



Walt Disney World First-Timer's Cheat Sheet

The dozen things nobody tells you before your first trip.

A FREE PRINTABLE FROM STARLIT MAGIC

A STARLIT MAGIC PRINTABLE · JULY 2026 · DETAILS CHANGE — CONFIRM IN THE MY DISNEY EXPERIENCE APP

Before You Go

- ★ **Book dining at 60 days**
The tables that make a trip (Space 220, Cinderella's Royal Table) vanish minutes after your 60-day window opens at 6 AM ET. Have a ranked list ready.
- ★ **Lightning Lane is 7 days out**
Resort guests book paid ride passes 7 days before check-in (3 days off-site), 7 AM ET. Not the same window as dining.
- ★ **Download the My Disney Experience app**
Your tickets, reservations, mobile food orders, and wait times all live here. Set it up before you arrive.
- ★ **Standard tickets need no park reservation**
Date-based tickets guarantee entry — that step was retired in 2024. One less thing to track.
- ★ **Park Hopper vs. one park**
A base ticket is one park per day. Park Hopper (add-on) lets you bounce between parks after 2 PM — worth it for short trips, less so for first-timers with young kids.

Money & Extras

- ★ **Rider Switch keeps everyone happy**
One adult waits with a non-rider, then swaps in via the Lightning Lane with no re-wait. Free, and it works for more than height.
- ★ **Single Rider & standby still exist**
Not every ride needs a paid pass. Single Rider lines (Test Track, Everest) and early standby can beat the system.
- ★ **Refillable resort mug**
Buy one mug and refill it free at any resort all trip — even resorts you're just visiting. Doesn't work in the parks, but great for morning coffee and soda.
- ★ **Refill water for free**
Any counter-service spot will give you free ice water. Bring a refillable bottle — Florida heat is no joke.
- ★ **You can bring your own food**
Packed snacks and a water bottle are allowed through security. No glass, no loose ice.

In the Park

- ★ **Rope drop is your best hour**
The first hour walks onto rides that hit 75-minute waits by noon. Resort guests get 30 minutes earlier still with Early Entry.
- ★ **Mobile order your quick meals**
Order counter-service food in the app ahead of time and skip the line. Do it before you're hungry.
- ★ **Meet characters over a meal**
Character dining is the efficient way to see favorites — one meal, several characters, no separate lines.
- ★ **There's first aid & baby care**
Every park has a quiet First Aid station and a Baby Care Center with changing tables, nursing rooms, and supplies. Find them on the app map.
- ★ **Pace yourself — it's a marathon**
Parks are bigger than they look and days are long. Build in a midday break; the evening is when they shine.

Good to Know

- ★ **Getting around is free**
Buses, monorail, boats, and the Skyliner gondola are all complimentary — you never need a car between parks and resorts.
- ★ **Deluxe guests get Extended Evening Hours**
On select nights, deluxe resort guests get extra hours after the park closes to everyone else — the emptiest the park ever gets.
- ★ **Photos are being taken all day**
PhotoPass photographers are stationed at big photo spots and scan your band — the shots land in your app for free to view. Downloads are the paid part.
- ★ **Afternoon storms are normal**
Florida gets a quick daily downpour most summer afternoons. Pack a poncho, plan an indoor ride or a break, and it usually passes fast.



First trip? Starlit Magic is the friend who's been a hundred times.

Live wait times, park maps, dining, and the plan for your day — one app, no subscription.

Pay once. Yours forever. No subscription.

Download Starlit Magic free on the App Store · starlitmagic.com

Made by Starlit Magic · AliKat Digital · © 2026