

The year was 2021, and the world was just beginning to emerge from the pandemic. Covid 19 had killed many and made a great many sicker, not only physically but emotionally and spiritually. This was no different for myself and for my family. My wife and three children had just spent more than a year basically in our home. My kids were not allowed to go to school or play sports, my wife had lost her job, and I struggled to make ends meet. But then, just as the restrictions on the world began to lift, my family was graced with an amazing opportunity. We were going to travel to Orlando, FL and go to the Magic Kingdom. My children had never dreamed that this would be possible, and frankly neither had I. But by the kindness of family, this dream became reality. We did not know what to expect as we got in the car to head to the airport on an early April morning. We packed our bags, and our masks and away we went. When we arrived in Orlando, we were surprised by so many people not wearing masks or participating in social distancing. It seemed like we were in a place where the pandemic had left.

This all changed drastically when we arrived at the gates of the Magic Kingdom. We did not have the right kind of masks and were told that unless we purchased the right ones that we would not be allowed to enter. At first, I was angered by this, but then when we all got to pick our own Disney masks, I was not as mad, especially seeing how happy this made my children. The masks actually became the only masks that any of us wore for the rest of the time masks were required. We got lucky in the fact that the parks had just changed a rule allowing us to pull our masks down when we were taking pictures. We took hundreds of pictures over the next week of fun and excitement, sometimes we had our masks on and sometimes we did not. The masks made it unbearably hot at times, especially when the temperatures peaked at 98 degrees. The parks were not allowing full capacity yet, so it was far less crowded than normal times. This made the lines shorter, which meant we got to do more. There were still many rules that had to be followed to keep us and the people who work at the parks safe, but none of them made the trip any less magical. This was truly the trip of a lifetime, and the memories that we created will last forever, not only in the photos taken, but in our minds and in our hearts. It may have been a different experience for us since we had just come out of a pandemic, but it was amazing none the less. The Masked Magic Kingdom was no less magical, and every bit as wonderful!