

# VILLAGE VIEW

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Even in winter Orlando can be hot, and in summer the area usually swelters; then again, since this is Central Florida, winter months may bring wind-breaker days. If your plans include the newest of Disney World's exhibits, come prepared for any kind of weather.

I can't guarantee anything; the day I visited EPCOT Center was hot, but a grand breeze kept everyone comfortable. And, I mean, everyone literally. EPCOT was mobbed.

An acronym for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, EPCOT grew from a vision Walt Disney conceived many years ago, and while the display is far different from Disney's dream, it won't disappoint you.

Two parts of EPCOT Center opened last October and are but the beginning of what promises to become a permanent World's Fair. Since it may not be finished until sometime in the next century, and since you may not want to wait that long, let me tell you about this remarkable attraction now.

You step into the future upon entrance. The Bell System's Spaceship Earth, a gleaming silver geosphere 189 feet high, stands inside the gate to give you a close-up history of communications from the Stone Age to the Computer Age. Exxon presents the Universe of Energy, highlighted by computerized visual images. The World of Motion, General Motors' contribution, traces the history of transportation. Journey into Imagination, by Kodak, is a three-dimensional voyage into creativity. And Kraft presents The Land, illustrating the partnership between nature and humans.

This is only the beginning. World Showcase, the second section, takes you globe-trotting. You know as you leave Future World that you'll have a long trot, for World Showcase rises on the horizon, surrounds a lake-sized lagoon, and beckons you to explore representative communities of Canada, Mexico, Japan China, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Germany.

Each exhibit, with streets, buildings (constructed in authentic architectural style and containing shops and stores where goods and wares typical of those of each country may be purchased), the landscaping, even the sound effects, is a replica in miniature of surroundings you might find in Montreal, Mexico City, Tokyo, Peking, Paris, Philadelphia, London, Rome and Bonn. Imagine visiting all these cities in a single day!

You can see them all at a leisurely pace, however, and everywhere are benches and seat-high curbs around raised gardens, some in sun, some in shade, for resting.

A pleasant feature is the absence of litter, despite the crowds. Not a single cigarette butt did I see tossed to the ground. Less pleasant are the long lines of people waiting to enter the special shows. If you hate queuing up, arrive at EPCOT by 8:00 a.m. when the gates open.

Each national exhibit presents a film. (An incredible 360 degree screen encircles you in both the Chinese and Canadian shows. You feel you are IN the movie rather than watching.) There are no long lines to enter the shops; in Italy you may pick up a souvenir of Murano glass. When you walk a London street, choose a piece of Royal Dalton china. A Bavarian stein from Germany will give your brew unique flavor, or perhaps you'd prefer a Teddy bear.

Restaurants of the nations include Liberty Inn (American, Biergarten (Germany), Mitsukoshi (Japanese), Les Chefs (French), The Rose and Crown (English), and Alfredo di Roma (Italian). And those are just the principal (and expensive) dining opportunities offered. A bistro, a cafe, a pub, a cantina, a cellar, as well as a Farmer's Market and the Odyssey Restaurant serve moderately-priced meals. Dinner reservations may be made at the Earth Center as you enter the main gates for the restaurants; lunch reservations at these must be made in person and at the restaurants. Reserve as early as possible. All other eating facilities serve on a first-come basis; no reservations.

For your convenience: Baby Services provides space for

changing diapers, warming bottles, and feeding infants; supplies may be purchased. Camera Centers sell and rent equipment and, of course, film. Foreign Currency Exchange and check cashing service is available. Should you have car trouble, call Car Care Center for assistance. A Registered Nurse staffs the First Aid Station.

To help those who speak no English, interpreters provide information. Wheelchairs may be rented. Restrooms and telephones abound. Lockers are banked conveniently at the entrance. Lost and Found couples with Package Pick-up where any purchases you make may be sent to await your convenience. Lost a child? Report to Baby Services. Leave a message at Earth Station for a wandering member of your party. Rent a stroller for your weary toddler. Ride free busses around the lagoon or board a launch to cross its waters.

Can you think of an unmet need? I can; but only because I witnessed an incident I was thankful didn't happen to me. The parking lots for visitors' cars are immense. Should you leave your car without noting its exact location, you could spend the final few hours searching for your vehicle. Be sure, if you drive to EPCOT, you pay strict attention to where you park.

Assuming you've determined to make EPCOT the highlight of your next trip south, I suggest: Have confirmed reservations for accommodations if you want to stay near Orlando. While thousands of motel rooms await a 20-minute drive of Disney World, thousands of families fill them nightly. Run-of-the-mill restaurants are commonplace: they offer adequate food but slap-dash service, in my experience. Prices are in line with those on the Cape.

Shuttle bus transportation between many motels and EPCOT Center is offered at \$5.50 per person. Parking at EPCOT costs \$1 per car, and roads are clearly marked. The entrance fee for one day is \$15 per adult; for three days, \$35; four days, \$45. Slightly less for youngsters. Multi-day admissions permit unlimited use of attractions at both the Magic Kingdom and EPCOT and include free transportation between them on the Monorail (a 20-minute ride); these need not be used on consecutive days. One-day admissions are good for EPCOT or Magic Kingdom, not both.

Other area attractions include Walt Disney World Village, River Country at Fort Wilderness Campground Resort, and Discovery Island at the Magic Kingdom, a certified zoological park alive with lush tropical foliage, exotic birds, and rare wildlife.

Your own schedule will determine how much time you allot to Disney World, but whether you stay a day or a week, you won't exhaust the possibilities for delightful entertainment. Disney World is for people of all ages, all interests. Stay a day and you'll want to return another time. Stay a week -- you may never again go elsewhere!

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