



THEME PARK TRAVEL GUIDE

The *"No Stupid Questions"* Guide



A THEME PARK GUIDE FROM THE THEME PARK TRAVEL EXPERTS



The “No Stupid Questions” Guide

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1. This Guide Is For You

If you are holding this guide, there is a good chance you have questions. Maybe you are planning your first theme park visit. Maybe you have been before, but always felt unsure if you were doing it right. Maybe you love theme parks quietly, from a distance, and are not sure where you fit.

This guide is for you.

Theme parks can feel intimidating. There are maps, apps, queues, unspoken rules and people who seem to know exactly where to go and what to do. It is easy to think that everyone else has it figured out. The truth is that most people are just finding their way as they go.

There is no single right way to visit a theme park. You do not have to love rollercoasters. You do not have to see everything. You do not have to stay until closing time or arrive at opening. You do not need perfect planning or insider knowledge.

Questions are not a sign that you do not belong. They are a sign that you care about having a good experience. And every question you have asked yourself, someone else has asked too, even if they never say it out loud.

This guide is called the No Stupid Questions Guide because there truly are no stupid questions here. You are allowed to wonder how things work. You are allowed to feel nervous, excited or overwhelmed. You are allowed to take your time.

Think of this book as a calm companion. Not something to study, but something to read when you need reassurance. We will talk about practical things, but also about feelings that often go unmentioned. About pressure, comparison and the idea that you need to do it all.

You belong in a theme park exactly as you are. Curious, unsure, excited, careful or completely new. This guide is here to help you enjoy the experience in your own way, at your own pace.

Take a breath.

You are in the right place.

With love,

Jolanda

2. Theme Park Lingo

Theme parks have their own language. You might hear people use certain words as if everyone understands them. If you ever felt confused or hesitant to ask, you are not alone. This chapter explains common theme park terms in plain language.

You do not need to remember all of this. Think of it as a translation guide you can come back to whenever something sounds unfamiliar.

Attraction: An attraction is anything you can experience in the park. This includes rides, shows, walkthroughs and sometimes even interactive areas. Not every attraction is fast or scary.

Ride: A ride is a type of attraction where you sit in a vehicle or on a moving system. Rides can be slow, gentle, dark, scenic or fast and intense. When someone says ride, they are not automatically talking about rollercoasters.

Rollercoaster or coaster: A rollercoaster is a ride that uses speed, height or sharp turns to create excitement. Some are smooth and mild. Others are intense. You are never required to like them, and skipping them does not make your visit less valid.

Dark Ride: A dark ride is an indoor ride where the focus is on scenes, music and storytelling rather than speed. You usually move slowly through decorated spaces. Many people who dislike rollercoasters love dark rides.

Show: A show is a seated or standing performance such as music, theater, dance or storytelling. Shows are a great way to rest while still enjoying the park.

Queue: A queue is simply the line where you wait for an attraction. Queues can be indoors or outdoors. Some are themed and part of the experience. Waiting in a queue is normal and expected in theme parks.

Wait Time: Wait time is an estimate of how long you will stand in the queue before entering an attraction. It is not always exact and can change throughout the day.

Single Rider: Single rider refers to a separate queue for people willing to ride alone. It can be faster, but it also means you may be separated from others in your group.

Fast Pass or Priority Access: This refers to systems that allow guests to skip part of the queue. Some parks offer this for free, others for an extra fee. Using it is optional, not required.

Rope Drop: Rope drop means arriving at the park before opening time. Guests wait near the entrance until the park opens and are then allowed in. It is often used by people who like to start early.

Soft Opening: A soft opening means an attraction opens quietly before its official opening date. It may not run all day or every day. It is not guaranteed and usually not announced far in advance.

Seasonal Event: A seasonal event is a special period like Halloween or winter celebrations. These events often include decorations, themed food, shows and extended opening hours.

Downtime: Downtime means an attraction is temporarily closed, usually for technical reasons or weather. This is normal and usually resolved without action from visitors.

Immersion: Immersion describes how much an area or attraction makes you feel like you are inside a story or world. This is about atmosphere, not rides.

Virtual Queue : A virtual queue means you do not stand in a physical line for an attraction. Instead, you reserve a time slot using an app or system provided by the park. When your time arrives, you return to the attraction and wait a much shorter time.

App: An app in a theme park context usually refers to the official mobile application of the park. Many parks use their app to show maps, attraction wait times, show schedules, opening hours and sometimes virtual queues or reservations.

Annual pass: This is a ticket that allows multiple visits over a longer period. You do not need one to enjoy a park, and many visitors never have one.

ERT: stands for early ride time or early access. It means guests with certain tickets or hotel stays can enter the park earlier. This is a bonus, not a requirement.

Facility Card: is a pass used in some theme parks to support guests who need extra assistance. This can include visitors with disabilities, medical conditions or other needs that make waiting in regular queues difficult.

