



Disney just increased ticket prices again. It won't be the last time.

By [Hannah Sampson](#)

February 13 at 2:57 PM

Disney regulars know they can always count on a towering castle, a friendly wave from Mickey, a giant turkey leg — and a higher price on future trips.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the entertainment giant raised the cost of certain tickets — including annual passes — at both its U.S. locations this week.

Among the increases: [Disneyland Resort](#) hiked the price of a one-day ticket that provides access to both its California parks to \$209 at peak times. That's compared with \$199 before, the Los Angeles Times [reported](#); the same type of ticket during the slowest day increased from \$154 to \$159, the paper said.

In Florida, the most [expensive annual pass](#) for nonresidents now costs \$1,295, up from \$1,219, according to the [Orlando Sentinel](#). Single-day tickets for one park range from \$109 to \$159 a day; those prices have not yet increased this year.



“No one should be surprised by Disney’s annual price increases at this point. The only questions are when it will happen and how much it will be,” Robert Niles, founder and editor of the industry news site Theme Park Insider, said in an email. “With soft attendance following last year’s aggressive price increase, fans expected a relatively low price hike this year, and that’s what they got.”

He pointed out in a [story](#) that 13 months had passed since Disneyland’s last price increase and that the hikes at both domestic resorts were lower than previous ones.

Disney sets prices according to how busy the parks are expected to be on any given day, a change the company ushered in a few years ago to manage crowds and encourage more people to turn up when parks are slower.

It's a strategy executives embrace, even if regular parkgoers complain that they're being priced out of a family vacation. In an earnings call last year, CEO Robert Iger said the company is trying to take advantage of the parks' popularity to make the experience better for people who buy tickets.

"We know that crowding can be an issue and that when our parks are the most crowded, the guest experience is not what we would like it to be," Iger said. "So, we're leveraging the popularity to obviously increase pricing and to spread demand to get much more strategic about how we're pricing."

The company has also seen its costs increase as it builds more attractions at parks around the globe and pays workers more, which observers say is another factor in the higher cost of entry.

"A visit to our parks is the best value in entertainment bar none, and we offer flexible ticket choices to enable families to choose what's best for them," Disney said in a statement.

Niles said he expects the company to keep raising its prices but to address any attendance slumps with discounts.

“There seem to be a ton of people willing to pay whatever price, and Disney doesn’t want to leave money on the table if people are willing to pay those high prices,” Martin Lewison, an associate professor of business management at Farmingdale State College who studies the theme-park industry, said in an email.

He added: “The truth is that you can’t experience anything like Disney anywhere else, and people still feel like they are getting value for money, even at the ‘outrageous’ prices.”

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