

8 magical new reasons to visit Disneyland this year

(Courtesy of Tarah Chieffi, The Points Guy)



In my humble opinion, there's always a reason to go to Disneyland. You just got paid? Go to Disneyland. There's a new churro flavor? Go to Disneyland. It's Tuesday ... well, you get the idea.

You don't necessarily need a special reason to visit The Happiest Place on Earth. However, there are quite a few new attractions and special events coming to Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure this year, as well as the return of favorite parades and exciting events.

From the opening of [Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge in 2019](#) and the opening of [Avengers Campus in 2021](#), Disneyland has changed quite a bit in recent years, but there's even more coming in 2023.

Read on to learn more about eight new offerings coming to Disneyland this year that you won't want to miss.

The Walt Disney Company's 100th anniversary



DISNEYLAND RESORT

When Walt Disney opened Disneyland in 1955, he had already made magic for kids of all ages for decades with his groundbreaking animated shorts. They showcased characters like Oswald the Lucky Rabbit and, of course, Mickey Mouse, as well as full-length animated features like "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

The Walt Disney Company was established on Oct. 16, 1923, and Disney parks across the globe are marking the company's 100th anniversary with fanfare fitting of the world's most popular mouse. Disneyland was Walt's original theme park, so the biggest celebration is held there through the end of 2023.

During the "Disney 100 Years of Wonder" celebration, you can expect to see exclusive merchandise, limited-time food offerings and festive platinum and regal purple decor, including an elegant makeover for Sleeping Beauty Castle.

At Disney California Adventure, you can also see two new nighttime spectacles, Wondrous Journeys at Disneyland Park and World of Color — One.



TARAH CHIEFFI/THE POINTS GUY

All 61 Walt Disney Animation Studios films are featured in Wondrous Journeys along with the company's 62nd film, "Wish," slated to be released later this year.

The show utilizes fireworks and projections on Sleeping Beauty Castle, the "It's a Small World" facade and along Main Street U.S.A., so there is really no bad spot to watch the show.

Also, the projections in each area are different, creating an entirely new show depending on where you watch it from. Keep your eyes on the sky for some special surprises, too.



TARAH CHIEFFI/THE POINTS GUY

At Disney California Adventure, World of Color – One uses water projections, lights and fountains to tell the story of how just "one" drop can create a ripple that changes the world.

It isn't as high-energy as some of Disney's other nighttime spectacles. However, the message is heartwarming and the sections featuring "Star Wars" and "The Avengers" will really wow you.

Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway



TARAH CHIEFFI/THE POINTS GUY

It took more than 65 years for Mickey and Minnie to get their own attraction at Disneyland, but the time has finally come for the main mice to take center stage.

Though [Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway has been open at Walt Disney World](#) since March 2020, the attraction did not make its way to the West Coast until Jan. 27, 2023, the official kickoff date for Disney's 100th-anniversary festivities.

The two attractions are not identical, however. If you've experienced Florida's version, it's still worth checking out Disneyland's version. The ride is set in the El Capitoon Theater (a play on the nearby El Capitan Theatre in Los Angeles) and the queue is filled with Mickey memorabilia and many, many Easter eggs.

I won't give them all away, but all of the candy on display at the concession stand in the queue draws inspiration from Disney films and TV shows throughout the years, and the popcorn in the popcorn machine is full of hidden Mickeys.

The ride itself is not quite the same because the building layout is different than that in Florida. It's not wildly different, so don't spend the entire ride trying to spot the changes. Just have fun!

Currently, Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway uses a virtual queue, which you can join from the Disneyland app at 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day. You don't need to be in the park for the 7 a.m. queue, but you do for the 1 p.m. queue.

You must be quick, though, because the spots disappear in less than a second. That should die down after the ride has been open for a few weeks. If your fingers aren't fast enough, you can also purchase an [Individual Lightning Lane entry](#) for the ride. There is currently no standby queue.

The reimagining of Mickey's Toontown



DISNEYLAND RESORT

Mickey's Toontown originally opened at Disneyland Park in 1993. Thirty years later, it was time for a makeover. Toontown has always been a place where you can visit with Mickey and Minnie in their homes and kids could play in themed play areas and ride pint-sized attractions.

The new Toontown opens on March 8, with reimagined play spaces and attractions that kids will love. And, yes, you can still pop by Mickey and Minnie's homes to say hi and snap a picture. The new Toontown will have more greenspaces and interactive elements where kids can run around (and expend some energy). There will even be a "dreaming tree" inspired by the tree on Walt's family farm in Marceline, Missouri, where he played as a child.

Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway is located in this area, as are the kid-friendly Chip 'n' Dale's Gadgetcoaster and Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin.

