

# PIXIE DUST NEWS

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## 8 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE CRAZY FLORIDA HEAT WHILE AT DISNEY WORLD

(Posted by: [Mike & Jamie Sylvester](#) in [Planning](#))

Sure, Olaf may enjoy the heat, but we don't have that personal snow cloud provided by Elsa like he does! Until Disney can make that magic happen for all of us, here are our top 8 tips on how to deal with the crazy Florida heat.

### **1. Nonstop H2O**

Tip number one is to drink plenty of water! Pack some water bottles in your bag, become frequent visitors of water fountains, or get a free cup of water from any quick service location. Don't forget about your kiddos as well. They may be enjoying sugary drinks while on vacation, but be sure to focus on their water needs as well. The more you hydrate, the better you all will feel!

### **2. Keep It Light**

When you pack for your trip, check the weather and plan for the heat with the correct clothing. White, breathable t-shirts are excellent choices and shorts are a must! Light sneakers or comfortable walking sandals are helpful. Whatever you wear, just remember to keep it light. Don't forget the hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Sunburns and vacation just don't mesh well!

### **3. Cooling Accessories**

Sold throughout Disney, you will find what looks like a spray bottle with a foam fan on the end of it. This mist bottle is worth the money on those exceptionally hot Florida days. Plus, they make for neat souvenirs and are great for soccer practice when you get home! Baby in tow? Purchase a stroller clip-on fan before arriving at the park (Babies-R-Us). Don't forget to bring some extra batteries along with you in the parks. We've also brought along one of those cooling snap towels available at sporting department stores. You'll be happy you have it mid-day!

### **4. Water Recreation**

Of course, we must mention Disney's incredible water parks! Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach are just waiting to cool you off in the midst of the hot and humid Florida summer. If you can't make it to a water park, be sure to check out Disney's water activities at the Contemporary Resorts, such as Sammy Duvall's Watersports. Last, but probably one of the easiest ways to cool off outside of the park, would be at your Disney resort pool. Disney's pools are simply incredible! Enjoy the slides, the lounging areas, the kids' zone—the perfect way to beat the summer heat.

## 5. Tasty Refreshments

What better way to cool off than enjoying a tasty treat! It seems like every corner you turn in the parks there is an ice cream stand. You are at Disney after all! We love all of the ice cream selections, but especially enjoy the traditional Mickey Ears Ice Cream Bar. It's so good! We also recommend frozen lemonade or even a Dole Whip. Keep in mind whatever you eat to cool off shouldn't be a supplement for how much water your body needs you to keep drinking.

## 6. Mist, Squirt, and Splash!

There are a few ways to cool off in each of Disney's theme parks. Magic Kingdom has the awesome attraction, Splash Mountain, which will get you a little wet. Plus, Fantasyland has Casey Jr. Splash 'N' Soak for kiddos! Epcot has a great mist machine "car wash" area near Test Track. Plus, on your way in to the World Showcase, check out the squirting fountains that come up from the ground—kids love these. Animal Kingdom has the perfect water ride for hot days—Kali River Rapids! While Hollywood Studios doesn't have a water ride, if you sit in the front rows at Fantasmic, you may get a tad wet. Sure, you might look like a wet mouse walking around the park after some of these activities, but you'll be feeling refreshed!

## 7. Seek Out Air Conditioning

Anytime you have the opportunity to cool off inside a gift shop, attraction, or even the bathroom—we say go for it! Don't wait around outside for your group to get off an attraction. Instead, head toward the exit of the attraction and typically you can find an air-conditioned space and sometimes even seating. Do you have a young one? Take advantage of the air-conditioned baby care centers located at each park. Your baby/toddler will thank you! Last, we understand and agree that a view of the parade is important. We suggest trying to find a shady spot if at all possible. There is a lot to think through when enjoying a busy day at the park, but keep the focus on protecting yourself and your family and take advantage of cool moments whenever possible.

## 8. Time of Day

Are you an early bird and/or night owl? Good! We like to keep in mind that midday is the hottest time of day during the summer. If possible, head to the park as early in the morning as possible, before the humidity gets too unbearable. Once midday rolls around, head back to your resort for a time of relaxing in your air-conditioned room, or even for some swim time! When evening hits, you can make your way back to the park as the sun starts to set. Yes, this may cut out some of your park time, but we'd rather spend our time at Disney with Happy than with Grumpy!

