

# PIXIE DUST NEWS

FALL 2017

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## DESTINATION: PARIS, THE CITY OF LIGHTS

In the summer issue of *Pixie Dust News*, we heard from my coworker, Shirley Thummel, on her recent trip to Israel. In this issue, we again hear from Shirley about her recent trip to Paris.

This time Shirley and her friend Judy traveled via “We Travel France” on a weeklong tour. “We Travel France” deals exclusively with luxury travel, small groups, and private, customized tours. They were escorted from the time they were picked up at the Paris airport by their own personal driver. The driver took them in a separate line and assisted them with Immigration and customs before taking them to their 5-star hotel. Private guides took them through many attractions, while personal drivers took them many places, explaining everything along the way. Private guides and personal drivers are worth every penny as they were given the royal treatment, taken through private entrances, and at the least crowded times. You never have to wait in line for anything. We Travel France is a VERY classy operation! It is also interesting to note that the second half of August is the best, quietest, and least crowded time to tour Paris because it is when most of the French people are on vacation.

After settling into their hotel, Shirley and Judy were picked up by their driver and taken on a one-hour private cruise on the Seine River, complete with champagne, while they took in the beautiful sights from Notre Dame to the Eiffel Tower. After breakfast on the second day, their guide took them on a walking tour of Paris (Left Bank), including the Orsay Museum and Notre Dame Cathedral. The Left Bank (or *la Rive Gauche* in French) spreads over the southern side of the Seine. Together the district of St.-Germain-des-Prés and the Latin Quarter define the *Esprit Rive Gauche* (“Left Bank spirit”) as a blend of Parisian chic intellectual attitude and history. The area is generally associated with artists, intellectuals, and a bohemian way of life, mainly due the thousands of Sorbonne students living in the area. The Left Bank features many of the Paris monuments, museums, and gardens, ranging from the Orsay Museum, the New Musee du Quai Branly, and the Institut du Monde Arabe to the Musee de Cluny, or the National Museum of History.

As a fine example of their customized tour, Judy told them (in advance, of course!) that she loved to cook. On the morning of their third day in Paris, they met with a cooking teacher in her apartment. She took them first to the market to purchase the requisite produce for the day’s recipes. The cook gave tips and proposed delicious traditional and creative recipes. Under the chef’s watchful eyes, they contributed to the preparation of a whole meal: entrée, main dish and dessert. After the class, their private driver guide picked them up for an afternoon visit to Giverny to visit Monet’s house and gardens. Monet, a leader of the Impressionist school, lived in this house from 1883 to 1926. The house regained the colorful interior and intimate charm of bygone days. Several of the rooms are now devoted to the artist’s precious collection of Japanese prints, hung in accordance with the instructions of the master of Giverny.

On the fourth day of their trip, Shirley and Judy were taken to Montmartre. Their guides often took the Metro as it is the fastest and cheapest way to get around Paris. *Note:* Although the Metro is fast and efficient, there are too many steps and very few elevators in Paris. There are often 60 steps going from the street down to the Metro. Also noted is that the restaurants and pastry shops have “toilettes” either up or down a flight of stairs. Montmartre also has a lot of steps—physically demanding. Countless novels, legends, and “fabulous destinies” are set in the Butte, such as the Bateau-Lavoir in place Emile Goudeau, where Picasso painted the *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, and the café made famous by Amelie Poulain in rue Lepic. There is a lot more climbing to do before you reach the top of the street under the last remaining windmills, before continuing on up to the very top where you will find Sacre-Coeur, surrounded by a labyrinth of extraordinary

little streets, and a vineyard, where the grape harvest is celebrated each year. During the visit to Montmartre, Shirley and Judy visited the backstage of a bakery. Paris is home of the baguette, that golden breadstick that is a real symbol of all things French. They stepped behind the counter of this typical beautiful French bakery, a boulangerie, into the kitchen to watch a demonstration by the master baker of how a perfect baguette is made. Following their bakery experience, they continued toward Canal St. Martin for a visit and wine and cheese tasting.

Day Five was all about champagne. Their driver guide took them out for a full day in Champagne. They passed vineyards and picturesque villages, offering a charming bucolic landscape, and visited the Côte des Blancs for a sightseeing tour of some of the most famous Grandes Maisons de Champagne. There was a tour of the exquisite village of Hautvilliers, overlooking Epernay and all the vineyards. They visited the grave of the Monk Dom Perignon in the village church. After viewing the whole Marne Valley and all the vineyards owned by the most famous Champagne producers around Epernay, they departed for a private Champagne tasting at Veuve Cliquot. Mrs. Cliquot took over the Champagne production when her husband died (in the 1800s). She was ahead of her time and was responsible for innovations in Champagne production that are still used today. Champagne has been stored in chalk caves since the 1800s. During WWII, the French soldiers hid from the Germans in these caves and evidence of this can be seen on the cave walls.

In the late afternoons and evenings, Shirley and Judy were able to explore on their own. They visited the Dior exhibit in the Louvre, which was crowded but very enjoyable. Paris is known as the City of Lights, and walking around to see it at night is a must. The Eiffel Tower is lit up and sparkles, Notre Dame is lit up, and the bateaux (boats) on the Seine are a beautiful sight. Inexpensive meals can be found in the St. Germaine area (Left Bank) near Sorbonne University. For 10 to 15 Euros, you can get a delicious three-course meal.

Shirley wants everyone to know that the French people in shops and restaurants are very professional. When they don't interact with you, it does not mean they are being rude. You must ask the questions; they are there to assist.

