

Pirates of the Caribbean Takes Walt Disney World Guests On Swashbuckling Adventure in Sacked Seaport

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — *Listen up, hardies — there be squalls ahead...*

Pirates of the Caribbean has entertained millions of Walt Disney World guests on a thrilling adventure through dark, mysterious caverns where "dead men tell no tales" since it opened at Magic Kingdom on Dec. 15, 1973.

Starring a comical cast of rascals, scoundrels, villains and knaves, the eight-and-a-half minute Adventureland attraction sends guests of all ages on a rollicking boat ride to a Caribbean seaport under siege by a swashbuckling band of pirates.

History

- Pirates of the Caribbean first opened at Disneyland in 1967 and continues to delight guests today. According to Disney archivist Dave Smith, many guests still consider it their favorite theme park attraction.
- The Disneyland attraction originally was conceived by Walt Disney as a walk-through exhibit until the 1964 World's Fair presentations created by WED Enterprises (now Walt Disney Imagineering) paved the way for a more sophisticated kind of three-dimensional storytelling known as Audio-Animatronics.
- Veteran Disney animator and Imagineer Marc Davis created hundreds of humorous pirate drawings during the attraction's development in the early 1960s, sketches that Disney sculptor Blaine Gibson helped bring to life as Audio-Animatronics figures.
- The jaunty theme song by lyricist X. Atencio and composer George Bruns, "Yo Ho, Yo Ho; a Pirate's Life for Me," sets the attraction's light tone with its tongue-in-cheek depiction of high-seas lawlessness:

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.

We pillage, plunder, we rifle and loot

Drink up me 'earties yo ho

We kidnap and ravage and don't give a hoot

Drink up me 'earties yo ho

- Pirates of the Caribbean wasn't included in the original plans for Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort — the Disney Imagineers thought that since Florida sits in the middle of the real Caribbean there would be little interest in a pirates-themed adventure.
- Soon after opening in the fall of 1971, Walt Disney World Resort was inundated with guest comments expressing disappointment that the renowned Disneyland attraction was nowhere to be found in Magic Kingdom. By fall of 1972 Pirates of the Caribbean was under construction in Florida.

- Pirates of the Caribbean opened in Florida's Magic Kingdom on Dec. 15, 1973. It was one of the first major additions to the park following its grand opening in 1971.
- Due to the hit motion picture "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" and the follow-up "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," the attraction was updated in summer 2006 with the addition of Captain Jack Sparrow and his nemesis Barbossa, from the feature films.
- Audio enhancements, new special effects and the addition of the ghostly Davy Jones, from "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," also anchor the reopened attraction.

Fun Facts

- The Walt Disney World attraction features 125 Audio-Animatronics figures — 65 pirates and villagers and 60 animals and birds.
- Caribbean Plaza in Adventureland, where the attraction is located, features the Spanish and English architectural styles of the 18th century West Indies.
- Paul Frees and Thurl Ravenscroft provided the voices for many of the attraction's colorful characters. The prolific voice artists also can be heard throughout The Haunted Mansion at Magic Kingdom.
- Lyricist X. Atencio supplied the voice for the talking skull and crossbones that delivers an ominous warning to passing guests: "Dead men tell no tales."
- Flat-bottomed boats that seat 15-18 passengers take guests on a gentle journey through a flume containing approximately 155,000 gallons of water, but beware — there's a single plunge down a 14-foot chute in darkness, followed by a mild splash.
- Sharp-eyed guests at the attraction will notice two chess-playing skeletons, their eerie match deadlocked in a tie.
- Birnbaum's Walt Disney World – The Official Guide depicts Pirates of the Caribbean as "One of the very best of the Magic Kingdom's classic adventures" and honors the attraction with a "Birnbaum's Best" endorsement.