## WORLD'S SAFEST COUNTRIES (FOR TRAVELING)

- Iceland
- Denmark
- Austria
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Czech Republic
- Switzerland
- Canada
- Japan

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## **STAR WARS: A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY**

(From Disney Destinations newsletter)

In an interesting mix of movie vignettes and character appearances, this stage show is all about highlighting what we love about Star Wars—everything! The show begins with John Williams’ famous Star Wars theme with highlights of favorite scenes from the original trilogy. As the opening builds, scenes from *The Force Awakens* begin to filter in along with a few scenes from the prequels.

Next, Yoda invites us to feel the Force and is followed by an on-stage appearance from C3PO and R2D2 for a short exchange. Yoda then speaks again of the Force. We see multiple shots of characters wielding their light sabers from all the movies. This section culminates in Yoda introducing the Sith and the Dark Side. Fittingly, Darth Maul appears on stage for a short light-saber demonstration.

The show then moves onto movie vignettes focusing on the many plots in the Star Wars universe and includes scenes of Luke Skywalker, Poe Dameron, and Han Solo, interrupted by an exciting (but short) visit on stage by Chewbacca himself with images of the Millennium Falcon behind him. The movie clips then focus on the search for the Millennium Falcon and end with Darth Vader handing over Han Solo to Boba Fett. Boba Fett then appears on stage.

The show then transitions to the Dark Side with Yoda quoting how people are led to the Dark Side. Scenes highlight Anakin’s path to the Dark Side and culminate with a visit from Darth Vader accompanied by Storm Troopers and John Williams’ *The Imperial March*. Those paying close attention will notice that Darth Vader’s Storm Troopers helmets are those from the original movies and not the newer Storm Troopers helmets seen with Captain Phasma and Kylo Ren from *The Force Awakens* era. Those details matter to Star Wars fans and Disney got it right!

Yoda’s wise voice returns to warn us again about the Dark Side. Kylo Ren then speaks and appears with Captain Phasma and more Storm Troopers. Scenes are shown from *The Force Awakens* and speak of the First Order and a deserter. Kylo Ren gets really angry upon hearing of the deserter (not so shocking if you’ve seen the movie).

The music transitions to Rey’s Theme and we hear Maz Kanata speaking. We are treated to more scenes of *The Force Awakens* and the good guys: Han Solo, Leia, Poe, Finn, Rey, Chewbacca, Luke Skywalker, and BB8. BB8 then appears on the stage (he does not move).

Finally, the entire cast comes out on stage for a final appearance with Maz saying that the Force is calling to us!

We really enjoyed the show as did the crowd. Throughout the show, there were many cheers and shouts, especially with certain character appearances. The show blended movie scenes and live characters well. The story flowed and had direction. The Center Stage area was packed during the multiple shows we saw. This show will please Star Wars fans from all generations as all of the movies were represented, though the prequels were definitely minimized (who can blame them). We highly recommend making time in your day for this show, and if you have a huge Star Wars fan in the family, then this show is a no brainer.

Shows are primarily in the afternoon hours. Check your Times Guide for the most up-to-date show times. Note that people were lined up as early as 45 minutes before a show starts. If you want a front row seat, be prepared to get there very early. Some people caught the end of a show, only to grab the best spots for the next one. The crowd pressed in once the show started and there is no shade in the prime viewing spots. Be prepared for standing in the hot sun! The show is definitely worth it, though!

#### **The Storm Trooper March led by Captain Phasma**

The Storm Trooper March led by Captain Phasma debuted on April 4. This march begins in the Animation Courtyard, leaving Star Wars Launch Bay with the Storm Troopers marching behind Center Stage and then arriving for a short (about 3 minutes) demonstration on stage. It's a real treat to see Captain Phasma up close with her troops! Anyone who loves Storm Troopers will not want to miss this short demonstration. Note that this is currently not in the Times Guide, but generally these shows are at the top of the hour (with the stage show being at half past the hour). Feel free to ask any Cast Member about exactly when they will march as times will vary day to day.

The Force has awakened at Hollywood Studios, and it awakened really well! If this is a taste of what we can expect when Star Wars Land opens, all we can say is, "Hold onto your hats!"

#### **TOP 4 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ZIKA**

(From Health.com – July/August 2016)

A year ago, Zika wasn't on most Americans' radar. Now the World Health Organization considers the virus an international public health emergency. Ann Powers, PhD, chief of the Alphavirus Laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), fills us in on the latest findings.