Hard Ticketed Event: is a special event that requires a separate ticket, even if you already have a regular park ticket or annual pass. Examples include certain Halloween evenings, exclusive nighttime events or seasonal celebrations with limited capacity.

Thrill: When people talk about thrill in a theme park, they usually mean a strong feeling of excitement. This can come from speed, height, surprise or the sensation of losing control for a moment. Rollercoasters are designed to create this kind of thrill, with fast turns, drops and sudden movements.

But thrill does not only belong to big rides. For some people, a thrill comes from atmosphere, music, storytelling or stepping into a beautifully designed world. A dark ride, a show or even a quiet moment of discovery can be just as thrilling, just in a different way.

Thrill is personal. What excites one person might overwhelm another, and what feels calm to one person might feel intense to someone else. There is no correct level of thrill you need to enjoy to belong in a theme park. The only thing that matters is finding the kind of thrill that feels right for you.

3. Should I Love Rollercoasters

This is one of the most common questions people ask themselves in a theme park, even if they never say it out loud. Should I like Rollercoasters? Should I love this parade? Everyone else seems to love it? Am I doing this right. Am I missing something. Should I be somewhere else.

The answer is no. There is no single correct way to experience a theme park. You do not need a plan that fills every minute. You do not need to move quickly from one attraction to the next. You do not need to enjoy the same things other people enjoy.

And you definitely do not need to love rollercoasters. You can though, no matter your age, we've sat next to 70 year olds who had the time of their life on the coaster but we also traveled with people who do not enjoy a rollercoaster.

Theme parks offer many different kinds of experiences. Some people come for speed and adrenaline. Others come for stories, music, atmosphere, food, shows or simply the feeling of being somewhere different for a day. None of these reasons are more valid than the others.

It can feel intimidating when big rides seem to dominate the conversation. You hear people talk about heights, drops and thrills and it can seem like that is what the park is really about. But look around and you will notice something else. Many of the busiest attractions are slow rides, indoor rides, shows or places where people sit and watch.

Skipping a rollercoaster does not mean you are missing the point. It often means you are paying attention to what actually suits you.

It is also okay if your energy changes throughout the day. You might feel excited in the morning and tired in the afternoon. You might enjoy one intense experience and decide that is enough. You might realise halfway through the day that sitting down with a drink is more appealing than another queue.

None of that means you are doing it wrong.

Doing it right means listening to yourself instead of the noise around you. It means choosing comfort over pressure and curiosity over comparison. It means allowing yourself to enjoy the park in a way that feels natural, even if it looks different from someone else's visit.

If at any moment you find yourself wondering whether you belong, pause and look around. Notice the details. The music. The people smiling quietly. The small moments happening everywhere.

4. How Crowds Really Work

Crowds are one of the biggest worries people have before visiting a theme park. Will it be too busy. Will I spend the whole day waiting. Will I feel overwhelmed. Crowds are real, but they are also often misunderstood.

A busy park does not mean every place is busy all the time. Crowds move. They gather around popular attractions, meal times and shows, then thin out again. Two people can visit the same park on the same day and have completely different experiences, simply because they move differently.

Wait times are estimates, not promises. They are based on how many people are in line at that moment and how the attraction is running. Sometimes they go down quickly. Sometimes they go up. Seeing a long wait time does not mean you are doing something wrong or that the day is lost.

It is also important to know that you are never required to stand in a long queue. You are allowed to walk away. You are allowed to choose a quieter attraction, sit down, watch a show or take a break. Waiting is an option, not an obligation.

Crowds can feel more intense when you are tired, hungry or overstimulated. Often, what helps most is not a strategy, but a pause. Sitting somewhere calm, eating something or simply stepping away from the busiest path can change how the entire park feels.

Many people assume experienced visitors enjoy crowds more. That is not true. They have simply learned that crowds are part of the rhythm of a park day. They adjust without fighting it.

You do not need to outsmart the crowds to enjoy a theme park. You only need to move in a way that feels manageable for you. Sometimes that means joining the energy. Sometimes it means stepping aside.

5. What If I Get Tired or Overstimulated

Theme parks are designed to stimulate your senses. Music, movement, colours, crowds and constant choices all compete for attention. Feeling tired or overstimulated during a park day is not a failure. It is a very normal human response.

Tiredness does not always mean physical exhaustion. Sometimes it shows up as irritability, difficulty choosing what to do next or the feeling that everything is suddenly too much. When that happens, the best thing you can do is pause.

Taking a break is not wasted time. Sitting down, watching people pass by, eating something simple or stepping into a quiet corner can reset your energy more effectively than pushing through another attraction. Many parks have calmer areas, indoor spaces or shows that allow you to rest while still being part of the experience.

It is also okay to step away from stimulation completely. Using earplugs, focusing on breathing or simply closing your eyes for a moment can help your nervous system settle. You do not have to explain this to anyone.

