

CONTENTS

List of Maps xiv

Introduction 1

Why “Unofficial”? 1

- Declaration of Independence 1
- Dance to the Music 1
- The Importance of Being Goofy 2
- Honey, I Blew Up the Book! 3
- For Those Who Desire Additional Information 4
- The Death of Spontaneity 5
- A Word to Our Readers about Annual Revisions 5
- Corrections, Updates, and Breaking News 7
- We’ve Got Attitude 7
- The Sum of All Fears 8
- Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen? 9
- The *Unofficial* Team 10
- The How and the Why of It 11
- The *Unofficial Guide* Publishing Year 12
- Where’s the Index? 12
- Letters and Comments from Readers 12

Walt Disney World: An Overview 13

- What Walt Disney World Encompasses 13
- The Major Theme Parks 13
- The Water Parks 15
- Other Walt Disney World Venues 15

PART ONE Planning before You Leave Home 22

Gathering Information 22

- PassPorter Guides 23
- Walt Disney World on the Web 23
- Important Walt Disney World Telephone Numbers 28
- This Year’s Buzz: A Year of a Million Dreams 28

When to Go to Walt Disney World 30

- Selecting the Time of Year for Your Visit 30
- Extra Magic Hours 36
- Early Entry (aka Morning Extra Magic Hours) 38

Summer and Holidays 40

The Disney Calendar 42

PART TWO Making the Most of Your Time and Money 45

Allocating Money 45

Walt Disney World Admission Options 45

Help Is on the Way! 46

Magic Your Way 46

Base-ticket Add-on Options 47

Diz Spin 50

Every Cloud Has a Polyester Lining 52

Big Brother Is Watching 52

How to Get the Most from the New Tickets 53

Where to Purchase Magic Your Way Tickets 53

For Additional Information on Passes 55

Where the Real Deals Are 55

The Time-share Game 55

The British Are Coming! 59

Discounts on Admissions 59

Partially Used Passes Purchased before January 2005 59

How Much Does It Cost per Day? 60

Allocating Time 60

Which Park to See First 61

Operating Hours 61

Official Opening versus Real Opening 61

The Vacation That Fights Back 62

The Practicality of Returning to Your Hotel for Rest 63

Arrival-day Blues: What to Do When You Have Only a Half Day 64

Optimum Touring Situation 67

The Cardinal Rules for Successful Touring 67

What's a Queue? 69

Of Utmost Importance: Read This! 69

Touring Plans: What They Are and How They Work 70

Overview of the Touring Plans 74

Extra Magic Hours and the Touring Plans 81

FASTPASS 82

Understanding Walt Disney World Attractions 89

Cutting Your Time in Line by Understanding the Rides 91

Cutting Your Time in Line by Understanding the Shows 94

A Word about Disney Thrill Rides 95

"Unheralded Treasures" Touring 96

The Magic Kingdom 96

Epcot 97

Disney-MGM Studios 98

Disney's Animal Kingdom 98

PART THREE Accommodations 100

The Basic Considerations 100

About Hotel Renovations 101

Benefits of Staying in the World 101

Staying in or out of the World: Weighing the Pros and Cons 102

The Disney Resorts 104

- Disney Resorts 101 104
- How to Get Discounts on Lodging 107
- Walt Disney World Lodging Areas 111
- Choosing a Walt Disney World Hotel 112
- Researching Walt Disney World Hotels 125
- Readers' 2006 Disney Resort Report Card 129

Walt Disney World Hotel Profiles 131

- The Magic Kingdom Resorts 131
- The Epcot Resorts 143
- The Bonnet Creek Resorts 156
- The Animal Kingdom Resorts 164
- Independent Hotels of the Downtown Disney Resort Area 176
- Camping at Walt Disney World 180

How to Evaluate a Walt Disney World Travel Package 00

- SOME TIPS FROM MARY WARING** 185
- Walt Disney Travel Company Magic Your Way Packages 188
- Number Crunching 191
- Platinum Plan Reprise 192
- Throw Me a Line! 192
- Packages from a Different Perspective 193

Hotels outside Walt Disney World 195

- Selecting and Booking a Hotel outside Walt Disney World 195
- Driving Time to the Parks for Visitors Lodging outside Walt Disney World 195
- Getting a Good Deal on a Room outside Walt Disney World 201
- Condominiums and Vacation Homes 205
- RENTING A VACATION HOME** 206
- Best Hotels for Families outside Walt Disney World 216

Hotels and Motels: Rated and Ranked 225

- What's in a Room? 225
- Room Ratings 225
- A Word about Toll-free Telephone Numbers 227
- THE TOP 30 BEST DEALS** 228
- HOW THE HOTELS COMPARE** 230
- HOTEL INFORMATION CHART** 236

