

Polar Bear Band Florida Trip—Disney FastPass+ and Rise of the Resistance Boarding Group Information

MY DISNEY EXPERIENCE

Having an account on “My Disney Experience” will allow making FastPass+ ride reservations and try for Rise of the Resistance Boarding Groups. You can also make a “Friends & Family” group and download the free phone app you to check ride waiting times and show times, descriptions of attractions, dining menus, access park maps, etc. If you don’t have a smart phone in the park with you, you should still have a MDE account set up, because you still make FastPass+ reservations on the home computer, and you can go to FastPass+ computer kiosks in the park to add and change FastPass+ times.

ANY GUEST AGE 13 AND OLDER IS NOW ABLE TO MAKE AND MANAGE THEIR OWN “MY DISNEY EXPERIENCE” ACCOUNT. To sign up for an account, you can download the app from the store, or you can go to Disneyworld.com and in the upper right corner click on “My Disney Experience”. When you first sign up it will walk you through setup, but you can change or add things later. To do so, click on “My Profile”.

My Family and Friends

Click on “My Family and Friends” to add in other family members or friends that you might want to share information with. If you have their email address and birthdate, and they have an account on MDE, click on “Add a Guest”. It will send them an invitation to be your friend, and they will have to respond to join your list. If you and your friends want to get the same boarding group or have the same FastPass return times, you should be MDE friends and sign up together. You can also be a guest that your friend controls completely; they can sign you up and link your tickets in their account, and would have to manage all your FastPasses and Boarding Groups.

Link Your Tickets

Most important, under “My Profile”, you should put in your ticket number. Go to “My Tickets” or “My Plans”, and click on the “+” or on “Link Tickets”. Do not link anyone else’s ticket to your name. Once it is linked in you can go back to “FastPass+” and select ride times.

Selecting FastPass+

To sign up for FastPass+, sign in to MDE online or in the app, and select “My Plans” or “Add New FastPass+”. Select the members of your party that want to get a FastPass together, and click “Next”. Choose the date and park: Friday 2/21 for Magic Kingdom, or Saturday 2/22 for Hollywood Studios. Always start with morning and try to get the earliest FastPass possible that you would be interested in. Because we are under 30 days, most will start in the afternoon, many won’t even have times available. Don’t worry, just make the best choices you can. Click “Confirm”. You can pick 3 for each park date.

Later you can keep checking for better FastPasses, either better times or rides that you prefer. Just go into my plans and this time select the FastPass you might want to change, and choose “Modify” and see what’s there. Your current one won’t get changed unless you pick “Confirm,” you can just back out. If you keep checking, you can often nab other better or earlier FastPasses as people cancel or change plans.

Other Uses of My Disney Experience

You can check posted waiting times for rides, or the schedule for shows. You can view ride and Photopass photos. Mobile Food Ordering is great, but they cannot do it with gift cards at this time. You can make dining reservations at sit-down restaurants. It can link to the “Play Disney Parks” for trivia, music, and games to play when in line specific for that ride. You can also shop merchandise, because it is Disney and they love to sell you stuff.

Rise of the Resistance

This is the NEW and very AMAZING ride at Disney’s Hollywood Studios. It is an experience that combines FOUR different ride systems and numerous animatronics. It opened in December, and still is not operating to capacity, and frequently goes down for technical difficulties. Because of this, they have not started having a regular stand-by line for this ride. They are using a very problematic system called “Boarding Groups.”

If you want ANY chance of riding “Rise of the Resistance” at all, then you MUST have a “My Disney Experience” account. BEFORE you get to the Hollywood Studios park, you need to link your account through “My Friends and Family” with anyone you might want to ride it with.

Boarding groups are only available to sign up by people who are already scanned into the Hollywood Studios. They are letting people into the park ahead of the official opening time, but no rides or shows are open yet. At the actual opening time, they open the Boarding Groups, and people can sign up for them in MDE. They are usually filled within minutes. There are “backup” Boarding Groups available after that that don’t always get to ride. Therefore, we MUST be INSIDE the park BEFORE the official opening time. That means leaving our hotel, with our luggage packed and loaded, with enough time to drive to the park, unload, walk to the gates, and get all our tickets scanned, get into the parks, get the MDE apps opened and be ready to hit the button. And, unfortunately, the park hours recently changed from a 9:00 open on our day there to an 8:00 opening. That means we should aim for arriving at 7:30 or even earlier! YIKES! That’s just like a school day!

We need to quickly get in Hollywood Studios. You do not need to be in the “Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge” land, however. The park rides will not be open anywhere until park opening time, but you can head to a ride or land. Getting further into the park allows you to get to less crowded WiFi servers and could mean a faster app speed. Some also suggest turning off WiFi and use your internet provider. Make sure you are in a spot with good service.

Once in the parks, open the MDE app, and on the first page is a section “Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance - Access by Boarding Group”. Click on “Find Out More”. The “Join Boarding Group” button will be grayed out before park opening. At park open you need to click on that button when it becomes activated. (You might need to go back out and back in “Find Out More” to refresh it. You can also click on “My Status” and refresh it by pulling the screen down.) When the “Join Boarding Group” button is red, you can tap it. Select everyone in your party who is there in the park with you, and join, then the next page that comes up will tell you your boarding group number. Click “Done”. (If you do not have a phone or a friend who has one, there are kiosks where you can get a cast member to sign you up; some say that is riskier, some say if you are near the front of the line you are good to go.) If you are not in time or lose the lottery, then you may get a “Backup Boarding Group” message, or a message saying “Sorry, try again another time.”

There will not be a time of day given to your boarding group, just a number. The groups are taken in order, and how far they get varies every day. They will push notification to you through the MDE app when a time is assigned, or if there is any reason that your group will not get to ride, they will let you know. They also post the current boarding groups at various places through the park. This is one time you will want to have push notifications turned on for this app.

If several of you are friends and family on MDE, make sure when you go into the app that you mark that you are signing up for a boarding group for everyone. It is possible that several of you in a linked group can make the attempt to sign up at the same time. Only the quickest sign-up will go through, the others will get a “Sorry, you can only ride once” message. You do not get two boarding groups on the same day. There is a party size limit of 8 people.

It is VERY likely that even if we get to the park in time, some or all of us will not get into a Boarding Group. I see messages on the internet boards that families on vacation will go several mornings to try for a boarding group until they get one. Others say they got in to ride it every day. Be prepared for the disappointment and go enjoy all the other rides at the park. This ride will be around for decades to come, and you can always come back to visit again later.

Another effect of this process is that the other rides in Hollywood Studios will have longer lines first thing in the morning, but then tend to open up more in the afternoon. Look for a show or snack or something if the lines are too long for you, then get in line when they shorten up later. Disney will tend to overestimate and the wait will be lower than the posted time.

If you actually have no interest in riding this ride, please do not make it difficult on Saturday morning for those of us that do want to ride it; be cooperative for us get there on time, then just go on to ride Aliens Swirling Saucers or meet Lightning McQueen or something.