1. *Pregnant women aren't the only ones who should be worried.* Yes, they're the people most at risk because of Zika's confirmed link to birth defects. For most folks, a Zika infection produces a relatively mild illness, with only one in five developing symptoms such as fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes. But the virus has now also been tied to neurological issues, most notably Guillain-Barré syndrome, which causes the immune system to damage nerve cells.
2. *We're still not sure how long it lingers in men.* It's believed that the body clears the virus within two weeks, then you're immune. So if you later get pregnant (the CDC suggests waiting at least 8 weeks), your baby will likely be fine. But Zika may survive months longer in semen. Men returning from a Zika-infected area shouldn't have unprotected sex for at least 8 weeks (6 months if they've had symptoms) or for all of a partner's pregnancy.
3. *The virus will almost definitely spread in the United States.* Zika is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and can likely be spread by another species, *Aedes albopictus*—both found in the United States. The outbreak has already begun in Puerto Rico; the CDC estimates that 20% of the population could be infected by year's end. In May, Puerto Rico reported the first case of microcephaly due to Zika infection acquired in the United States.
4. *...but don't pack your bags for Antarctica just yet.* Consider this: The continental United States isn't battling the same circumstances—such as dense urban centers with high poverty, uneven access to health care, and weak mosquito-control programs—as many other places where Zika is thriving. Lifestyle factors, like our widespread use of window screens and air-conditioning, should also make it easier to keep outbreaks contained in most parts of the United States.
5. *Zika free countries:* Bermuda, Uruguay, Turks & Caicos, Chile, British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Cayman Islands.

## **CHOOSING WHEN TO GO TO DISNEY WORLD— CONSIDERATIONS BEYOND THE CROWDS**

(Posted by: [Chad N](#) in [Planning](#))

So you want to go to Disney World and you want it to be perfect? Of course. But when to go? This is one of the most important questions you must answer when planning your trip to Disney World. The challenge is that there isn't a single right answer for every person. While crowd levels tend to be the first thing on the minds of guests, there are so many other factors to consider. Here are a handful of things to think about before you set the date.

### **1. Crowds**

There's no getting around it. Disney World is more crowded than ever. All things considered, most people will want to avoid crowded times as much

as possible, but there are plenty of good reasons you may choose to visit during a peak period. Here are times with the lowest crowd levels:

- The week following New Year's Day through the first few days of February. With the exception of Marathon Weekend and the weekend/Monday of the MLK holiday, January is a great time to visit. Besides low crowds, it's also the coolest time of the year when we have our winter (brrrrrrrr). Don't worry, with the exception of a few random days, people who don't live in Florida call this spring or early summer—or just paradise. Expect temps in the upper 60s or low 70s.
- The last two weeks of February are generally slower.
- April through the first week of May. Spring breakers have left and schools and colleges won't begin letting out until mid-May. This is also a great time weather-wise to visit. Temps will have warmed into the 80s so pools and waterparks are in full swing. However, the oppressive summer heat and humidity that Florida is famous for is still a few months away.
- The second half of August through the end of September has some of the lowest crowd levels of the year. Schools are back in session and even if parents are willing to pull the kids out of school later in the year, they are usually unwilling to do so the first month.
- Be aware the first couple weeks of October get a little busier due to some events and some fall breaks. The crowds are nothing like summer or holidays, but they are noticeably heavier.
- The second half of October up to Thanksgiving week are generally slower. Don't forget to avoid Jersey Week. Again, not as heavy as summer or holidays, but slightly busier.
- Finally, the week following Thanksgiving through the first half of December are very good times to visit from a crowd perspective. Also, the humidity will have moved out but temperatures are usually still in the low to mid 80s so it's still great pool weather.

## **2. School**

If you're the parent of a school-age child, you have a difficult decision to make. This is probably the number one consideration for most parents with it comes to travel timing. The first step is to determine how your child's school will handle an absence during the school year. While many schools and teachers are surprisingly accommodating, others are not, which makes the question moot. If taking your children out of school is an option, then you must decide how *you* feel about it and if it's the right decision for your child. While there are many people with very strong opinions on the subject, it's your child and your choice.

## **3. Work**

This may be obvious, but if you have a job you need to report to in order to pay for your vacation, it's a good idea to take into consideration the best time to be away from it.