PART FOUR The Disney Cruise Line 255

The Mouse at Sea 255

The Ships 257

- Cabins 258

Services and Amenities 258

- Dining 259
- Facilities and Entertainment 260
- Children's Programs 261
- Sports, Fitness, and Beauty 262

Castaway Cay 262

Rates 263

A Few Tips 264

PART FIVE Walt Disney World with Kids 265

The Ecstasy and the Agony 265

- Reality Testing: Whose Dream Is It? 266
- Recommendations for Making the Dream Come True 266

Lost Children 284

How Kids Get Lost 285

Disney, Kids, and Scary Stuff 287

The Fright Factor 288

A Bit of Preparation 289

SMALL-CHILD FRIGHT-POTENTIAL CHART 290

Attractions That Eat Adults 294

A Word about Height Requirements 294

Waiting-line Strategies for Adults with Young Children 295

The Disney Characters 301

Meeting Characters for Free 304

Character Dining 306

Character Dining: What to Expect 307

When to Go 307

How to Choose a Character Meal 310

CHARACTER-MEAL HIT PARADE 308

Getting an Advance Reservation at Cinderella's Royal Table 313

Other Character Events 316

Babysitting 317

BABYSITTING SERVICES 318

Special Programs for Children 318

Birthdays and Special Occasions 320

PART SIX Special Tips for Special People 321

Walt Disney World for Singles 321

Walt Disney World for Couples 321

Weddings 321

TIPS FOR GOING SOLO 322

Honeymoons and Vow Renewals 324

Romantic Getaways 324

Quiet, Romantic Places to Eat 324

Walt Disney World "At Large" 325

Walt Disney World for Expectant Mothers 326

More Tips for Moms 328

Walt Disney World for Seniors 328

Getting Around 329

Timing Your Visit 329

Lodging 329

Transportation 330

Senior Dining 329

Behind-the-scenes Tours 329

Walt Disney World for Disabled Guests 331

Visitors with Special Needs 332

Friend of Bill W. 335

Guests Who Don't Speak English 335

PART SEVEN Arriving and Getting Around 336

Getting There 336

Directions 336

Security at Orlando International Airport 338

Getting to Walt Disney World from the Airport 338

Disney's Magical Express 340

Renting a Car 343

RENT AT THE AIRPORT OR OFF SITE? 346

Getting Oriented 347

A Good Map 347
Finding Your Way Around 347

How to Travel around the World (or, The Real Mr. Toad's Wild Ride) 348

Transportation Trade-offs for Guests: Lodging outside Walt Disney World 348
All You Need to Know about Driving to the Theme Parks 349
Sneak Routes 352
The Disney Transportation System 355

**DOOR-TO-DOOR COMMUTING TIMES TO AND FROM THE DISNEY RESORTS
AND PARKS 358**

PART EIGHT Bare Necessities 362

Credit Cards and Money 362

Credit Cards 362
Banking Services 362
A License to Print Money 362

Problems and Unusual Situations 363

Attractions Closed for Repairs 363
Car Trouble 363
Gasoline 364
Lost and Found 364
Pal Mickey 364
Medical Matters 365
Sergeant Blisterblaster's Guide to Happy Feet 365
Rain 366
How to Lodge a Complaint with Disney 367

Services 368

Messages 368
Pet Care 368
Excuse Me, but Where Can I Find . . . 369

PART NINE Dining in and around Walt Disney World 371

Dining outside Walt Disney World 371

Take Out Express 375
Dining at Universal's CityWalk 375
WHERE TO EAT OUTSIDE WALT DISNEY WORLD 372
One Man's Treasure 376
Buffet and Meal Deals outside Walt Disney World 376

Dining in Walt Disney World 379

Getting It Right 379

Disney Dining 101 381

Advance Reservations—What's in a Name 381
Behind the Scenes at Advance Reservations 382
Getting Your Act Together 382
Dress 384
Smoking 384
Food Allergies and Special Requests 385
A Few Caveats 385
Walt Disney World Restaurant Categories 385
WALT DISNEY WORLD BUFFETS AND FAMILY-STYLE RESTAURANTS 387
Hard Choices 388
Full-service Dining for Families with Young Children 389

