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# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO



# homeschooling Disney

BY SUSAN LANDRY

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# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HOMESCHOOLING DISNEY

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By Susan Landry

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## WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

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### All Families

It has always been my opinion that in some ways all families are homeschool families. Whether your family utilizes public school, private school, charter, online, or homeschool...you can be a family that learns together. When my boys were attending a local charter school, we still learned at home, and I'll bet you do too. Museums, documentaries, family vacations, the local library, your backyard ... there are a million ways to learn and grow together as a family.

I remember sitting in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom and hearing the teacher talk about the monuments in Washington D.C. that I had visited with my family. "*Hey,*" I thought, "*I've seen those!*" I immediately tuned in and focused on what he was saying. When I visited Russia in college, I recall walking through the Hermitage fine art museum. Much of the art was lovely and impressive, but when I walked into the room of Monet paintings, it took my breath away. Monet was familiar. I had studied his work in my art history class, and seeing it in person was mesmerizing.

The familiar.

When something is familiar to us, it sticks in our brains. It can also add immense enjoyment to activities. Any family can add a layer of enjoyment to their Disney World vacation with the information in this book. Build more memories. Experience more magic.

## Homeschool Families

While all families will benefit from this information, I wrote this book with homeschool families in mind. When we began homeschooling, one of my favorite things was that we could incorporate our studies and our real life. So when we planned our next Disney World vacation I thought, *“What is Disney if not the ultimate field trip?!”*

Being a solidly ‘Disney’ family, I knew that the parks were literally stuffed with opportunities for learning. Unfortunately, when I began searching for resources, there was nothing out there. No comprehensive list of study topics, ideas, and sources. So we did what homeschooling families around the world do...we pieced lessons together from the resources we could find and made the best of it.

This guide is not a curriculum. It’s not a book of lessons. What it is (which is far more useful in my opinion) is a collection of ideas and resources for your studies. Ideas and resources that you can use with a variety of ages and grades and learning styles. You’ll also find lots of information about what to expect in the parks.

If you try to do every single thing in this book, you will face the mountain of overwhelm. Don’t do it! Choose the ideas that resonate with your family, the ones that fit your study plans, the ones that you have time for.

Enjoy! Have fun! And I hope that you find magic in these pages!

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## HISTORY

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### American History

Two parks offer opportunities for studies in American History. In the Magic Kingdom, **Liberty Square** is the primary place to look. And in Epcot, the **American Adventure** attraction is full of learning.



## Fun things to watch for in Magic Kingdom:

Did you know that the **Liberty Bell** that is displayed in the parks was cast from a mold of the original? Here's the story: In 1976, 50 replicas were cast and molded in honor of our country's 200th birthday. Each state would receive one and place it in a spot of their choice. However, the state of Pennsylvania had a problem. They already had the original Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. Why would they want a replica? Years later, Walt Disney World realized Pennsylvania had the replica and asked if they could have it for Liberty Square. Pennsylvania agreed and on July 4th, 1989 the replica Liberty Bell was hoisted and lowered into its permanent spot inside Liberty Square at the Magic Kingdom where it still sits today. Florida remains the only state with two of the 50 replica Liberty Bells.



If you look in the tree in front of Liberty Tree Tavern, you'll see 13 lanterns representing the original 13 colonies of the United States. And a great photo-op in

Liberty Square is at the authentic wooden pillory (stocks) that you can put your head and hands in.

Also in Liberty Square, notice that the sidewalk has a brown 'path' built into the pavement. In colonial times, there was no sewer system, and so many streets had a stream of sewage flowing within them.



You won't want to miss the *Hall of Presidents* here, either. In the atrium/pre-show area, be sure to spend some time looking at the Presidential portraits and memorabilia. You'll see such things as George Washington's dental instruments and Abraham Lincoln's leather portfolio.

The film inside highlights a number of defining moments by our country's Presidents. From the forming of our Constitution, the American Revolution and Civil War to words from John F. Kennedy. You'll even watch Abraham Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg address.

Then, witness a very special display as the curtain rises to reveal each and every United States President, together for the very first time—followed by speeches delivered by Presidents George Washington and the current President.

All of the clothing on the figures is an authentic reproduction of their respective eras, including the braces on Franklin Delano Roosevelt's legs.

Frontierland is a celebration of the American West. Although not as full of learning opportunities as Liberty Square, it can be a fun place to take a step back in time. The attraction *Big Thunder Mountain* could open the door to a study of the history of coal mines, specifically the dangers of them. For train lovers, this can be a fun place to hop on the *Walt Disney World Railroad*, too.

### **Learning at Epcot's American Adventure:**

The architecture in the American pavilion was done in classic English Georgian style. Elements in the building were inspired by Independence Hall, Boston's Old State House, Monticello, and Colonial Williamsburg.