## **CURRENT DISNEY OFFERS**

### **HOLIDAY MAGIC PACKAGE**

You can enjoy a package that includes a four-night stay in a standard room at a select Disney's All-Star Resort and four-day Magic Your Way® base tickets for as low as \$1,942. Sample package price is valid for a family of four for stays most Sunday through Thursday nights from October 9 through December 14, 2017.

The holiday season is a great time for you to take a family vacation at Walt Disney World® Resort. Together, you can explore exciting experiences across all four theme parks—and still be among the first to visit Pandora—The World of Avatar, an all-new awe-inspiring land at Disney's Animal Kingdom® theme park. You must book through October 7, 2017 to get this deal. Are you planning a longer stay or have more people in your party? Check availability for packages that can accommodate other lengths of stay and party sizes.

### **SAVE UP TO 20% ON ROOMS AT SELECT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT HOTELS!**

You can save up to 20 percent\* on rooms at select Walt Disney World® Resort Hotels. Book through October 7, 2017, for stays most Sunday through Thursday nights October 8 to November 16, 2017, and for stays most nights November 17 to 21, 2017, and November 25 to December 24, 2017. Must book through December 24, 2017, for stays most nights December 8 to 24, 2017. When you stay at a select Walt Disney World Resort hotel, you'll enjoy benefits like first access to Disney FastPass+\*\* planning, complimentary MagicBands, Extra Magic Hours in a Theme Park each day to enjoy select attractions (valid Theme Park admission and Resort ID required), complimentary transportation, and standard parking, plus more! **The following room types and Disney Resort hotels are excluded:** 3-bedroom villas, campsites, cabins at Copper Creek Villas & Cabins at Disney's Wilderness Lodge, bungalows at Disney's Polynesian Villas, and bungalows, Disney's Art of Animation Resort—The Little Mermaid standard rooms, the Villas at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, and Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort.

### **KID-SIZE MAGICAL HOLIDAYS PACKAGE**

You can explore a package that includes a three-night stay in a standard room at a select Disney's All-Star Resort and two-day Magic Your Way® base tickets for as low as \$977.\* Sample package price is valid for a family of three for stays

most Sunday through Thursday nights from October 9 through December 14, 2017, when you book from now through October 7, 2017.

No matter when you choose to visit, your little ones will love exploring the festive fun sprinkled throughout the Walt Disney World® Resort during the fall and winter holiday season. Are you planning a longer stay or have more people in your party? Check availability for packages that can accommodate other lengths of stay and party sizes.

## DISNEY NEWS

Posted July 15, 2017, by Disney Destinations

### TOY STORY LAND TO OPEN AT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT IN SUMMER OF 2018

Many of you know that Toy Story Land is coming to Disney's Hollywood Studios® at Walt Disney World® Resort—but did you know it will open next summer? In 2018, you'll find yourself shrunk to the size of a toy to explore the world of Andy's backyard with your favorite Toy Story characters, including Woody and Buzz. And Toy Story Land will feature two new themed attractions: Slinky Dog Dash will be a family coaster attraction where you'll zip, dodge, and dash around many turns and drops that Andy has created to make Slinky and his coils really stretch to their limits. Alien Swirling Saucers will also be a new attraction at Toy Story Land. It's designed as a toy play set that Andy got from Pizza Planet, inspired by the first *Toy Story* film. Aliens are flying around in their toy flying saucers, trying to capture your rocket toy vehicle with "The Claw."

### NEW ADVENTURES BEGIN AT MISSION: SPACE IN AUGUST AT EPCOT

Mission: SPACE at Epcot® has been a must-do for guests since it opened in 2003, allowing space adventurers to become navigators, pilots, commanders, or engineers on a thrilling trip to Mars. And as it was announced at the D23 Expo, in just a few weeks, you will be able to enjoy new adventures at Mission: SPACE—an updated Orange Mission and a brand-new Green Mission. (Orange is the more intense training experience, while Green is less intense). The updated Orange Mission will make an even more visually stunning trip to Mars, while the all-new Green adventure will allow guests to blast off for an orbital adventure around planet Earth.

### STAR WARS: GALAXY'S EDGE ANNOUNCED AS NAME FOR STAR WARS LANDS AT DISNEY PARKS

Bob Chapek, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, revealed the official name of the *Star Wars*-inspired lands that are currently under construction at the Disneyland® and Walt Disney World® Resorts, and shared details on the immersive experiences you will be able to enjoy when the lands open in 2019.

The lands, both called *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*, will allow you to visit a remote trading port on the edge of wild space, where *Star Wars* characters and their stories come to life—and where guests will find themselves in the middle of the action. The lands will feature two major attractions that put you in the middle of a battle between the First Order and the Resistance. Each attraction—and even the land itself—will offer you the chance to immerse yourselves in the *Star Wars* universe like never before. One attraction will make guests feel like they're on a Star Destroyer inside a hangar bay. It's an attraction built on a scale we've never done before.

The second attraction will give you the opportunity to fly the Millennium Falcon, piloting the ship, shooting blasters, or preparing for hyperspace, all while completing a critical mission. But how you perform on the mission holds even bigger stakes: Perform with skill and you may earn extra galactic credits, while bringing the ship back banged up could put you on the list of a bounty hunter. End up on Harkos's list and you may face a problem if you show up at the local cantina!

Guests will also encounter many familiar faces inside *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*, including BB-8, Chewbacca, members of the First Order and—among many others—Rex, the troublesome pilot fans may remember from the previous version of a certain Disney attraction who takes on a new role in this land as the DJ at the cantina.

And speaking of the cantina, here you will be able to try unique concoctions like blue milk. Nearby, you'll also be able to acquire trinkets and treasures from across the galaxy. *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* will open in 2019, first at the

**Disneyland** Resort and later in the year at the **Walt Disney World** Resort. (No further opening dates have been announced yet.)

