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8 Simple Ways to Relax With Your Family at Disney World

THE STORY ON SOUTHERN GIRL TRAVEL

Southern Girl Travel is a travel agency and consultancy specializing in, among other things, leisurely and relaxing trips to Walt Disney World.

Please visit our website at southerngirltravel.com to learn more about what we do.

Southern Girl Travel is owned and operated by Jennifer Newsome with a little help from her husband, Mark.

Thanks so much for checking out this ebook.

I'm Jennifer and [if you would like to jump straight to 8 Simple Ways please click here.](#) If you would like to know more about us, keep reading and I will tell you why we love helping families relax and enjoy trips to Disney.



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RELAX, YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE.

I'm a mom. By default, that makes me the vacation planner (even if I wasn't in the travel business). If, by chance or divine intervention, the weather is perfect, the souvenirs readily available and reasonably priced, the photos flawless, and the destination surpasses my family's wildest expectations, then:

I am also a hero.

However, if it rains for a solid week, the shorts she wore all summer no longer fit, his flip-flops disintegrate, the camera full of non-uploaded photos gets dropped in the marsh, and the journey home is delayed by a traffic jam or an overbooked flight, then it is somehow all my fault.

Traveling with a husband and three kids used to stress me out.

I always thought that I couldn't relax until we had returned home with all of our possessions intact, having endured no late-night trips to an unfamiliar ER, severe sunburn, or mosquito bites that required an antibiotic.



I wanted everything to be perfect.

Invariably, it wasn't.

Then we decided to take our children to Disney World. I sold myself on the notion that this was a once-in-a-lifetime trip that would be the catalyst for fond vacation memories, stamped in my impressionable kids' minds forever.

THIS was the ultimate make or break trip.

It had better be better than perfect. Amid all of the guide-book buying, online researching, relentless quizzing of friends about their trips to the Magic Kingdom, something clicked:

**IT IS NOT A VACATION IF YOU NEED A VACATION
WHEN YOU RETURN HOME.**



This is important, so let me say it again: It is not a vacation if you need a vacation when you return home.

In capital letters.

In bold.

In italics.

With cute little stars on each end of the sentence.

****IT IS NOT A VACATION IF YOU NEED A VACATION
WHEN YOU RETURN HOME.****

And so I started to plan...

and this ebook highlights the 8 most important things I learned.



FAMILIES, LEISURE, AND WALT DISNEY WORLD

One of our specialties at Southern Girl Travel is family travel (especially families of five or more), and a visit to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida can be one of the best vacations a family can take together.

From the Magic Kingdom, to Epcot, to Animal Kingdom, to Hollywood Studios, the parks are wonderful and the on-site lodging, from the Polynesian, to the Grand Floridian, to the Wilderness Lodge, to the Yacht Club are perfect.

Disney's customer service is impeccable, the choices for food and drink are amazing, and the facility is beyond compare. The rides and shows are wonderful and the atmosphere can really be infectious.

It's all in one place, accessible by boat, monorail, and bus. A visit to Disney really can be the next best thing to a trip around the world.

However, there are so many things to see, and so many experiences to have at Disney, a visitor can come home after a week at Disney in need of another



week off to recover from the trip. Disney can be loads of fun for a single traveler, adult couple, or group of friends, but it seems that families with younger children really experience that Disney magic in a very special way.

But with children in tow, that magic can get just a bit hectic if you're not careful.

Really, it can be exceedingly hectic visiting Disney – all the kids, the crowds, the logistics of getting from one place to another!

It doesn't have to be that way.

A trip to Disney with the family can, and should, be an amazingly relaxing vacation. And that's my goal with **Southern Girl Travel**, with our Disney vacations, and all of our trips, to help you, our clients, relax and enjoy leisure. After all, what's our real aim in life, if not to enjoy leisure?



OUR FIRST TRIP TO DISNEY AS A FAMILY

I was married in 1999 to a great guy, and over the last 13 years we have had 3 wonderful kids, two daughters who are now 10 and 8, and one son who is 6. A few years ago we took our first trip to Disney World as a family.

I began my planning six months ahead of time and within a few weeks had all the details worked out...but, that's when the trouble started.

The trouble wasn't with Disney World, the reservations and travel plans went without a hitch.

The trouble was my husband.

My husband can, at times, be quite difficult.

I love him, but he often sees things very differently from most people I know. And not unlike more than a few husbands and fathers out there, my husband hated the idea of a trip to Disney World more than just about any ill fate that



could befall him. He typically referred to Disney World as Rat-Ville (actually he used more colorful language, but since we're concentrating here on *family* trips to Disney World, I'll keep it clean).

He hated the whole idea of the trip.

