

Tokyo DisneySea  
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## **Background**

Tokyo DisneySea is unlike any other park out there. Being part of the only resort not operated by the Disney Company, but instead the Oriental Land Company, has its perks. This “sea-themed park” opened on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in Urayasu, Japan. Their design choices were catered specifically for the Japanese local market, this can be seen by the concept for their original vertical landmark, a lighthouse. Originally, Disney thought that a lighthouse would be an excellent choice for a sea-themed park, since to Americans a lighthouse is inviting, but to the Japanese it is a symbol of melancholy and loneliness. (*Tokyo DisneySea Project: History / Chronology: About us: Oriental Land Co., ltd.*) This emphasis and respect of Japanese culture and thought process worked to bring the Japanese residents to their park. According to the Themed Entertainment Association’s Theme Park Index of 2022 it had an attendance of 10 million guests. 65% of them being Japanese, only 6% being international guests, making it a regional park.

## **Marketing**

Tokyo DisneySea doesn’t have any personal social media accounts, but instead the whole resort seems to have an Instagram, X, and a facebook account being used for both Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea. Most of their posts are purely in Japanese, signifying that they aren’t really interested in enticing an international market. Their advertisements are mostly to showcase anything new coming to the park in order to build up some excitement for guests. For example, they recently had a Fantasy Springs countdown where they showed different parts of the land to grow the already existing hype. They also used to have a series called “Stories to find at Tokyo Disney Resort” which seemed to be little trivia/easter egg posts about certain things in the parks, such as boats or flowers. When not trying to promote the newest edition to the park,

the accounts seem to be filled with aesthetically pleasing photos and a cute little caption, it seems like they are mostly just trying to sell the aesthetic of Disney.

On top of the social media accounts, the resort also has an app and a website. They are both similar in function to the Disney World ones, but are different in design. The Japanese park app is significantly more user friendly than the My Disney Experience app. There are less different types of screens and less hurdles to go through to find certain things, the map is always present. It also just looks nicer overall with nicer graphics for the map. The website is similar in simplicity as it splits into the 2 parks, the resort, and reservation and tickets, as opposed to the Walt Disney World website that promotes “things to do” or their shopping options more than their parks.

## **Design**

The main theme for Tokyo DisneySea was inspired by the seven seas. The ocean is a large influence on Japan’s culture from their art, literature, even their anime, and this theme park isn’t any different. It isn’t a water park, but it is sea themed. The idea is that Earth is a “water planet.” In their own words, this park is “where adventure and imagination set sail.” Throughout the park, there is a repetitive motif on nautical exploration. ([official]tokyo DisneySea

Overview: Tokyo disney resort)

Just like the seven seas, before the creation and opening of Fantasy Springs, DisneySea originally had seven different themed ports. Once entering the park, you are greeted by the Mediterranean Harbor. Fitting of the name, the atmosphere is heavily inspired by Italian port towns, gondolas included. Turn right, there is DisneySea’s version of Soarin’. If you follow the natural curve, on the other side of the area past the lagoon, there is an ornate fortress with gold roofs, Fortress Exploration, a walkthrough attraction. This fortress is used as the headquarters for

the Society of Explorers and Adventurers which was founded by the brightest and smartest people of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There are fantastical rooms filled with science, but enhanced with a sense of magic. One of these rooms is the park's finest and most upscale restaurant, Magellan's, which serves western dishes and even has its own secret dining room. (Bricker)

If you decide to take a left at the entrance you enter the American Waterfront, almost as if you never left America. This harbor is inspired by the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> century United States of America. The waterfront is split up into two sections, New York and Cape Cod, one is a faux-city with the giant building, the Tower of Terror, a drop attraction, and the other is a quaint fishing village, respectively. Here is also where they have a small little Toy Story corner, which is seemingly a little out of place. In New York is the The Teddy Roosevelt Lounge, a fancy little bar that is lined with cute wooden bears used as pillars.

Continuing past the huge volcano, is Port Discovery. A futuristic marina where "science and nature are in balance." It is extremely small with the only rides being the Aquatopia, a water flat ride, and a Star Tours-like simulation ride where you go under the sea with Nemo and his friends. They do have Horizon Bay Restaurant, a buffet styled establishment. Its overall aesthetic does look cool, it feels like it could be a port or a harbor in Treasure Planet, which it could benefit from in order to give it something else, as it does feel like the weakest harbor in the park.

Next we have the Lost River Delta. You enter the lost ruins of an ancient civilization as you see this giant Central American temple. It feels like the jungle with giant trees providing shade as well as bridges and huts fashioned by wood and rope. You feel as if you were in an Indiana Jones movie, which is possible by riding the dark ride Indiana Jones Adventure: Temple of the Crystal Skull, or if you are interested in something more fast paced there's also Raging

Spirits, the only real rollercoaster in the park. Tokyo Disney Ride Guide: Which rides are copies, and which are unique?)

Past the entrance of Raging Spirits, is the Arabian Coast. Inspired by the Islamic folktales from One Thousand and One Nights, or Arabian Nights as most commonly known, is the world of Genie and his magical powers. You can take a carpet ride with Jasmine, go on an adventure with Sinbad and his tiger, Chandu, or you can go into the palace and see Genie's powers for yourself either as a show in The Magic Lamp Theater or just go on his carousel.