#### **4. Weather**

There is a perception that the central Florida television stations taped the forecast once in the mid-1970s and have been rebroadcasting it every day since then, but it's not true. Central Florida has three distinct seasons: perfect, nearly perfect, and hot. The perfect season runs from early November through April. This is the time of year when the humidity is low and the temperatures are in a very comfortable range of 70s to low 80s. We get our cold spells from time to time (We survived the winter of 2015. It was a brutal couple of days!), but a light jacket is usually sufficient. Be aware that if the pool and waterparks are at the top of the list for your family, swimming can be touch and go during this time. The waterparks will close in turns during this time for refurbishment, and while the pools are heated and we swim year-round, 60s is pretty cool for sitting by the pool. The nearly perfect season consists of October and May through June. The weather can be still warm in October but the humidity has usually begun to abate. May through June will be heating up, but with cooler waters off both coasts, it's still relatively pleasant. This brings us to the hot season. The heat and humidity really descend on Orlando from July to the end of September. Disney World sits in a tropical climate so summer is pretty hot and wet. Be aware that this is also our rainy season. It may surprise many to know that it rains in the sunshine state A LOT. During the summer it rains nearly everyday. That's the bad news. The good news is the storms are intense but short. Usually 30 to 45 minutes and then the skies will be sunny again. The last consideration on weather is hurricane season. Hurricane season runs from June 1st through November 30th. These massive storms are rare, but they can affect your vacation. Except in the case of a direct hit, Disney World will remain open. But plan on being very wet.

#### **5. Cost**

The time of year you visit will impact your vacation budget. Room charges vary depending upon crowd levels and demand for rooms. You can see significant savings on the cost of lodging by traveling during a slower time of the year. Disney also occasionally offers seasonal sales that you can take advantage of. While it is never guaranteed, Disney World historically has offered a spring room sale of around 25% off and a fall sale that includes free dining. Other sales do pop up from time to time. We keep an eye out for these sales and send alerts to our newsletter list when they are released. If you'd like a heads-up, you can sign up for the newsletter at the end of this article.

#### **6. Holidays**

If avoiding crowds is your number-one priority, then avoid holidays like the plague. However, if you are a fan of Halloween or Christmas, then you should consider visiting during these times. The Magic Kingdom is

decked out for Halloween with amazing decorations and is host to Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party. The Halloween season runs from mid-September through Halloween. From mid-November through the first week of January, Walt Disney World undergoes what can only be described as an amazing transformation to a holiday wonderland. While the Magic Kingdom is the star of the show, Christmas cheer spreads to every corner of Disney property. From the parks to the resorts to Disney Springs and pretty much everywhere in between, everything gets a touch of holiday magic. Also not to be missed are the resort gingerbread displays, Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, Holidays Around the World at Epcot, and my personal favorite, the Candlelight Processional. Honestly, the holidays are an amazing time at Disney World and shouldn't be missed.

## **7. Special Events/Festivals**

Disney World is more than just rides at theme parks. There are an amazing number of special events year-round you may want to think about incorporating into your vacation time. A couple of the most popular are the International Food & Wine Festival and the Flower & Garden Festival, both at Epcot. You can also catch a MLB spring training game at ESPN Wide World of Sports in March where the Atlanta Braves take up residence each year. Of course there are numerous other sporting events and tournaments at every level from pee wee to college, and all the way up to professional and Olympic.

## **DISNEY WORLD HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

(Posted by: [Christy Caby](#) in [Planning](#))

You will notice a list of warnings for many attractions throughout Walt Disney World. Among these warnings are height requirements. The minimum height requirement, if any, will be posted at the entrance to the attraction and will also be online within the My Disney Experience application. Be very mindful of these as you are planning your day so you don't get hopes up for an attraction that someone may not be able to ride.

### **Why are there height requirements?**

The height requirements are established based on safety tests that were conducted during the development of the attraction. The height requirements are put in place in order to protect individuals. The restrictions are typically based on the speed, intensity level, seat belt or restraint placement and type, etc.