### **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY AND RATATOUILLE ATTRACTIONS COMING TO EPCOT**

**Epcot**® at **Walt Disney World**® Resort will receive not one, but two new attractions inspired by popular films. First, a “Guardians of the Galaxy”-inspired attraction will be added to Future World, adhering to the original vision of **Epcot**’s Future World as the place to experience the excitement and adventure offered by space travel.

This is an addition we’re really looking forward to, as a “Guardians of the Galaxy” attraction—Guardians of the Galaxy—Mission: BREAKOUT!—debuted at **Disney California Adventure**® park earlier this year to rave reviews from guests. **Epcot**’s brand new E-ticket attraction will be based on the rockin’ and action-packed world of “Guardians of the Galaxy” and is the next step in how you can encounter these characters at the **Walt Disney World Resort**. Note: This new attraction will replace the current Universe of Energy attraction, which closed August 13, 2017.

Second, a Disney•Pixar’s “Ratatouille”-inspired attraction will also be added to the France Pavilion in World Showcase. The attraction will expand the pavilion. Similar to the 4-D attraction *Ratatouille: The Adventure* that opened at the Walt Disney Studios Park in Paris in 2014, you will be able to shrink to Remy’s size and scurry to safety in a dazzling chase across a kitchen with the sights, sounds, and smells of Gusteau’s legendary Parisian restaurant. According to Disney leaders, both attractions will open in time for the 50th anniversary of **Walt Disney World**® Resort in 2021.

### **NEW TRON ATTRACTION COMING TO MAGIC KINGDOM PARK AT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT**

Tron—Disney’s highest-rated attraction at Shanghai Disneyland—is coming to **Walt Disney World**® Resort in Florida! The new Tron attraction will sit in an entirely new area right next to the Space Mountain attraction at **Magic Kingdom**® Park. Bob Chapek, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, made the announcement during the **Walt Disney World** Parks and Resorts presentation at D23 Expo 2017.

The TRON Lightcycle Power Run attraction at Shanghai Disneyland is a coaster-style attraction where riders board a train of two-wheeled Lightcycles. It offers access into the energy, lights, and excitement of TRON’s high-tech universe and is one of the most thrilling adventures at any Disney park.

Also, during the presentation, Bob said the plan is to open the Tron attraction in time for Walt Disney World’s 50th anniversary in 2021.

### **FIRST MICKEY-THEMED RIDE—THROUGH ATTRACTION, MICKEY AND MINNIE’S RUNAWAY RAILWAY, COMING TO DISNEY’S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS**

A new attraction featuring international icon Mickey Mouse is coming to **Disney’s Hollywood Studios**® at the **Walt Disney World**® Resort! On Mickey and Minnie’s Runaway Railway, you will step *through* the movie screen and join Mickey and his friends like never before. The attraction will put guests inside the wacky and unpredictable world of a Mickey Mouse cartoon short where they’re the star and anything can happen. This zany out-of-control adventure features surprising twists and turns, dazzling visual effects, and mind-boggling transformations that happen before your very eyes.

The attraction is inspired by the Mickey Shorts that you can see on the Disney Channel. And the people who bring you the shorts at Disney Television Animation are partnering with us to help bring the attraction to life. Mickey and Minnie’s Runaway Railway will feature a new story and a new singable attraction theme song as well as a new experience we’re calling “2 1/2 D.” No glasses required. Walt Disney Imagineer Kevin Rafferty said teams are inventing new technologies that turn the flat world of a colorful cartoon short into a “dimensional display of amazingness.”

Disney also wanted to let you know that in order to begin to prepare the new home of Mickey and Minnie’s Runaway Railway at the *Chinese Theatre* in **Disney’s Hollywood Studios**, August 13, 2017, was the final day of operation for the Great Movie Ride presented by Turner Classic Movies.

### **PLANS UNVEILED FOR STAR WARS-INSPIRED THEMED RESORTS AT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT**

*Just announced . . . a Star Wars-inspired resort will debut as part of the new Disney 360 vacation concept. According to Bob, this revolutionary new vacation experience will be a living adventure that allows guests to immerse themselves in an entirely new form of Disney storytelling. “It’s unlike anything that exists today.” Bob said. “From the second you arrive, you will become a part of a *Star Wars* story! You’ll immediately become a citizen of the galaxy and experience all that entails, including dressing up in the proper attire. Once you leave Earth, you will discover a starship alive with characters, stories, and adventures that unfold all around you. It is 100 percent immersive—the story will touch every single minute of your day, and it will culminate in a unique journey for every person who visits.”*

#### **FIRST LOOK: NEW SPACE RESTAURANT TO OFFER ‘OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD’ DINING EXPERIENCE AT EPCOT**

Disney is excited to unveil exciting plans to create a new restaurant at **Epcot**® that’ll offer amazing meals with spectacular views high above Earth—**from space**! The restaurant, which will be located adjacent to the park’s Mission: SPACE attraction, will invite guests to travel into space for amazing dining experiences in the stars. Walt Disney Imagineer Tom Fitzgerald shared a first look at the restaurant during the Walt Disney World Parks and Resorts presentation at D23 Expo 2017.

“We know our guests love dining at Epcot—and the restaurants really are out of this world,” Tom said. “Now we’re about to create one that takes that literally.” The new space restaurant will be operated by the Patina Restaurant Group. Patina Restaurant Group operates several other restaurants at **Walt Disney World**® Resort including Tutto Italia and Via Napoli at **Epcot** and Morimoto Asia at **Disney Springs**®.