Right next to the coast is the Mermaid Lagoon, inspired by Atlantica, the home of Ariel, The Little Mermaid. You go into King Triton's palace and are met with jumpin' jellyfish, giant seaweed, fish everywhere, and a giant whale. The entire section is indoors to make you feel more "under the sea." You can eat at Sebastian's Calypso Kitchen or watch Ariel's little musical show at the Mermaid Lagoon Theater.

The final seventh harbor is Mysterious Island, the one with the volcano, which is named Mount Prometheus. It is inspired by the literary works of Jules Verne, specifically 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Journey to the Center of the Earth, and the harbor's own namesake The Mysterious Island. Here Captain Nemo holds his hidden base and his Nautilus. Guests can either go to the center of earth or they could can go 20,000 leagues under the sea, their choice. Tokyo Disney Ride Guide: Which rides are copies, and which are unique?)

Lastly, with the opening of Fantasy Springs just a few days ago, it is important to take note of it. It is the only "harbor" that isn't actually a harbor or holds strong a nautical theme. It is

a land that is based off of the movies, Tangled, Frozen, and Peter Pan. Which with its own parts of the land that show intricate detail and respect to the movies. You can either go to Neverland and get on Captain Hook's ship, or you can see Arendelle and see Elsa's ice palace from afar. Each movie also has their own ride that takes the guests through the movie. The main piece that ties this land together is the Fantasy Springs Hotel with stunning landscapes of Disney characters seemingly made out of natural rock with a water element such as fountains or mist.

### *Attraction Mix*

This park is severely lacking in roller coasters. As mentioned previously, this park only has the Raging Spirits. They have a couple of cute little transportation rides that are mostly in the front of the park, and a surplus of dark rides everywhere with even more being added to the list due to Fantasy Springs. DisneySea could really benefit from adding another roller coaster elsewhere, perhaps in Port Discovery, since like mentioned it does feel lacking. DisneySea also has a couple of nice shows scattered across the park and their nighttime spectacular is Sky Full of Colors, and they also have a cute water parade named Believe! Sea of Dreams

### *Ancillary Features*

In total this park has 26 different counter service restaurants and 8 sit down or buffet style restaurants. They also have a plethora of different carts and quick service places to choose from. They have 38 different shops, with an emphasis on stationary and plushies. Something that was interesting is that they have a camera store, Fotografica. Here they sell disposable cameras, film, and cell phone chargers. Cameras and taking photos is a big part of Japanese culture, so it isn't a total surprise but a nice thing to see at the park. They also have two different gacha/capsule shops. One is next to the Tower of Terror and the other is in Mermaid Lagoon. Gacha is also a huge part of just Japanese pop culture as everyone loves a little surprise.

Other things that were noted is that they have phone battery rental services where you can just rent a battery for the day and then return it, you can also charge it at the park. They have a mailbox where you can buy post stamps and mail off little post cards to whoever around the world. They also have baking stations such as ATMs, and handwashing stations. Also due to the Oriental Line Company's rules, they don't really have WiFi outside of a 10 minute minimum per log in. ([official]free wireless internet access (Wi-Fi): Tokyo disneyland)

## Operations

I couldn't find any leadership or organizational chart for the park, although getting hired there as someone who isn't Japanese does seem difficult. You have to already work for the Disney company in the United States and through the intro-company transfer, which could take years, hope to transfer to DisneySea. Most of their in-house recruiting is through their own website called Casting Line, which states all their roles, wages, and an requirements.

The Tokyo Disney Resort has 5 keys, safety, courtesy, inclusion, show, and efficiency. Not only is the Japanese people extremely courteous, but safety and is also one of their top priorities. (*Code of conduct - the five keys (tokyo disney resort): Guests' safety and security at theme parks: Social: Sustainability: Oriental Land Co., Ltd..*) There has one been on minor safety incident in 2012, where the park then publicly came out and apologize for the incident and made sure everything is working to proper standard and trained their people properly.

As in tune with their keys, efficiency is also a main component to how the park is ran. Operations try to keep things as smoothly as possible, especially after 1 in the afternoon. In the morning, the park seems to be packed with most lines being 2-3 hours even more, but once it hits the afternoon you aren't waiting for very long in lines. You don't feel as you are packed in the park. (R/japantraveltips on reddit: Tokyo disneysea? more like Disney Queueland.)

## Personal Development

It is pretty easy to get a work visa in Japan, the issue is getting a job. A lot of Japanese companies, DisneySeas included, don't hire people who don't speak Japanese, which I unfortunate don't. You don't have to be a Japanese citizen to own property in Japan, they pretty much make everything easy except find a job in Japan. DisneySeas also doesn't necessarily hire people who aren't Japanese or who at least aren't fluent in Japanese. They hire the princesses and face characters by seasonal positions from outside parks, but the only other chance to work for or at that park is if you're an imagineer hired to work on something new. The biggest issue I would find would be that language barrier, another issue would just be the culture shock as Japan is extremely different from any country I've been to.

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