### **The attractions that have height requirements across all of Walt Disney World:**

**32"**

Tomorrowland Indy Speedway—Magic Kingdom (to ride with a driver over 52")

Chairlift—Blizzard Beach

**35":**

The Barnstormer—Magic Kingdom

**38":**

Seven Dwarfs Mine Train—Magic Kingdom

Kali River Rapids—Animal Kingdom

**40":**

Splash Mountain—Magic Kingdom

Big Thunder Mountain—Magic Kingdom

Stitch's Great Escape—Magic Kingdom

Test Track—Epcot

Soarin'—Epcot

The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror—Hollywood Studios

Star Tours—Hollywood Studios

DINOSAUR—Animal Kingdom

**44":**

Space Mountain—Magic Kingdom

Mission: Space—Epcot

Expedition Everest—Animal Kingdom

**48":**

Rock-n-Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith—Hollywood Studios

Primeval Whirl—Animal Kingdom

Slush Gusher—Blizzard Beach

Summit Plummet—Blizzard Beach

Downhill Double Dipper—Blizzard Beach

Crush 'n' Gusher—Typhoon Lagoon

Humunga Kowabunga—Typhoon Lagoon

**52":**

Tomorrowland Indy Speedway—Magic Kingdom (to ride alone or drive)

**How heights are measured and determined.**

At the entrance to each attraction that has a height requirement, there is a stand that is positioned to match the height requirement for that specific attraction. You can walk up and test your kids yourself to see if they are tall enough to ride so that you don't spend time waiting for an attraction that they won't be able to ride. Also don't be surprised if the cast members stop you if your kids are right at the cusp of the height

requirements, as they double-check anyone that looks to be too short or very close to the requirement.

**Don't try to "sneak" a child who isn't the appropriate height onto an attraction.**

Try to remember that these requirements are put in place for good reasons. They are a matter of safety to ensure that every passenger is most likely to get off of the attraction with no injury or other serious issue. It is a bad idea to try to get someone under the height requirement past the filters and on the attraction. Many parents have tried to add height to their children by adding padding to their shoes or other crazy means, and it really isn't in their best interest for safety. Just don't do it and wait until they are actually tall enough to ride!

**Utilize Rider Swap.**

[Rider Swap](#) is a great feature if you have guests in your party who aren't tall enough for some attractions. You tell the cast member that you will need a rider swap. You then wait in the standby line while someone waits with the child that can't ride in another location. That keeps them from waiting in the long line and allows part of your group to do something else. Then after you ride you will be able to take your Rider Swap to the FastPass entrance and the person who had to sit out can then ride with two other members of your party with a far less wait. It is really helpful and prevents small children from waiting in the standby line, which can get long and exhausting for them.

**Don't waste FastPass+ on party members that can't ride.**

If you know that guests in your party can't ride a certain attraction, plan your FastPass+ accordingly. You could either decide not to FastPass the attraction at all since you can use rider swap; or if it is a really popular attraction and only some of your party really cares about riding it, you can get FastPasses for them and then something different for the other part of your party. This helps make the best utilization of your FastPass+ entitlements and reduces your wait times the most.

**THE NEW ANIMAL KINGDOM NIGHTTIME EXPERIENCES—  
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY** (Posted by: [Chad & Cindy](#)

[N](#) in [Animal Kingdom](#), [Theme Parks](#))

Disney's Animal Kingdom is an incredible park centered around conservation, discovery, and delight in the amazing animals we share this planet with. Until now, it has also been a daytime-only park with opportunities to explore after dark relegated to rare winter evenings when an earlier sunset and holiday crowds justified keeping the park open later. Even then, with many attractions such as Kilimanjaro Safari closing early, options were limited. That all changed as part of the

Summer Awakens celebration and the addition of a plethora of new nighttime experiences.

The object of much hype over the last couple months, this change is without a doubt the most exciting development at Animal Kingdom in close to a decade. As the curtain was raised on a new era in Animal Kingdom's history, the park was packed, and there was a level of energy and excitement among the crowd noticeably higher than normal. This was a big deal for Disney, but did they pull it off? Well, it's a mixed bag. There was some great, some bad, and a little ugly.

### **1. Extended Hours and Attractions at Night**

Since Memorial Day weekend Animal Kingdom has extended their hours from the typical closing time of 7:00 pm or 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm during the summer months. We had only experienced Animal Kingdom at night in the winter months when the sun sets around 5:00 pm and you might be able to get a small bit of time in the dark. We were thrilled for these extended hours as riding in the dark really does make it a whole new experience. Attractions that are open through the late closing are:

- Kilimanjaro Safaris
- Expedition Everest
- Dinosaur
- Kali River Rapids
- It's Tough to Be a Bug
- Primeval Whirl
- Triceratops Spin
- The Boneyard

The attractions that will not be open during the extended park hours include Rafiki's Planet Watch, Gorilla Falls Exploration Trail, and Maharajah Jungle Trek.

