

Ride or Drive: Getting Around Walt Disney World

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There are many questions that come up on a regular basis about touring Walt Disney World.

One of those is whether to drive or take Disney transportation while you're there.

You may have driven down to Disney World or you may be renting a car for the duration of your vacation, and that may affect your choice of how much driving you want to do while you're on property. If you've had a long, and potentially exhausting, drive to get to Walt Disney World, then getting into the car while you're actually on your vacation may not seem as attractive.

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□ Renting a car comes with its own dilemmas. While you don't have the problem of having driven to Disney, you may be encountering other issues. The roads aren't familiar, you're not sure where you're going or how long it will take to get there. The list goes on.

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□ I'll start by saying that on the vast majority of our trips to Walt Disney World, we've always had a rental car, so our daily decision has always been whether to drive that or use Disney transportation. No doubt many of you are immediately declaring yourself in one camp or the other as you read this, with some of you thinking, "Why on Earth would you drive when you can take buses, monorails, and boats instead," while others will be thinking "I'd rather rely on my own transport, instead of waiting around for Disney's."

The first place you can look for guidance is your trusty [PassPorter's Walt Disney World](#) -- you do have one, right?! This lists all the different ways of getting around property, and gives you an idea of how long it will take from each of the various resorts to reach your destination.

□ At some resorts, you may think there's no decision to make. Why would you do anything else but walk or take the boat from the Yacht and Beach Club, the BoardWalk or the Swan to Dolphin, to Epcot? Driving would mean heading for the main parking lot at the front of the park, and if you're arriving first thing in the morning, when World Showcase isn't open yet, that may work better for you. Equally, if you're going to park-hop later, driving might work just as well. Generally though, we walk from our beloved Beach Club Villas, which is one of the things we love so much about this resort.

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□With the monorail resorts, the choice is pretty straightforward, simply because of the location of the Magic Kingdom's parking lot, across Seven Seas Lagoon from the park itself. Why would you do anything else other than take a monorail or a boat, or in the case of the Contemporary and Bay Lake Tower, walk? It's the most straightforward and easiest way to get there. In truth, heading to the Magic Kingdom from resorts outside the Magic Kingdom area is when we tend to keep our car off the road, because it's such a hassle to drive there. You have to park, then catch the monorail or boat over to Magic Kingdom. With the bus, it picks you up at your resort, and deposits you at the park entrance. What could be simpler?

□The opposite is true for us with Animal Kingdom. We always drive out there, as we tend to find it much quicker than taking the bus. If you're there early enough in the morning, the chances are that you can walk from your spot in the parking lot, rather than taking the tram, as that can be just as quick.

□Of course, parking is one problem you're always going to have whenever you drive anywhere, and nowhere is that problem more apparent than at Downtown Disney. Generally, unless the parks are absolutely packed to capacity, and if that's the case they're probably already closed to anyone who's not using Disney transportation, there's usually a parking spot to be found somewhere in those enormous theme park lots. The same isn't necessarily true for Downtown Disney, particularly at busy times. You try driving there any time other than opening during the week or so running up to Christmas. It's not a pretty sight, I can assure you! Equally, Friday and Saturday nights tend to be pretty busy there as well. You may need to factor in extra time to find a space, or resign yourself to a pretty long walk from the lot. This is where the bus can win out, although the time spent visiting the multiple stops at Downtown Disney can be frustrating.

□Let's not forget that there are also stops for the water parks on some bus routes, which can be a real pain. Blizzard Beach is added into the Animal Kingdom routes, while Typhoon Lagoon is a stop on the way to and from Downtown Disney. That's why, if we're heading to either Animal Kingdom or Downtown Disney, we tend to get behind the wheel.

□Sometimes, the car is the obvious choice. Buses don't run directly from one resort to another, and getting around by bus can be tough, especially if the parks are closing early and you're heading out to a late night dinner appointment. With most of the Signature restaurants located at Disney's resorts, it leaves a car or a taxi as the easiest way to get to and from such appointments. And let's be honest, if you're dressed up for a special dinner, do you really want to be in those pouch

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frocks on a theme park bus? Taxis are usually plentiful at each resort, and are not a bad price, given the mileage involved in getting around Disney property.

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□The simple rule of thumb for us is you don't always need to use your car when you're on Disney property, but equally you don't always need to rely on Disney transportation. It's worth working out which method of transport will work best for you and your family on the way to each destination. I'm willing to bet it will be a combination of the two!

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!](#)

Article last updated: 02-09-2012

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