

PIXIE DUST NEWS

SPRING 2017

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DESTINATION: EVERYWHERE! YOU WILL NEED A NEW ID! THIS IS IMPORTANT!!

You think you are ready to go on that big trip you've been saving up for. Suitcases are packed; you printed out your boarding pass, cancelled the newspapers, and took the cat to the kennel—the whole family is excited! You get to the airport and prepare to go through the security line. You hand your driver's license and boarding pass to the TSA agent . . . and everything stops! It is January 22, 2018, and you forgot that Pennsylvania does not meet the federal standards of the REAL ID act, passed by the U.S. Congress. Pennsylvania passengers with a driver's license issued by a state that is still not compliant with the REAL ID Act will need to show an alternative form of acceptable ID for domestic air travel to board their flight! Right now (January 22) you will have to show them your passport!! Don't let this happen to you! **Apply for that passport NOW and avoid the rush. Everyone in the family needs a passport—even infants! Forms are available at the Post Office.**

IT'S FREE DINING TIME! FEAST ON A DELICIOUS OFFER AT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

You can get a FREE dining plan when you purchase a nondiscounted 5-night/6-day **Magic Your Way**® package that includes a room at a select **Walt Disney World**® Resort hotel and ticket with a Park Hopper or Park Hopper Plus Option August 21 to September 30, November 14 to 20, November 25 to 27, and December 8 to 23, 2017, when you book by July 7, 2017. With this offer, you can enjoy distinctive Disney Resort Guest benefits and amenities—including early access to **Disney FastPass+** planning, Extra Magic Hours, complimentary Resort transportation, standard parking, and entertaining amenities! Plus, you can uncover a magical mix of new and unforgettable experiences, including **Pandora—The World of Avatar at Disney's Animal Kingdom**® Theme Park.

The number of rooms allocated for this offer is limited. Tickets and options must be used within 14 days of first use. Cannot be combined with any other discount or promotion. Ask about packages of other lengths of stay. Advance reservations required. Offer excludes campsites, 3-bedroom villas, Bungalows at Disney's Polynesian Villas & Bungalows, and Disney's Art of Animation Resort—The Little Mermaid standard rooms. Dining plan excludes gratuities and alcoholic beverages. Children ages 3 to 9 must order from children's menu, if available. Some Table Service restaurants may have limited or no availability at time of package purchase.

ENCHANTED ESCAPE AWAITS—SAVE UP TO 25%* ON ROOMS AT SELECT WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT HOTELS!

It's the perfect time to stay in the middle of the magic! You can save up to 25%* on rooms at select **Walt Disney World**® Resort hotels for stays most nights August 1 to October 7, 2017, when you book by August 31, 2017. With this offer, you can enjoy distinctive Disney Resort Guest benefits and amenities—including early access to **Disney FastPass+** planning, Extra Magic Hours, complimentary Resort transportation, standard parking, and entertaining amenities! Plus, you can uncover a magical mix of new and unforgettable experiences when you add theme park admission, including **Pandora—The World of Avatar at Disney's Animal Kingdom**® Theme Park.

**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 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 3-bedroom villas, Disney's Art of Animation Resort—The Little Mermaid Standard*

Rooms, and the Bungalows at Disney's Polynesian Villas & Bungalows. 25% savings for select Disney Deluxe and Disney Deluxe Villa Resorts; lower savings may be available at other select Disney Resort hotels.

10 WAYS TO SAVE UP FOR A DISNEY WORLD VACATION

Disney vacations can be pretty pricey, especially so depending on how long you plan to stay and which resort you are staying at. It doesn't have to have as dramatic an impact to the pocketbook though! There are a lot of great ways that you can save or create extra funds for your vacation fund! Here are 10 ways to save up for a Disney World vacation.

10. Open a Disney Vacation Account.

This is definitely a great idea that can help you save little by little and also earn you a little bit of extra spending money. You can open a Disney Vacation Account for free. The account gives you a safe holding place for your funds (but without risk since you can still get the funds back if your plans change). You can also set up weekly, biweekly, monthly, or one-time withdrawals from your main account so that money is frequently deposited into the vacation account but in smaller increments that feels less impactful to the bottom line when you are paying your bills. For every \$1,000 spent from a Disney Vacation Account on vacation purchases, you will receive \$20 in free gift cards! So why not get a little bit of extra money while you save!

9. Buy Disney gift cards on a regular basis.

You can buy a Disney gift card here and there when you are doing your regular shopping. This will definitely add up over time and lessen the amount of money that you have to come up with all at once. Once you have the gift cards, you can use them to pay for just about every aspect of your vacation. If you have a Disney Vacation Account, you can also upload them there so they are ready for use.

