

Traveling Carry-On to Walt Disney World: Avoid Those Baggage Fees

by Mary Albright, PassPorter Guest Contributor

It seems that almost every airline is charging you something just to check a bag when you travel. And if you have two suitcases or an overweight item?

Forget about it! For me, having to pay to check a bag is a little like running my fingernails on a chalkboard.

I've traveled with my family to Walt Disney World twice in 2008 with carry-on baggage only - once for 4 days, and once for 7 days. We are a family of four; two adults, a 12-year-old son, and an 11-year-old daughter.

At first glance, you may think, "I can't possibly only take a carry-on! There's too much I have to bring!" My first piece of advice is seriously examine the items you "have" to bring. I'd bet a bunch of us can probably say we over-pack.

Most airlines allow each person to bring one carry on item - backpack, a carry-on sized suitcase (see your airlines web site for size requirements), or tote bag, and one personal item - camera bag, diaper bag, laptop bag, briefcase, purse, etc.

That means for a family of 4, you can potentially carry on eight items. If you plan to use the largest size bag allowable, you will find you can work wonders! Clothing: This is probably one of the biggest places where you can save space. If you are traveling for a week, I suggest you make time to do laundry. This can halve the amount of clothing you pack if you take a break mid-stay to do some wash. All onsite Disney resorts have laundry facilities, and they are reasonably priced. At most, I do two loads; one colored and one white. For vacation, that's enough. You can find travel-sized laundry detergents at your local store and the liquid versions are even small enough to not cross the 3 oz. threshold that the TSA has set. Place a few dryer sheets in a zip lock bag and you are ready.

Toiletries: The TSA has the 3-1-1 rule: 3 oz. containers of liquids and gels fitting in one quart-sized zip lock bag for each person. Get your travel-sized toiletries, including sunscreen, at your local Target, Walmart or your favorite store and follow this rule. I purchased several 3 oz. sunscreen tubes for each trip and that was one of my kid's zip lock

bags. Ladies, my first advice is to leave the giant make-up bag at home. Seriously, you are on vacation. And in Florida's heat and humidity, it begins to sweat off anyway. Save yourself some aggravation. Bring a sun blocking moisturizer and call it a day. If you have a special evening planned at Victoria & Albert's or another upscale dining establishment, consider only what you truly need to make yourself presentable. Your goal is to not have one bag full of make-up and hair products.

As far as shampoos, conditioners, and soaps go, the Disney resorts and most hotels in the Orlando area do provide those for you in your room. Use them. We all have our favorite shampoos and such, but you are on vacation. This can be a big space saver if you can use what is provided.

Shoes: Wear the shoes you plan to wear on vacation onto the plane. If you are traveling during a cold part of the year, pack your sandals and wear other comfortable shoes on the plane.

Cold Weather Gear: Layers are good. It's usually not too cold in Florida, but it can be when you go back home. Layer up with a nice hooded sweatshirt or fleece jacket. Something that can keep you warm, yet can breathe in the warm Florida weather.

Other clothing tips: Consider getting what my husband calls "Zip pants." You can find them easily for men and boys and it's a bit of a challenge for women and girls. These are usually cargo type pants where the legs can zip off somewhere above the knees. Great 2-in-1 bottoms that can be used for just about any weather condition. I've found these usually at sporting goods stores like Cabela's or REI.

Snacks and Sundries: For those traveling with an infant or toddler, there are always so many supplies that are needed to care for them. And many of us seem to need snacks or plan breakfasts in the room. However, you too can still travel carry-on. Pack your diaper bag with the supplies you need for your travel day. Diapers, wipes, formula, etc. There are many places in and around Walt Disney World where you can get your supplies at a reasonable cost. If you have a rental car, there are several Super Targets, a Walmart Supercenter and local grocery stores like Publix and Wynn Dixie where you can stock up on what's needed. If you are taking Magical Express or another service, consider GardenGrocer.com or WeGoShop.com. These are delivery services that, for a small fee, can shop for your supplies for you and deliver them to you at your resort or hotel.

What about my souvenirs? Unless you tend to bring home larger items, most of the time, you can wrap and pad your souvenirs in the clothing in your bag and not have it be a significant problem. However, if you find

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that you have acquired too many items to fit, know that you can have all your items shipped home to you. The front desk of the Disney resorts will help you package and ship your items home for a surcharge. If you have a rental car and prefer to do your own work, there is a FedEx/Kinkos just north of the intersection of Hwy 535 and Hotel Plaza Blvd.

The benefits to traveling carry-on are many.

- * You don't incur the additional costs of checking a bag.

- * Most airlines have dedicated check-in lines for passengers with carry-on luggage only. This means a short line for you to check-in and get your boarding pass at the airport, if needed. If you are printing your boarding pass from home, you are set to go right to security. This can be a huge time saver.

- * You get off the plane and you don't have to wait for your bags. You can walk directly to Magical Express, your rental car, or other transportation. You are on your way a lot faster!

- * All your gear is with you. You don't have to worry about losing your bags in transit or how long it will take Magical Express to get your bags to your room. We all have choices and I want you to know that you can choose to travel carry-on, be in complete control of your belongings, and still have a completely enjoyable vacation in Walt Disney World.

About The Author:

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