

My Magic Wristbands Deliver More Disney Magic



ALL PHOTOS BY LEAH WALKER



A day in any theme park means a lot of walking, but the new Disney My Magic+ bands, customized radio-frequency wristbands, can honestly save you steps. Previously Disney World park guests had to stop at the attraction they desired and pick up a FastPass to avoid waiting in long lines. However, the process usually meant crisscrossing the park numerous times because they would have to return to ride.

The new MyMagic+ system allows guests to reserve three FastPasses reservations per day, before they even enter the park. Disney has more than doubled the number of attractions and experiences you can reserve such as fireworks and parade viewing areas and character greetings. This means you can plan your day around the FastPass reserved events and even make restaurant reservations ahead. The bands enable you to do more at the parks, which in my mind is a magical win-win for guests and Disney alike.

I admit the process is a bit complicated when you start, but once you step through the official website and get the My Disney Experience mobile app on your tablet or smartphone, you're ready. In fact, the free mobile app allows you to make changes during your park visit. It even includes interactive maps and ride waiting times and can connect with other family and friends if you make a group trip.

The MagicBands also work as your park admission ticket and if you stay at a Disney resort, they can

function as your hotel room key. If you wish, you can connect with your credit card on file at the hotel and make charges at restaurants and gift shops throughout the parks - with just a swipe of your wrist! The bands can also be used for the PhotoPass program.

I used my wristband to enter the park, as a room key and to charge my lunch. It was easy, no need to fumble for a credit card or room key, and the fee was added to my hotel bill.

So how does this work? First guests go online and book their Disney World vacation through the website [www. MyDisneyExperience.com](http://www.MyDisneyExperience.com). If booking far enough in advance, your MagicBands can be customized with a color choice and mailed to your home. Otherwise, you pick them up when you check-in. They contain your name and your park information, but are not GPS enhanced.

Annual pass-holders are also given MagicBands when they sign-up. If you aren't staying at a Disney resort or just visiting for a day, you are able to make FastPass+ selections 30 days in advance of your trip once tickets are purchased. If you just show up on the day of your park visit, you can use the RF card (admission ticket) for park activities or purchase a band for \$12.95 and the information can be transferred.

The biggest difference I noticed on my recent trip was the entry gates. The turnstile barriers have been removed which makes entry so much

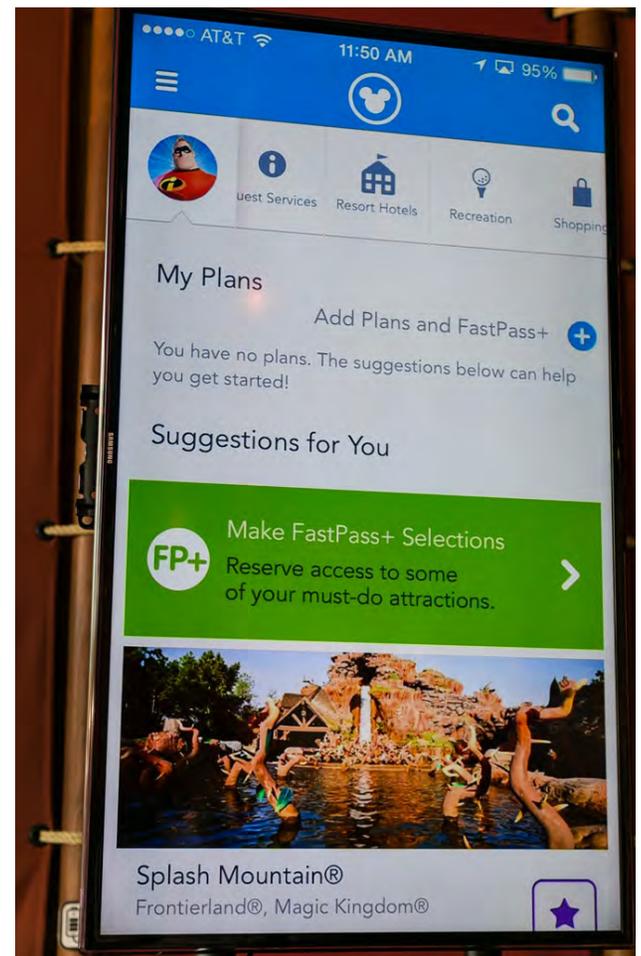
easier for strollers and wheelchairs. This is also true when entering an attraction area.

In order to get the technology up and running, Walt Disney World "changed out and installed the park entry turnstiles with hundreds of touch points. We put in more than 28,000 hotel door locks," said Tom Staggs, chairman of Disney Parks and Resorts, during a media

breakfast at Walt Disney World.

Surely more functions will be added to the MyMagic+ program as it evolves. Now that I have an account, I can continue to use the same band and update my account any time I return to Disney World. How magical is that?

ALL PHOTOS BY DEBI LANDER . MANY THANKS TO DISNEY FOR HOSTING ME DURING A MEDIA TRIP.



Far-left: Using a MagicBand

Right: Disney Mobile App

Above-left Wheelchair Entry is barrier free

Above-right: Enjoying Disney with a MagicBand