

DZ News

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Trip Planning and the Non-Planner

First of all let me clarify that I am usually a fly by the seat of your pants sort of person. I never plan meals ahead of time, I don't make reservations when we got out to dinner, I go Christmas shopping the last couple days before Christmas Day, I just tend to put everything off. Things always work out, and my life works fine this way.

My sister and I (well, mostly my sister) decided that she wanted both our families to go to Disney World together for a family vacation. I was all for it. I told her to make the plans and tell me when to call in with my credit card number to reserve our rooms, airfare, etc.

About a week later she called and told me that she wanted my input on some things. To be honest, I didn't care one way or another where we stayed, or which tickets we bought. I told her

to just pick whatever and it would be fine.

She insisted that I help with some of the planning. So I did. I met her at her house, and we went over all the various hotels and the pros and cons for each. She had an actual spreadsheet all made up! Which, I must admit made it really easy to see the differences.

After our second little 'planning meeting' I was getting excited. I realized that it is really fun agonizing over some of the decisions.

We met every couple weeks and went over the 'plan'. She mulled over the details inbetween, I am sure about that! But we did plan things out together for the most part.

I looked forward to our meetings, and even 'planned' babysitters prior to

the actual day of the meeting. Is my sister wearing off on me? Don't think so, but I did see the benefit of planning ahead.

Our trip was wonderful. We had so much fun. I think it was even more fun because we knew what the plan was for each day, we had reservations for meals even! It all went so smooth. I thanked her over and over for forcing me to be part of the basic plan, and for continually asking me to participate in the decision making.

She even included my kids in the planning. The oldest is 6 and she enjoyed it. She got to choose a couple places for us to eat, and also got to choose which day we would spend at the pool.

I don't think it will change my personality, but I do see some definite benefits to taking time to plan. I was very proud that I helped plan or perfect vacation!

- Natalie from Ohio

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Dinner at Chefs de France

Dinner Review Chefs de France

September 30, 2004

By TheRustyScupper

It was a slowly-paced trip, mainly to celebrate the 8th birthday of Granddaughter #2. Granddaughter #1 had her WDW tri at age-8, now it was DGD#2. Myself and Mrs. Rusty met DD#1 and SIL at WDW, after being invited by DGD#2. For the most part, us grandparents let the kids and grandkids wander, while we did attractions and saw sight not usually done when rushing around WDW ?commando style?. One of the events was dinner at Chefs de France. We had not been there in a few years, and decided to try them again.

We made our PS-Ressie for 5:00pm EST, which is opening time for the dinner serving. We were seated promptly at 5:20pm as the first guests of the evening, which is when they actually opened. Even at WDW, I find the French slow o late. We were placed at the front window where we had a grand view of the passers-by. We opted to move to a "four-top" (table for four) table instead of the "deuce" (table for two) at the window. I have an aversion for sitting on main aisles, near kitchens, or at small tables. For the price of Chefs, this is a small request.

Mrs. Rusty and I wee greeted by ?Anthony? from Bordeaux. Among other business languages, I do speak a little

French, so we attempted to communicate. I did an 'OK' job, and don't think I launched an international crisis. However, I did hear a reference or two about wanting to take back the New York Harbor statue. We reviewed the menu, and decided upon appetizers and a main course. The portions at Chefs are large enough to automatically know that dessert would be a stretch (a literal tummy stretch) to complete.

Mrs. Rusty ordered to French Onion Soup with gruyere cheese (Soupe a l'oignon gratin - \$4.95). I ordered the assorted cheese plate (Assiette de fromages de France - \$7.95), with four different cheeses. To accompany the appetizers, we ordered a glass of Chardonnay. Anthony seemed a little disturbed, as we did not order the main course. At fancy or elegant restaurant, I usually order the appetizer, then order the main course. This stretches the time of the experience, as well as giving us the possibility of changing our minds following the appetizer. The onion soup was excellent, with the right saltiness and completely loaded with onions. The bowl was so large it could have fed two, and she left the bowl almost two-thirds full. My cheese plate was good, with four cheeses and a field of greens. I used the French rolls to accompany the cheeses, and left the greens.

When we had completed the appetizers and talked a little, we ordered the main course. She had the one-half chicken, red potatoes and tomato (Demi poulet fermier a la broche, pommes rissolees et tomate braisee - \$20.95), and I

had the steak with pepper sauce, au gratin potatoes and green beans (Filet de boeuf grill sauce au poivre noir, gratin Dauphinois et haricots verts - \$27.95). She ordered iced tea, and I had a wine selection of an n attractive pinot. Her chicken fell off of the bone, and my steak could be cut with a spoon. Defintiely one of the beter or even the best steak I have had at WDW. There was so much chicken and meat, that we had to leave most of the potatoes and a good portion of the vegetables or we couldn't finish the meat and poultry.

Anthony was very attentive, and checked on our progress frequently. I sometimes thought he wished we would leave so another could take our table, but with over one-half the tables empty, I chalked this up to good service. However, We were then asked if we wished dessert while we were still finishing our main course. When I brushed him off, Anthony left the dessert menu standing on the table. A little gauche I thought. Instead of a dessert, I ordered coffee and brandy. Although I ordered Cafe American (American style coffee), it came very thick, and had a burnt taste. I am glad I had the brandy to wash down the coffee, instead of visa versa.