#### **DISNEY SKYLINE TO TRANSPORT GUESTS AROUND WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT**

A brand new transportation system is coming to the **Walt Disney World**® Resort to add even more magic to your future vacation experiences. Bob Chapek, Chairman of Walt Disney Parks & Resorts announced recently that the Disney Skyliner will soon give Guests a bird’s-eye view of **Walt Disney World** Resort. The transportation system will connect Disney’s Art of Animation, Pop Century, and Caribbean Beach resorts and other locations with **Disney’s Hollywood Studios**® and the International Gateway at **Epcot**. And many of the gondolas with Disney Skyliner will feature favorite Disney characters.

#### **FIRST LOOK: NEW THEATER INSPIRED BY KANSAS CITY’S WILLIS WOOD THEATER TO DEBUT AT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT**

A new venue for world-class entertainment is coming to Main Street, U.S.A. at **Magic Kingdom**® Park in Florida. If the image of the theater looks familiar, that’s because the new entertainment venue will be based on the iconic Willis Wood Theater in 1920s Kansas City, where Walt lived after he left Marceline. And as you can see from the design, it’ll fit well right off Main Street, U.S.A.

“Across Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, we’ve been upping the game in Entertainment with shows like Frozen Live at the Hyperion,” Bob Chapek, chairman of Walt Disney Parks & Resorts said. “It’s been a huge hit at the Disneyland Resort, and I’m sure many of you have seen it. This new theater at Walt Disney World continues that streak by bringing a new venue for world-class entertainment to the world’s biggest park.”

#### **NOW OPEN: COPPER CREEK VILLAS & CABINS AT DISNEY’S WILDERNESS LODGE**

Today marks the grand opening of the 14th Disney Vacation Club Resort—Copper Creek Villas & Cabins at Disney’s Wilderness Lodge at the **Walt Disney World**® Resort!

Inspired by the beauty of the Pacific Northwest, the resort features natural elements, such as wood and stone, in its design, as well as subtle nods to the American transcontinental railroad. The Deluxe Studios offer room for up to four guests, while the larger one- and two-bedroom Villas and three-bedroom Grand Villas seamlessly blend the comforts of home, such as full kitchens and in-room laundry, with the wonders of the wilderness to create a tranquil retreat for families of any size.

The 26 all-new luxurious waterfront Cascade Cabins are the centerpiece of the resort. These two-bedroom, two-bath cabins sleep up to eight, offering modern luxuries with a rustic, yet upscale feel. Large dining and living room spaces, along with a screened-in wraparound porch (complete with a private hot tub!), allow for plenty of space for families.

The resort is a short water taxi ride away from **Magic Kingdom**® Park and offers easy bus access to the rest of the **Walt Disney World** Resort, making it the ideal home base for families looking to explore a wide range of new Disney attractions, including the recently opened **Pandora—The World of Avatar** at **Disney's Animal Kingdom**® Theme Park.

While staying at Copper Creek Villas & Cabins, guests have shared access to all of the amenities and activities available just steps away at Disney's Wilderness Lodge. Geyser Point Bar & Grill, which opened earlier this year, offers picturesque views of Bay Lake, as well as explorer-worthy feasts and trails-end spirits in an open-air lounge. Roaring Fork, the resort's original quick-service restaurant, has recently reopened featuring a refreshed look and expanded outdoor seating.

## 10 PLACES IN THE US THAT EVERY MUSIC LOVER SHOULD VISIT

[Kevin Coyd](#), travel writer, 16 August 2017 9 (TRO TRAVELGRAM)

Elvis fans shouldn't miss Graceland—but there's more to Memphis than the King. The United States is a country in thrall to music. Over the past century (and a bit), it has watched the heady ascents of numerous stars—from B B King and Louis Armstrong through to Bob Dylan, Debbie Harry and Nirvana—in genres as diverse as blues, jazz, folk, and rock.

So where to go to find echoes of your heroes? In truth, each American state has some sort of musical tale to tell. But you could certainly start your search in one of these 10 cities...

### 1. Memphis

The shadow of Elvis Presley looms over Tennessee's largest city. His Graceland mansion ([graceland.com](#)), 9 miles south of Downtown, is still a hive of well-wishers 40 years after his death, with visitors paying their respects at his grave in the grounds. But there is more to Memphis than the King.

South-east of the centre at 926 East McLemore Avenue, the Stax Museum ([staxmuseum.com](#)) keeps alive the flame of the soul label that released classics by Isaac Hayes and Otis Redding between 1959 and 1975.

Then there is Beale Street, one of the spiritual playgrounds of the blues. Here, B. B. King's Blues Club ([bbkings.com](#)) hosts nightly shows in tribute to the musical titan who died last year.

### 2. New York City

The Big Apple has long been a swirl of the coolest musical acts. The likes of the Velvet Underground, Blondie, Talking Heads, the Strokes, and Wu-Tang Clan all emerged from its febrile environment, while Bob Dylan cut his teeth in the folk clubs of Greenwich Village in the early Sixties. You can find traces of the great man in this much-loved part of Manhattan—Cafe Wha? ([cafewha.com](#)), where he played regularly in 1961, is at 115 Macdougal Street. Dylan was too late in arriving to share New York with Charlie Parker, but the city framed this virtuoso jazz trumpeter's career between 1939 and 1955. The National Museum of Jazz ([jazzmuseuminharlem.org](#)) in Harlem tells the trumpeter's story.

### 3. Los Angeles

California's biggest city is a place with serious rock credentials. The Rainbow Bar And Grill ([rainbowbarandgrill.com](#)), on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood, has been a watering hole for a legion of guitar bands, including Guns N' Roses and the Red Hot Chili Peppers—while Jim Morrison of the Doors used to prop up the bar at the nearby Whisky A Go Go ([whiskyagogo.com](#)). And the Troubadour, on Santa Monica Boulevard ([troubadour.com](#)), has hosted artists from Radiohead to Elton John. Hip-hop has its say, too. LA Hood Life Tours ([lahoodlifetours.com](#)) offers guided trips around Compton, where gangsta rap pioneers NWA concocted seismic LP Straight Outta Compton in 1988.

