

CROWD PLEASERS WITHOUT THE CROWDS: DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK'S *Hidden Gems*

BY JENNI KEAST

LOVE DISNEY BUT HATE THE CROWDS? TRY THESE HIDDEN GEMS AT DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE. YOU'LL FIND SHORTER LINES, COOL NEARBY PLACES TO WINE AND DINE, WHILE STILL FEELIN' THE DISNEY LOVE.

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Beast's Library *Sorcerer's Workshop*

(Animation Building)

→ Meghan Markle isn't the only little girl to have dreamed of becoming a princess. Perhaps you have, too (assuming you're female) — though don't be disappointed if, after taking your "storybook personality quiz" inside Beast's Library, you find you're better suited to be Scar from *The Lion King* or the resourceful Mrs. Incredible, aka Elastigirl. No worries. As any actor will tell you, villains are always more fun to play, and sassy superheroes never have to follow royal protocol — such as deleting their Instagram account or wearing nylons. While you take the quiz, be amazed as the library, itself, in a mere four minutes, transforms from palatial grandeur to a sad state of decay, offering a harsh glimpse of what life would be like if British taxpayers suddenly revolted and the Royal Family couldn't pay their mortgage. 🏠

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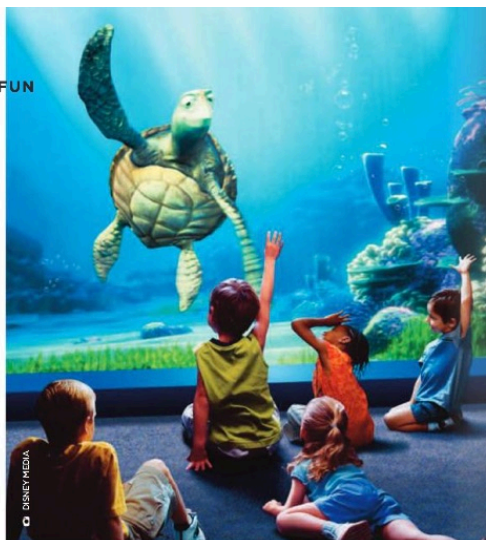
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Turtle Talk with Crush

Animation Building

→ It's no secret that Pixar Fest is happening throughout Disneyland and Disney California Adventure from April 13 to Sept. 3, 2018. But this lesser-known Pixar attraction might be a welcome reprieve from the crowds.

We've all had our adolescent crushes, and your child will be no different, even if that "crush" is a bit slow, has a hard shell, and tends to be a bit of an introvert. Enter "Crush," the endearing sea turtle from Finding Nemo, who, if you're lucky, will interact with you personally ("Pick me! Pick me!") as you ask and he answers your questions while he swims about underwater. Of course, this totally awesome surfer dude mainly chooses to interact with kids, but that's okay — that itself is pretty entertaining. (Kids say the darndest things.) As a bonus, Crush's friend Dory also makes an appearance, even if she does forget how she got there.



Magic Mirror Realm

Sorcerer's Workshop (Animation Building)

→ Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the greatest Disney animator of all? Now you too can be a Disney artist in this fun, interactive room where you'll see how drawings come to life — and even get to try your hand at creating some animated figures yourself. But while you may get away from the crowds, you can't get away from Uncle Walt. As you draw, the image of Mr. Magic Kingdom himself appears to cast his ever-watchful eye on you, making sure you keep a steady hand — and, of course, that you don't litter.



TripleDent Gum Presents The Pixarmonic Orchestra

Pixar Pier

→ Triple your pleasure and your fun with this zany, seven-piece band that performs a well-loved repertoire of Pixar songs with decidedly non-traditional instruments such as Christopher Walken-approved cowbells ("More Cowbell!"), kazooes, duck calls, sirens and slide whistles. Okay, so it's not the L.A. Philharmonic, but lest we forget, this is Disney, folks — which means "all happy, all the time" and kid-friendly entertainment engaging enough to keep your little darlings bright-eyed and bushy-tailed — at least until the sugar high wears off. After that, all bets are off.

In true Disney form, lots of Pixar characters are roaming about Pixar Pier as well including Jessie the yodeling cowgirl from Toy Story, who struts through the park as though she had just roped a steer, "bested a bronc" and given the "stink-eye" to Stinky Pete. But like all of Disney's theme-park characters, she always has time to stop and give a "half-pint" a hug.

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Redwood Creek Challenge Trail

Grizzly Peak

→ Right about the time your kid's sugar level (and yours) reaches an unmanageable level, head over to the Redwood Creek Challenge Trail. No, it's not an Iron Man competition, but it does offer plenty of opportunities for you to wear out your kids ... before they wear you out! Slide, climb, stomp, run and explore. Your kids will be doing all of that and more while you enjoy the peace and quiet of the forest, thanks to tall redwoods and a secluded stream that drowns out the noise from the rest of the park. While it's true that in this part of the park, "the thrill is gone" for Mom and Dad (sorry, no adult-sized zip lines and jungle gyms), in its place are some gentler and kinder activities that the whole family can enjoy — including the Cliff Hanger Traverse Rock Climb, a glide down a natural rock slide, and the Boulder Bears where you can climb on rock formations that "bear" a striking resemblance to grizzly bear cubs. All in all, the Redwood Creek Challenge Trail provides unleashed fun for your kids and a little bit of serenity for you — including the knowledge that your kids will sleep like a Splash Mountain log long after the crowds are gone. ♦

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