

In A Nutshell
May 2018
Travel to Disney World

My husband's birthday is April 24th and mine is April 25th. We often will plan something special to do over those days. This year we went to Disney World because we had not been there for many years. One of the drawing cards for our going is that Disney is currently having their Flower & Garden Festival. I want to report on the accessibility of the parks and surrounding areas.

We made our plans at the very last minute so finding accessible lodging was not easy. We settled on a room at the All Star Sports Hotel. And, actually this was the most economical choice. We asked for a room with roll-in shower and a king bed. The rooms are very small. Turning in my wheelchair was awkward at certain places. The bed was a bit high and I needed help getting into it. The bathroom was pretty good. There was a mini refrigerator which was nice since we were staying for 3 days and kept cold beverages and snacks in it. We did not use the pool but it had a very nice looking lift. It never seemed overly crowded and most of those using it were children. The hotel offered a food court with many selections. The front desk and concierge staff were very helpful. Since it was our birthdays we were given badges to wear. This was fun because as we made our way around all the Disney employees would say "Happy Birthday" when they saw the badge. The bus system is very good. All the Disney buses accommodate wheelchairs and scooters. Some even have 2 spots. They run frequently and will stop at all the Disney properties. We never had to wait more than 15 minutes going to or from the parks.

Day One was spent at Epcot. This is where you see all the amazing flowers and topiaries made into Disney characters. They were amazing. It kind of reminded me of the Rose Bowl Parade floats on a much smaller scale.

We went on the "Living with the Land" attraction. This required me to transfer from the scooter to their wheelchair and then on to the ride. You travel through greenhouses of all different plantings-vegetables, fruits, trees and flowers.

Then we went to "Soarin'". You must transfer into a seat that has a seatbelt.

You are then transported all around the world as if you are in a hot air balloon looking down on scenes from different countries. Great Wall of China, the Eiffel tower, Egyptian pyramids, and it went on and on. Don't do this if you have a fear of heights. The next attraction was called "Test Track". When you first enter you work at a terminal to design a car that will be graded as to performance, efficiency, power. Then you proceed to get into a test car that will take you on a roller coaster ride. Getting into and out of this car was very difficult. It required two people to lift me into a seat. The ride itself was teeth clenching. At one point you are going greater than 60 miles per hour. Heart pounding turns and dips.

Getting out of the car was another two person ordeal. So I would say that this attraction was the least accessible of all. Then we did "The Seas with Nemo". For this ride you transfer to a wheelchair and get into something that looks like a shell. It holds 2 people. We had dinner at the Coral Reef Restaurant. One entire

wall is like a giant aquarium for you to watch fish, stingrays, sharks and even divers swimming around. Very unique setting. Plus they gave us a free dessert because it was our birthdays. We were beat because it had been a very long day. We did not stay for the Illumination over the lake.

Day Two

We made our way to the Animal Kingdom. Neither of us had been here before. I will caution you that the ground is uneven, bumpy and hilly. We found it difficult to navigate and we got lost several times. I highly recommend seeing "The Lion King" show. All wheelchairs and scooters are placed in the front row. These were excellent seats for an excellent show. We took the "Gorilla Falls Exploration Trail". We did see a few gorillas but once again the path was uneven. I recommend the "Kilimanjaro Safari". You must transfer to a wheelchair and then pull onto a special jeep where you transfer to a seat. You will see more animals here- cheetah, tigers, giraffes, hippos, elephants in their natural elements. There was another attraction/show of trained birds. For this you would be placed in the top row which weren't bad seats. I never thought that birds could be trained but these were. The "Na'vi River Journey" and "Avatar" were both closed. We had dinner at Tiffin's which offered food that is indigenes to Africa. Rick had wild boar that said it tasted like beef tenderloin. Once again a free dessert for our birthdays. I most highly recommend the "Rivers of Light" attraction that comes on at dark. You will be taken to a front row which is excellent viewing. Do not get too close to the area near the entrance because those seats were soaked with water. We were further down the line and I even got a little damp. But it is a spectacular show. Then go to the big, and I mean really big, Tree of Life in the middle of the park. They light this up and there are holographs of animals playing. This is just something you gather around. Don't miss seeing this.

Day Three

Off to Hollywood Studios on our last day. We went to the Beauty and the Beast show. You will be seated in the top row here but it is not too bad. They did have an area in the front row but we thought that would be too close. Very pretty, colorful show. We also did the Indiana Jones Adventure. You will be seated in the back row but it is not too bad viewing. I recommend this. If you are a Star Wars fan this is the park for you.

Final comment-you must get Fast Passes. You are allowed 3 per park per day. It eliminates a lot of wait time. And get the My Disney Experience app onto your phone.

Just for Fun



If you have any travel experiences that you would like to share please let me know and I will include them in future articles. Kaydee691@gmail.com