

Disney closes US and Paris theme parks, delays 'Mulan' over virus

March 13 2020, by Andrew Marszal



Disney's theme parks are among the largest in the world, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each day

Disney will close its giant theme parks in Florida, California and Paris and pull the releases of major blockbusters including "Mulan" over the

coronavirus, it announced Thursday.

The resorts are among the largest theme parks in the world, each drawing tens of thousands of visitors each day. They will remain shut at least until the end of March.

"In an abundance of caution and in the best interest of our guests and employees, we are proceeding with the closure," a Disney spokesperson said.

The closure of Disneyland in Anaheim from Saturday was announced first, after California officials called for large gatherings to be canceled across the state to slow the spread of the pandemic.

Governor Gavin Newsom said Disney had "made the right call in the interest of public health and agreed to shut down their California parks."

"Expect more announcements like this shortly," he added.

Hours later the company said Walt Disney World in Florida and Disneyland Paris would shut from close of business Sunday. Hotels on those sites will remain open for now.

The flagship Magic Kingdom theme park at Disney World drew more than 20 million visitors in 2018—the highest number in the world.

Disney's cruise line will stop new departures from Saturday until the end of March.

The US theatrical release of Disney's upcoming "Mulan" was also pulled, along with two other Mouse House titles, "The New Mutants" and "Antlers."

All three films were postponed indefinitely as Disney determines new release dates, with potential theater slots later this year being considered.

"Mulan," a live-action remake of the 1998 animation based on the tale of a legendary Chinese warrior, had already had its red-carpet premiere in Los Angeles on Monday, and was set to hit US theaters in two weeks.

Events canceled

The Disney moves follow a string of high-profile postponements and cancellations in California including the Coachella desert music festival, the Beverly Hills Film Festival, and the WonderCon pop culture gathering.

Universal Studios Hollywood, another major theme park in Los Angeles, also announced it will temporarily close beginning Saturday, until at least March 28.

Across the country, events including the CinemaCon movie theater summit in Las Vegas, SXSW media festival in Texas and the Tribeca Film Festival in New York have been scrapped or postponed.

New York's Broadway theater district on Thursday suspended performances for a month under a similar a ban on large public gatherings.

American rock giants Pearl Jam postponed the first leg of their North American tour, while pop diva Mariah Carey delayed a planned gig in Hawaii over the virus.

"Fast and Furious 9," the latest sequel in the high-grossing, fast-car franchise from Universal Studios, also saw its release pushed back a year.

No cases of the new coronavirus had been reported at Disneyland in California, the company said. It did not say whether there were any cases at Disney World in Florida or at Disneyland Paris.

Disney will monitor the situation, and on-site hotels in California will remain open until Monday to give guests time to leave.

Disney-themed parks in Asia have also closed due to the COVID-19 illness, although its Shanghai resort partially reopened this month after closing in late January.

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