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10 Best Children's Activities at Walt Disney World

By Cara Goldsbury

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by: **Cara Goldsbury**

I'm sure you all know about Disney World's amazing theme parks, but are you familiar with the myriad of fascinating activities for children offered throughout Walt Disney World that are either complimentary or offered for a reasonable fee to Disney resort guests? Here are some of the best:

Snag a Bass On a Kid's Fishing Excursion. 1-hour angling trips just for children are available from the resort marinas of Disney's Contemporary, Polynesian, Yacht and Beach Club, and Boardwalk Inn and Villas. For miles of shore fishing head over to Disney's Ft. Wilderness where cane poles and rods and reels may be rented at the Bike Barn in the Meadow Recreation Area. Fishing excursions are approximately \$25 per child. Call 407-WDW-PLAY for reservations.

Enjoy the Old West. Hayrides depart each evening from Pioneer Hall at Fort Wilderness for a 45-minute trip. Very tame, cowboy-guided trail rides are also offered, or younger children can opt for a \$2 pony ride at the Fort Wilderness Petting Farm. Hayrides are \$8 per adult and \$4 per child; no reservations taken. Trail rides are \$30 per person; reservations are required and may be made up to two weeks in advance by calling 407-WDW-PLAY.

Sing-Along in Front of the Campfire. Families gather round the campfire each evening at Ft. Wilderness for a sing-along, marshmallow roast, and a Disney animated movie. Complimentary to all Walt Disney World resort guests.

Watch the Electrical Water Pageant Parade. Nightly on the Seven Seas Lagoon is a delightful 1000-foot string of illuminated barges featuring King Neptune and his court of whales, sea serpents, and other deep-sea creatures. The free show can be seen from the beaches of Disney's Polynesian, Grand Floridian, Contemporary, and Wilderness Lodge Resorts.

Ride Up Front with the Monorail Driver. Simply ask the Cast Member on duty. They will be happy to oblige as long as the front car is empty.

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Take a Spin on a Watermouse Boat. Rent one of these two-seater mini-power boats and zip around one of Disney's lakes at 22 miles per hour. Kids love them, particularly because they need only be 12 years or older and at least 5 feet tall to drive one without adult supervision. Available at the Contemporary, Polynesian, Grand Floridian, the Yacht and Beach Club, Downtown Disney, and the Wilderness Lodge. Approximately \$22 per half-hour.

Dive into One of Disney's Fabulous Themed Pools. You can't do much better than a dip in one of Disney's wonderful swimming pools. Children's favorites: the Volcano Pool at Disney's Polynesian Resort featuring a smoking volcano slide, underwater music, and sparkling waterfall, all with a superb view of the Seven Seas Lagoon; the Wilderness Lodge's boulder-lined pool featuring waterfalls, rocky overlooks, water slide, and a nearby geyser; the eye-popping Stormalong Bay, a mini-water park complex that meanders between the Yacht and Beach Club, offering three acres of winding, watery delight including sandy bottom pools, a giant "shipwreck" waterslide, a tidal whirlpool, bubbling hot

tubs, a kiddie pool with its own slide next to the beach, and enough length to float lazily in inner tubes to your heart's delight.

Search for Buried Treasure on a Pirate's Cruise. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, children ages 3-10 sail from the dock of Disney's Grand Floridian Resort on a 2-hour supervised trip to a deserted island. \$28 fee includes snacks, bandanas, and treasure. Call 407-WDW-DINE for reservations.

Attend a Children's Tea Party. A "Wonderland Tea Party" happens Mon-Fri at 1:30 P.M. in 1900 Park Fare at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort. Hosted by characters from Alice in Wonderland, the little ones play games, listen to stories, and drink apple "tea". \$28. Strictly for children ages 3-10. Call 407-WDW-DINE for reservations.

Take in a Character Meal. These extremely popular dining opportunities, offered at both the Disney theme parks and resort hotels, are a perfect way for your children to spend extra time with favorite Disney characters. Meals are offered in three ways depending on the restaurant: buffet-style, family-style, or pre-plated meals; regardless, it's essentially all-you-can-eat. Characters work the room, stopping at each table to interact with guests, pose for photos, and sign autographs. Book priority seating early, particularly for Cinderella's Royal Table, Epcot's Princess Breakfast in Norway, and Chef Mickey's by calling 407-WDW-DINE.

Cara Goldsbury is the author of *The Luxury Guide to Walt Disney World: How to Get the Most Out of the Best Disney Has to Offer* available at 800-247-6553,

,

, or

your local bookstore. Visit her at

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Planning Your Walt Disney World Vacation

By I Henman

While it's always thought that children are the ones who dream of Walt Disney Vacations, there are adults that think of Walt Disney World as their ideal vacation spot as well. The greatest appeal for families to Disney has to be the ability to find something for everyone to do. Of course we're not just talking about group activities, but things for every individual too. This is probably one of the big reasons that families will go back each year, yet they never seem to get bored.

If you're seriously considering taking a Walt Disney vacation you should start your research on the Internet. Of course you can book a vacation right on Disney's website, there are other online travel sites that also have special family destination packages that might include Walt Disney world, as well as airfare, and hotels.

An important thing to keep in mind is that Walt Disney world vacations vary in price depending on the time of year you want to travel. Disney is also busier at particular times of the year than others. Choosing to go to Disney in the off season will often mean you'll get a better deal. It's a funny thing really, Disney never has a shortage of visitors whether it's peak season or not, yet you can always find a deal. This is likely another one of the big attractions as a vacation spot, there is always a good deal to be found.

There are a few ways to book your trip to Walt Disney world. First off you can book it online, via a travel agent or by phoning Disney. Each option has benefits, when calling the operator on the other end might be able to dig a bit deeper and find you a better deal than is available online or at your regular travel agent. If you do intend on calling to book your trip you should either call in the evening or early morning. Calling throughout the day is the busier time, and you'll be more rushed to book and get off the phone so that operators can serve other clients.

Another attraction to consider when planning your trip to Disney is the special events they hold. While you likely won't find a deal during those special events it can make your vacation that much more enjoyable. Attractions such as concerts for children under five, or special character appearances often occur but aren't part of Disney's regular attractions. Also keep a watch for Disney anniversary specials. Catching specials that don't happen all the time can create wonderful vacation memories, and be that much more fun for you and your family.

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