

# **“it’s a small world” History & Fun Facts**

## **Disneyland 2009**

- “it’s a small world” was originally conceived as an exhibit that would benefit UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund, at the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair. Because UNICEF is dedicated to the welfare of children all over the world, the theme for “it’s a small world” became an international voyage celebrating the happy spirit of children everywhere.
- After two hit seasons at the fair, “it’s a small world” moved to Disneyland, where it was expanded and then reopened as a major attraction in 1966.
- Walt Disney dedicated “it’s a small world” at Disneyland on May 28, 1966. He invited children from around the world, and each child brought water from the rivers and seas of his or her own native land to be poured into the flume.
- Considered a quintessential Disney theme park experience, “it’s a small world” can now be found at five Disney parks on three continents – Disneyland, the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort, Tokyo Disneyland, Disneyland Paris and Hong Kong Disneyland.
- Guest research at Disneyland has found that one in four Disneyland guests – families with children and those who grew up riding the attraction - consider “it’s a small world” a tradition. They plan a voyage whenever they visit the park.
- More than 256 *million* guests have experienced “it’s a small world” at Disneyland in California since the attraction opened in 1966.
- “it’s a small world” contains more than 300 *Audio-Animatronics* figures representing children around the world. It also features more than 250 toys and 80 animated props.

- The tune was composed by Richard M. and Robert S. Sherman, the Academy Award®-winning composers of "Mary Poppins," at the request of Walt Disney. Arranged and orchestrated with instruments from all over the world – bagpipes in the attraction's Scotland scene, Peruvian reed flutes, Tahitian drums, etc. – the music not only provides accents to each scene, it underscores the attraction's theme of unity.

- **"It's a Small World (After All)" Lyrics**

It's a world of laughter  
 A world of tears;  
 It's a world of hopes  
 And a world of fears.  
 There's so much that we share  
 That it's time we're aware

It's a small world after all.  
 It's a small world after all,  
 It's a small world after all,  
 It's a small world after all,  
 It's a small, small world.

There is just one moon  
 And one golden sun  
 And a smile means  
 Friendship to ev'ry one.  
 Though the mountains divide  
 And the oceans are wide,  
 It's a small world after all.

- A stylized sun or moon ("*There is just one moon/And one golden sun ...*") appears somewhere in each region.
- In the newly refreshed attraction, familiar Disney melodies provide musical counterpoint to the original tune. The Disney songs (and their locations) include "All in the Golden Afternoon" from "Alice in Wonderland" (Great Britain), and "A Whole New World" from "Aladdin" (Middle East).
- Also new to "it's a small world," 29 popular Disney and Disney•Pixar characters are represented through costumed child dolls and toys in the countries or regions in which their stories take place. Some examples:

Alice and the White Rabbit ("Alice in Wonderland") in Great Britain

Woody and Jessie ("Toy Story") in Spirit of America

Aladdin and Jasmine ("Aladdin") in the Middle East

Mulan and Mushu ("Mulan") in Asia (China)

Donald Duck, Panchito and José Carioca ("The Three Caballeros") in South America

Ariel and Flounder ("The Little Mermaid") in the Pacific Islands

Lilo and Stitch ("Lilo and Stitch") in the Pacific Islands (Hawaii)

- The design of the new characters replicates the bold yet childlike designs that were created by Disney Imagineering art director Mary Blair, who was honored as a "Disney Legend" posthumously in 1991. Her sense of design and use of color and shapes enhance the storytelling for "it's a small world" and have informed every version of the attraction since the 1964 original.
- Also helping create the original "it's a small world" was a team of Walt Disney Imagineers, several of whom also have been named "Disney Legends." Rolly Crump translated Mary Blair's two-dimensional designs into the three-dimensional sculptural world. Disney animator and Imagineer Marc Davis created many of the character vignettes, while his wife, Alice Davis, helped create many of the children's costumes for the New York World's Fair, Disneyland, Magic Kingdom, Tokyo Disneyland and Disneyland Paris versions of the attraction.
- Disneyland Resort Horticulture creates and maintains a widely admired menagerie of animal-shaped topiary plants outside "it's a small world." It often takes five years before a topiary figure is ready for its onstage debut.
- A new "it's a small world" tradition began in December 1997 when "it's a small world" holiday debuted. Each holiday season, the attraction undergoes a festive holiday redressing and features new decorations, soundtracks,

costumes, props and effects. The show depicts the children of the world celebrating the joys of the season.

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