



PLANNING A BUDGET-  
FRIENDLY PRINCESS DAY

WITH KIDS!





BY DANI MORTIZ

**M**ost little girls dream of becoming a princess, but few actually have a Fairy Godmother to bibbidi-bobbidi-boo their dreams into reality. But at Walt Disney World, anyone can become a princess, and it doesn't have to cost a royal fortune.

Here's how you can transform your little one into a princess for a day without breaking the bank. (No wand required.)

### PRE-PURCHASE THE WARDROBE

Disney sells gorgeous princess gowns throughout the park, but they aren't without high-dollar price tags. If you plan ahead, you can buy more affordable (yet still stunning) alternatives ahead of your trip.

My daughter Sagan dresses for our visits to Magic Kingdom frequently, and most of her gowns come from Amazon. Her auntie (the closest thing Sagan has to a Fairy Godmother) has bought her several full-fledged princess outfits, from Aurora to Belle to Moana. Most of them have been \$25 or less—and some have come with accessories.

Speaking of accessories, no princess is complete without one particular item: her tiara. Amazon is my go-to for that, too. You can find plenty of headpiece options to crown your princess.

Your little one might want to wear princess shoes, but glass slippers and plastic heels don't mix well with theme parks. I recommend a pair of white sneakers to complete the look, but comfortable sandals can work well, too.

**PRO TIP:** Florida is hot, and princess attire doesn't always help. Be prepared for your little one to want to change into something more comfortable after a few hours. Pack comfy clothes (like a princess T-shirt and shorts) just in case.

### ENJOY A MORNING SPA SESSION

Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique is a great way to give your child the royal spa treatment, but you can also arrange a princess transformation on a budget. Before you head to the parks with your little one, take some time to do a special spa session in the hotel room. If you're comfortable, you can make your princess's day extra special by applying some kid-friendly, shimmery makeup and a little lip gloss.

I also recommend doing a simple up-do (like a bun). This hairstyle works perfectly with a tiara and keeps your child's neck cool. My daughter calls it the "princess hairstyle."

You can top off the spa session when you get to Magic Kingdom by heading to Sir Mickey's, which is located just behind Cinderella Castle. There, you can ask a Cast Member for a free pixie dusting. They'll sprinkle some pixie dust (glitter) on your princess to complete the look.

### PARTAKE IN PRINCESS LESSONS

Another way you can help your princess prepare for their royal debut is by giving them proper princess lessons before your visit. Teach them how to give a royal princess wave and a proper curtsy,



Don't have a princess dress handy? Sir Mickey's has a wide variety, including this Cinderella dress. **PHOTO BY LAURIE SAPP**



DIY the makeover to save some bucks—and make your princess feel royal before you walk inside the gate! **PHOTO BY CLIFF WANG**  
OPPOSITE: Anyone can be a princess for a day at Walt Disney World. **PHOTO BY ERNIE CARR**





and practice walking with good posture while in their princess dress—navigating stairs in a ballgown takes some getting used to.

It may seem silly, but princess lessons will help your little one feel extra special. My daughter loves when someone calls her a princess, and she's always prepared to respond with her special princess wave.

### CAPTURE THE MOMENT

A day as a princess wouldn't be complete without the proof, so plan to take plenty of photos. This is another way to make your princess feel special in the moment while also capturing memories for years to come.

Walt Disney World Resort has plenty of great locations for photo shoots (even with your smartphone). At Magic Kingdom, my go-to locations are in front of and behind Cinderella Castle, at the wishing well (behind the castle), aboard Prince Charming's Regal Carousel, and in front of Belle's Castle in Fantasyland.

For an extra-special day, I recommend taking the monorail over to Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, where you'll find some additional breathtaking backdrops for a photo shoot. Our favorites include the magnificent lobby and beautiful waterfront.

### MEET THEIR IDOLS

One of my daughter's favorite parts of dressing like a princess is showing off her attire to a real-life Disney Princess at a meet-and-greet. Our go-to is Princess Fairytale Hall, where aspiring princesses can meet some of Disney's most beloved royal characters, including Tiana, Rapunzel, Cinderella, and Elena of Avalor. The Hall's princesses love engaging with smaller versions of themselves and practicing twirling and curtsies with the princesses who come to visit. Kiddos can also meet Belle inside her library and head under the sea to meet Ariel at her grotto.