As an overall comment, the meal was excellent and the service very good. The total bill for appetizer, main course, and wine was just a little over \$110.00 for two. I would go back again, but next time we will do the Bistro on the second floor.

Turning Magical Memories into Photo Stamps

It has been almost a year since we have visited Disney World and I am looking forward to our next trip. Last October our family went to Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party and had a wonderful time. The entire family was dressed in costumes and it made for some great memories. Since returning, I have learned of a web site that can turn all your great memories into "PHOTO STAMPS" which are real postage stamps.

Imagine taking that precious picture of your family member getting a hug from Mickey or one of the many other characters at Disney and putting that image on a real postage stamp. The possibilities are endless, a family picture by the pool at your Disney resort or the children riding the monorail.

To reach this site, simply click on the link: <http://www.photo.stamps.com/> and for \$16.99 plus \$2.99 you can upload any picture into a sheet of 20 - \$.37 postage stamps. Once

you upload your picture, you can enlarge it, reduce it, flip it, and even change the picture if you don't like it. What I particularly like is you can take a group picture and "enlarge" it so only one person/face is in the stamp....the site is VERY user friendly and once ordered, it only took a few days to arrive and the quality was great.

This is the coolest thing I have done in a long time. I have recommended this site to numerous people and they all loved it. Several plan on making stamps for their Christmas cards using pictures taken at Disney.

Or course there are many different occasions that can be used for making photo stamps, but I am sure placing one of your favorite Disney pictures on postage stamps would create one more magical moment and would be a great souvenir for your scrap book, it is definitely worth taking a look at.

Keith T
Milwaukee, WI

Articles Needed!

Would you like to share your Disney experiences with others? Do you have some great tips that others might benefit from? Would you like to tell everyone about your favorite WDW restaurant? Have you stayed at one of the Disney resorts

lately and want to share details?

DZ News is as great as it is because so many of you contribute articles! Thanks!

Cheap Souvenirs

I have a wonderful tip to share with the DZ News readers. On my recent trip to Disney World with my fiancé, I found some great inexpensive souvenirs to bring back for family and friends.

- Pins—They are mostly under \$10, easy to pack & they offer such a great variety. Sports, hobbies, flags, you name it.
- Rubbery picture frames. I think the ones we bought were \$10-\$12. You can get them with characters on them, or the castle, or words.
- Mickey Head shaped notepads. I think they were \$8. They had different color paper in them. Very cute!
- Pens! We bought about 20 different pens. They are about \$5 each. They have so many different designs, you can find one for everyone.
- Keychains. Also in many designs. Run about \$6-\$10. They have different designs in various shops, so if you don't find one you like in one store, just wait until the next little shop.
- Candy! Lots of cute boxed candy items. Suckers are always a hit with kids!

We wanted to bring back something for everyone, so we didn't spend too much on each gift.

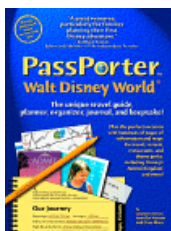
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Have you visited the **DZ Message Boards** lately? It's a great spot to meet other Disney World enthusiasts! There are many topics to discuss, lots of very nice people to meet & a wealth of information for those planning Disney World vacations! Visit today! **CLICK HERE** to go to the boards!

The **NEW LOOK**. The newsletter has changed a little, this layout should make it easier to read. Also, all the links to email & websites now work. Which means you can click on them and they will actually take you to a website, or bring up your email client. Give it a try and visit some of the links within the newsletter!

DZ has a great **contest** that just ended. And another one just started! Contests on DZ are ALWAYS FREE. You can win a great prize, just for participating!

Go enter the new contest, by visiting the contest page!

CLICK HERE to go to the DZ Contest Page - play and you could win a cool prize!

***If you would like to donate a prize, please contact us! prizes@disneyzone.net - You get some advertising on the site in exchange for your donation!**

DZ Kids

Do you like Mickey Mouse?
He is a favorite at our house.
He is cute and fun.
To Disney he will run.
Mickey Mouse loves Minnie
He doesn't look like Winnie
Mickey Mouse is great.
To see him, I cant wait!
- Ryanna, 13 years old

A good restaurant at Disney World is Chef Mickey's. I like it allot because you can eat lots of good food and make cupcakes. They have good pizza and hot dogs and lots of dessert choices. I also think it is fun when they do the napkin dance and it is fun when the charcters come to your table and visit you. They don't talk but they are still fun. At Chef Mickey's it is a long wait if you get there during the middle of dinner time so go at like 3:00 or something. It is a good place for food.

- Ben, age 11

Happy Birthday...



Sharon, Marie,
Colin, Skye,
Allyson - 8,
Meg - 42,
Joey - 13,

Alesha, Tom - 43, Chuck,
Jared - 12, Lisabeth - 17,
Christian, Douglas - 13,
Emilee, Tyler - 14, Cole - 6,
Dan, Eric, Sheri - 32,
Amanda - 4, Katrina,
Chris - 8, Charles, Vicki,
Courtney - 18, Jamie - 24,
Karen - 51, Paul, Edwin,
Joey - 13, Daniel - 7,
Drew - 41, Emily - 10,
Sarah - 14, Mari - 50, and
Ryan - 4, Cameron, Joel,
Caleb:9, Justin:16.

Please send an email to
birthdays@disneyzone.net

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