On Friday, May 27, wait times for these attractions varied. Not surprisingly, the wait for Kilimanjaro Safaris was the longest at 65 minutes at around 10:00 p.m. Expedition Everest saw very short wait times (around 5 to 15 minutes) at the end of the evening. Expedition Everest is an entirely different ride in the dark. The portions of the ride inside the mountain are pitch black and we swear it feels twice as fast. The chance to ride Expedition Everest in the dark is one of the highlights of the Animal Kingdom nighttime experiences. We suggest taking advantage of the shorter wait times when the Jungle Book: Alive with Magic show draws people away from the lines.

### **2. The Jungle Book: Alive with Magic**

Recently, Disney announced a temporary "Plan B" for the highly anticipated, but delayed Rivers of Light show. Discovery River becomes

the stage for a limited-engagement show inspired by Disney's hit live-action film *The Jungle Book*. *The Jungle Book: Alive with Magic* show features live music, singers, dancers, and special effects that celebrate the new film and classic songs infused with an Indian influence.

When we fans hear "nighttime spectacular," we naturally think of shows like *Fantasmic* or *Illuminations*. Unfortunately, *Jungle Book: Alive with Magic* isn't even close. There are two shows at 9:00 pm and 10:30 pm. There are also two different entrances: A FastPass entrance in Asia across from Expedition Everest and the standby entrance in DinoLand. If you don't have FastPasses, you will likely need to line up very early. On Friday, May 27, the theater was already packed at 8:00 pm. There is also very limited seating (more like standing room) on the bridge that links Asia and DinoLand U.S.A. The set-up is interesting. The outdoor theater is essentially split into two separate audiences on side of Discovery River. On the river are three stationary barges just off the edge of the river where most of the performance takes place. The center barge features the singers and the side barges feature dancers. There are also on-land stages at the front of both seating areas featuring dancers as well.

The angles of the barges are strange to say the least. The main performance barge is centered between the two seating areas and it's difficult to see well from either side. Also, with the positioning of the barges just off the edges of Discovery River, it's almost impossible to watch the live performers in the foreground and see the projections on the fans of water in the background (which may not be a bad thing—more on that next). The net effect of the staging is that there really isn't a good seat in the house. The major special effect of the show is gigantic "movie screen" created with fans of water onto which movie clips and other effects are projected. The effect is intended to be similar to what you see in *Fantasmic* but on a much bigger scale. I don't know if the problem was with the projection equipment or the distance or that the fans of water simply couldn't provide the density of water needed to create the "screen," but the effect fell completely flat. Images we saw were blurry and indecipherable. I completely understand that Disney was in a bind with technical issues in the River of Light, which was supposed to be the grand centerpiece of Animal Kingdom nighttime experiences. I also understand that by the time it was apparent that Rivers of Light would not be ready on time there was less than two months to pull together a Plan B. However, this show is a bomb. With some enhancements and fine-tuning, it could move up into the "bad" category. For now, we have to say it was the ugliest part of the night.

### **3. Tiffins and Nomad Lounge**

While not technically a part of the new Animal Kingdom nighttime experiences, Disney did also introduce a brand new table service restaurant and lounge on May 27, and we were there to get a first-hand experience of this high-end restaurant. We were very excited to hear that Animal Kingdom was getting another table service dining option. Billed as a Signature Dining location (a classification reserved for Disney's best and more expensive restaurants), expectations were set high.

I admit I was skeptical given the recent disappointment of Skipper Canteen and the fact that Disney usually struggles in this area. With very limited exceptions, the best dining options on Disney property are operated by other restaurant groups and Disney-operated locations tend to get a B rating on good days. However, to say that Disney hit a home run in Tiffins would be an understatement. It was an out-of-the-park grand slam. The design and atmosphere were artistic and classy. The service was impeccable. The food was amazing. The Wagyu Striploin and Braised Short Rib was perfectly cooked and was frankly the best steak I've ever eaten at Disney, as well as in my top 5 all time (and I've been fortunate enough to eat in many of the finest steak houses around the country). We will have full review with all the details and lots of pictures coming very soon! For now, let's just say it is without question one of the top 5 restaurants on Disney property.

#### **4. Discovery Island Carnivale**

On Discovery Island, there is a brand new celebration that features music, dancers, stilt walkers, food, and more. This was fun to watch. The performers and dancers were very energetic and were successful in pulling in the crowd to participate in the fun. This definitely belongs in the "good" category.

