

Disney Dining: The Ultimate Guide to Eating Well Without Going Bankrupt

Every family plans a trip to Disney World, pays an exorbitant (yet very much worth it) amount of money for tickets, hotel, and travel, and they go out of their way to make dining reservations 60 days ahead of their trip.

But, they're often conflicted. How do you eat well at Disney World without breaking the bank? If you're not careful you'll spend all your money on food and not even be able to get home (just kidding).

If I'm such an expert, how would I eat at Disney on a budget (or just without spending WAY too much)?

Bring Food With You or Use DoorDash

If you have a car, bring food with you on the trip. No car? Use DoorDash (or your preferred delivery service) to have food delivered to the room. Of course, you should take into account the fridge and freezer that are available, but this is a good idea, even if you only have a mini fridge.

What Food Do You Keep in the Room?

Eat breakfast in the room. Cereal. Microwave oatmeal. Toaster pastries (what? I'm not getting sued over that brand name you're totally not thinking of right now). Instant coffee—or just coffee and tea. Toaster waffles. You get the idea.

Maybe you eat lunch in the room. Lunchmeat, cheese, and bread with a little mayo and mustard is cheap. There's a bout a thousand other things you can bring for lunch that are quick and easy (and it gets you out of the parks when they're blazing hot).

Maybe you have dinner in the room? Yes, you can cook dinner (if that's a possibility), or you might just order pizza one night because—why not?

Basically, you shouldn't assume that you're spending a zillion dollars on every meal.

Plan Your Meals Wisely

Visit restaurants you ACTUALLY want to visit. Read the menus online. Watch those reviews on YouTube. This way, you have an idea of what you're in for before making a reservation.

(A special note on YouTubers. None of them have the credentials necessary to actually review food. They don't. They never will. Go for YouTubers who are honest about the food without pretending they're sitting next to Tom Colicchio on 'Top Chef'.)

So, you know where you TRULY want to go, and you should plan accordingly. Have one big meal this day, a quick service the next day, etc. Spread them out so you can actually enjoy them.

Don't Overeat (Yes, I'm Looking at You)

If your daily plan is Tusker House breakfast, visit Animal Kingdom, get loaded at Tiffin's and have a big lunch, then head over to Disney Springs early for dinner at Morimoto, you'll be miserable and you won't remember a single thing you ate.

Eat breakfast at Tusker House and maybe slide up to an empty table at Nomad Lounge and eat a snicky snack off the menu (that's got a lot in common with Tiffin's), and take your time before heading over to your hotel for an evening dinner at the quick service counter AFTER you shopped at Disney Springs.

Go to Morimoto another night—a night that follows a day where you didn't eat all that much.

Enjoy Your Hotel

If you're in a hotel (on or off property) that has good food—eat there! What are you doing? Have you been to the All Star Music Intermission Food Court? It's really good.

Have a nice dinner at the signature restaurant in your hotel, or go resort hopping for that nice dinner. Maybe that's the most you spend all trip, and the rest of the time you're saving money while still enjoying yourself.

Bring Water and Snacks

Disney World is beautiful, but it's also a machine designed to make money. Don't buy water in the park when you can bring it with you. Don't buy tiny snacks for little kids when you can pack them.

Stop Trying to Do it All

There's no way in the world anyone will ever get everything done when they go to Disney in just one trip. Disney World is roughly the size of San Francisco, and it's doubtful anyone can move that fast—and if you do, you'll be miserable, broke, and sick. Buy your own food, keep it in the room, bring your own water and snacks, don't stuff yourself all in one day, and visit the RIGHT restaurants...not all of them.

You'll be glad you did.

Agree or disagree? Happy to have the conversation! Disney is fun. Let's keep it that way!

