

Tokyo Disney Resort: Booking the Best Hotel For You

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

When you're planning a vacation, it usually follows a fairly familiar pattern. Once you've chosen when to go and booked your flights -- or sorted out other means to get to your destination -- then your thoughts turn to where you're going to stay. If it's a Disney vacation you're planning, the first choice is usually whether to stay at a hotel on or off site and it's no different, even if your Disney destination is a little more exotic. That was the case with our plans for the Tokyo Disney resort -- we needed a place to stay.

Our first challenge was finding out what options are available, but fortunately there are plenty of online resources. The best source of information I found was the [Tokyo Disney web site](#) itself. I quickly learned that our choices were limited to three onsite Disney hotels or the six official hotels of the Tokyo Disney resort. These are similar to the Hotel Plaza Resorts at Walt Disney World, such as the Hilton, the Royal Plaza, or the Buena Vista Palace Hotel and Spa. If you're more familiar with Disneyland in California, they compare to the Good Neighbor hotels.

All located alongside the Tokyo Disney monorail system, they offer guests a range of benefits, including purchasing theme park tickets at their hotel, guaranteed park admission, complimentary shuttle buses from the monorail station and a baggage delivery service from the Tokyo Disney Resort Welcome Centre, something all the Disney resorts benefit from as well.

One of the downsides to an off-site hotel however is in the small print on the Tokyo Disney website, where it does warn you that "some hotels may not have English speaking staff available." That's a daunting prospect, even for someone like me, who has a basic grasp of the Japanese language.

As the only two Western names, the Hilton Tokyo Bay and Sheraton Grande Tokyo Bay were instantly familiar to me and the Hilton's website clearly states that they have multi-lingual staff, while the Sheraton's website is exceptionally detailed and all in English, unlike some of the other official hotels. Add to that, both are regularly available on search engines such as Expedia, which shows they cater to a more Western market.

That proved to be the case with our short one-night stay at the Sheraton

Grande. The staff was all very helpful and polite. Our room, which was upgraded by the hotel when we checked in, had a theme park view, overlooking both Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea. We were absolutely delighted with the facilities there, considering the low price we'd paid to stay there.

If price is less of an obstacle, then it's definitely worth considering the three onsite Disney resorts. Each boasts swimming pools (although they're only open during the summer months), restaurants, lounges, and shops.

Of those, the Disney Ambassador Hotel is the cheapest of the three. As usual, you do get what you pay for and its location is also the poorest of the three. Admittedly, it's still very close to both theme parks and is right next door to both the Ikspiari shopping and entertainment complex and the theatre that houses ZED, the resident Cirque du Soleil production.

The theme here is Art Deco with lots of crisp, clean lines as you arrive at the hotel. The lobby is stunning and it's definitely worth looking up to see the constellation of stars above you, with some forming some familiar Disney characters. Although it's the cheapest, a standard room at the cheapest time of the year will still set you back around \$300 a night.

More expensive and located inside Tokyo DisneySea theme park is the [DisneySea Hotel MiraCosta](#), designed to be an Italian style village. It's even got its own special entrance into the theme park and is right next to the Tokyo DisneySea monorail station. You're looking at a starting price of \$350 a night to stay here.

The newest addition to the Disney hotel line-up is just as pricey as the Hotel MiraCosta and that's perhaps not surprising. The [Tokyo Disneyland Hotel](#) is situated at the entrance to the Tokyo Disneyland park and is exceptionally grand, in a similar style to the Grand Floridian. Walk into the lobby and you'll gasp at the Victorian beauty and splendor of the place.

Obviously, as well as staying onsite and closer to the action, each of the three Tokyo Disney hotels brings a number of benefits for its guests. Just like the official Disney resorts, you can check in at the Tokyo Disney Welcome Centre. Located at the Maihama station, where trains arrive from Tokyo, it's a great idea and something I'd love to see implemented at other Disney resorts.

As soon as we walked in, we were immediately seen to by people who

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spoke impeccable English. We were able to check in and were given our free passes to ride the monorail. That's one of the perks that Disney hotel guests get. In Tokyo Disney, you have to pay for the monorail, unless you're staying at a Disney resort. They were also able to give us our park tickets and take our luggage, which would be delivered to our hotel and would be waiting for us later in the day.

Other benefits are familiar to anyone who's stayed at a Disney resort before. You get guaranteed admittance to a park, even on the busiest of days and merchandise purchased at the parks can be sent back to your hotel. You'll have the Disney Channel in your room, although you may find that it's in Japanese! And, of course, there are Disney touches to be found everywhere, from your room to your lobby to the shops and restaurants. One nice touch, which is available until at least March 2010, is that you can purchase a special multi-day passport to the theme parks. This is important, as at Tokyo Disney, for the first two days of your visit, you have to specify which park out of the two you wish to visit. You can't park hop until day three, but this multi-day passport allows you to park hop each day and is currently only available to Disney hotel guests.

So where on earth do you find out more? The Tokyo Disney web pages have extensive information on all the hotels mentioned. We also found it useful to read people's trip reports about their visits to Tokyo Disney. [MousePlanet](#) has a great selection of these, while [MouseSavers](#) has a very detailed report of their visit there in May 2004.

And finally, how easy was it to book everything? It was very simple, with booking online through the Tokyo Disney Resort website. Everything is in English, so there are no worries on that account. The only issue we had was putting the deposit down for our room, when the system refused to accept our Mastercard and American Express. Fortunately, our Visa card went through fine. Whether this was just a glitch or a problem with the site, we weren't sure, but we did experience exactly the same thing when purchasing our park tickets.

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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