### 4. Seattle

If LA has long dealt in guitar-toting flamboyance, Seattle has stood for a glummer style of rock. Between 1989 and 1994, it was the epicentre of grunge, the gritty musical movement that produced groups such as Soundgarden and Pearl Jam—but most notably Nirvana.

Washington's biggest city salutes Kurt Cobain and his band mates at its fabulous EMP Museum ([empmuseum.org](http://empmuseum.org)), where Nirvana: Taking Punk to the Masses lays out instruments, set lists, photos, and testimony. Another exhibition in the building, Wild Blue Angel, celebrates another great Seattleite—Jimi Hendrix.

## 5. Detroit

The contribution of Michigan's largest city to the American musical tapestry should never be underestimated. Acts as diverse as Eminem, the White Stripes, and Iggy Pop all found their feet in this Midwest metropolis, while Madonna grew up in the suburb of Rochester Hills.

However, Detroit's biggest gift to the world will always be Motown. The mold-breaking soul record label was founded here by Berry Gordy Jr. in 1959, and was based in the conurbation until 1972. Its operational hub lives on at 2648 West Grand Boulevard, as the Motown Museum ([motownmuseum.org](http://motownmuseum.org))—twin townhouses where visitors can follow the footsteps of Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, and Stevie Wonder into the legendary Studio A.

## 6. Nashville

The Tennessee state capital is one vast shrine to all things country music. Performers as diverse as Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, and Taylor Swift have all worked at their oeuvre in a city so obsessed with the genre that it has the Country Music Hall of Fame—an enormous museum of more than 2.5million artifacts ([countrymusicHalloffame.org](http://countrymusicHalloffame.org)). Nashville is also the home of the Grand Ole Opry ([opry.com](http://opry.com)), a weekly country stage show that has been broadcast since 1925. These days, this extravaganza largely takes place at the Grand Ole Opry House, a 4,000-seat arena. But it still pops up at the wonderful Ryman Auditorium, a theatre of exquisite acoustics that acted as Opry base from 1943 to 1974.

## 7. Chicago

While the blues was certainly born in the Deep South, it found fresh impetus in Chicago between the Thirties and Sixties, when the likes of Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, Howlin' Wolf, and Buddy Guy were active in the Windy City. The latter shows no sign of retiring despite turning 80 last year—and his name shines in neon above the door of Buddy Guy's Legends ([buddyguy.com](http://buddyguy.com)), a suitably atmospheric club at 700 South Wabash Avenue in the central Loop area of the city, where younger guns try to live up to the master's genius.

## 8. New Orleans

Louisiana's most fabled city is renowned for its Mardi Gras carnival and the up-all-night atmosphere of its French Quarter—but it has also been a cultural birthing place. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it witnessed the dawn of jazz, this genre of skittering rhythms and clever invention emerging from New Orleans's African-American community. Louis Armstrong, arguably the finest ever jazz trumpeter, followed, born in town in 1901. "Satchmo" still lingers in town. The airport bears his name. The music lives on, too, in Preservation Hall ([preservationhall.com](http://preservationhall.com)), at 726 St Peter Street. Although younger than it looks (it opened in 1961), this is a true jazz mecca, staging nightly shows.

## 9. Minneapolis

Minnesota's biggest city was known as the home of the rock-soul legend Prince, even before his death in April at the age of 57. He famously worked out of his studio complex Paisley Park ([officialpaisleypark.com](http://officialpaisleypark.com)), 20 miles south-west of downtown. This was a secret bunker during his lifetime, but from October the place where he masterminded albums such as Sign o' the Times and Diamonds and Pearls will be open for tours. Fans can also seek the great man at First Avenue ([first-avenue.com](http://first-avenue.com)), in the very heart of the metropolis where he played on several occasions. The searing guitar solo on his most vaunted track, Purple Rain, was recorded here during a concert in 1983.

## 10. Miami

The current decade has been dominated by EDM (Electronic Dance Music), a feverishly upbeat genre. But while this is an international form of music—a planet-bestriding colossus of superstar DJs and major hits—it has a symbolic heartland in Miami. Florida's brightest metropolis is always ready to party and does so with aplomb every March in the form of its Winter Music Conference ([wintermusicconference.com](http://wintermusicconference.com))—a bonanza that, while technically a record industry shindig, fills clubs along the Atlantic to capacity each night.

## HALLOWEEN EVENTS GET GOING EARLY ACROSS FLORIDA

[Isabelle D'Antonio](#), [Contact Reporter](#), Orlando Sentinel

With summer coming to an end and [Halloween](#) right around the corner, Florida is about to get spooky. From major events like Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party and [Halloween Horror Nights](#) to smaller, family-friendly events like the Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Garden's Zoo Boo Bash, the sunshine state has celebrations for everyone. Events aren't limited to October—some range from August to November, ensuring you can get all your creepy thrills in. A full list of Halloween events is available below:

**Aug. 24–Nov. 1 (select nights): Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party, Walt Disney World.** The special event at Magic Kingdom returns earlier than ever before and will be held on select dates on 32 nights through Nov. 1. The event again will include the "Happy HalloWishes" fireworks display, Mickey's Boo-to-You Halloween Parade and the "Hocus Pocus Villain Spelltacular" stage show in front of Cinderella Castle. Prices have yet to be announced, but 2016 prices ranged from \$59 to \$73 (\$54 to \$68 for ages 3 to 9) with earlier nights being the least expensive. 407-824-4321. [disneyworld.com/halloween](http://disneyworld.com/halloween)

