

Disneyland Resort: The 'Original' Magic Kingdom - Part 3

by Sarah Mudd, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

When last we met, we made our way into [Disneyland park](#), taking time to enjoy Main Street USA and Adventureland.

□ As we continue on our clockwise trek through the park, we come to New Orleans Square, which is unique to Disneyland. New Orleans Square is modeled after the French Quarter of New Orleans, complete with street names for the walkways through the land (Front Street, Orleans Street, and Royal Street).

When you enter New Orleans Square, your first stop should be Pirates of the Caribbean. Its facade resembles an old Southern mansion. (Trivia! There is an 18-star American flag flying atop the building, indicating that the Pirates "show" may take place around the 1850's.) In a lot of ways, Disneyland's Pirates is similar to the version at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, but in other ways it is very different. Disneyland's version, for instance, has two small "waterfalls" (as compared to Walt Disney World's one), as well as some different scenes within the ride. It is also almost twice as long as Walt Disney World's version, running 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes (compared to the Magic Kingdom's 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes)! If you choose not to ride and head towards the exit, you will find the stairs that lead up to the entrance to the former Disney Gallery, which is now the Disneyland Dream Suite (housed in the second level of the Pirates show building). You may also catch Princess Tiana and Prince Naveen meeting, greeting, and celebrating around the streets of New Orleans!

□ When you exit Pirates of the Caribbean, you'll find the entrance to the Blue Bayou restaurant, the inside of which you can see as your boat floats past as you begin your Pirates ride. Also close at hand is the entrance to the exclusive Club 33. The only way to have a meal at Club 33 is to be a member or the guest of a member. Membership is so exclusive that Disney has currently stopped taking membership requests altogether (after having a waiting list 14 years long for several years)! If you decide against dining at (or can't get into) Blue Bayou, there are three other eateries in New Orleans Square that offer specialties like gumbo, jambalaya, and beignets: Cafe Orleans, French Market Restaurant, and Royal Street Veranda.

□ There's one last stop on our way through New Orleans Square; The Haunted Mansion. Like Pirates of the Caribbean, there are a few differences between the Disneyland version and the rides at the other

Disney parks, including the building facades, some of the scenes, and the way in which the stretching room stretches. The biggest difference is that, unlike the Magic Kingdom's version, the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland becomes Haunted Mansion Holiday completely transforms the attraction, with a spooky yet fun Nightmare Before Christmas theme. The "overlaid" attraction has proven so popular in the 10 years since it opened that Disneyland normally has to activate the Haunted Mansion FastPASS machines, which are mostly inactive the rest of the year!

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□ Moving on from New Orleans Square, we come into Critter Country, which was, once upon a time, home to the Country Bear Jamboree. In fact, up until Splash Mountain was opened in 1989, that's the only attraction (besides Davy Crockett's Explorer Canoes) that was there. Sadly, the Country Bears went into retirement in 2001 and The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh moved into the old Country Bear Playhouse in 2003. (Trivia! See if you can find the old mounted heads of Max the Deer, Buff the Buffalo, and Melvin the Moose while riding The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh!) Winnie the Pooh is another attraction that has several differences from its Walt Disney World counterpart. Some of the Disneyland version's scenes are in a different order, some are a little shorter, and the ending scene is quite different from Walt Disney World's. Speaking of Bears, though, if you get hungry from the hard work of paddling your Davy Crockett Explorer Canoe, plunging down Splash Mountain, and floating through Pooh's dream sequence, you can grab a bite to eat at the Hungry Bear Restaurant on your way towards our next stop, Frontierland.

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□ As you make your way into Frontierland, you might see the beautiful Sailing Ship Columbia. She only sails on weekends for much of the year, and daily only during "select" seasons. When she is not sailing passengers around the Rivers of America, she is anchored near Critter Country. Also on the Rivers of America is the Mark Twain Riverboat, which sails daily around the Pirate's Lair on Tom Sawyer Island. Pirate's Lair was opened on Tom Sawyer Island in conjunction with the opening of the film *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* in 2007. For the most part, the Tom Sawyer theme of the Island is gone and has been replaced with many references to the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie series: Dead Man's Grotto, which houses the Chest of Davy Jones; several gags featuring the movie characters Pintel and Ragetti; and Davy Jones' voice warning you about the perils of entering the Shipwreck and alluding to the Kraken. The only attraction on the Island leftover from the original Tom Sawyer theme that is open to the public is Tom and Huck's Treehouse.

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□ Tom Sawyer Island is also the stage for Disneyland's version of Fantasmic! There are a few differences in Disneyland's version of the show such as the use of the Sailing Ship Columbia (Peter Pan and Captain Hook fight on the ship), a Pink Elephants On Parade (from Dumbo) segment and a slightly different Villains segment. If I had to choose between the two shows, I would pick Disneyland's "Fantasmic!" every time!

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□ On the east side of Frontierland looms Big Thunder Mountain. The Magic Kingdom version of Big Thunder Mountain Railroad is almost an exact copy of the Disneyland version. The main differences being the loading areas (Disneyland's is an outdoor loading area), the name of the fictional town the ride is based around (Disneyland's "Big Thunder" vs. Magic Kingdom's "Tumbleweed"), and the track layout, as Magic Kingdom's track, while the same main layout, is reversed in direction. After your wild ride through the wilderness of Big Thunder, head into Big Thunder Ranch and visit some of the live frontier farm animals! There is a petting zoo where you'll find quite a few goats, sheep, cows, and even a couple of turkeys who received Presidential pardons in honor of Thanksgiving 2008! Around Halloween time, the Ranch is transformed into Woody's Halloween Roundup, and at Christmas time, Santa's Reindeer Roundup. If you happen to get hungry, make a reservation for the Big Thunder Ranch BBQ, where you can feast on a delicious all-you-care-to-eat menu of chicken, ribs, smoked sausage, cornbread, and coleslaw.

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□ If all-you-care-to-eat isn't your style, there are a few counter service eateries to choose from in Frontierland: The Golden Horseshoe, where you can munch on chicken, fish, and mozzarella strips while watching Billy Hill & The Hillbillies entertain the crowds; Stage Door Cafe (the same chicken, fish and mozzarella without the entertainment), Rancho del Zocalo (tasty Mexican dishes) and River Belle Terrace, offering big salads and carved-to-order sandwiches.

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□ I'm going to take a little break and head over to the Frontierland Shootin' Exposition. When I return in the next installment, we'll start making our way into the east side of Disneyland park!

About The Author: □ Sarah is a busy stay-at-home mom, Travel Consultant with [Ears to You Travel](#), PassPorter Message Board Guide and Navy wife whose family is currently stationed in Washington state. She has made many trips to both Walt Disney World and Disneyland. Her family is excited to be heading to Disneyland (her husband and 2-year-old son's first trip) in August 2011!

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