Leaving early is also allowed. You do not owe the park a full day. Some of the best visits are short, gentle and leave you wanting to come back rather than feeling drained.

Listening to your body and mind is not a sign that you are doing less. It is a sign that you are taking care of yourself. A theme park day should meet you where you are, not demand more than you can give.

6. Is It Weird to Go Alone or Without Kids

Many people quietly wonder this before their visit. Is it strange to go to a theme park alone. Is it childish to go without kids. Will people look at me. The honest answer is no.

Theme parks are full of people enjoying them in different ways. Couples, friends, families, solo visitors and adults without children are all part of the same space. Most people are focused on their own day, not on judging yours.

Going alone can actually be a very calm experience. You move at your own pace. You choose what interests you. You take breaks when you need them. Many experienced visitors enjoy solo visits for exactly these reasons.

Visiting without kids is just as normal. Theme parks are built for many types of enjoyment, not just family trips. Atmosphere, storytelling, design, food and shows are all experiences adults appreciate deeply.

If you ever feel self conscious, remember this. The park is doing its job if it makes you feel something. Joy, nostalgia, curiosity or comfort all belong here. You do not need a reason or an excuse to enjoy them.

7. Food, Money and What else?

Many worries about theme parks are not about rides or crowds, but about small practical things. When will I eat. Will it be expensive. What if I get hungry at the wrong moment. These questions are very normal.

You do not need to solve food perfectly to have a good park day.

Most theme parks offer many food options, from quick snacks to full meals. You do not have to eat at fixed times or follow a strict plan. Eating when you feel hungry and resting when you feel tired is often enough. Sitting down with food is not just about eating. It is also one of the easiest ways to reset your energy.

It is allowed to bring your own snacks or drinks, especially water. This gives you flexibility and removes pressure. You are allowed to eat a simple snack and save a bigger meal for later, or the other way around.

Money can feel like a silent source of stress. Park food can be more expensive than food outside the park, but you are never forced to buy everything. You can choose one special treat and keep the rest simple. There is no correct amount to spend. Enjoyment is not measured in purchases.

Payment in theme parks is usually straightforward. Cards are widely accepted and cash is rarely essential. You do not need to carry more than feels comfortable to you.

Small worries often feel bigger when you are tired. When something starts to bother you, hunger, thirst or decision fatigue may be the real cause. Taking care of basic needs often solves more than expected.

8. What If Something Goes Wrong

No theme park day goes exactly as planned. An attraction closes. The weather changes. A queue feels longer than expected. Something you looked forward to does not work out. This does not mean the day is ruined.

Attractions can close temporarily for many reasons, often related to safety or weather. This is normal and usually out of your control. It is disappointing, but it is not personal and it is not your fault.

Weather can change quickly. Rain, wind or cold can shift the rhythm of the day. Sometimes this leads to shorter queues later on. Sometimes it means slowing down and adapting. Neither response is wrong.

If you lose something, feel confused or are unsure what to do, staff members are there to help. Theme parks are designed with one main goal in mind: to give guests an enjoyable and safe experience. A lot of thought goes into how days flow, how issues are handled and how guests are supported when something does not go as planned. Staff members are trained to help, to listen and to look for solutions, whether that means explaining a situation, offering an alternative or simply giving you a moment to pause. You never need to handle problems on your own. If something feels confusing or uncomfortable, asking for help is the fastest way forward. You are not bothering anyone. You are doing exactly what the park expects you to do.

The most important thing to remember when something goes wrong is this. A theme park day is made up of many moments, not one single experience. One disappointment does not erase the rest of the day unless you let it. Take a breath. Adjust your expectations. Choose the next small thing that feels doable. Often, the day finds its rhythm again on its own. Even imperfect days can hold quiet, meaningful moments. Sometimes especially then.

9. Final Thoughts: A Letter From Me to You

If you have read this far, I hope one thing is clear above all else. You belong in a theme park exactly as you are.

Theme parks are not reserved for experts, thrill seekers or people who know all the words. They are places built for curiosity, wonder, rest and joy in many different forms. However you move through them, slowly, carefully, enthusiastically or quietly, you are doing it right.

Over the years, I have visited many parks in many moods. Excited, tired, overwhelmed, confident, unsure. What I have learned is that the best days are not the ones where everything went perfectly. They are the days where I allowed myself to listen, adjust and enjoy the moment I was in.

If you ever feel unsure, remember this. You are allowed to ask questions. You are allowed to take breaks. You are allowed to change your mind. And you are allowed to enjoy something simply because it brings you joy.

If after reading this guide you still have questions, or if something feels unclear during your visit, you do not have to figure it out alone. You can always reach out to Dutch Theme Park Network. We love helping people feel more confident and at home in theme parks.

You can contact us through our website or send a message on our social channels. No question is too small. No question is silly. If it matters to you, it matters.

I hope your next theme park visit is gentle, joyful and fully your own.

With love,
Jolanda

Dutch Theme Park Network