



Find your HAPPY PLACE

Disneyland isn't just for the kids – the theme parks have something for everyone.

■ KATE EVANS

It's no secret that Disney has been experiencing a renaissance recently. *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin* and *The Lion King* have all become live action movies, and *The Little Mermaid* is next (I'm still mad at Harry Styles for turning down the role of Prince Eric). *Frozen II* is imminent and even *Lizzie McGuire* is getting a reboot – this really is what dreams are made of!

Disney's digging deep into our nostalgia – and it can, it's a brand that's embedded in our childhoods. We played mermaids in the pool, had crushes on Disney characters (mine was Kovu from *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride*, don't judge) and I'm still swanning around like a princess.

If you want to experience the nostalgia, it's time to put on the Mickey Mouse ears and head to a Disney theme park because they're not just for kids. Here, we're exploring all the Disney parks around the world and why you shouldn't write them off for your next holiday.

DISNEYLAND RESORT

California's theme park was the very first in 1955 and is the only one designed and built to completion under Walt Disney himself. It's ideal for purists who want to admire and enjoy the storybook-style architecture, the original attractions and rides. It's authentic, intimate and charming.

The resort is made up of two parks: Disney California Adventure Park and Disneyland

Park. Bring your lightsaber with you for the latter – it's got the brand-new Star Wars Galaxy's Edge attraction and *Rise of the Resistance* is set to open in January.

WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

There's a reason Florida's Disney World is the most visited vacation resort on the globe and it's the only one with "World" in its title. I mean, it's got four theme parks (Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Hollywood Studios – also with the new Star Wars attraction – and Animal Kingdom) and two water parks (Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach). There's also the Disney Springs shopping

and dining area that's perfect for those who prefer retail to rides.

Walt Disney World is probably the best theme park for the whole family, especially those with young kids. It's amazing (I went several times growing up), but it's quite an (expensive) multi-day commitment – three or four days at least. Prepare for your step count to skyrocket.

TOKYO DISNEY RESORT

This is the only Disney park that's not actually owned by Disney. It's owned by the Oriental Land Company, which pays royalty and licensing fees to Walt Disney. It was also the first Disneyland theme park to open outside the US.

The fine details are there at Disneyland Park, from the parades and shows to the character casting and floats, but it has a much better layout than the original. The Japanese park is a masterclass in urban design and runs a lot more smoothly than other Disneys. Its second park, DisneySea, is elaborate, dreamy and visually striking – there's really no other park like it.

DISNEYLAND PARIS

Or as I affectionately refer to it, Skim Disney. Despite having two parks (Disneyland Park and Walt Disney Studios Park), it's one of the smaller parks, so it's easy to cover off.



The joy of Disney

There's a reason Disney's tagline is "The Happiest Place on Earth" – because it is! It's joyful, nostalgic and pure, unadulterated fun. And when you're not a whiny child, you can plan it better – knowing what rides get the busiest, which ones offer fast passes and where to watch the parades from makes all the difference.



Disneyland truly is “The Happiest Place on Earth” – it’s joyful, nostalgic and pure, unadulterated fun

It's just over an hour out of Paris, so it's perfect to add on as a weekend trip if you're in the City of Love.

If you're an Instagram-obsessed millennial like myself, this park is definitely the prettiest. How can it not be? It's French! Marvel attractions and experiences will be joining the universe (ha!) in the next few years, as will Frozen – maybe book this one for 2021.

HONG KONG DISNEYLAND

A park that's better suited for a weekend, the design is based on the California park. But what it lacks in original layout it makes up for in other elements, including exclusive rides (such as Mystic Manor and Big Grizzly Mountain Runaway Mine Cars) and characters, as well as unique merchandise.

It's more of a quick stop-off if you have time to spare in Hong Kong.

SHANGHAI DISNEY RESORT

Shanghai is the newest Disney park, so it's learnt from the mistakes of its predecessors and uses advanced technology. However, it's missing some of the original Disney magic and classic charm other parks have.

Rides are the highlight here, whether they're new or reinvented. Shanghai is the only Disney park to have a Tron attraction and its Pirates of the Caribbean ride blows all others out of the water – pun intended.

Main Street has been replaced with the smaller Mickey Avenue and the classic Disney Princess castle is now a “Enchanted Storybook Castle”, although it's the largest and most interactive one yet. **fw**

Best Disney hotels

DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM LODGE, FLORIDA

If you've ever wanted to pretend you're in *The Lion King*, this is for you. Nothing will get you singing “Circle of Life” like being able to see giraffes, zebras and more from your bedroom window.

TOY STORY HOTEL, SHANGHAI

Looking for a hotel where aliens announce what floor you're on? Look no further. Choose to stay in either “Woody” or “Buzz” – the decor is amended accordingly.

DISNEY'S HOTEL NEW YORK – THE ART OF MARVEL, PARIS

Obsessed with all things Avengers? There are 300 pieces of Marvel artwork decorating the interior and Spider-Man, Iron Man and Thor wandering around, plus there's a Marvel Design Studio for kids.