

# California's Yosemite National Park shuts down over coronavirus fears

March 21 2020

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The rock formation El Capitan is seen in Yosemite National Park

California's Yosemite National Park, one of the most visited parks in the nation, shut down to visitors on Friday because of the coronavirus crisis.

"Yosemite National Park is announcing modifications to operations at the request of the local health department," park officials said in a statement.

Beginning at 3:00 pm local time (2200 GMT), they said, the grounds would be "closed to all [park visitors](#) until further notice."

The only people allowed access to the park, located in northern California, will be employees, the statement said.

The park's landmark Ahwahnee Hotel and other lodgings and restaurants had closed on Tuesday as a precaution over coronavirus concerns and campgrounds were also shut down.

Services at other parks throughout the country have also been suspended because of coronavirus but the parks have not been shut down.

Earlier this week, US Interior Secretary David Bernhardt announced that entrance fees would be waived at national parks, drawing criticism that the move would encourage people to gather in [public spaces](#) and heighten their risk of contracting the virus.

The move comes a day after California Governor Gavin Newsom ordered all 40 million residents of the state to stay at home indefinitely.

California is one of the hardest hit states with 23 deaths and more than 1,180 cases reported.

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