Why?

The thought of the stress and strain of dragging his wife and three kids into an airport through security, onto a plane, flying them to Orlando, through the Orlando airport, waiting in those lines to board a bus, checking in, and struggling through the crowds to ride It's a Small World, was part and parcel of the lowest circle of hell to him.

As we got closer to the day of departure, his level of stress got higher and higher. We told the kids about the trip 100 days out and put up a calendar where they could mark off each day of the 100. With each hash mark on the calendar, my husband saw himself one day closer to a fate worse than death.



Again, why?

My husband is Type A, and a CPA, and he leads a pretty hectic life.

He has been on many vacations that had absolutely nothing to do with leisure. He has been forced to spend his vacations and holidays in a minivan traveling from one retired grandparent's house to another while he sees his own free time dwindle away.

Don't many of us find ourselves in that same spot?

Yes, we do.

Our vacations should take that into consideration and they should have one aim – leisure.

Now, don't confuse leisure with laziness. Good leisure always has an aim and a purpose. And our purpose with a good Disney World vacation should be to enjoy the best Disney has to offer, while living at a humane pace.



Before our first Disney trip though, all my husband could see from home was another vacation where he came home exhausted and miserable.

That said, my husband is often more flexible than I give him credit for and a few hours into our first trip his mind began to change, slowly, but he did begin to relax.

And after two days at Disney, our oldest daughter told him,

**“Daddy, I wish you were
always this happy.”**





Does this look like the face of a grumpy Daddy?

(Notice the view: this picture was taken outside of our room at The Polynesian, and you can see the Contemporary Resort, the launch pad to the Magic Kingdom, the boat heading back, and the Liberty Square Riverboat. From the sliding glass door in our room, we could enjoy the fireworks over Cinderella's castle each evening that we weren't in the park)



Well, how did I do it? How did I get my husband to the point of relaxing at Disney? How did I convince a grump who thought Disney was hell, that it was really an amazing place to relax and have a good time?

I mean really relax, get in touch with leisure, and enjoy his time away from the worries of the working world?

I planned ahead.

I actually planned ahead pretty thoroughly.

It wasn't exactly hard, but I did learn a few things that made our first trip to Disney amazing, and after some time in the travel business, booking, planning, reading, researching, and writing, I have developed a solution for Disney planning.

And that solution involves one primary thing – **plan for leisure.**



You CAN visit Disney World and relax. Disney can be the ultimate in leisure. You can have an amazingly relaxing trip to Disney. If...

If, you follow these next 8 pointers (I like to call it the Southern Girl method) you can enjoy a relaxing Disney vacation.

The eight pointers, the 8 Simple Ways to Relax with Your Family at Disney, are:

1. **Relax, this won't be the only time you visit Disney, you don't have to see everything**
2. **Plan ahead**
3. **Build unscheduled time into the trip**
4. **Stay in the park**
5. **Fly into Orlando**
6. **Ditch the car and don't even *think* of leaving the park**
7. **Utilize the babysitting**
8. **Don't worry about the money**

Read on for the details!



1. RELAX, THIS WON'T BE THE ONLY TIME YOU VISIT DISNEY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE EVERYTHING

The sheer size and scope of Disney can be overwhelming.

Many, many visitors to Disney World get almost obsessed with seeing it all. Riding that latest ride, seeing that new exhibit or eating at all the restaurants you've read about becomes more important than slowing down and enjoying yourself.

A visit to Disney World is not a spontaneous thing. Plan ahead and realize that Disney is huge. There's absolutely no way to see it all in one trip (unless you have the time and money to move in at one of the resorts for a year and spend every day seeing the sights and riding the rides).

As a family with kids, plan several trips to Disney as the kids grow up, but I would not take a kid much younger than 4 or 5 years old, they won't remember it, and it will exhaust you pushing a stroller or dragging a tired



toddler around the parks. If it turns out that you really love Disney World (as I bet you will) plan one every other year (or every year if your time and funding allow). But know that you can always go back again.

So, relax, you don't have to see it all.

For my family's Disney trips, I always plan afternoons free. Mornings in the parks (including extended hours for resort guests, beginning at 8:00am), afternoons by the pool, or just relaxing with drink and a book while the kids enjoy the planned activities in the resorts; then, evenings at a show or back in the parks.

While relaxing in the afternoon, you can easily make some notes on the sights you want to see on the next trip (as your husband enjoys a beer and a nap, and you gloat at how you were right, he would enjoy himself, and whisper I told you so, over and over again).



2. PLAN AHEAD

A lot of people visit Disney.

I mean a LOT of people.

They often visit at the same time, so the crowds can be significant. And depending on how you feel about crowds you may want to schedule your trip around certain events.

