

Around the World on a Segway: A Tour Review

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

If your idea of a perfect Disney trip includes wandering around Epcot's World Showcase, then you need go Around the World on a Segway! Have you seen the cast members zipping around the park on those cool, two wheeled vehicles? Well, you can learn to operate one, too!

Disney introduced this tour several years ago, and it has become so popular that they now run it four times a day. I've been able to take this tour twice, and both times were amazing!

You meet at "Segway Central," which is located in Future World. If your tour is scheduled before the park opens, you can enter through the main gate. Your name will be on a list. Your group starts with classroom and practice time. First, and most important, will be safety training. You will learn exactly what a Segway is and what it does. The Segways at Walt Disney World are tiered for speed, slow, medium and fast. The student Segways are locked on slow, so there's a lot less chance for mishap!

After your classroom work is done, you are ready to practice. The room comes equipped with cones, ramps, turns and helmets! You don your helmet and get on your Segway. Even though they look a bit intimidating, after only a few minutes you will have the balance issue figured out, and you will be ready to roll.

You practice accelerating and stopping first. Once those skills are mastered, you begin to maneuver through turns and curves. After getting more comfortable, you will go up and down a gentle ramp and practice stopping and starting on there. After an hour or so of practice, you are ready to hit the streets! Led by your instructors, you zip out of the classroom and into Epcot!

Your tour begins in Future World, but you sail quickly towards World Showcase. The tours are designed to have you there before the park officially opens, so you have lots of room and no crowds. Once you are in World Showcase, it's time to relax and have fun! Your instructor will take you on a few side trips, and you can Segway through the gardens of China or the pillars of Morocco. You will have several places to stop for photo opportunities. However, you are not allowed to video tape or take pictures while you are driving.

You are in World Showcase for about 45 minutes, and then it's back to

Segway Central for the wrap-up. You park your Segway, give back your helmet and get a special memento of your tour. For the less intrepid, Disney introduced a tour called "Simply Segway." This is a one hour class that teaches you the basics of a Segway and includes mostly indoor riding time. If the class is not crowded, you may get some outside riding time. This is a great way to get your feet wet with the Segway for a lower price!

Around the World on a Segway tours cost \$95, and discounts are available to Disney Visa holders, AAA members, DVC members and Annual Passholders. Tours meet at 7:45, 8:30, 9:00 and 9:30 am. Arrive 15 minutes early for your tour, and report to Guest Relations. I would suggest wearing sturdy shoes or sneakers (no flip-flops). You will need to get to Epcot and park admission is required. The weight limit is 250 lbs, and due to safety concerns, pregnant women and persons with special needs may not participate. Minimum age is 16, and children who are 16 and 17 must have a parent or guardian with them to sign the waiver.

The Simply Segway tours are a Disney bargain at \$35. Discounts are also available for this tour. Tours meet daily at 11:30 am. The limit for this tour is 15 individuals, and all the same restrictions as above apply.

We had a blast on our Segway tour! In what can only be called a truly Disney Magical Moment, we were greeted in Italy by a true cast of characters: Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, Pluto, Suzie, and Perla. They were headed out for a day of work at the parks, but they stopped to take some amazing pictures with our group. It was a memory I will always treasure!

You can book these tours by calling 407-WDW-TOUR. They tend to book up during peak times, so try to reserve well in advance, but in less popular times, you may be able to get a reservation the day before. Also, if you decide when you arrive that you are not comfortable on a Segway and the tour is not for you, Disney is very accommodating and gives you a full refund. Book one today for your next trip, and be ready to see the World from a totally unique viewpoint!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

Article last updated: 05-13-2010

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