

Conquering the Thrill Rides at Walt Disney World: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Julie Long, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Chances are you've had this same conversation when you tell someone you're going to Disney. "Ooh, I can't ride any spinning or fast rides anymore, I don't think Disney would be for me."

How do you answer? All of us Disney lovers know that there is so much more at the Disney Parks than just thrill rides, it's far from your everyday amusement park.

Yet, as a mom in her mid-40s, (yes I admitted it) I was also having a little internal war with myself as I prepared for our recent family trip. I know there are all my favorite, classic Disney rides that I love and have no fear of, but there are also several rides in particular that I've never ridden at Walt Disney World, and I was a bit nervous. I used to love upside down roller coasters, but after getting dizzy on things that send me in circles at a local amusement park, I thought maybe my days of those thrill rides were over. Would Rock 'n' Roller Coaster at Hollywood Studios, or Expedition Everest at Animal Kingdom haunt me forever, or could I conquer them?

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□ The last time we took our two girls, they were quite a bit younger, and I was able to hide behind the fact that our younger daughter was only 3, and not able to take the high-speed or scary rides. Now, they are 14 and 10, and they were ready to conquer everything Disney (and Universal Studios Orlando) would throw at them! My husband was game to ride it all, but where did that leave me? I could play it safe and sit it out - waiting for them at the ride exit, wishing I had the guts to try. Or, I could figure out some ways to put myself in control and do my best to not let a ride make me feel motion sick.

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□ I confess, while I've gotten dizzy on a couple rides in the past, I think my fear almost became more an anxiety that "I could get motion sick" and I in no way wanted it to ruin any part of our vacation. Here is what I did to combat my insecurities.

Talk to your doctor or medical professional

□ I'd recommend talking to your doctor, which I did. What I share below is only my experience that worked for me. I'm sharing with other Disney lovers because it was hard for me to find a lot of info about it.

(Editor's Note - Contact a medical professional before starting or

changing any medications.)

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□ Look for motion sickness remedies that work for you

□ I know many people that swear by Dramamine or Bonine. I decided to look at the approach of ginger supplements and essential oils.

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□ I found a natural ginger supplement while searching online. It's called Sailor's Choice and is primarily used for people cruising and experiencing motion sickness. I took two in the morning, and was fine each day; never any dizzy or motion sickness feelings.

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□ Essential Oils- I carried three in my purse every day in the parks. I learned the primary oils that worked for me was a blend of oils called Digize that contains ginger in it. I put it behind my ears before I went on the rides I was nervous about. Peppermint oil is another one that helped me if I had sore muscles or headache. I've also put it on the roof of my mouth to combat any motion sickness feeling. The third is Stress Away-a blend that contains vanilla, lime and other oils that I used to calm my fears as I waited in lines so I didn't chicken out!

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□ Ginger Gum: had a sweet with a little spicy taste to it. I actually really liked it and popped it in before riding a ride that made me nervous for motion sickness.

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□ Watch ride videos on YouTube

□ My older daughter wants to experience the ride for the first time with no spoilers, but I felt watching point of view videos of rides helped me know what I was in for. I liked to have a sense of knowing if I thought I could handle it without the surprise factor.

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□ Now, we started our vacation with a day and a half at Universal Orlando, and I certainly was able to test my remedies there! Our first ride was Spiderman, (one I hadn't previewed on YouTube ahead of time) where we donned 3D glasses, and got into a vehicle that spun us a LOT as we moved from screen to screen with villains battling Spidey. I honestly got off it saying "not again"--but I wasn't sick, I just didn't like it.

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□ We are big Harry Potter fans, and I learned from watching videos that both the main attractions in Hogsmeade (Islands of Adventure park at Universal) and Diagon Alley (Universal Studios side of the park) have rides that move but also have either 3D glasses and screens along with technology in the ride vehicles that simulate flying, and lots of movement. Spiderman's ride technology got me ready for Forbidden Journey and Escape From Gringotts rides, though, and I loved them!

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☐ After conquering lots of simulation type rides at Universal, I was full prepared for Walt Disney World! Here are the rides I finally conquered at each park:

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☐ Magic Kingdom:

☐ Space Mountain - I went on Space Mountain my first day with the family. I have ridden it in the past, but I'm not big on not knowing where the coaster would turn next in the dark. Success - I got off of saying, "check, I did it," but I wasn't expecting to do a repeat of the attraction. Never say never, my husband and girls rode it again late one night while I sat out, but on the last day, they convinced me to close out Magic Kingdom with another Space Mountain ride! (I will admit, I still stayed far away from the Mad Hatter Tea cups! Spinning for fun is not my cup of tea.)

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☐ Epcot:

☐ Mission Space - This is one I stayed away from last trip when my youngest was too little to ride. I heard it was one so many people get sick on, I was afraid. I decided to go for it (on the easier GREEN level, while my older daughter and husband did the more intense ORANGE level) and I did it! I did look forward all the time and closed my eyes a couple times, but it was a win.

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☐ Soarin' - is one of my favorites and I never had an issue on it in the past, but glad to know with the new Soarin' Around the World film, I still had no issues and just enjoyed the beautiful scenery!

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☐ Hollywood Studios:

☐ Rock 'n' Roller Coaster - This is huge win for me! The first night at Disney park hopped on the new express transportation to Hollywood Studios for the Star Wars Galactic Spectacular and the bus drops you off right next to Rock 'n' Roller Coaster. My family decided to go on it and I let my nerves get the best of me and I sat out. Fate gave me another chance later in the week when a nice family gave us an extra paper fastpass for any ride in Hollywood Studios and my girls wanted to ride the coaster again. I put on my oils and popped some ginger gum while waiting in line, and hopped into the limo style coaster car…3...2...1...GO! The first 0-60 mph launch takes your breath away but the coaster is super smooth and it's in the dark so you don't know you're going to go upside down. I survived, and later in the week did it again and honestly can now say I love it.

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☐ Star Tours: Our family adores all things Star Wars. This is a simulator ride with lots of movement in the vehicle to make you feel like you're in space, but I did just fine. We rode twice in a row since very time the story changes. I don't know if I could have kept going over and over, but

twice was good.

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□Animal Kingdom:

□Expedition Everest - The big daddy of them all...I wasn't sure about this one, even after watching videos --it doesn't invert you, but I was worried about going backwards. One evening at Animal Kingdom, there was no wait without fast passes, and I was in line so quickly, I couldn't change my mind. I rode once and liked it, but passed when my family went several more times. On the 5th time in a row, I rode one more time and can say I conquered Everest. Again, no motion sickness!

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□My badges of honor are now complete. My girls giggled as they smelled my essential oils while we waited in line, but this mom has some great family memories and some killer ride photos!

About The Author: Julie is an avid Disney fan who lives in LeRoy, N.Y., (the birthplace of JELL-O) with her husband Rob and two daughters. She works as chief public relations officer of a private college, and before that was a TV news producer. Julie enjoys blending her love of Disney with her digital scrap-booking hobby, and loves to document their latest Disney trip and other family memories.

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