#### **5. Harambe Parti**

Harambe Village also plays host to a party where you can become a "party animal." Guests are invited to join this street festival that begins in the late afternoon. Entertainment includes:

- Muziki, stilt walking musician and drummer
- The Karibu Sisters, an acapella group
- Harambe Soccer Meerkats, the village's finest soccer players with skillful acrobatic dancing
- Harambe Village Acrobats

We witnessed the Harambe Village Acrobats and Muziki. The acrobats are simply amazing and a must-see! Be sure to check out the video below for the full act! Muziki was also fun and did a great job getting people of all ages to get up and dance. Again, a great addition to Animal Kingdom.

#### **6. Tree of Life at Night**

The highlight of the night was seeing the Tree of Life transformed into a magical display that only Disney can pull off. During the evening hours, pay special attention to the Tree of Life at the center of Disney's Animal Kingdom Park. At various times, flickering fireflies magically appear and awaken the wondrous animals' spirits carved into the tree's towering trunk—bringing to light a stunning visual extravaganza swarming with vivid color and animated imagery. The animal carvings that are impressive during the day come alive and move at night.

We sat at the base of the Tree of Life for about 50 minutes. The tree projections were amazing and Disney did a fantastic job. Most of the time, nothing much happens, but then here and there an animal carved into the tree makes some kind of movement. The tiger movement in particular was a very cool effect. There was also a short 5-minute show that is projected on the tree with music and scenes from the various animal centric Disney films. The show was fantastic. As you would expect, a very large crowd was a constant presence in the Tree area, all waiting to catch the show. There are no specific times announced and we were told times when it would be projected would vary. But when it happens, prepare to be amazed.

Our only complaint is that the shows are too infrequent! We got our spots at the end of the first show of the night and then waited over 45 minutes for the show to play again. By 30 minutes there was a lot of grumbling in the crowd. We saw many families eventually give up and leave disappointed. Considering the show is less than 5 minutes long, we really expected a 15- to 25-minute wait between shows at most. We really hope that Disney increases the times the show is projected through the night. Overall, Disney really did it again with this one! “Good” doesn't quite cut it. This is a “great”!

### **7. Kilimanjaro Safaris at Night**

We have been very eager to experience one of our favorites, Kilimanjaro Safaris, in a whole new light, or rather very little light. Until now, the Safari has only operated during daylight hours so we were very excited for this completely new opportunity. In addition to seeing the animals when many of them are much more active (and Florida is crazy hot so can you blame them?), Disney has also introduced new nocturnal species such as painted dogs and hyenas.

While the idea is fantastic, unfortunately, we were very disappointed. Our FastPasses were for later in the evening so we rode around 10:00 pm when it was fully dark. Disney used special lighting so as not to disturb the animals' natural rhythms. However, most of the time, it just was too dark to see anything. Sometimes you could see shadows and hints of

animals, other times you couldn't see a thing. There were large sections of the safari that were simply empty and we chuckled as our guide repeatedly encouraged us to "check out that big black thing that looks like a rock. That's the back side of a rhino." On the grassland section, a huge screen projected what we came to realize was supposed to be a sunset, however, until you were next to it, it really looked like the trees were on fire. Because of all of the light coming from the screen, this section of the safari was the best lit and we were able to see the many of animals here. Half of the lion area was in complete darkness so it made things difficult to see. When we turned the corner there was some light and we were able to see two lionesses and one lion moving about. That was a real treat since during the day the lions are typically sleeping.

The new species were a no-show, and I found myself thinking of the tour in the first Jurassic Park movie when most of the dinosaurs were nowhere to be seen. Fortunately, the odds of being chased down and eaten by a giraffe are low so this is likely to be a better experience than that.

If you have never experienced Kilimanjaro Safaris and have one day planned at Animal Kingdom, you will likely have a better experience with a daytime safari. We heard some good feedback about the safari around dusk. The animals were active, yet it still light enough to see! We would suggest trying for FastPasses in that timeframe.

It will be interesting to see how Disney tweaks the experience based on guest feedback. Again, love the idea, but unfortunately it didn't really work once the sun had fully set and it was dark. Overall, we think the Animal Kingdom nighttime experiences were a hit and will only improve as Disney polishes the rough edges. There is a beauty about Animal Kingdom at night that is truly touching and the opportunity for guests to finally experience it is welcome indeed! When Rivers of Light debuts, Animal Kingdom at night is going to go from good to amazing. Will you be hitting Animal Kingdom at night? What are you most excited about?