**Sept. 15–Oct. 29 (weekends only): Goblins & Giggles Getaway Weekends at Gaylord Palms Resort, Kissimmee.** Gaylord Palms Resort will offer a ghoulish good time for families with the return of its Goblins & Giggles Getaway Weekends. Guests can enjoy Storytime with Morgana, ghost tours, a Monster Mash Bash, a night-time pool party, [haunted house](#) decorating, trick-or-treating and more. \$189 per night, plus tax, resort fee and parking. Packages include accommodations, tickets for the Monster Mash Bash, trick-or-treating, an activity book, Storytime with Morgana and poolside activities. 6000 W. Osceola Parkway, 407-586-0000. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)

**Sept. 15–Nov. 4 (select nights): Universal's Halloween Horror Nights, Orlando.** The event is considered one of the world's largest, most elaborate Halloween celebrations. See if you can survive new [haunted houses](#), spine-chilling street experiences, outrageous live shows and more. 407-363-8000. [www.halloweenhorrornights.com](http://www.halloweenhorrornights.com). The Tampa Bay theme park gets its scare on for this annual event.

**Sept. 22–Oct. 29 (select nights): Busch Gardens' Howl-O-Scream, Tampa.** The annual Halloween event transforms Busch Gardens into a nightmarish array of haunted houses, wandering creatures mixed with the thrills of the park's roller coasters and other rides. The scares start at 7:30 p.m., but tickets give entry beginning at 5 p.m. \$45.99 to \$70.99. [www.howloscream.com](http://www.howloscream.com)

**Sept. 22–Oct. 29 (select nights): The Haunt At Old Town, Kissimmee.** Experience the Old Town Halloween in Kissimmee, which will include haunt zones, live entertainment and costume contests. Fridays and Saturdays: 8 p.m. to midnight. Free. 5770 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway. 407-396-4888. [myoldtownusa.com](http://myoldtownusa.com) The family-friendly events will run every Saturday and Sunday from Sept. 23 through Oct. 29, 2017.

**Sept. 23–Oct. 29 (select days): SeaWorld's Halloween Spooktacular, Orlando.** During this daytime family event, guests can trick-or-treat, create sea-themed crafts, dance in a spooky dance party and enjoy an underwater "fantasea." Included in park admission. 407-545-5550. [seaworld.com](http://seaworld.com)

**Sept. 29–Nov. 2 (select nights): A Petrified Forest, Altamonte Springs.** In its 10th year, this spooky event offers haunted trails for guests to walk through and special themed nights. 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. \$15 to \$30. 1360 E. Altamonte Drive. 407-468-6600. [apetrifiedforest.com](http://apetrifiedforest.com)

**Oct. 5–28 (select nights): Fright Nights, West Palm Beach.** This 16th-annual event will feature four haunted houses, carnival rides, live music, food and more. Thursdays 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 6 p.m. to midnight. At the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd. [myfrightnights.com](http://myfrightnights.com)

**Oct. 6–29 (select nights): Lowry Park Zoo's Creatures of the Night, Tampa.** The zoo will have scare zones, Halloween treats, glimpses of nocturnal animals and more. Ticket prices and times TBA. 1101 W. Sligh Ave. 813-935-8552. [lowryparkzoo.org](http://lowryparkzoo.org)

**Oct. 7: Harvest Fest, Jupiter.** Jupiter puts on Harvest Fest, a free family friendly festival that features an Oktoberfest-style beer garden, kids' fall carnival area, petting zoo, dog costume contest, local vendors, food trucks, and more. Noon to 5 p.m. At The Plaza Down Under on the Riverwalk, 210 Military Trail. 561-746-5134. [jupiter.fl.us](http://jupiter.fl.us)

**Oct. 7–29: Corn Maze at Sykes & Cooper Farm, Elkton.** Here's a way to get ready for fall: a nine-acre Corn Maze at Sykes & Cooper Farm. Event also features a Pumpkin Maze for kids. Other highlights include hayrides, and farm animals to meet and greet. Fridays 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$8 to \$10. Sykes & Cooper Farm, 5995 Brough Road. 904-692-1370. [www.sycofarms.com](http://www.sycofarms.com)

**Oct. 14: Family Pumpkin Festival, White Springs.** Big Shoals State Park hosts a family fun night complete with pumpkin bowling, face painting, hayrides and more. 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. \$4 per vehicle. 18738 Southeast 94th St. 386-397-2733. [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org)

**Oct. 20–21: 25th Annual Haunted Woods, Thonotosassa.** This event hosted by the Hillsborough River State Park features a haunted woods trail, coloring contest, family tram rides, drinks, prizes, contests and more. \$10, children 12 and under free. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. 15402 US-301. 813-987-6771. [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org)

**Oct. 20–21: 5th Annual Haunted Trails, Osprey.** Oscar Scherer State Park hosts its annual haunted trails with a haunted house, trick-or-treating, costume contests, food and more. Entertainment includes trick-or-treating, costume contests, the spooky haunted trail and more. 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$10 adults, \$5 children. 1843 S. Tamiami Trail. 941-483-5956. [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org)

**Oct. 20–22: Necronomicon, Tampa.** Shanna Swendson and Ken Mitchrone will be the guests of honor at this year's Necronomicon, a convention for science fiction, fantasy and horror. \$25 to \$40. Holiday Inn Tampa Westshore, 700 N. Westshore Blvd. [www.stonehill.org](http://www.stonehill.org)