Fast Food in the Theme Parks 390

Disney Dining Suggestions 393

THE TOP TEN SNACKS AT WALT DISNEY WORLD 394

The Magic Kingdom 394

Epcot 397

Disney-MGM Studios 400

Animal Kingdom 402

More Readers' Comments about Walt Disney World Dining 402

Counter-service Restaurant Mini-profiles 405

Walt Disney World Restaurants: Rated and Ranked 413

WALT DISNEY WORLD RESTAURANTS BY CUISINE 414

Readers' Restaurant-survey Responses 417

Full-service Restaurant Profiles 418

PART TEN The Magic Kingdom 457

Arriving 457

Getting Oriented 457

Starting the Tour 458

FASTPASS at the Magic Kingdom 459

Main Street, U.S.A. 459

Adventureland 463

Frontierland 467

Liberty Square 473

Fantasyland 476

Mickey's Toontown Fair 482

Tomorrowland 487

Live Entertainment in the Magic Kingdom 495

Parades 497

Afternoon Parade 498

Evening Parades 498

Parade Route and Vantage Points 498

Vantage Points for Fireworks 501

Leaving the Park after Evening Parades and Fireworks 501

Traffic Patterns in the Magic Kingdom 502

Magic Kingdom Touring Plans 504

Choosing the Appropriate Touring Plan 505

About Touring-plan Clip-out Pocket Outlines 506

Magic Kingdom Touring-plan Companion 506

The Single-day Touring Conundrum 506

Preliminary Instructions for All Magic Kingdom Touring Plans 507

What to Do if You Get Off Track 507

Park-opening Procedures 507

Before You Go 508

Magic Kingdom One-day Touring Plan for Adults 508

Author's Selective Magic Kingdom One-day Touring Plan for Adults 510

Magic Kingdom One-day Touring Plan for Parents with Young Children 512

Magic Kingdom Dumbo-or-Die-in-a-Day Touring Plan for Parents with
Young Children 514

Magic Kingdom Two-day Touring Plan 516

PART ELEVEN Epcot 519

Overview 519

Operating Hours 519

Arriving 520**Getting Oriented 520**

The EPCOT Acronym 521

Future World 521

Guest Relations 521

The Seas Pavilion 526

The Land Pavilion 528

Imagination Pavilion 531

Test Track Pavilion 533

Wonders of Life Pavilion 534

World Showcase 540

Mexico Pavilion 542

Norway Pavilion 542

China Pavilion 543

Germany Pavilion 544

Italy Pavilion 545

United States Pavilion 545

Japan Pavilion 546

Morocco Pavilion 547

France Pavilion 547

United Kingdom Pavilion 547

Canada Pavilion 548

Live Entertainment in Epcot 549

The Best Ways to See *IllumiNations* 551

IllumiNations Cruise 555

Traffic Patterns in Epcot 556**Epcot Touring Plans 557**

Preliminary Instructions for All Epcot Touring Plans 557

Epcot One-day Touring Plan 557

Author's Selective One-day Touring Plan 559

Epcot Two-day Sunrise–Starlight Touring Plan 561

Epcot Two-day Early-riser Touring Plan 563

PART TWELVE Animal Kingdom 566**Arriving 570**

Operating Hours 570

Getting Oriented 571**The Oasis 572**

A Word about Animal Kingdom Live Shows 574

Discovery Island 574**Camp Minnie-Mickey 576****Africa 578****Asia 583****DinoLand U.S.A. 589****Live Entertainment in the Animal Kingdom 593****Traffic Patterns in the Animal Kingdom 594****Animal Kingdom Touring Plans 595**

Before You Go 596

Animal Kingdom One-day Touring Plan 596

PART THIRTEEN Behind the Scenes at Walt Disney World 598**Behind the Scenes at the Magic Kingdom 598**