### ***CELEBRATE 60 YEARS OF MAGIC***

This summer is the best time ever to visit the Disneyland Resort in California . Go now and experience the **Diamond Celebration**—don't miss your chance to see it all dazzle! Plus, discover exciting new entertainment and attractions in both Parks. Debuting this summer in Disney California Adventure Park , the all-new Frozen—Live at the Hyperion brings the timeless story of Frozen to life in a music and special effects-filled stage spectacular. And also beginning this summer, the exhilarating new Soarin' Around the World takes you on a breathtaking journey over natural wonders and world-famous landmarks. That's in

addition to the special Star Wars experiences-like the thrilling Hyperspace Mountain -you'll find right now in Disneyland Park . Of course, you won't want to miss the spectacular Diamond Celebration nighttime entertainment; the electrifying Paint the Night Parade, the awe-inspiring Disneyland Forever street-to-sky fireworks show and the mesmerizing World of Color: Celebrate! The Wonderful World of Walt Disney. Disneyland Resort is the place where summer dazzles! So, plan enough days to enjoy it all with a multi-day Park Hopper ticket.

## **CURRENT DISNEY DEALS**

### *SAVE UP TO 25% ON ROOMS AT SELECT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORTS*

You can save up to 25% on rooms at select **Walt Disney World**® Resort hotels for stays most nights August 26 through November 5, 2016 when you book by Aug. 31, 2016. Check availability for other great rates for stays most nights August 1 through 25, 2016.

The number of rooms allocated for this offer is limited. Length-of-stay requirements may apply. Savings based on the nondiscounted price for the same room. Additional per-adult charges may apply if there are more than two adults per room at Disney Value, Moderate, and Deluxe Resorts. Cannot be combined with any other discount or promotion. Advance reservations required. Offer excludes the Villas at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort, campsites, 3-bedroom villas, Bungalows at Disney's Polynesian Villas & Bungalows, and Disney's Art of Animation Resort—The Little Mermaid Standard Rooms. 25% savings for select Disney Deluxe and Deluxe Villa Resorts; lower savings may be available for other Resort hotels.

### *SAVE WITH A KID-SIZE VACATION PACKAGE FOR AS LOW AS \$998 FOR A FAMILY OF 3!*

You can enjoy a 2-day/3-night stay in a standard room at a select Disney's All-Star Resort with one park per day **Magic Your Way**® base tickets for just \$998 for a family of 3. Book by August 31, 2016, for stays most Sunday through Thursday nights from August 1 through November 5, 2016. Great rates are available for other lengths of stay and party sizes.

### *LATE SUMMER FAMILY TIME OFFER*

You can enjoy a 4-day/4-night stay in a standard room at a select Disney's All-Star Resort with one park per day **Magic Your Way**® base tickets for just \$1,850. Book through August 31, 2016, for stays most Sunday through Thursday nights from August 1 through November 5, 2016.

Great rates are available for other lengths of stay and party sizes.

*ENJOY GREAT SAVINGS AT **AULANI**, A DISNEY RESORT & SPA IN HAWAII*

At **Aulani**, a Disney Resort & Spa, you can explore incredible pools, an unforgettable, complimentary kids' club and world-class entertainment. Now through September 26, 2016, you can save 30% on stays of 5+ nights when you book select nights between August 21 through December 19, 2016. And you'll save 25% on 4-night consecutive stays. If you book an Ocean or Partial Ocean View room, you'll receive a free meal at Ulu Cafe per person, per night of your stay.

\*Savings based on the nondiscounted rate for the same room. The number of rooms allocated for this offer may be limited. Premium View package includes one daily meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner) for each Guest (ages 3+) on the reservation per night of your package stay. Meal is only redeemable at Ulu Cafe during normal operating hours and includes one entrée and one nonspecialty beverage. Meal entitlements and Resort credits (limit one per room) may not be redeemed for cash in whole or in part, sold separately, transferred or refunded, and expire at 11:59 p.m. on package departure date. Limit 2 rooms per reservation. Excludes suites and 3-bedroom Grand Villas. Additional charges may apply if more than 2 adults per room. Cannot be combined with other discounts or promotions. Advance reservations required.

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**ANY VACATION DESTINATION, NOT JUST WALT DISNEY**  
**WORLD!**