

No waiting to ride the wild Web coaster

By PAMELA WEINTRAUB

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As the summer draws to a close, the thirst for one last blast of adventure runs high.

Time permitting, you could catch a flight to Madagascar or scale the Himalayas. If you just have a couple of days, though, you can get all your thrills and chills at one of the world's great amusement parks.

To sample the goods and plot your journey before you set off, preview the rides and attractions at these action sites online.

Start your excellent adventure with the pomp and circumstance of Disney, whose homepage is an homage to the company's creative thrust.

If you plan a trip to one of the Disney theme parks, learn all you can about Disneyland in California, Walt Disney World in Florida or EuroDisney in France before you start.

Address: <http://www.disney.com>

Click on: **THEME PARKS/VACATIONS**

If you live for the sheer, chest-pounding action of the world's fastest roller coasters, the cool thrill of Amazonian water rides or classics like the Ferris wheel and the carousel, you already know about Six Flags, whose eight theme parks constitute some of the largest in the United States.

Ride aficionados: The Six Flags site offers an excellent update on the latest and greatest in ride technology, including video profiles.

To get the details on such high-tech thrillers as Batman the Ride, the Scream Machine and Superman the Escape (accelerate to 100 miles an hour in seven seconds), your Web site of choice is here.

Address: <http://www.sixflags.com/>

So you're one of those roller-coaster nomads — you pack a suitcase and hop a plane every time a bigger, better concoction of steel and speed comes along? If so,

check out "Where to Coast," the cult bible of the coaster crowd, with listings of amusement parks and the roller coasters in each, as well as links to other favorite coasting sites around the Web.

Address: <http://www.tripod.com/userland/E/Express/wheretocoast.html>

If your love for the amusement park is rooted in nostalgia, there's no better blast from the past than the boardwalk attractions along the Jersey shore.

For monster slides and bumper cars, upside-down rides and funnel cakes, for the pure sweet sensation of pink cotton candy, red candy apples and sky-blue Hawaiian ice, you'll want to get in your Chevy or Ford, roll down the windows and head to Point Pleasant, Seaside Heights, and parts beyond.

Need some guidance or perhaps a place to crash? Start with the Internet Home of Ocean County, New Jersey.

Address: <http://204.141.122.11/ocean/>

Finally, no theme park tour would be complete without a guide to Orlando, Fla., the theme park capital of the world. We recommend the Graphic City Guide to Orlando, which explains it all: Not just Disney World, Universal Studios, MGM Studios and Sea World, but also Gatorland, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Wallaby Ranch and more.

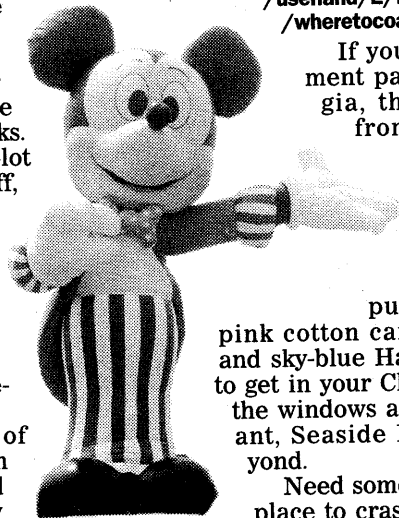
Address:

<http://www.iag.net/%7Elsiddons/orlando.html>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION: The last time I went to a theme park, I waited two hours for a two-minute ride. I walked out, vowing never to return again.

Can I get my thrills vicariously, these days, online?

Just stay home and watch the action on the Web. Disney World has placed Webcams at both the Epcot Center and the Magic Kingdom, enabling theme park voyeurs to see the action, second by second, real time.



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Address: <http://www.disney.com/DisneyWorld/TheParks/LiveCamera/>

For Disney sounds from such well-known arenas as Adventureland, Frontierland, Mickey's Toon Town, Fantasyland and Tomorrowland, among other park venues, put your ear to the Webtracks and hear the rumbling at:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/markel/dizlinks.htm>

MAKE THE CONNECTION: To discuss the pros and cons of the various theme parks, stop in and get an evaluation from the experts — your fellow park adventurers — at the newsgroup news:rec.parks.theme. Roller coaster addicts: Get up to speed at news:rec.roller-coaster.

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