

Fantasyland: Not Just For The Pre-school Set!

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

I'm going to share a secret with you -- I'm a firm believer that you can have just as much fun or perhaps even more when you visit Walt Disney World without children, but shhh… don't tell your kids that. You wouldn't want them thinking that grown ups enjoy the Disney magic. After all, Disney is all about children, isn't it?

Well, yes and no. Fantasyland in the Magic Kingdom is a case in point. At first glance, most people would think it's a children's paradise and in fairness, there are some attractions in there that really won't interest adults. No matter how hard you try, you've got to face facts. You won't be able to enjoy the children's playground at Pooh's Playful Spot, although you can admire the detail in it from afar. And even the most diehard adult autograph hunters won't want to put up with the long waits at Ariel's Grotto to see the Little Mermaid.

With those exceptions, I firmly believe that adults can enjoy everything else that Fantasyland has to offer. Want some proof? Just go into any showing of Mickey's PhilharMagic and watch grown-ups who should know better reaching out when things come flying towards them, happily sniffing the apple pie or laughing at Donald's travels through an animated wonderland. Proof indeed that it's not only children that can enjoy this attraction.

Perhaps that's the most obvious example. But for some adults, that's where the joys of Fantasyland end, as they hightail it over to the more grown up thrills of a trip into the stars on Space Mountain or a plunge down Splash Mountain. What they don't realize is that they're missing some of the best attractions that Disney has to offer. All you have to do to fully enjoy them is find the child inside you and put aside any embarrassment about going on "kid's rides" and off you go! It's easy when you know how.

Cinderella's Golden Carrousel may live up to its name in that it's effectively just a carousel, but it's also one of the most beautiful ones around and I challenge anyone not to ride this and be magically transported back to childhood memories.

The under-fives don't have a monopoly on riding Dumbo the Flying Elephant either. Now, I've got a confession to make. I never rode this as a kid and when I returned to Disney as a teenager, my parents asked me on our last day what I most wanted to do. I stood there and shuffled my

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feet a bit and looked at the ground. "Come on, it's your choice. What do you want to do?" asked my mum. I looked at her with those big round appealing eyes that every child perfects so well and mumbled, "Dumbo." After asking me to repeat that, just in case she'd misheard the first time, we set off to ride Dumbo together and it's one of the fondest memories I have of that vacation. Even today, I get a thrill riding round in Dumbo and let's be honest; you get a pretty cool view from up there! So take your camera with you and capture the memory.

Perhaps the best thing about Fantasyland is the fact that all the rides are very similar -- based on classic Disney tales, they take you through the stories in honey pots, mine cars or even flying pirate ships. Yes, the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, Snow White's Scary Adventures and Peter Pan's Flight are all similar but they're also beautifully simple but effective rides, and really shouldn't be missed. After all, it's these types of rides that Disney -- and no-one else -- does so well.

OK, so unless you have a child in your party that's a Pooh bear or a Peter Pan fan, you might not consider waiting very long for these rides, but with FastPasses for two of these rides and usually very short waits for the third (Snow White), you don't have to. We've found one of the best times to visit Fantasyland is later in the day, particularly if the park's open late into the evening. By then, a lot of families with youngsters have headed home for the day and Fantasyland is often deserted.

The final thing that we haven't mentioned is perhaps the most controversial -- "it's a small world." Why on earth would a gentle boat ride through dolls from all the different countries of the world be controversial? The simple answer is the catchy song. This ride is one that you either love or hate and many have suggested that it would be considerably livened up by the addition of softballs, so you could see how many dolls you could hit. It's not something I foresee Disney doing either in the short or the long term.

Whatever your views on this ride -- and if you haven't ever ridden it, you should ride just so you can make your own mind up about it -- you can't deny that this is a priceless piece of Disney nostalgia, first seen at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. And I, for one, can't help but come off this ride with a big smile on my face. It's just so sweet and happy and although I may be cursing the fact that the song is revolving in my head for the next hour, it just has an uplifting effect for me.

The beauty of Fantasyland is that it's built around the famous animated characters that we all know and love from our childhood. This gives us the chance to step back in time and let those wonderful memories of carefree days come flooding back. And after all, isn't that what Disney

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is all about? Give me Fantasyland any day over the latest roller coaster! It's packed with the most Disney magic you'll ever find in any park, so if you're one of the adults who usually hightails it out of this part of the Magic Kingdom, give it a try on your next visit. I'll be the one on Dumbo!

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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