**PRO TIP:** Meeting your idol (especially a princess!) can feel intimidating. If character meet-and-greets are new to your little one, explain what they'll experience beforehand. Go over what to expect—from waiting in line to getting a chance to talk to and even hug their favorite princesses—so your little one doesn't feel overwhelmed when it's their time to shine.



*Belle—wait, that's Sagan M.!—meets Cinderella. PHOTO BY DANI MORTIZ*



*Sisters? Close! Lily W. meets Anna. PHOTO BY CLIFF WANG*



*Under the sea and on land are both great places to meet Ariel. Lily S. chose to meet this salty princess on terra firma. PHOTO BY LAURIE SAPP*





Chow down on a cinnamon roll fit for royalty at Gaston's Tavern. **PHOTOS BY JEFF CHIU**

### GRAB A BITE

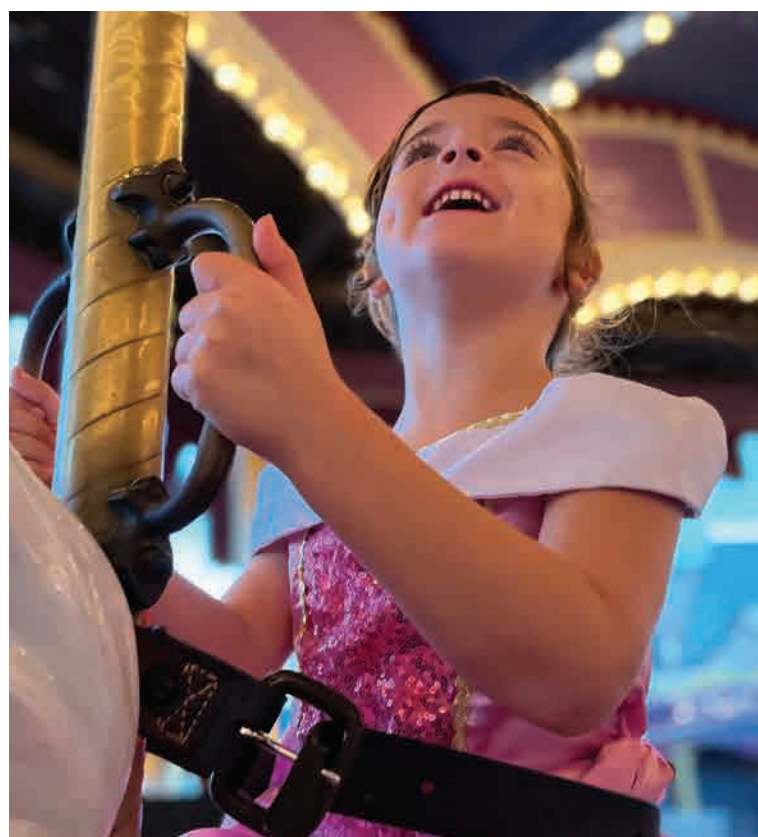
Cinderella's Royal Table and Be Our Guest are two of the best dining experiences at Magic Kingdom, but if you're on a budget or can't snag an ADR, you can have a magical princess meal at Gaston's Tavern. The Warm Cinnamon Roll makes the perfect snack for hungry princesses!

### CHECK OUT ROYAL RIDES

And, of course, what Disney vacation would be complete without the rides? Riding attractions as a princess is a special experience. Little princesses often get recognized by Cast Members and, sometimes, other guests.

In addition to the picture-perfect carousel, check out attractions based on your princess's favorites, like The Magic Carpets of Aladdin (Magic Kingdom), Under the Sea ~ Journey of the Little Mermaid (Magic Kingdom), and Frozen Ever After (EPCOT).

Depending on the park you visit, check out entertainment offerings featuring Disney Princesses, such as Happily Ever After (returning to Magic Kingdom next month), Beauty & the Beast Live on Stage (Disney's Hollywood Studios), and For the First Time in Forever: A Frozen Sing-Along Celebration (Disney's Hollywood Studios). You can also spot some of your favorites during Magic Kingdom's Festival of Fantasy Parade and Disney Adventure Friends Cavalcade (the latter is a great opportunity to see harder-to-find princesses like Merida and Raya). 🐾



Every princess needs her horse, and Princess Sagan found hers on the carousel. **PHOTO BY DANI MORITZ**