Do the research or work with a professional (like me) and know what you want to see and do, and just as important, when you want to do it.

You may not want to visit Disney when a massive high school cheerleading competition is taking place (or maybe you would). And there are a ton of similar events that happen at Disney every year. The dates are all public. I would be glad to help you with those dates, or you can always consult any number of guides or websites that specialize in Disney to know when the peak times are, and schedule your trip according to what you want and don't want.



Also, many of the shows and events fill up very, very early. When I have made reservations as early as possible, I have almost always gotten the best rooms and best seats. On that first family visit to Disney, we were on the front row for every show we signed up for.



Hoop-Dee-Doo Musical Revue, at Fort Wilderness (photo taken from our table, front row)

Do your research or simply let me know, and I'll fill you in.



3. BUILD UNSCHEDULED PERIODS INTO YOUR TRIP

As I said above, when my family visits Disney, I like to plan on visiting the parks in the morning, and by early afternoon, I like to be back at our hotel to relax by the pool, with shows, suppers, or back in the parks at night.

The free time either allows us to completely relax, or to simply enjoy the Disney resorts on site, which have tons to offer.

Building in free time also allows you to be spontaneous and add new things into your trip that you might discover along the way.

That free time is what will help you immeasurably too. It will give you a chance to slow down and enjoy the time you have off. Stroll around the grounds of your hotel, or maybe just ride the monorail around to see the sights.



We have even taken that time just to stroll around Tomorrow Land and ride the PeopleMover over and over again. Or maybe just ride the same ride over and over again for fun. Or, just sit in the sun by the pool.



Hula Hoop contest at the pool at The Polynesian

You are on vacation to have fun, to get back in touch with **leisure**, and with each other.



To do that right you have to be well rested.

Building in that free, unscheduled time will allow you to thrive.

And don't worry about what you might be missing. It will still be there tomorrow, or next year, or several years down the line.

Time, however, you can never get back.



4. STAY IN THE PARK!

There are plenty of accommodation options in the park. The lodging can fit just about any budget.

Take advantage of those in-park accommodations. It will lower your stress and help you relax. You will spend much less time in transit and more time enjoying yourself.

Driving into the park every day will ruin the trip.

Don't even consider it. If you want to see all the sights in Orlando outside of Disney World, plan another trip just for that.

Make that Disney trip special and concentrate just on Disney. Staying in the park will help force you to concentrate only on Disney.





Arriving at The Polynesian, 9:30am

Also, staying in the park will take away those stressors of getting in and out. You won't have to remember where you left the car, and you won't have to argue about who's going to drive today.



Remember, this is a vacation.

You are supposed to be relaxing and having a good time. Which means staying out of the car as much as possible.

Stay in the park!

As an added bonus, resort guests receive special extended park hours, which gives you even more time to relax during the middle of the day.



5. FLY INTO ORLANDO

If you are more than a six-hour drive from Orlando, I always tell my clients, as well as my friends and family, to fly.

Yes it is more expensive, though often not as much more expensive as you might think. Follow these steps to make the comparison:

- Use Google Maps and determine the mileage between home and Disney World
- Estimate your car's miles per gallon, divide the two to get the number of gallons it should take you to drive to Disney World
- Multiply the number of gallons by an estimated cost of fuel
- Add in other expenses, food, lodging, entertainment
- Decide how much your time is worth

Add all those together and compare to the cost of flying. Yes, flying is likely to be more expensive in actual dollars, but when you calculate your time and the wear and tear on your body and the potential conflicts that arise when a



family is traveling long distances in a single vehicle, flying may actually be the better deal.

One of the things that put my husband most at ease on our first trip, was the flight.

He very much wanted to drive to save money.

We are about a 10 to 12 hour drive from Disney, but about an hour and a half flight. With three young children, we would have either had to drive through the night, spend the night half way, or both me and my husband would have been crazy by the time we got to Orlando.

By flying, we got on a plane at 7:00 am (yes, we did have to get up at 3:00am, but we were only in the van for an hour, and amazingly, the kids jumped right up when the alarm clock sounded).



But by 7:30 we had Bloody Marys, by 9:30am we were checked into our resort, and by a little after 10:00am were we crossing the lagoon on a boat to the Magic Kingdom.

My husband the CPA says that he will never, ever, ever drive to Disney.

And no matter what time it is or how much it costs, have that cocktail on the plane. It will set the mood. We always put aside some cash for drinks on the plane. I don't care if I am paying nearly \$50 for two rounds of drinks out of a plastic cup, it just makes the experience more special.

Oh, and dress nicely on the plane.

Air travel can be a nightmare these days.

