

Disney Lessons for Planning Trips to Other Destinations: A Disney Planner Guide to Travel

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

□ You can't always take a Disney vacation, much as I'm sure we'd all love to. First, funds may not always extend to a trip, and that's certainly true for us here in the UK, with a lot of locations closer, and cheaper for us to visit. Second, there are many other wonderful places to explore around the world. So when you do take a non-Disney vacation, there's no link to Disney at all, right? Not really, as I've been discovering over the last few months.

□ It's only been as I've been doing the planning for visits to the wonderful cities of Amsterdam in Holland and London, our stunning British capital, that I realized just how much Disney knowledge comes into play in these situations. As I started to plan, one of the first things I did was look at which attractions we wanted to visit, and which part of the city they were all in. For example, in London, if you've got a list that maybe includes St. Paul's Cathedral and Tower Bridge, which are located fairly close together, then it makes sense to visit them at the same time.

□ Sound at all familiar? It's no different than the advice you read in your PassPorter, about drawing up a list of the attractions you want to experience at the Disney parks and working out which are in the same park, so they can all be done on the same day. It's common sense as well, as it stops a lot of zigzagging around, minimizing the amount of travelling around you'll be doing when you get there, saving you precious vacation time to see the things you really want to see.

□ So that's the planning side of things, but I found myself applying more Disney logic when we actually got to Amsterdam. You know the old adage about going out to the theme parks, even when the weather is terrible, because the crowds will be lower? Well, that happened to us during our stay. We ended up visiting on what turned out to be one of the coldest weekends of the year, with the canals, famous for their boat trips, all frozen over. When I heard this, initially I was disappointed. After all, how much time would I really want to spend outside?

□ I quickly shook myself out of this funk, and thought about what I'd do if I was at a Disney park. Of course, I'd ignore the weather, and go out

regardless. So that's what we did, another perfect example of applying Disney planning to a totally different type of vacation. Sure, it was absolutely freezing outside, but we made the best of it, enjoyed the unique view of the frozen canals, and the skaters on them, and of course ducking inside to any attraction whenever we possibly could.

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□ Everyone is different, but we tend to be morning people rather than night owls, and whenever we're at Disney, we put that trait to good use, always making sure we hit the parks as early as we can, sometimes using the Extra Magic Hours in the morning. It's well known by Disney planners that the rides are always at their quietest when the park first opens, as the crowds are lower, with many vacationers choosing to have an extra hour in bed.

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□ Again, why not apply that theory to visiting cities? If you plan on visiting major tourist attractions, then get there before the crowds inundate them. When we last went to the Tower of London, knowing that it's one of the capital's biggest visitor draws, we headed there for opening time. We even went one better, ensuring that we were among the first in to see the Crown Jewels, allowing us to linger and admire the amazing Royal collection of jewels. Later in the day, we couldn't help but smirk when we saw the lines snaking out of there, with people facing a long wait to even get in. I'm pretty sure that they wouldn't have been able to spend as much time in there as we managed first thing.

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□ Something else I find myself doing increasingly is planning places to eat in cities now, and again that's down to Disney. We love the dining, it's one of the reasons that keeps us returning to the parks time, and time again, along with the characters, rides, shows, theming, weather -- you get the idea! So if you're going somewhere else, why not plan ahead, and think about where you want to eat, rather than taking a chance on just being able to get in on the day? With online reservations services now available, you can usually find plenty of options in any major city around the world. It's much less risky than wandering around an unfamiliar place, wondering where you're going to eat that night. With a little bit of planning, you can ensure that you're dining in places that you're going to enjoy.

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□ So, you see, even when you're not heading to a Disney park, you can still apply the theory of Disney planning wherever you travel. It's certainly helped us to enhance our time away, and for that, I will always be grateful to Disney.

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!](#)

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