

Comparing Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach: A Walt Disney World Water Park Review

by Erin Souder, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach are the two water parks located within the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida. Which one should you visit on your next trip? Let's compare them!

Both of the Disney water parks are themed. Typhoon Lagoon has a tropical shipwreck theme. Blizzard Beach has the theme of a freak snowstorm in a warm climate. Both are great parks and my family recommends visiting both if possible. If your trip requires you to choose between the two, here are some of our observations to help you compare and choose. For reference, some of our visits to the water parks included only our immediate family of two adults and two daughters, nine and six years old. Some of our visits also included two more adults plus Nana and two little nieces. My older niece was two years old and the younger was about six months old when they joined us for the water parks.

The key feature for us in a water park is the lazy river. We love to float along while relaxing on a tube or swim with the current. Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach each have a lazy river. Typhoon Lagoon has Castaway Creek, while Blizzard Beach has Cross County Creek. They are both nice, long, lazy rivers giving plenty of time for relaxing while taking in the scenery of a loop around the park. Of course you can always stay in for multiple laps. In our experience the lazy river at Blizzard Beach was cold. I don't know whether the one at Typhoon Lagoon actually has warmer water or if the snow theme of Blizzard Beach just makes it seem that way, but everyone in our group noticed a big difference in comfort. Also for us, the tropical theme of Typhoon Lagoon made for prettier views and seemed more fitting to the lazy river experience. So hands down, we cast our winning lazy river vote for Typhoon Lagoon.

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□ Another area of note is the wave pools at the parks. At Blizzard Beach guests can enjoy the waves at Melt-Away Bay. In my opinion, this is a typical wave pool you would find at most water parks. Typhoon Lagoon has the Surf Pool. According to Disney, the Surf Pool is the largest wave pool in North America and has six-foot waves. This is not an ordinary wave pool! The waves are very intense. They seem much larger than six feet tall. This can be a positive or a negative. Our younger daughter, a slightly small six-year-old, found them to be overwhelming. I also felt it was overwhelming trying to keep her safe in the giant waves. After one

wave, she and I worked our way back to shore. On the other hand our older daughter, a slightly larger than average nine year old, loves the intensity of it. She would gladly stay in there all day body surfing. For her the incredible waves of the Surf Pool are a big reason to vote for Typhoon Lagoon. I guess this one gets a split vote. For larger kids, strong swimmers, or adventure seeking adults, there is nothing like the waves you will find at Typhoon Lagoon. For smaller kids, weaker swimmers, or relaxation seeking adults, I think Melt-Away Bay at Blizzard Beach will be more to your liking.

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□ Areas specifically designed for children are another thing to consider between the parks. Typhoon Lagoon has an area called Ketchakiddee Creek which is a water play area for kids. There are many very small slides for small children, maybe ages five or six and under. There is also a kid size tube slide that is a big hit with our six-year-old and two-year-old. Ketchakiddee Creek has many places for families to sit and relax. There is a shallow creek like water feature that winds through the area which is perfect for toddlers to splash in. There is also plenty of sand around this area to help everyone feel tropical and relaxed. My daughters could play in the sand for hours. Ketchakiddee Creek also includes some spraying water features, a pretend boat to play in, and a couple of small shallow pools. The one drawback to Ketchakiddee Creek for our family is that all of the activities in the area have a height limit of 48". This meant our older daughter couldn't participate in much of the fun here. There are two medium sized slides just outside of Ketchakiddee Creek called Bay Slides. These have a posted height maximum of 60". These are a good option for kids up to 60" looking for some gentle fun. It also works well for families with bigger kids and smaller kids.

Blizzard Beach boasts two kid's water play areas. One is called Tike's Peak. This area is also for children 48" and under. It has some small slides for kids, as well as water features and shallow pools for splashing. It seems smaller than Ketchakiddee Creek, and while greatly themed we find it less pretty than Ketchakiddee Creek. The second area at Blizzard Beach is called Ski Patrol. Ski Patrol is designed for bigger kids. There are floating icebergs to cross, a zipline, and several slides. Our daughters loved this area. So the kid's areas are another split vote from us. For kids 48" and up, Blizzard Beach wins. The Ski Patrol area is perfect. For kids under 48" tall, Typhoon Lagoon wins. Ketchakiddee Creek beats Tike's Peak.

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□ Here are a few other considerations in choosing a water park. Blizzard Beach boasts Summit Plummet which is a very steep 120 foot body slide. While this isn't something anyone in my family was interested in, I am sure if you are an ultimate thrill seeker it would be a reason to choose

Blizzard Beach. Blizzard Beach also has a chair lift to carry riders to the top loading platform for some slides. There is often a line for the chair lift, but it is a fun ride and a way to avoid all of the stairs found with most water slides. If you have a family member who likes water slides but has trouble with steps, Blizzard Beach and the chair lift might work well. Typhoon Lagoon has a water coaster called Crush 'N' Gusher. Riders sit in two-person tubes and are propelled up hill at times during their trip down the water slide. This up and down path gives the feeling of a roller coaster. Typhoon Lagoon also has three slides called the Storm Slides. These worked very well for our whole family. I saw kids as young as two or three enjoying the storm slides. They are longer slides than any in the kid specific area, but they aren't rough or fast. They are fun for adults and big kids but not too scary for smaller kids. Another nice feature of Typhoon Lagoon is Hideaway Bay. It is a zero entry pool near the exit of Crush 'N' Gusher. It is nice to wade in and relax or take a swim.

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□ Both Disney water parks are awesome. Visiting a water park is a nice break from the hustle and bustle of the main parks, but still a Disney experience for sure. The question of which park is better has a visitor specific answer. It will depend on your group make up and what water adventures people enjoy.

About The Author: Erin is a "retired" engineer who is now a homeschooling mom of two girls. As a long time Disney fan, she would love to make more frequent Disney trips but counts herself fortunate to visit Walt Disney World about once per year.

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