If we all simply say no to the nightmare, things might get better.

Go slow. Plan ahead. Dress well.



Get to the airport early. Have a drink in the bar, the sky club, or on the plane.
For that matter make it champagne.

Be nice to everyone, especially the flight attendants.

Pack light and check as many bags as you can.

Smile a lot. Rise above it all. Channel that mythical golden age of flight and maybe things will begin to get better. Nevertheless, it will make your vacation to Disney more enjoyable.



5. DITCH THE CAR AND DON'T EVEN THINK OF LEAVING THE PARK

Now this advice is both for those flying in and driving in, and is a supplement to the above advice to stay in the park.

If you are flying in, don't even think about renting a car and leaving the park for any reason.

There's no need.

If you would like to see the sights around Orlando, schedule another trip. Make your Disney trips just about Disney and you will come away much, much happier – and well rested.

You can pick up a bus, Disney's Magical Express, at the airport, and it will deliver you right to your resort, and chances are your baggage will beat you to the room.



If you are driving into Disney, drive to your resort and park.

Do not, I repeat, do not even think about going back to your car.

Being without a car brings a sense of freedom and it gives you one less thing to worry about.



6. UTILIZE THE BABYSITTING (IF TRAVELING WITH KIDS 12 AND UNDER)

The Polynesian Resort at Disney has the Never Land Club. The Animal Kingdom Lodge has Simba's Clubhouse. The Beach Club Resort has the Sandcastle Club. The Wilderness Lodge has the Cub's Den, among others. The kids will love the experience and the adults will love the free time.

Take advantage of the free time.

It doesn't have to be terribly structured or planned even. My husband and I have simply dropped the kids off at the Never Land Club, jumped on the monorail and headed for Epcot. And as many Disney visitors will know, Epcot has some of the best food and drink at the entire Park.

One memorable night for us, we simply made our way around Epcot, stopping at a number of places for a quick drink, settling in England at the pub for several pints, and walking over to Japan for a supper of some of the best sushi and tempura this side of the Pacific. We still have the pictures and the



memories from that night, and the kids still talk about how much fun they had at the Never Land Club.



Enjoying a night at Epcot, while the kids enjoy the Never Land Club



7. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MONEY

Now you must be thinking...*easy for you to say, but we're on a budget!*

Well, we're on a budget too, and I am not advocating for blowing a year's salary on a single trip to Disney, but I am advocating for setting a budget, and then not worrying too much about the details.

For instance, on that first trip to Disney I mentioned above, I told my husband – did I mention he's a CPA? He put the A in type A.

He deals in money all day and can barely even stand to see a bill at a restaurant and the thought of paying for the Disney trip had me and the kids considering having him involuntarily committed – but I told him to relax and not worry about the money.

It took him a day or two to get into it, but he did. Because of our eating and drinking habits, we tend to stay away from the meal plans at Disney (unless



they are included as a part of a larger special that works for us), though they work well for many folks.

On this particular trip, I gave my husband his key card (which works to charge things to your room), and told him to get all the food and drink he needed and not to worry.

After we returned home he asked me what we would have saved had we worried about the money. What if we had stayed at a cheaper resort, scrimped on food and drink, and cut out all the extras? **My calculation is that we would have saved less than 10% of our total trip. And for that 10% we were able to have a much better time.**

Also, the way Disney's planning and reservations work, we effectively had most of the trip paid for prior to even stepping on the plane.

Set your budget, build a contingency percentage into that budget, plan ahead, and then don't worry about the money. **You will build life-long memories at Disney, those are worth 10%.**



A QUICK RECAP

A trip to Disney World in Orlando can be the best, most relaxing vacation a family can take. Or, it can be a living hell that you need another vacation to recover from. How do you ensure a Disney vacation will be a time to enjoy leisure?

Follow these steps:

- **Plan ahead**
- **Build unscheduled time into the trip**
- **Stay in the park**
- **Fly into Orlando**
- **Ditch the car and don't even *think* of leaving the park**
- **Utilize the babysitting**
- **Don't worry about the money**



Better yet, give me a call or drop me an email at Southern Girl Travel and I will help you plan a very relaxing family getaway to Disney.



HOW TO CONTACT SOUTHERN GIRL TRAVEL

Thanks so much for downloading and reading 8 Simple Ways to Relax with your Family at Disney World.

If you missed it, my name is Jennifer Newsome and I would love to talk with you about Disney World. You can find out more about Disney and Southern Girl Travel by visiting my website at southerngirltravel.com.

You can always drop me an email at jenn@southerngirltravel.com or better yet, give me a call at 919-612-6131.

I can't wait to hear from you!

Relax, you can get there from here.

