

CELEBRATIONS

SHARING THE MAGIC OF WALT DISNEY WORLD



Pandora Twilight
• A Magical Keepsake •

Pandora — The World of AVATAR provides a jaw-dropping feast for the senses at any hour, but the film's famous bioluminescent landscape shines especially bright after dark. Everything changes at night, with the very ground beneath your feet glowing eerily. Animal cries erupt from the encroaching foliage — both distant and shockingly near — that sound every bit as authentic as those heard on Kilimanjaro Safaris. Set one foot into Pandora and you will never call Animal Kingdom a half-day park again.

Elaborate steel constructions form the basis of the moon's floating mountains, and mind-bending advances in Audio-Animatronic technology bring the Na'vi to life, but the true foundation of Pandora on that oldest of Disney principles: storytelling. As such, the immersive experiences — the sights, sounds, and sensations — are what bring this mythical land to life.

From the moment you cross the bridge into Pandora, you feel as if you have entered another world — alien, yet welcoming. Mountains float overhead, and flora unlike any on Earth abounds as far as the eye can see. Here lies the Valley of Mo'ara, a fertile Pandoran refuge far removed from the events of the blockbuster film. Citizens of Earth are now welcomed to Pandora, thanks to a partnership between the native Na'vi and Alpha Centauri Expeditions, an eco-tour group that shuttles humans through the cosmos. A large map of the Valley of Mo'ara greets new ar-

rivals, but this diagram more closely resembles one found in a national park than a theme park. There are no markings for rides or other attractions, but rather observation points, camps, and trails. This cartographical shift makes a strong statement — instilling the mood of a living, breathing world, as opposed to a tourist trap. Imagineering once again strikes the perfect balance between usability and theming.



In truth, Pandora numbers few attractions. But, once again, this reflects an intentional decision to devote most of the space to the land's natural wonders. Every inch of this new world has been meticulously handcrafted to showcase the grandeur of nature, including several former RDA facilities being slowly reclaimed by the environment. Even the nighttime lighting system remains purposely dimmed, all the better to let the bioluminescent scenery take center stage.

If seeing AVATAR in 3D at the theaters was heralded as immersive in 2009, stepping into Animal Kingdom's Pandora will be something else altogether. In fact, simply walking the paths to take in the sights should be considered an attraction in itself. Where else could you ever dream of gazing up at 156-foot tall floating mountains, basking in the bioluminescent glow of the forest, or hearing the cries of winged banshees in flight? When you step into Pandora, especially at twilight, you are truly stepping into another world.

— Story by Kevin Carpenter









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