**Oct. 21–22: Coconut Grove Pumpkin Patch Festival, Coconut Grove.** This festival features a pumpkin patch with more than 5,000 pumpkins, carnival rides, a cornstalk maze, food and beer. \$20. Saturday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Regatta Park, 3400 Pan American Drive. [miamiandbeaches.com](http://miamiandbeaches.com)

**Oct. 21: 13th Annual Florida Bat Festival, Gainesville.** Right in time for Halloween, the Lubee Bat Conservancy offers visitors a chance to get up close and personal with giant fruit bats by touring the conservancy grounds, not normally open to the public. The family-friendly event will feature free activities including bat-themed crafts, games for children, educational exhibits, bounce houses and bat experts. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission \$8 ages 13 and up, \$5 ages 5 to 12, 4 and under free. 1309 NW 192nd Ave. 352-485-1250. [www.lubee.org](http://www.lubee.org)

**Oct. 21–29: Spooky Empire, Orlando.** This annual gathering brings stars and fans of horror together in a Halloween, tattoo and film festival. The 2017 version brings guests Richard Dreyfuss, John Kassir, and C. J. Graham. Three-day passes \$60, single-day tickets \$30 to \$35. Hyatt Regency Orlando, 9801 International Drive. 954-258-7852. [www.spookyempire.com](http://www.spookyempire.com)

**Oct. 21, 27–28: Annual Haunted House Walking and Trolley Tours, Pensacola.** Guests can choose from among three walking tours led by guides who share the haunted history of the city. Trolley tours are also available for those looking to cruise alongside the ghouls. Check website for times and ticket prices. 117 E. Government St. 850-595-5985. [visitpensacola.com](http://visitpensacola.com)

**Oct. 23: Heroes and Villains 5K, Key West.** The Last Key sets the scene for the Heroes and Villains 5K Run/Walk. Participants are encouraged to dress as their favorite superhero or villain. Prizes are awarded for the most creative, best group, scariest and funniest characters. 6 p.m. Pre-register for only \$20 (price goes up after Sept. 21). Southernmost Beach Cafe, 508 South St. 305-747-8563. [www.themeruns.com](http://www.themeruns.com)

**Oct. 28–29: Zoo Boo Bash, Sanford.** The Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens invites children and adults alike to trick-or-treat throughout the park while learning about the myths and realities of endangered animals. Kids are encouraged to wear costumes and bring goody bags. Events include costume contests, face painting and more. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Event included in general zoo admission. At the Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens, 3755 NW Highway 17-92. 407-323-4450. <http://www.centralfloridazoo.org/events>

**Oct. 28–30: Manasota Pumpkin Festival, Bradenton.** On the agenda for this ninth annual festival are a pumpkin patch, maze, midway rides and games, pie eating contest, shows, petting zoo, crafts, hayrides, pony rides and a beer garden. Noon to 10 p.m. \$10. DeSoto Square Mall, 303 301 Blvd. W.  
[www.sarasotapumpkinfestival.com](http://www.sarasotapumpkinfestival.com)

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## London's Big Ben Silent until 2021

by [Meredith Carey](#), Conte Nast Traveler

August 14, 2017

London's Big Ben bell will remain silent for most of the next four years. The iconic bell will only ring for special occasions over the next four years.

After 157 years of nearly uninterrupted service, [London's](#) Big Ben has stopped chiming. Starting on August 21, 2017, the Elizabeth Tower (colloquially known as Big Ben, the name of the largest bell inside) will undergo a series of vital renovations, including repairs to the roof, stonework, and the Big Ben's 13-foot pendulum. People gathered in Parliament Square on August 21 at noon "to hear Big Ben's final bong until they return in 2021."

The bells and its tower are so desperately in need of work, according to Parliament, that without repairs, Big Ben could stop functioning completely. "We have a duty to ensure that it is safeguarded for future generations to appreciate, just as we owe it to our predecessors to restore their masterpiece to its former glory. While these works are much needed in the short-term, they will also ensure the long-term future and sustainability of Big Ben," Parliament spokesman Tom Brake said in a [statement](#).

While the Elizabeth Tower fell silent until 2021, the five bells that make up the iconic sound will still ring on special occasions, including New Year's Eve. The last time Big Ben, one of the city's most famous landmarks, stopped ringing for several months was 40 years ago during the last major renovation (though the bells were silent for six weeks for some minor repairs in 2007). "It's been running 24/7. You wouldn't run a motor 24/7 for 150 years without maintaining it," Paul Roberson, one of the clockmakers at the Palace of Westminster, told the [BBC](#). But, the repairs are much needed not just for the tower but for the 12,000 people who climb up to the bells each year. The \$42 million renovation will also include the addition of the tower's first elevator and the first bathroom.

Note: [Tours of the Elizabeth Tower](#) are free for U.K. residents but will stop while the renovations are on-going. Tours are projected to resume in early 2020.

## Natalia Cooper from "Today" on How to Get a Good Night's Sleep Away from Home

Sarah Nicholson, Escape

September 6, 2017 10:23am

Natalia Cooper knows better than most the importance of getting a good night's sleep while travelling. For most of us a sleepless night in a hotel room results in a late breakfast, or an afternoon snooze below a beachside palm tree, but for the Today team member it means presenting the weather while rubbing the sleep from her eyes. "My job takes me around Australia and the world and means I sleep in a different bed almost every night of the week," she says.

"We stay in hotels, motels, caravan parks, and even dongas and I never know when there will be night roadwork or noisy guests in neighboring rooms and whether I'm travelling for work or on a holiday it's important to get good shut-eye and wake up feeling as fresh as possible."

There are a few rules Natalia follows when travelling.

## CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

The first thing Natalia does in the place she's spending the night is create a "sleeping sanctuary." "I unplug any bright alarm clocks in the room, take soft earplugs everywhere I go and use them every night as they minimize the noise, and a silk sleeping eye mask also helps block out extra light," she says. "I also recommend trying to fit in some exercise after arriving at a new location, even if it's just a light walk as that helps burn off extra energy or stress, and half an hour before bed I put the phone down and read a book to unwind."

## TURN OFF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is the enemy of a good night's sleep and a recent study conducted by Westin Hotels & Resorts reveals 65 percent of people "sleep fewer hours while on the road" with many postponing shut-eye to stay online longer.

To combat the hypnotic lure of smart phones, tablets and laptops Westin has tweaked its Sleep Well offering to bookend the traditional wake-up call with a bedtime reminder that prompts guests to power down and snuggle in.

"The use of technology right before bed can stimulate the nervous system, interrupting a good night's sleep, and to help combat this Westin launched the 'bedtime call' service," Marriott International's Australia area vice-president Sean Hunt says. "This gives guests the option to schedule a gentle reminder for when they should power down and prepare for bed, and the call is scheduled based on when the guest needs to wake up. "From a room design perspective guests staying at a Westin hotel or resort can expect the Heavenly Bed for maximum comfort, as well as lavender balm you can rub into your pulse points to help you relax, and blackout curtains provide the perfect atmosphere for sleep." Turn off all technology.

## KEEPING IT NATURAL

Natalia also swears by a few natural remedies when it comes to slumber with her bedtime routine including a cup of chamomile tea. "I take magnesium supplements every night, as they are great for relaxing the muscles, just make sure they're not the ones with vitamin B as that might keep you awake," she says. "I also use a great natural room spray called Sweet Dreams by Perfect Potions which contains lavender, orange oil and chamomile and smells divine."

## Five Secret Hotel Rooms You NOW Know About (Don't Pass It On)

By Alyson Krueger, August 23, 2017

### The Jackie Gaughan suite at the El Cortez Hotel and Casino

When Veronica Hershey was planning a trip to [Las Vegas](#), her friend told her about an unadvertised suite at the [El Cortez Hotel and Casino](#). It was the former penthouse of Jackie Gaughan, a famed Las Vegas casino owner with eccentric taste. After a renovation, the owners decided to preserve the 2,700-square-foot space in his honor. The bathroom has a pink marble tub with gold swan faucets. The living room walls and floor are upholstered. There is a romper room covered with oversize shag pillows. It was recently used as the set for one of [Ellie Goulding's music videos](#).

The hotel considers this suite a gem but doesn't promote it. It isn't even listed as an offering. Rather, it's kept under wraps, available only to guests who learn it exists through word of mouth and request it. Intrigued by "the secret factor," Ms. Hershey selected it for her trip. "The experience was outstanding," she said. "The room was immaculate with two living rooms, full kitchen and even a retro wet bar. I was torn between telling everyone I know or just keeping the secret for myself." While ordering off-menu items has become trendy among knowing foodies, few travelers realize that they can do something similar when they book a hotel room.

Across the globe, many properties have accommodations that are hidden from everyone except those clued in to their existence. The hotels use them as a way to delight valued guests or generate buzz. Many of these rooms, like the Jackie Gaughan suite, have exceptional histories or aesthetics.

At the [Warwick New York](#) in Manhattan, there is a corner suite named after Cary Grant, who lived there for 12 years. From the hallway, it resembles any other room. Inside, guests find a wraparound terrace and wood furnishings and floral curtains similar to what Mr. Grant, or other famous guests like the Beatles, would have enjoyed. Many people

learn about the room from previous guests; it can be booked by contacting Angela Calabrese, the director of reservations. “This is what hospitality is all about,” she said, “having some secrets we only share with our special guests.”

[Union Station Hotel](#) in [Nashville](#) has Room 711, where a ghost named Abigail is said to linger. The property was once a train station, and according to one legend, Abigail threw herself in front of a train there after losing her lover in World War II. While the rest of the hotel has a modern, chic design, this room comes with antique furnishings like a four-poster bed and artwork inspired by her tale. Only guests who know about this legend request to stay in her room. It’s a selling point, said Kate Thompson, the director of sales and marketing. “What better way to intrigue and delight guests than give them an unexpected twist on the experience.” Other secret rooms come with features or amenities unavailable to other guests.

Ed Valente, a financial services professional who splits his time between São Paulo, [Brazil](#), and Milan, visited the [Uxua Casa Hotel and Spa](#) in Trancoso, Brazil, almost a dozen times before learning there was a private, unlisted villa. It was offered to him when the hotel was fully booked, and he was surprised by not only its existence but also its near invisibility to other guests (it is inside a garden). “When you come and go, you almost feel like you’re popping out of nowhere,” Mr. Valente said. Named Casa Frozina after a beloved local who called it home, the villa comes with an outdoor hot tub, a spacious veranda, a garden with sofas and hammocks, and furnishings made by a local artisan. Guests staying there even get access to a camouflaged path that leads to the town square.

Suite 5000 at [Mandarin Oriental, New York](#) features a private art collection, a Swarovski crystal wall, a curated record collection and floor-to-ceiling views of Central Park. It, too, is available only to those who know about it (travelers can request it when they call to make a reservation).

Once guests land one of these secret rooms, most face the dilemma of whether to keep them secret. Should they boast about their experience on social media or retain the intrigue for future guests? “Honestly, I try to keep it to myself,” Mr. Valente said. “After all, a secret should not be shared to many, only to those in the know.”

**PLEASE HAVE A FUN AND COMFORTABLE FALL, AND DON'T FORGET, PIXIE DUST TOURS IS THERE TO HANDLE NOT ONLY YOUR DISNEY TRIPS BUT OTHER TRIPS AS WELL!**

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