

# Pregnant at Walt Disney World: How to Travel With a Baby on Board

by Jennifer Marx, PassPorter Guidebooks Author

Perhaps you've carefully planned your Walt Disney World trip months in advance, only to discover you're pregnant. Congratulations!

Now you may ask yourself, "Should I still go to Walt Disney World, or cancel my plans now that I'm expecting? If I do go, what should I avoid?" While neither of us have personal experience being in this condition, we did travel to Walt Disney World twice with Jennifer's sister while she was pregnant and we have some insights to offer. Jennifer also travelled to Walt Disney World three times, visited Disneyland (California) once, and sailed on the Disney Cruise Line once during her pregnancy.

## 1. Talk to your doctor.

If you have any special conditions that may make travel difficult, your doctor can advise you. If your doctor gives you the green light, ask him/her for the names of good ob-gyns in the Orlando area, just in case. Also carry your own doctor's name and phone number with you at all times.

## 2. What is your due date, and how close will you be to it when you plan to travel?

Travel in your third trimester may not only be risky, but downright uncomfortable. Some airlines may require a note from your doctor, and as a general rule, you should not fly within 30 days of your due date without your doctor's permission. To make air travel more comfortable, request an aisle seat (for easy access to the facilities and better leg room), bring food and water for yourself, and stand up and stretch at least once an hour during the flight. You may also wish to dress in layers in the event it gets too hot. Jennifer's sister Kim adds, "anti-nausea medication may also be very helpful during the flight." If you drive rather than fly, just remember to pull off the road every 1-2 hours for a little walk.

## 3. Are you going on the Disney Cruise Line?

Pregnant women past their 24th week are not allowed to sail. Before your 24th week you'll still need to fax a doctor's note to Disney and then complete a medical clearance form before you can sail. Call 800-511-9444 for more information. Also, if nausea is a problem during your pregnancy, talk to your doctor/midwife about anti-nausea medication before you go. Jennifer's sister Kim adds this note: "If you can handle the motion of a cruise ship, it's a fantastic value for a pregnant woman as you can graze whenever on whatever and never

have to pay a cent. If you are not feeling up to some of the off shore adventures, don't worry. You will find staying on the ship has its definite advantages as you really have it to yourself. You can go into a lounge and listen to your favorite Disney tunes with your feet propped up while watching jet skiers out the HUGE portholes. On special nights they may have Captain's parties where there are free drinks offered to all who attend. Not to worry, they always have several yummy nonalcoholic choices available." Kim adds this tip regarding eating onboard: "Many women have an increased appetite (or need to eat small meals more often) during pregnancy. When you are on a cruise you are at the mercy of the ship to provide your meals. Although there are a wide variety of foods available, currently the Disney cruise ships do not have a 24 hour buffet available. What worked best for me was room service. It's great as you can return to your cabin several times throughout the day, kick off your shoes, sprawl out on the big bed, and order your favorite sandwich or fruit plate. You will refresh yourself and be able to participate in all the fun activities the cruise has to offer."

#### 4. Pack with care.

Pack plenty of comfortable clothes you can layer. Water bottles with filters (such as Brita) are also a good idea to bring along, as you should be drinking water frequently to avoid dehydration. Sure, you can buy bottled water at Disney, but it's very expensive! Be sure to also bring your prenatal vitamins and any special medications or food. If you've got morning sickness, pack those saltines! You may also want to bring a maternity support belt, particularly if you're not used to walking around much. Bring along your prenatal medical records as well, just in case. Jennifer's sister Kim adds this packing tip: "Bring a really good pair of walking shoes, possibly a 1/2 size larger (or the wide version of normal size) as the Florida heat mixed with the physical activity tends to puff your ankles a bit."

#### 5. Get your zzzzzzs.

Moms-to-be usually need more sleep, but this can be hard when you're pregnant and even harder when you're away from home. If you have a favorite pillow or wedge, consider making room in your suitcase for it. A portable travel sound machine can block outside noise and lull you into sleep. And a nightlight for the bathroom will make those frequent trips easier to bear. Jennifer's sister Kim added this perspective on which resort to stay at: "Staying at the Disney Institute was a real advantage for me as we were able to utilize the golf carts to get not only around the resort, but all the way to Downtown Disney. You exhaust quickly when you are pregnant and I was able to save a great deal of energy by not walking or waiting for the buses as much. I felt more comfortable knowing if I wanted to check out the pool or the gift shop in the main hotel area that I could simply jump in the cart

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and off I'd go, effortlessly."

