sings in *The Muppet Movie*.

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□ And that meal is just a tiny example of the details that abound in Disney's restaurants. Hungry for more? Well, there are the cherubs on the ceiling at Be Our Guest, which were inspired by the children of actual Imagineers. Then there are the seafaring tunes at Columbia Harbor House. The jukebox at Beaches & Cream Soda Shoppe that actually plays your pick, for free. The metalwork depicting horses and riders around the chandeliers in Whispering Canyon Cafe.

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□ Oh my...I nearly forgot the rides and the queues! We stood in line for

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the new Frozen ride, and while the line was long, the queue was awesome! Wandering Oaken's has everything you'd expect to find, including a quart of lutefisk (so there are good feelings). Ice harvesting tools adorn the walls, and, even if you are sick of the Frozen soundtrack, you may find the instrumental, Appalachian-style versions of the songs refreshing.

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□ My daughter's favorite part of Seven Dwarfs Mine Train was playing with the jewels and the water while waiting for the ride. I love the video at the beginning of Tower of Terror (a well-done mashup of real Twilight Zone footage and Disney Imagineering) as much as the cobwebs and the abandoned Mahjong game in the lobby. And then there's the smell of the water as you go down the ramp at Pirates of the Caribbean that lets you know that you're getting close to boarding your vessel.

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□ And, no homage to Disney details would be complete without a visit to...the restroom. I actually have a favorite restroom at the Magic Kingdom. The Tangled-theme rest area had me in and out almost as often as, well, that morning's coffee and fruit juice. The "Women" sign outside the bathroom depicts a standard "woman" icon, but she's decked out in a lavender dress, like Rapunzel, with yellow hair that loops around the sign. Inside the restroom, shelves of Rapunzel's books, toys, paints, and other forms of entertainment are on every wall. Even the doors to the stalls are fairy-tale-esque, decorated to look like wooden panels with large iron hinges.

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□ Yes, I'm crazy for details, and anything that tickles all five senses. It's a good thing that Disney caters to people of all ages, since I will need decades to enjoy all the hidden goodies that Disney has to offer and continues to create. I can't wait to see what I'll discover next time!

About The Author: Amy Jones lives in Kentucky with one husband and two future Disney imagineers. She is a stay-at-home mom, a runner, a writer, and a Disney planning fiend. She and her family have been to the World twice and have two more trips scheduled for 2017 to celebrate birthdays, Star Wars, and a long-awaited 20th wedding anniversary.

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