Behind the Scenes at Epcot 599
Behind the Scenes at the Animal Kingdom 603

PART FOURTEEN Disney-MGM Studios, Universal Orlando, and SeaWorld 604

Disney-MGM Studios versus Universal Studios Florida 604

Disney-MGM Studios 607

The MGM Connection 607

Comparing Disney-MGM Studios to the Magic Kingdom and Epcot 608

How Much Time to Allocate 608

Disney-MGM Studios in the Evening 609

Arriving at Disney-MGM Studios 609

Getting Oriented at Disney-MGM Studios 609

What to See 613

Waiting-times Display 613

Disney-MGM Studios Attractions 613

Hollywood Boulevard 613

Sunset Boulevard 613

Live Entertainment at Disney-MGM Studios 632

Disney-MGM Studios Touring Plan 633

Before You Go 634

Disney-MGM Studios One-day Touring Plan 634

Universal Orlando 634

Lodging at Universal Orlando 635

Arriving at Universal Orlando 638

Early Entry and Universal Express 639

Universal Express Programs Available to All Guests 639

Singles Lines 640

Universal, Kids, and Scary Stuff 640

Universal Studios Florida 641

Universal Studios Florida Attractions 644

Live Entertainment at Universal Studios 656

Universal Studios Florida Touring Plan 656

Buying Admission to Universal Studios Florida 656

Touring Plan 657

Universal's Islands of Adventure 658

Beware of the Wet and Wild 659

Getting Oriented at Islands of Adventure 659

Islands of Adventure Attractions 662

Marvel Super Hero Island 662

Toon Lagoon 664

Jurassic Park 666

The Lost Continent 668

Seuss Landing 670

Islands of Adventure Touring Plan 671

Islands of Adventure One-day Touring Plan 671

SeaWorld 673

Discovery Cove 675

PART FIFTEEN The Water Parks 677

You're Soaking in It! 677

Extra Magic Hours 677

Blizzard Beach 677

Typhoon Lagoon 679

Shark Reef 680

Surf Pool 681

Wet 'n Wild 682

Body and Mat Slides 683

Raft and Tube Rides 683

Other Attractions 684

Wakezone 685

Typhoon Lagoon versus Blizzard Beach 685**When to Go 687****Planning Your Day at Disney Water Parks 688****PART SIXTEEN Beyond the Parks 692****Downtown Disney 692**

Downtown Disney Marketplace 692

Pleasure Island 693

Disney's West Side 693

DisneyQuest 693

Disney's Wide World of Sports 696**The Disney Wilderness Preserve 697****Walt Disney World Speedway 698****Walt Disney World Recreation 698****Walt Disney World Golf 698****Golf beyond Walt Disney World 702**

Other Standout Courses in Orlando 704

The Best of the Rest 707

Miniature Golf 708**PART SEVENTEEN Shopping in and out of Walt Disney World 709****Hey, Big Spender 709**

Pin Mania 710

Shopping in Walt Disney World 711

Tips for Disney Shopping 711

I Need . . . 711

Downtown Disney 712

Epcot 717

Disney-MGM Studios 720

Animal Kingdom 721

The Magic Kingdom 721

Walt Disney World Resorts 723

Disney Water Parks 724

Disney Outlet Stores 724**Shopping beyond Walt Disney World 724**

Celebration 724

Universal CityWalk 725

International Drive 725

Outlets 726

Traditional Shopping 727

PART EIGHTEEN Nightlife in and out of Walt Disney World 729**Walt Disney World at Night 729**

In the Theme Parks 729

At the Hotels 729

At Fort Wilderness Campground 730
At Disney's BoardWalk 730
At Downtown Disney 730
Walt Disney World Dinner Theaters 733
Other Area Dinner Theaters 736

Pleasure Island 736

Pleasure Island Touring Plan 740

Universal's CityWalk 742

CityWalk versus Pleasure Island 743

Appendix, Indexes, Clip-out Touring Plans, and Reader Surveys 744

Readers' Questions to the Author 744

Readers' Comments 746

Accommodations Index 750

Restaurant Index 756

Subject Index 759

Recommended Visitation Times and Clip-out Touring Plans 781

Clip-out Touring-plan Companions 807

Reader Survey 815

Restaurant Survey 817

LIST of MAPS

South Orlando and Walt Disney World Area 18–19

Walt Disney World 20–21

Deluxe Resorts Room Diagrams 117

Disney Vacation Club Resorts Room Diagrams 118

Moderate Resorts Room Diagrams 119

Value Resorts Room Diagrams 119

Fort Wilderness Log Cabin Diagram 120

Grand Floridian Resort & Spa 132

Polynesian Resort 134

Wilderness Lodge and Villas 138

Contemporary Resort 140

Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Resorts and Villas 147

BoardWalk Inn and Villas Resort 149

Swan and Dolphin Resorts 153

Caribbean Beach Resort 156

Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa 158

Old Key West Resort 160

Port Orleans French Quarter Resort 162

Port Orleans Riverside Resort 163

Animal Kingdom Lodge 166

Coronado Springs Resort 168

All-Star Resorts 170

Pop Century Resort 175

Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground 182–183

Hotel Concentrations around Walt Disney World 196

International Drive Area 197

Lake Buena Vista Resort Area and the I-4 Corridor 198

US 192–Kissimmee Resort Area 199

Rental-home Developments Near WDW 212

I-4 and Walt Disney World Area 337

Walt Disney World Touring and Hotel Clusters 350–351

Magic Kingdom 460–461

Magic Kingdom Parade Route 499

Epcot 522

Where to View *IllumiNations* 553

Animal Kingdom 568–569

Disney-MGM Studios 610–611

Universal Orlando 636–637

Universal Studios Florida 642–643

Islands of Adventure 660–661

Shopping in Walt Disney World 714–715

Pleasure Island 737