6. Avoid attractions with health restrictions.

These restrictions are always posted at the attraction itself, or you can check *PassPorter's Walt Disney World* guidebook to find out before you go. In general, you want to avoid rides that are bumpy, cause dizziness, or accelerate too quickly. Epcot is the most pregnant-friendly park -- only two attractions, Test Track and Body Wars, are off-limits. At Magic Kingdom, just say no to Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, Splash Mountain, Dumbo (if you get nauseous easily), Magic Carpets of Aladdin, Mad Tea Party, Astro Orbiter, Space Mountain, and the Tomorrowland Indy Speedway. At Disney's Hollywood Studios, stay off Star Tours, Rock n' Roller Coaster, and the Tower of Terror. At Disney's Animal Kingdom, avoid Kali River Rapids and Dinosaur. Kilimanjaro Safaris carries a health restriction, but many pregnant

women (including Jennifer's sister) feel okay about it. If you decide to go on the Kilimanjaro Safaris, ask the cast member if you can ride in the wheelchair-accessible vehicle -- it isn't as bumpy as the others. If you're not certain if a particular ride is for you, have your significant other try it out first and then report back. If you opt out of a ride, you can either shop in a nearby gift shop (there's always one around) or stay in the queue with your party until boarding and then ask for the "chicken exit."

7. Do you know where your restrooms are?

You'll be a happier mommy-to-be if you always know where the nearest restroom is located. Be sure to grab a park map (or two) on your way into the park and keep it handy. Or just keep your *PassPorter* handy -- all the restrooms are marked on the *PassPorter* maps. Each park also has a First Aid and Baby Center. It doesn't hurt to note its position on the map when you enter the park, and to keep your eyes open for it during the course of your day's tour. If you need a cool place to lie down (not to mention a helping hand from a knowledgeable professional), you'll be glad to know how to find it.

8. Get plenty of rest.

Take advantage of park benches and sit-down shows and rides while you're touring. The Baby Centers are also cool havens to take a break -- every park has one. How about a midday swim back at your resort? Get yourself a maternity swimsuit you're comfortable in and take a swim -- swimming while pregnant can be very liberating! Avoid the waterslides, though. Another way to relax is to book the Mother-To-Be Massage at the Grand Floridian Spa or the Spa at Saratoga Springs -- it's a 50-minute treatment that includes a foot compress, body brushing, and a soothing massage with lavender oil. It's a bit pricey at \$120, but we hear it's VERY relaxing.

9. Know your restaurants.

If you have food aversions, which are common during pregnancy, consider your restaurant choices carefully. You can use the descriptions in PassPorter or the menus on Deb Wills' site (<http://www.allears.net>). For food cravings, keep your favorite snacks handy in a backpack. And don't forget to drink that water!

10. Plan your trip well.

This does not mean going "commando," but this isn't the time to "wing it" either. Your trip will be more comfortable and enjoyable if you have a good idea of what you plan to do and when. This is especially important for first-time visitors to the World. When you have a plan, you'll find it is much easier to change it on the spur of the moment, which is exactly what you may need to do.

11. Will you need to cancel?

Consider the possibility that you may need to cancel your trip at the last-minute. We'd suggest you take advantage of travel insurance in this instance. And if you get a note from your doctor, you should be able to get a refund even on those non-refundable flights.

12. Shop for baby.

Oh, and while you're at Walt Disney World, you may want to pick up some baby clothes. In our experience, you'll find the best selection at Downtown Disney (World of Disney and Pooh Corner). We also found some infant outfits at Mouse Gears at Epcot. Don't forget to pick up some embroidered Mickey Ears for your little one -- you can get them in smaller sizes at The Chapeau on Main Street in the Magic Kingdom.

Things To Do: More Tips for Expectant Moms-To-Be can be found at AllEars.net (<http://www.allears.net/pl/pregnant.htm>). And don't forget [Jennifer Marx's own pregnancy journey with Alexander](#), during which she travelled to Walt Disney World three times and Disneyland once! And if you'd like to discuss this topic with other PassPorter readers, visit the [PassPorter Message Boards](#).

Notes: We're not doctors, and we cannot offer medical advice. Always consult your doctor before traveling and follow his/her advice.

*About The Author: Jennifer is the co-founder of PassPorter Travel Press, the author of more than 50 books, and mother to Alexander.*

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