

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK - GEARING UP FOR TRAVEL

REAL FAMILY TRAVEL MAGAZINE - JUNE/JULY 2014

REAL FamilyTravel MAGAZINE

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Hong Kong Disneyland Resort

By Becky Horace of www.beckyhorace.com

Almost 8,000 miles away from Walt Disney World lies a newer park, full of the same magic, but with an Asian twist.





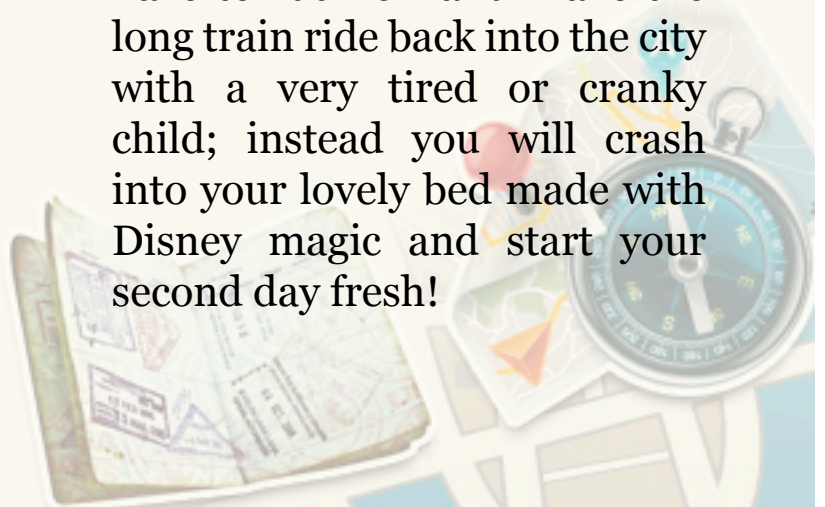
There are websites, articles, and apps dedicated to the topic of making the most of your family's Disney World adventure, which I agree is crucial in planning your first trip to see Mickey Mouse. Although Hong Kong Disneyland is much more compact, it can become very busy in a blink of an eye. Here are my top five travel tips which will help you make the most of your holiday time in Hong Kong Disneyland.


1. Make your stay at least a two-day event. If you are visiting Hong Kong, which I highly recommend as it is a very fun place for kids to visit, and are planning a trip to Disneyland, plan to spend more than one day at the park to make the most of your experience. During our family trip to HK Disney a couple months ago, we decided we would stay in the city and take the subway to the park.

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I suggest you plan to stay in the city center of Hong Kong, and toward the end of your vacation plan to take a couple of days to visit Disneyland and stay in one of the resorts. When you leave the city center, you will take the subway to the park with no worries about arriving late or missing Mickey Mouse. At the end of your fun filled day in the park, you will be able to enjoy the fireworks and you will not have to rush off and make the long train ride back into the city with a very tired or cranky child; instead you will crash into your lovely bed made with Disney magic and start your second day fresh!



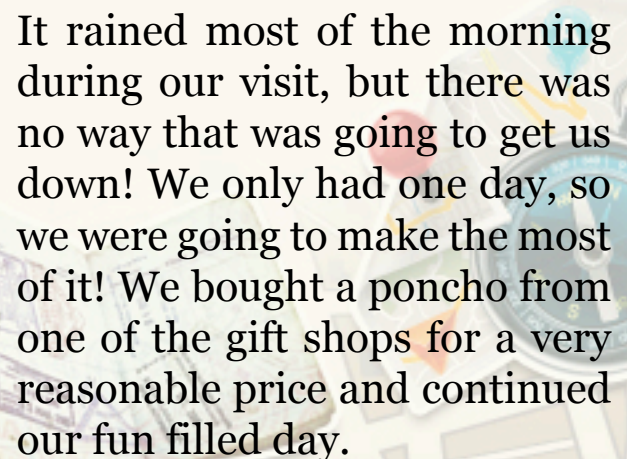


When you are ready to check out of your resort, you can take the train directly to the airport; fast and easy!

2. Try to avoid the weekend crowds. I am an expat parent living in Bangkok; several of our expat friends have visited Disneyland in Hong Kong and all of them are in agreement: **never go on a weekend!** This is a travel tip I am so glad I listened to. From what I have heard from our friend's experience, the park can be slammed packed to the point where you might get to enjoy a ride or two due to the park being small and the crowds being massive.

We visited the park on a Monday. We arrived before they opened; picked up the park passes we had ordered online at the automated ticket machine, and waited in line with everyone else. Although at the time the crowds seemed huge outside the gate, once we entered the park and made our way towards Toy Story Land, it felt like we had the entire park to ourselves. We were fortunate enough to ride a few of the rides completely alone. It was a perfect first experience of Disney magic.

3. Make sure you check on the weather. Although I live in Thailand where we experience a rainy season, it never occurred to me to check the weather before we planned our trip. I had checked the usual weather.com, but I didn't research when monsoon season started. I knew Thailand had a few weeks to go before the rains came so I assumed we were in the clear, but you know what happens when you assume... you get wet.



It rained most of the morning during our visit, but there was no way that was going to get us down! We only had one day, so we were going to make the most of it! We bought a poncho from one of the gift shops for a very reasonable price and continued our fun filled day.

4. Want to meet Mickey? You could be waiting for hours! This is another travel tip I am glad we listened to from our fellow expat parents. I was told in order to see Mickey, or any characters for that matter, you could be waiting in lines for hours. I didn't believe it until I saw it. In Hong Kong Disneyland, I saw more adults excitedly waiting in line for their photo with a character than I ever saw children, probably because there isn't a kid alive who would want to wait that long to see Mickey.

This is my insider travel tip: as soon as the gates open, Mickey welcomes everyone into the park and is driven to a gazebo at the front of Main Street. If you are quick and close to the first in line to enter the park, make a b-line to that gazebo. This way you will have your picture with Mickey Mouse out of the way, which is obviously on everyone's Disney to do list, and now you have the rest of the day to enjoy the park.

5. Use the cultural difference to your advantage. The best part about traveling abroad would have to be the cultural differences your family can experience. Disney magic is enjoyed throughout the world



and each park is sure to incorporate the cultural elements from where they reside. During your visit, you might not recognize the Chinese cultural influences such as the feng shui and placement of certain aspects of the park and resorts, but you can experience the culture through the food offered in the park.

Take your children on a culinary journey and experience the flavors of Hong Kong. You can dine in the park at the Comet Café in Tomorrow Land, where you can chow down on Hong Kong style beef brisket curry. If you are looking for a more fancy dinner destination, stop by the Disneyland Hotel for some traditional Dim Sum in the Crystal Lotus restaurant.



Bonus travel tip: After you have had all of the fun you can handle, it's time to head home via the Hong Kong International Airport. Be sure to take your little ones to the playground at Gate 25 to run out all of their energy before that long flight home.

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