8. Create a Disney change jar or piggy bank.

Designate a change jar for your family to drop all of their loose change (and even extra dollars) in. The change definitely adds up and is a great way to save together as a family and watch the jar fill up. It's much better than the money getting lost in the couch or the laundry!

7. Round up your checkbook register.

One great trick is to round up the dollar amount of everything that you spend. You can round up as much as you are comfortable with, but one simple way is to round up to the nearest dollar. For example, if you spend \$127.46 on an item, then you would write it in your check register as \$128. This leaves the extra \$0.54 in your account and unaccounted for. If you do this for everything you buy, you build up a savings in your account that you likely won't even realize that you missed and it can go toward your vacation!

6. Utilize credit card reward programs.

Review all of your credit card and loyalty programs to see if you have any opportunities for money-back savings or gift card rewards that could be used for your vacation. It may not give you large amounts, but every little bit helps!

5. Clip coupons.

There are many thrifty guests out there who save a ton of money from clipping coupons. If you can save money on the household items that you would already buy, you can pocket the savings for the vacation account. You would have spent the money if you hadn't clipped the coupons, so the savings make great deposits toward vacation!

4. "Found" money goes to the vacation fund.

If you get a bonus at work, an extra discount on a purchase, a tax refund, etc., then try to put as much of it as possible into the vacation fund. You weren't planning on this money or savings anyway, so use it to build your vacation fun so you are ready when the time comes and won't worry about putting any of your vacation on credit.

3. Ask for gift cards for gifts.

If you or any of your family have birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc., coming up and people would normally purchase gifts for you or other members of your family, you could all ask for Disney gift cards as gifts. This will give each of you your own spending money for the trip that you won't have to worry about saving up for. You can even give your friends/relatives a report of what they "bought" you for while on your vacation!

2. Have the kids earn their spending money.

To help control the budget while also helping your kids budget their own spending money, give them an opportunity to earn their spending money. You can create a list of chores and the dollar value for them and encourage them to complete the chores to earn their spending money in the months leading up to the vacation. You can even hold the money for them or purchase Disney gift cards with the earnings so that they have it for the trip. You get chores done around the house and the kids have a set limit for their souvenirs. It's a win-win!

1. Review unnecessary services.

Review all of your monthly bills. Maybe there is a service that you are paying for that you don't really need. Are you not using your Sirius radio account? Do you pay for movie channels that you don't really need? If so, you could cancel these and then deposit the money you were spending each month into the vacation fund!

BEST TIMES TO BEAT THE CROWDS AT DISNEY WORLD

Making the decision to go to Walt Disney World is the easy part. Deciding *when* to go can be a little more complicated. While there are a lot of things to consider in making this decision, the factors most people ask about are crowds. The reason Disney World has a reputation for being crowded is simple: It's crowded. But hey, it's the most popular tourist destination in the world. What do you expect? But that doesn't mean the worst of the crowds can't be avoided.

First of all, the bad news: There is no such thing as a slow time at Disney World any more. Disney has done an amazing job of using special events, festivals, and strategic room deals to fill those traditionally slow periods. Nowadays, the parks are either busy, crazy busy, or "you have to be kidding me, what were we thinking" busy.

If you want to avoid crowds no matter what, then holidays are out. **The week before Christmas through the weekend after New Year's is the busiest time of the year for Disney World.** Magic Kingdom typically closes to new guests before lunch, and you may see gate closures at some of the other parks as well. We've been to Magic Kingdom at Christmas several times, and there is no doubt about it—it's the thickest crowd we've ever been in. We've seen lines of an hour plus to get on the ferry boat or monorail from the parking lot to the front gate. It's an awesome way to spend a holiday but be aware of what you're getting into.

It's not just the major holidays such as Christmas, New Year's, and Thanksgiving that pack the parks. Crowds swell around any holiday that closes schools and businesses. Whether trying to save on vacation days or avoiding extra days out of school for the kids, planning a vacation around a 3- or 4-day weekend is very popular. The lines reflect that. Summer and spring-break time also bring much higher crowd levels for obvious reasons. Many parents are reluctant to pull kids out of school or don't have the option so times of extended school breaks are peak season in Orlando. Jersey Week falls into this category as well. While the weeks following Labor Day through Thanksgiving tend to have lower crowd levels, the first week of November is an exception to the rule. New Jersey closes its schools for its teachers' convention and everyone who isn't a teacher heads to Florida.

Finally, special events can impact crowd levels. Two events in particular, Marathon Weekend and Food and Wine Festival, will affect your visit. Marathon Weekend is always the second weekend in January and brings 150,000 plus extra people to the parks. That's enough to bump wait times over normal January levels and make traffic heavy on Saturday and a complete mess on Sunday. Food and Wine Festival has made fall a popular time to visit, but the impact is mostly contained to Epcot.

