

Christmas Day Delights: Holiday Wonders at Walt Disney World

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Christmas Day is perhaps one of the most magical days of the year, with all the joys of this festive season. Presents sit beneath the Christmas tree waiting to eagerly be unwrapped, turkeys are cooking ready for lunch, and families arrive at each other's houses to share the day together. That's how many people spend Christmas Day, but for us, we have our own family tradition for Christmas. As many times as our budget -- and workplaces -- will allow us to, we head to the Walt Disney World Resort for Christmas.

Why go to Walt Disney World for Christmas? There are many reasons why, not least the fact that Christmas almost coincides with my birthday, allowing me to spend my special day in my special place with my special husband -- and a special certain donkey named Eeyore, who's also close to my heart!

However, we love Christmas Day at Disney for so many other reasons. Firstly, there's no thought needed, in terms of wondering which part of the family we should be spending Christmas with or whether we should enjoy it just the two of us. Of course, one thing you do need to do is to plan ahead and make sure that all your meal bookings for the big day are in place as soon as you can make them. We've never had a problem getting what we want, but then, we don't go for character meals, which are probably a lot tougher to get. To give you an idea of our previous Christmas Day dining, we've eaten at Chefs de France, the California Grill, and Boma for dinner, all of which have been absolutely superb. Boma was certainly a very different Christmas dinner, but exceptionally enjoyable as we shared it with my husband's family, who fell in love with the restaurant and keep asking to go back there on their next visit!

The next tough decision you'll need to make is which park you want to spend Christmas Day visiting. There's only one rule we ever have on this -- we always avoid the Magic Kingdom. We've heard too many horror stories about how packed it is on the day and I've seen the park filled to capacity just a couple of days after Christmas. It was not a pleasant experience and one that put me off the idea for life! If you do want to head to the Magic Kingdom on Christmas Day, be sure to make the most of Extra Magic Hours early in the morning if you're staying on property. That's the time you're likely to find lower crowds and waits for the rides, allowing you to hopefully do more than you'd achieve later in the day.

We find Epcot absorbs the crowds beautifully. Of course, if you do want

to go on Test Track or Soarin', you will need to grab a Fastpass as soon as the park gates open or face the prospect of torturous hours waiting in line. The worst wait time we've seen at Christmas was 240 minutes for Test Track, that's right, a full four hours! Not the most fun way to spend a special day.

Instead, we tend to spend our time wandering the parks and checking out the wonderful little details that you find everywhere. Christmas Day is also a great time to stop and admire some of the performers in the park. One of our favorite things to do is to try and catch as many of the World Showcase's Holidays Around the World Storytellers as we can, as they bring to life the holiday traditions from their home country.

Something else that's a lot of fun to do on Christmas Day -- or Christmas Eve, as we've done that before in the past -- is to take in the Osborne Lights at Disney's Hollywood Studios. We always find that walking around that helps to remind us of the meaning of Christmas, which can sometimes get lost. Another way to remind yourself is to enjoy the Candlelight Processional at Epcot, the re-telling of the Christmas story. Be warned though, unless you've booked the Candlelight Processional Dining Package, the chances of actually getting into the American Gardens Theatre are fairly low, as this is an exceptionally popular event, particularly during Christmas week.

If the weather's working in your favor, there's another fun thing that you can do on Christmas Day that's very untraditional for most of us and that's to head to your resort pool for a swim. We had a wonderful Christmas Day morning a few years ago just hanging out at The Yacht and Beach Club's Stormalong Bay on a beautifully hot day. It was a very strange feeling, but also very relaxing and one of the best ways I know to enjoy Christmas!

I've heard people ask, "What's Disney really like on Christmas Day?" and I must admit I found myself asking something similar before our first stay there. I had images that maybe things would be closed, particularly outside the parks, or perhaps we'd run into grumpy Cast Members, miserable at being forced to work on Christmas Day and be away from their families. Not a bit of it. Christmas Day at Walt Disney World is very much like any other day of the year, with everything open as usual and Cast Members who walk around with huge smiles on their faces, wishing their guests "Happy Holidays." It really is a bit like a big family gathering, with everyone enjoying the day together.

I guess maybe that's the reason that we keep returning time and time again to spend Christmas at Disney, because it is a truly magical time of the year and there's no better place for us to celebrate than at a truly

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magical place, filled with friendly and happy faces.

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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