

Hidden Mickeys: Inside Joke Has Become a ‘Guest Quest’ at Walt Disney World Resort

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — As millions of guests scurry throughout Walt Disney World Resort to see Mickey Mouse, little do they realize they may be passing him right by.

And though the Mickeys they miss are not the life-sized, two-legged and three-fingered variety, they are "Hidden Mickeys" — silhouettes and abstract images of Mickey Mouse cleverly hidden by Disney Imagineers across the 40-square-mile Vacation Kingdom.

Hidden Mickeys began as an inside joke among Walt Disney Imagineers, the artists and engineers who design Disney parks and attractions. As word spread of these subtle tributes to Walt's famous mouse, guests sought to find them all.

That search continues today.

Like Easter eggs, Hidden Mickeys have been placed secretly (and not so secretly) by Imagineers at locations across Walt Disney World Resort. Imagineers include Hidden Mickeys when designing, building or putting the finishing touches on a new attraction or hotel, hiding silhouettes, profiles and other images of Mickey Mouse in murals, queue areas and even golf course sand traps.

"The popularity of Hidden Mickeys has just snowballed with guests," says Dave Smith, founder and main archivist for Walt Disney Archives, and author of *Disney: A to Z*. "Many will almost use a magnifying glass through the parks to find as many as they can."

No one knows how many Hidden Mickeys exist throughout Walt Disney World Resort, since Imagineers have never kept an official roster documenting their existence.

In fact, no one knows when the first Hidden Mickey even appeared. And, since attractions are renovated and updated periodically, many have appeared and disappeared through the years.

Where the next Hidden Mickey will appear is anyone's guess.

Here are some hints to start your quest for Hidden Mickeys at Walt Disney World Resort:

Magic Kingdom

- While the Haunted Mansion boasts "999 Happy Haunts," it also has one "mouse" — a Hidden Mickey formed by an arrangement of dishes on the table in the attraction's banquet scene.
- A Hidden Mickey enjoys a lazy day on the river in the final scene in Frontierland's Splash Mountain. A pink cloud floating high above the *Zip-A-Dee Lady* paddlewheeler bears a striking resemblance to a profile of Mickey lying on his back.

Epcot

- Mickey goes around the world in Norway, Gateway to Scandinavia. A burly Viking sports a pair of Mickey Mouse ears on the mural above the queue line for Maelstrom, the pavilion's boatripe attraction.
- Mickey Mouse has always been the brightest of stars. And at Spaceship Earth in Epcot Future World, Mickey is actually hidden in his own constellation just beyond the attraction's loading area.

Disney's Hollywood Studios

- A subtle Hidden Mickey can be found in the supernatural realm of The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror. The young child actress who vanishes from the Hollywood Tower Hotel one stormy night is clutching a Mickey Mouse doll in the attraction's pre-show.
- Mickey rocks his way into Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith. Two Hidden Mickeys were placed in the tile floor in the attraction's rotunda area.

Disney's Animal Kingdom

- Mickey can be "spotted" in the Pizzafari restaurant in the park's Discovery Island. His silhouette can be found on a wall mural, cleverly hidden among leopard spots.
- Mickey really digs The Boneyard in DinoLand U.S.A. In the woolly mammoth dig site, Mickey has been formed with a fan and two hard hats.
- There are more than 25 Hidden Mickeys at Rafiki's Planet Watch, with Mickey found hidden in murals, tree trunks and paintings of animals.

Resorts

- Mickey is remembered by golfers around the world for his contribution to the sixth hole of Disney's Magnolia golf course. A Hidden Mickey forms a giant sand trap that looms ominously next to the green. (Many golfers have not been too happy to find this Hidden Mickey, however, especially when they discover their golf ball has found it, as well.)
- Golfers at Disney's Osprey Ridge golf course may hone their skills on another giant Hidden Mickey. Mickey's head is used as a putting green at the course's clubhouse area.
- Mickey always knows the right direction at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, where a Hidden Mickey is found on the weather vane atop the convention center.
- At Downtown Disney Marketplace, a Hidden Mickey provides its share of splash-tastic fun. Interactive fountains at the entrance of the shopping, dining and entertainment district form Mickey's familiar silhouette — providing a waterful time for children (and a surprising number of adults) who frolic in the leaping waters.