After-hours events



Sweethearts' Nite at Disneyland. CHRISTIAN THOMPSON/DISNEYLAND RESORT

[Disneyland's after-hours events](#) offer a rare opportunity to visit the parks without the throngs of guests you'd normally contend with during regular park hours. These events do require a separate ticket purchase, but the number of tickets is limited, which keeps crowds low.

This year, Disney will add an all-new Disneyland After Dark: Princess Nite on select nights in March 2023. The event features characters, photo opportunities, entertainment, special food, drinks and merchandise and access to select attractions.

Your ticket allows you to enter Disneyland at 6 p.m. and enjoy the park until the party officially begins at 9 p.m. Tickets start at \$145 per person and include unlimited digital PhotoPass downloads during the event.

Return of the Magic Happens parade



The Magic Happens parade at Disneyland Park. JOSHUA SUDOCK/DISNEYLAND RESORT

The Magic Happens parade debuted on Feb. 28, 2020, and had the unfortunate luck of running for only two weeks before [Disneyland shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The performers and crew who designed the show barely got to see it realized before Disneyland's gates were shuttered for over a year.

On Feb. 24, 2023, almost three years to the day since the parade first floated down the streets of Disneyland, Magic Happens will return as part of the Disney 100 Years of Wonder celebration. This parade features fantastical floats where your favorite Disney films like "Frozen" and "Moana" come to life before your eyes.

Weather permitting, Magic Happens will run daily at Disneyland Park. Check showtimes on Disneyland's website or in the Disneyland app.

Reimagining of the Adventureland Treehouse



Adventureland Treehouse. DISNEYLAND RESORT

Disneyland's massive interactive treehouse walkthrough has held many identities over the years. It opened in 1962 as the Swiss Family Treehouse, named for Disney's "Swiss Family Robinson" film that debuted two years prior in 1960. In 1999, the attraction was rethemed to Tarzan's Treehouse, following the popularity of Disney's "Tarzan" film.

No matter the theme, the treehouse is a place where kids can climb, play, traverse bridges and enjoy some spectacular views of the park.

Later this year, the treehouse will open again, this time as the Adventureland Treehouse. The new version will pay homage to the original Swiss Family Treehouse, but with a new family and new spaces to explore.

According to the concept art, Disney may even integrate references to its secret society, the Society of Explorers and Adventurers (S.E.A). A flag in the top left corner of the treehouse depicts the S.E.A. logo. The entire backstory of this secret society is a story for another day, but references to S.E.A. and its members show up in attractions at Disney parks across the globe and it's exciting to see Disney continue to promote this fun Disney secret.

Tiana's Palace restaurant



DISNEYLAND RESORT

Soon after Disney announced its [Splash Mountain](#) attraction at Disney World and Disneyland would be rethemed to 2009's "The Princess and the Frog" film, fans began clamoring for a Tiana-themed restaurant. After all, she did fulfill her dream of opening a restaurant in New Orleans in the final act of the film.

Soon Disneyland visitors can dine at Tiana's Palace, with a menu inspired by authentic New Orleans flavors. Tiana's Palace will be located in New Orleans Square in the space previously occupied by the French Market. The French Market and the Mint Julep Bar (the only spot inside the park to get Mickey-shaped beignets and non-alcoholic mint juleps) will close on Feb. 17, 2023, to make way for the new restaurant.

Tiana's Palace and the Mint Julep Bar will reopen later this year. Splash Mountain has already closed at Disney World, but a closing date at Disneyland has yet to be announced. Tiana's Bayou Adventure will open at both parks in 2024.

Disneyland hotel updates



The upcoming Pixar Place Hotel at Disneyland. DISNEY

The [Disneyland Hotel](#) was the first hotel at Disneyland and one that all Disney fans hope to visit at least once in their lifetime. The hotel currently has towers themed as Adventure, Fantasy and Frontier, mirroring the decor and style of the corresponding lands inside the park. Later this year, the hotel will debut The Villas at Disneyland Hotel, a 344-room tower for Disney Vacation Club (DVC) members.

Luckily, you don't have to be a DVC member to stay there. You can also rent DVC points and stay at top-tier Disney hotels for less than the posted cash rates.

A redesign of the budget-friendly Paradise Pier Hotel is also underway and expected to debut later this year. The hotel will become [Pixar Place Hotel](#), incorporating Pixar characters (including the iconic Pixar ball and lamp) into the guest rooms, public spaces and pool area.

Bottom line

Have you already packed your bags and put on your Mickey ears?

Even if you don't plan to visit until later this year, it's easy to see there are a lot of new reasons to visit Disneyland in 2023. With The Walt Disney Company's "100 Years of Wonder" celebration underway, I wouldn't be surprised to hear about additional announcements throughout the year. If we learned anything from Disney World's 50th anniversary, it's that Disney knows how to throw a party.