

THE 7220 TRAVEL FIRST-TIME DISNEYLAND GUIDE

7 DECISIONS THAT MAKE THE TRIP EASIER

A short, practical guide for families who want a great Disneyland vacation without turning every hour into a project plan.

FIRST-TIMER QUICK START

THE 7220 TRAVEL APPROACH

Plan the experiences that matter. Leave enough margin in the day for your family to actually enjoy them.

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2026 EDITION | VERIFIED SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

START HERE

Disneyland Is Compact - Your Decisions Still Matter

Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure sit across a central esplanade, which makes the resort much easier to navigate than Walt Disney World. The planning challenge is not distance; it is deciding what deserves your family's time.

DECISION 1: TRIP LENGTH

For most first-time families, 3 park days gives you breathing room. Two days can work for a focused trip; 4 days creates a slower pace.

DECISION 3: HOTEL

At Disneyland, a truly walkable hotel can change the whole day. Price the room against transportation time, parking, stroller logistics and the ability to take a midday break.

DECISION 2: PARK HOPPER

Hopper adds flexibility because the entrances are close. It is most useful when you want dining, nighttime entertainment or favorite attractions in both parks on the same day.

DECISION 4: LIGHTNING LANE

Decide whether your family values reducing certain waits enough to pay for Lightning Lane. It is a tool, not a requirement for a good trip.

THE QUESTION TO ASK

At the end of this trip, what 3 experiences would make your family say, "That was worth it"? Build around those first.

Your top 3

[] Must-do attraction #1: _____

[] Must-do attraction #2: _____

[] Must-do attraction #3: _____

TIMING

A Simple Planning Timeline

Disney procedures change, but the planning sequence stays useful. Handle the decisions that affect availability first, then save the flexible decisions for later.

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY IT MATTERS
6-12+ months	Choose travel window, budget, trip length and hotel strategy.	Your lodging choice affects every park day.
After tickets	Confirm required park reservations for each park day.	Valid admission and a park reservation for the same park/date are currently required.
60 days	Reserve priority table-service dining and selected experiences.	Disney currently opens selected dining reservations up to 60 days ahead.
30 days	Finalize airport transfers, park priorities, stroller plan and downtime.	This turns “ideas” into a realistic family plan.
7 days	Check hours, refurbishment notices, entertainment, weather and app settings.	Schedules and attraction availability change.
Night before	Charge phones, pack the park bag, confirm first park and pick one morning priority.	A calm morning beats last-minute decision overload.

DON'T OVER-SCHEDULE

Dining, rides, shows and breaks all use the same limited hours. Leave open space so a great spontaneous moment does not feel like a problem.

TICKETS & PARKS

Get the Foundation Right

Disneyland currently offers 1 Park Per Day and Park Hopper tickets. Guests ages 3+ need valid admission and a park reservation for the same park and date.

CHOICE	BEST FOR	WATCH FOR
1 Park Per Day	Families who want a slower pace or are visiting enough days to dedicate full days to each park.	Less flexibility if your dining or nighttime plans shift.
Park Hopper	Families who value flexibility, favorites in both parks, or changing plans as waits and entertainment shift.	Adds cost; you still enter the park tied to your reservation first.

A first-timer park split

- Give Disneyland Park at least one full day. It has the highest concentration of classic attractions and often rewards a second visit.
- Give Disney California Adventure a dedicated day if Cars Land, Avengers Campus, Pixar Pier or World of Color-style nighttime entertainment matter to your family.
- If you have a third park day, use it to repeat favorites rather than treating it as a checklist cleanup day.
- For Park Hopper, follow the current Disneyland app rules for crossing between parks; Disney can update hopping procedures.

7220 TRAVEL RULE

Buy flexibility because you plan to use it - not because somebody online says every Disneyland trip needs it.

HOTELS

At Disneyland, Walking Distance Is a Vacation Feature

Disneyland has 3 Disney-owned hotels plus a large Good Neighbor hotel network. The hotel question is not simply “on-site or off-site?” It is “What location and room setup make our days easier?”

OPTION	WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE IT	TRADE-OFF
Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa	Premium location, Disney theming and direct access to Disney California Adventure.	Usually the highest room cost.
Disneyland Hotel	Classic Disney atmosphere, resort pools and convenient access to Downtown Disney / monorail area.	Still a walk to the main gates; compare price to your priorities.
Pixar Place Hotel	Pixar theming and close access to the resort area.	Room price may exceed nearby off-site options.
Walkable Good Neighbor hotel	Often strong value, family room choices, breakfast or suite options, and a straightforward walk.	Quality, exact walking route and amenities vary widely.

Ask before you book

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Can our family realistically walk this route twice a day? | ☐ Does the room actually sleep our family comfortably? |
| ☐ Do we want to return for naps, pool time or a midday reset? | ☐ Is breakfast included - and will we use it before early park mornings? |
| ☐ What will parking, resort fees and transportation add? | |

PARK DAY RHYTHM

The Best Plan Has an Exit Ramp

A strong Disneyland day usually has a priority-filled morning, a flexible middle and a deliberate evening. You do not need to prove anything by staying open-to-close.

TIME	FAMILY-FIRST STRATEGY
Before opening	Arrive with tickets linked, park reservation confirmed, bags organized and one first attraction chosen.
Morning	Use lower early waits for your biggest priorities. Avoid stopping every 15 minutes to redesign the day.
Lunch / early afternoon	Eat before everyone is exhausted. Mobile order when it helps. Decide whether the family needs a hotel break, pool, nap or slower attractions.
Late afternoon	Return with energy. Use Lightning Lane, shows, characters or lower-intensity attractions while crowds shift.
Evening	Pick one nighttime priority. If little kids are done, leaving happy is a successful strategy.

MAKE DISNEYLAND YOURS

A 10-hour day that your family enjoys is better than a 16-hour day everybody survives.

QUICK WORKSHEET

Your First Disneyland Plan

Write this down before you build an itinerary. These answers are more useful than copying somebody else's "perfect" touring plan.

- ☐ Trip dates: _____
- ☐ Number of park days: _____ Park Hopper? YES / NO
- ☐ Hotel / area: _____
- ☐ Top attraction #1: _____
- ☐ Top attraction #2: _____
- ☐ Top attraction #3: _____
- ☐ Top restaurant / food goal: _____
- ☐ Nighttime priority: _____
- ☐ Who needs a stroller / mobility plan? _____
- ☐ Best time for our family's midday reset: _____
- ☐ One thing we are intentionally NOT trying to do: _____

READY TO MAKE DISNEYLAND YOURS?

A good Disneyland plan should feel personal, realistic and easier than doing all the research alone. 7220 Travel can help you match the hotel, tickets, park days and priorities to your family.

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Planning sources

Disneyland Resort official site - park entry requires valid admission and a park reservation for the same park/date.

Disneyland Resort Dining FAQ - selected dining reservations can be made up to 60 days ahead.

Disneyland Resort hotel pages - Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, Disneyland Hotel and Pixar Place Hotel.

Planning details verified September 11, 2026. Disney policies, operating hours, attraction availability and pricing can change. Confirm trip-specific details in the official Disneyland app and website before travel.

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