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**Walt Disney World For Teens**

**By Cara Goldsbury**

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Can teens really have fun at a place like Walt Disney World? Absolutely! Actually, be prepared to have the time of your life. It's a safe place to assert some independence from your parents, a place you'll never forget. Here are some of the best experiences for teens at "The Most Magical Place on Earth":

**Have a Splashing Good Time at Disney's Water Parks**

For a blast of a time, head to one of Disney's two water parks. Blizzard Beach has a melting alpine resort theme where chairlifts carry swimmers instead of skiers. It's a place for daredevils to challenge wild, rushing water and death-defying slides including the Summit Plummet, a 120-foot slide reaching speeds of 60 miles per hour. Those a bit less adventuresome will love Typhoon Lagoon, a tropical fantasyland offering a wave pool with the tallest simulated waves in the world as well as a chance to snorkel among tropical fish, leopard and nurse sharks, and picturesque coral at Shark Reef.

**Live it Up at Downtown Disney**

After the parks close hop a bus from your Disney resort for a night on the town at Downtown Disney. Highlights include Disney Quest with five floors of interactive games, a 24-screen AMC Theater, a Cirque du Soleil show, and over 60 shops and restaurants. Favorite dining choices for the younger crowd are Planet Hollywood and Rainforest Café. And definitely consider House of Blues where teens are allowed to attend some of the almost daily concerts in their live music venue next-door.

**Cool Off at One of Disney's Resort Pools**

When your parents are wondering which resort to book for your Disney vacation, be sure and put your two cents in and steer them toward one with a great pool. Disney's very best uniquely themed pools include the Yacht and Beach Club's Stormalong Bay, a 3-acre mini-water park, the Swan and Dolphin's lush, grotto-style lagoon pool, the boulder-strewn wonderland at the Wilderness Lodge with its very

## Walt Disney World For Teens

own erupting geyser, and the Volcano Pool at the Polynesian Resort with its luxuriant waterfall, smoking peak, and perfect views of Cinderella's Castle.

### Plan Some Watersport Fun

Disney's Contemporary Resort is the place for water-ski, parasail, wakeboard, kneeboard, and jet-ski action under the guidance of a professional instructor. There's nothing better than a bird's-eye-view of the Magic Kingdom as you parasail high above the Seven Seas Lagoon. And the action down below on Bay Lake is a blast! For reservations call 407-WDW-PLAY up to 90 days in advance, and be sure to bring a parent along to sign a waiver to participate if you're under age 18.

### Pilot Your Own Boat

What could be more fun than renting a Sea Raycer, a 2-seater mini-power boat perfect for zipping

around Disney's waterways and lakes. It's a great pastime for teens with a valid driver's license (those under 18 must bring along a parent to sign a waiver). You'll get the most bang for your buck at one of the resorts near the Magic Kingdom (the Contemporary, Polynesian, Grand Floridian, or Wilderness Lodge) where you'll find miles of recreation on the Seven Seas Lagoon and Bay Lake.

### Scuba and Snorkel at Epcot's Living Seas

Scuba dive or snorkel in The Living Seas 5.7-million-gallon saltwater aquarium amid a variety of sharks, rays, fish, and turtles. Epcot's DiveQuest Program along with the Seas Aqua Tour using a Scuba Assisted Snorkel unit (snorkelers swim on the surface with a built-in flotation device while breathing compressed air from a regulator attached to a small tank) are two of the most exciting behind-the-scenes tours offered in all of Walt Disney World. Dives include all equipment, but be sure to bring a bathing suit. DiveQuest is open to certified divers, but those ages 14 and under need to dive along with a parent or guardian. The Seas Aqua Tour is open to participants under age 18 as long as they are accompanied by a participating adult. Call 407-WDW-TOUR for reservations.

### Surf's Up at Typhoon Lagoon

"Hang 10" before park opening hours in the 2.75-million-gallon wave pool (some waves as high as 6 feet tall!) under the guidance of professional instructors with surfboards provided. Guests must furnish their own transportation to the park since Disney buses are not up and running that early in the morning, and those under age 18 must have a signed waiver from their parents to participate. Call 407-WDW-PLAY for reservations up to 90 days in advance.

### White-Knuckle Riding at Richard Petty Driving Experience

Lying next to the Magic Kingdom is this speedway where white-knuckle rides in a NASCAR Winston Cup-style race car are offered. If you are at least 16 you can participate in the Ride-Along Program where you'll ride shotgun at speeds of up to 145 mph for three laps around the track with an experienced instructor (riders 16 or 17 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal

## Walt Disney World For Teens

guardian). Even more exciting, those ages 18 and older can drive the car themselves after an introductory class. If you just want to observe you can do so for no charge. Call 800-BE-PETTY for advance reservations.

### Head for a Theme Parks

Last but certainly not least are the theme parks. If you're staying on Disney property it's a cinch to board a monorail or a Disney bus and head out to the parks on your own.

At the Magic Kingdom you'll find all the old nostalgic favorites like Space Mountain and Pirates of the Caribbean. And don't forget to head straight to Splash Mountain, an unforgettable ride that ends in a plunge over a 5-story waterfall! Epcot's main attractions for fun-loving teens are Mission Space, a hair-raising rocket into space, and Test Track where you'll speed through hairpin turns and then barrel outside onto a high-speed banking loop at over 60 mph. At Disney-MGM Studios you'll be floored by Rock `N' Roller Coaster and The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, both a thrill a minute. Then there's the Animal Kingdom where a trip around the African savanna at Kilimanjaro Safaris and back in time 65 million years at Dinosaur are quite the adventure.

Super thrill seekers should plan a day at Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure where attractions

like the Incredible Hulk Coaster, Dueling Dragons, and The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman will leave your heart pounding.

So do you still think Disney is just for kids? I bet you can't wait to pack your bags. And don't forget to thank your parents on your return home for taking you to one of the most exciting places on the planet.

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

.

## **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

## Walt Disney World For Teens

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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