

Disney on a Dime: Free Things to Explore at Disney World

Close your wallet and get ready to explore all the free things to do at Disney! Yes, you read that correctly: there are free things to experience at Walt Disney World. Between airfare, lodging, theme park tickets, food, and those surprise expenses that always pop up, vacations are expensive. We have all the tricks and insider information to stretch your dollar during your next family vacation.

Celebrate Good Times! If you are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, engagement, honeymoon, or even just your first time at the park, you can stop in to guest services and pick up a free button. Cast members will comment on your newly added flair and congratulate you on your accomplishment. If you are dining at a **Disney World restaurant**, be sure to tell the server you are celebrating something special. Several restaurants will treat you to a decadent dessert!

Beat the Heat. Spoiler alert: Florida gets hot. Very hot. Luckily, free cups of ice water are available at any counter service station at the various Disney parks. Don't forget to hop over to **Future World at Epcot** for free samples of international sodas and frozen Coke products. Free *and* refreshing? That's a win-win in our book.

That's Entertainment! Free, live entertainment at multiple venues. **Disney's Boardwalk** has a 1940's small town feel, and features nightly street performers like jugglers, singers, and magicians. **Disney Springs**, a stunning retail and restaurant destination, features live music every evening in nearly every genre. Musicians perform all over the courtyard, and emcees host fun interactive games including dance-off contests and lip sync competitions. **Epcot** also features live music throughout the year at their spectacular American Gardens Theatre.

Build It Up! Disney Springs is home to **The Lego Imagination Center**, featuring a sprawling 3,000-square foot courtyard loaded with THOUSANDS of Lego blocks for kids (and adults) to play with. Once a month, the center hosts a mini model build event that rewards kids with a FREE mini model.

Enjoy the Dazzling Fireworks. Insider information: **Disney's Polynesian Resort** allows free entry to their beach for exclusive firework viewing; as an added bonus, they play fun music to heighten the experience. Other places to view Disney's fireworks for free include The Ticket and Transformation Center, The Boardwalk, and the Grand Floridian.

Take a Detour. All of the **Disney Resort Hotels** are visually stunning and uniquely themed. Disney transportation is free to travel from the parks to any of the resorts. If you prefer to drive, each car is allotted a FREE 3-hour parking permit. The **Coronado Springs** pool is reminiscent of an old Mayan ruin, while the **Stormalong Bay** pool is

styled after a major shipwreck, and the **Wilderness Lodge** spotlights an exploding geyser! Each Disney resort lobby offers themed décor and innovative elements to enjoy as well. The **Disney All Star Resorts** feature one-of-a-kind photo ops with towering sculptures like a 40-foot tall Pongo from Disney's *101 Dalmatians*, or a Rubik's Cube that's the size of a house!

Explore a New Town. A quick hop, step, and jump outside of Disney is the idyllic town of **Celebration, FL**. The pristine streets are delightfully walkable as you window shop the boutiques and restaurants. Depending on the time of year, your kids can enjoy the interactive splash pad or the nightly "snow" fall during the winter months.

Take a Hike! If you are looking for a sweet respite from the crowds, take a drive to **The Nature Conservancy's Disney Wilderness Preserve**. Located in the heart of the Everglade's, the preserve boasts a revitalizing 2.5 mile trail where hikers can explore the native plants and animals.

As you and your family embark on your big Disney World adventure, remember that creating lifelong memories does not have to devour your vacation budget. The free activities mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg. Walt Disney World offers a wide variety of FREE activities, excursions, and food/drink samples. Disney World on a budget is possible and the options are nearly endless!