So when are the slowest times to visit? Zig when everyone else is zagging. The key to avoiding crowds is to go when it's most inconvenient for the greatest number of people to travel. That gets us back to school schedules. Since families with school-aged children are the core of Disney's audience, visit during the times when it is most difficult for those families to visit. Here are the periods that historically see 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, early summer, or just paradise. Expect temps in the upper 60s or low 70s.
- The last 2 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 during the first month.
- Be aware that 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, that week is 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.

Again, we must warn you to set your expectations correctly. Empty parks are a thing of the past. No matter when you choose to visit, the parks will be busy, there will be lines, and you will want to get Fast Passes. Over the last couple decades, Disney has done a brilliant job of creating events, festivals, and facilities to draw crowds during traditionally slow times. However, try to visit during the periods listed above, avoid the times we've warned you about, and you will miss the worst of it. Have fun planning and enjoy your trip!

DISNEY PANDORA—THE WORLD OF AVATAR OPENING THIS SUMMER

Walt Disney Parks & Resorts Chairman Bob Chapek recently gave a construction update on Pandora—The World of Avatar and shared the exciting news that the new land is set to open at Disney's Animal Kingdom in summer 2017.

Bob also shared a look at a recent construction milestone—scaffolding has just been removed from the entry bridge into the new land (near Tiffins Restaurant), officially connecting the land with the rest of the park.

According to the storyline developed by Walt Disney Imagineering and Lightstorm Entertainment, this bridge was built during a time when a destructive company called the RDA came to Pandora. Now that they're long gone, nature is breaking down evidence of their presence. This bridge will soon serve as an entry into the base camp of Alpha Centauri Expeditions, the eco-tour group that is preparing Pandora for future explorers and adventure seekers. The story of the bridge is just our first look inside this land, which fulfills the original mission of Disney's Animal Kingdom of being a park that honors animals and natural environments "real, ancient, and imagined."

The entire Pandora—The World of Avatar land is set to open in 2017 and will transport guests to a visually stunning world complete with floating mountains and bioluminescent plants. Here, guests will be able to experience two excursions that will truly push adventure to the next level. First, the family-friendly Na'vi River Journey will send guests down a sacred river hidden within a bioluminescent rain forest. Their journey will end in an unforgettable encounter with a Na'vi Shaman, a figure who has a deep connection to the life force of Pandora. And second, the Avatar Flight of Passage excursion will offer the jaw-dropping experience of riding on a Banshee over the world of Pandora.

FUN FACTS ABOUT AFRICA'S BABY ANIMALS YOU MIGHT SEE ON A SAFARI

This article was updated and rewritten in part by [Jessica Macdonald](#) on December 9, 2016.

Baby animals are heartwarming cute, and the offspring of [Africa's safari animals](#) are no exception. From [elephant](#) calves covered in ginger fuzz to playful lion and [cheetah](#) cubs, spotting baby animals is a highlight of any safari. However, there's more to these tiny creatures than their adorable appearance. Unlike human infants, wild babies have to adapt quickly to life in the bush. Prey animals like wildebeest and impala have to be able to run within a few hours of being born, and even predator cubs have to learn quickly how to avoid danger. In this article, we look at a few African safari animals and the adaptations that they have developed to help them through their vulnerable infancy. Most animals are born at the start of the [rainy season](#), when food is plentiful and life is relatively easy. **If you want to see baby animals on safari, this is the best time to go.**

LION CUBS

Lion cubs are usually born as part of a litter of up to four siblings. Female lions often synchronize births so that all of the pride's cubs are born around the same time. In this way, females can take turns caring for the cubs, which will suckle

indiscriminately from any of the mothers as they get older. Lion cubs are blind for the first week, but can crawl within a few days. They learn to walk at around 3 weeks and are fully weaned by the age of 7 months. The first weeks are the most vulnerable, and during this time the mother lion hides her cubs in patches of long grass to avoid detection by other predators. As they become more stable, cubs play with each other, instinctively mimicking behaviors and strategies useful for hunting. The two biggest threats to lion cubs are starvation and infanticide. The latter happens when a new male takes over the pride and kills the offspring of his predecessor. The best places to see lion cubs in the wild include South Africa's [Kruger National Park](#), [Serengeti National Park](#) in Tanzania, and the [Masai Mara National Reserve](#) in Kenya.

ELEPHANT CALVES

Elephant calves may be small compared to their parents, but they still weigh around 260 pounds/150 kilograms at birth. Thanks to an incredible 22-month gestation period, baby elephants are well developed when they finally arrive and can walk within a few hours of being born. Baby elephants are unsure what to do with their trunks at first and will often suck on them in the same way that a human baby sucks their thumb. Elephants grow quickly, drinking around 3 gallons of milk every day. Their family unit is so strong that if a mother dies or is unable to care for her baby, the calf will be taken care of and nursed by a surrogate mother. Calves are usually weaned by the time they reach their first birthday, although they still depend on the herd for protection for at least another year after that. Female elephants stay with the herd for the rest of their lives, while males will eventually leave to form their own herd. Great places to see elephants in Africa include Botswana's [Chobe National Park](#), South Africa's [Addo Elephant Park](#), and [Tarangire National Park](#) in Tanzania.

