



Amuse

How to Do Disneyland in a Day

By Lynn Machon

OK, so it sounds crazy. But some families don't have a whole week, or even a full weekend, available to visit "The Happiest Place on Earth."

While experiencing Disneyland in just one day might not be ideal, it is certainly doable. Armed with advice from friends, in May we took our family of six (four kids from age 3 1/2 to 9) for a Day at Disney as part of our SoCal vacation.

Not only did we survive just fine, but found that an expedited mousefest is better than no Disneyland at all. Here are some tips that helped make our day a success.

Time It Right — There doesn't seem to be an "off-season" with Disneyland anymore. So regardless of the time of year, shoot for Tuesday through Thursday, if you can.



Get a Reality Check — You don't have to ride every ride, or see every Disney character to have a great time. Just make a list of your day's "must dos" and hit those first — the rest is gravy. Save the California Adventure side for another time.

Plan Your Attack — Check the Disney website (disneyland.com) ahead of time for ride closures and height requirements. Then print out a Park map and circle your picks. Get there super early — the gates to the Main Street shops open 20 minutes before the attractions — and hit the ever-popular Fantasyland and Tomorrowland first. If staying off property, plan on parking and taking the shuttle to the front gate that should take about an hour.

Pack a Picnic — Bring in sandwiches, snacks and bottled water to avoid time-eating lines and fairly pricey lunches. Make reservations for dinner ahead of time through Disney Dining, 714-781-3463. (Ariel's Grotto, and Blue Bayou are great family options.)

Use Fast Pass and Parent Swap — Not all rides have these options, but collecting fast passes for key rides when you first arrive, and utilizing the parent swap where needed, will help avoid long lines.

Keep Cool — If it's hot when you go (we happened to choose a 100+ degree day), save the indoor rides until the hottest part of the day. Pirates of the Caribbean, the Haunted House, and Star Tours were perfect places to chill.

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Stay Safe — Help keep your group together and on-schedule by all wearing bright-colored shirts (red or yellow), matching if possible, so no one gets lost. Take a picture of the kids that morning so you have a current photo of what they are wearing, just in case.

Don't Forget to Breathe — Know that "unscheduled" delights such as sitting down to enjoy frozen lemonades or cotton candy, and pausing to try and get Cruella DeVille to smile are all part of the memory package.

In addition to Disney's official website, visit www.mouseplanet.com or www.themeparks.about.com for more tips.

Although our family was there just one day, we were able to experience the full magic of Disneyland, even if we didn't do "everything". ■



Homeowners Shift Spending from Gas Tank to Home

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Repair Obvious Damage

Don't ignore the hole in the wall or peeling wallpaper. While some may come to accept the imperfections of a home, damage looks like an eyesore to most.

Outdoor Living

Functional outdoor living areas add the perception of usable square footage to a home. A deck or patio with a self-contained hot tub and picnic table can be a real bonus. They can be enjoyed immediately and when it comes

time to move, anything that's not bolted down can probably go too.

Wondering what expensive renovations to avoid? Experts say that conversions of a bedroom to a permanent home office, the addition of backup power generators and sunrooms offer the smallest return on investment.

For more information, checklists and tips on backyard design, or to get information from experts, visit www.HotTubGuide.com. ■
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