GORILLA INFANTS

Like human babies, baby gorillas are called infants—and with only around 880 mountain gorillas left in the world, it's a real privilege to see them in the wild. Gorillas are also similar to humans in that gestation takes around 8.5 months, and female gorillas have an average of three offspring during their lifetime. Twins do occur but are relatively rare. Newborns typically weigh in at around 4.5 pounds/2 kilograms and are entirely dependent on their mothers until they learn to crawl at around 2 months old. Baby gorillas are able to walk by the time they're 9 months old, but are only truly independent of their parents at around 3 years. For the first few months, baby gorillas ride on their mother's back, using their powerful fingers to grip tightly onto her long hair. Unlike most other African animals, mountain gorillas do not have a specific breeding season, which means that if you join a [gorilla trek](#) in [Rwanda](#), [Uganda](#), or the [DRC](#), you stand a chance of seeing infants all year-round.

CHEETAH CUB

Cheetahs are usually born in litters of three to five cubs. Cubs can weigh as little as 5.3 ounces/150 grams at birth, although newborns are already capable of crawling and spitting. It takes up to 11 days for the cubs' eyes to open and 2 weeks for them to start walking. In the wild, cheetah cubs are extremely vulnerable to predation by larger cats, so their mothers keep them well hidden for the first few weeks. They also have a mantle of long, bluish fur that disappears over time. It is thought that this mantle acts as a deterrent to would-be predators by helping the cubs to resemble the fierce [honey badger](#). Cheetah cubs are weaned by 6 months and start attempting to chase small animals around the same time. It usually takes over a year for juvenile cheetahs to make their first successful kill, however, so in the meantime, they remain dependent on their mothers for meat. It's a rare treat to see baby cheetahs on safari, but your best bet is in the Serengeti, the Masai Mara, and South Africa's [Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park](#).

GIRAFFE CALVES

Giraffe calves are usually born singly, or more rarely, as twins. Female giraffes give birth standing up, so the calf starts its life by falling several feet to the ground. Newborn giraffes are already an astonishing 6.6 feet/2 meters tall, and they are able to walk and even run within a few hours of being born. Coordination takes a little longer to achieve, however! The giraffe's small horns, or ossicones, are flattened in the womb to make birth easier but become erect within a few days. These horns help the calf to regulate its body temperature, and if it's a male, they will one day be used in fights with other giraffes. Calves are typically weaned at around 18 months, but will start to try vegetation as early as 2 months. Despite their impressive height, baby giraffes are targets for hungry lions. They depend on their mother's powerful kick for defense. Like gorillas, giraffes have no set breeding season. They are easily spotted at most private and national reserves in [Southern](#) and [East Africa](#).

SPOTTED HYENA CUBS

Spotted hyena cubs are almost always born in pairs. They are well developed and are the largest of all carnivore offspring in relation to the weight of their mothers. Spotted hyena cubs are also unique in that they are born with their eyes open and with sharp canine teeth that can measure up to 7 millimeters in length. It is common for hyena cubs to attack their siblings, and often the weaker cub will be killed. Despite their teeth, spotted hyena cubs suckle their mothers for up to 16 months, growing strong on milk that has the highest protein content of any terrestrial carnivore. Spotted hyenas are quick to develop, displaying territorial and even sexual behavior before they are even a month old. After just 1 year, they are already adept

hunters and can start producing their own young at 3 years of age. Spotted hyenas are widespread throughout the top safari destinations of sub-Saharan Africa. Often, night drives offer the best sightings.

WARTHOG PIGLETS

Warthog mothers have litters of up to eight piglets and form a family group known as a sounder with other moms and babies. The mother gives birth to her piglets in a hole, where she suckles them for a week or so before rejoining the sounder. It is thought that individual piglets each have their own teat, from which they suckle exclusively for around 6 months; although babies often start rooting for bulbs at a few weeks old. If a mother pig loses her litter, she will often adopt piglets from another litter, helping those that remain to get the nutrition they need. Piglets become mobile quickly and are known for their playful nature. All warthogs have a thin, tufted tail that they hold erect like a television aerial. It's thought that this characteristic makes it easy for piglets and mothers to spot each other when running through long grass. Warthog piglets are usually born at the beginning of the rainy season and are a common sight throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

PLEASE HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE SPRING, AND DON'T FORGET, PIXIE DUST TOURS IS THERE TO HANDLE NOT ONLY YOUR DISNEY TRIPS BUT OTHER TRIPS AS WELL!
