

SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL ZOO REOPENING: MAY 21, 2021

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER: WHAT THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO KNOW BEFORE VISITING THE ZOO

Visitor Guidance

- Visit nationalzoo.si.edu for detailed guidance on safety and admission procedures, including an FAQ, ahead of your visit.
- Read the updated Zoo Map that includes building closures and spots where food/retail is open.
- The Zoo Map is available online as a PDF to view or print.

Hours

- 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Last Zoo admittance for free timed-entry passes and for paid parking passes is at 3 p.m.

Safety Procedures

- As part of the Smithsonian Institution, the Zoo adheres to federal safety policy and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 public health guidance.
- The Zoo has guidelines to create the safest possible environment for visitors, staff, volunteers and animals.
- Go to nationalzoo.si.edu for detailed guidance ahead of your visit.
 - Visitors ages 2 and older are required to wear a face covering in all indoor spaces. Fully vaccinated visitors are not required to wear a face covering outdoors. Face coverings may be removed while eating or drinking.
 - Visitors are checked upon arrival.
 - Plan to follow social distancing protocols and other posted guidelines throughout the Zoo, wear face coverings where required and wash/sanitize their hands often.
 - If visitors feel sick before their scheduled reservation, we ask that they please do not visit the Zoo.
- The Zoo has increased cleaning throughout the day.
 - Bathrooms will be cleaned more frequently, and every other urinal, sink, and hand-dryer will be blocked to promote social distancing.
 - High-touch areas of the Zoo, such as doors, will be cleaned frequently.
 - Sanitizing stations are strategically placed throughout the park at frequently touched areas.

Limited Capacity

- The total number of daily visitors at the Zoo will be limited throughout the day, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- The Zoo will open conservatively and then work up to 5 – 6,000/a little over 20% of our full capacity.
- The Zoo carefully evaluated its public buildings, indoor and outdoor exhibits and pathways to identify areas that would meet safety and social distancing requirements.
- This means that in some instances areas or buildings are closed or capacity is limited.
- The Zoo will continue to follow Smithsonian guidance to determine what areas may open in the future.

Attendance Data

- If the Zoo was fully operational with all exhibit houses and buildings open, extended summer hours and lovely weather, we can accommodate approximately 20-25,000 visitors, full capacity.

Entry Passes

- Admission to the Zoo is free.
- The total number of visitors will be limited.
- All guests are required to reserve a timed entry pass OR paid parking pass before visiting.
- Visitors have [two options for entry passes to the Zoo](#):
 - Free timed-entry pass or paid parking pass. Visitors do not need both. All passes must be reserved online.
- Visit the Zoo's website to reserve timed-entry passes or purchase a paid parking pass.
 - If you plan to walk, bike, taxi, ride-share or take public transportation, visitors need to reserve a free timed entry pass for every member of their group.
 - If visitors drive a personal vehicle and park at the Zoo, they need to purchase a paid parking pass for \$30 before their visit (one pass per vehicle).
 - The parking pass **IS** the entry pass to the Zoo and covers all passengers in your personal vehicle.
 - Visitors do not need to reserve additional free timed entry passes for each person in the vehicle.

Asia Trail/Panda Pass

- In order to keep visitors, staff and animals safe, admission to Asia Trail and the giant panda exhibit is extremely limited.
- Visitors need both a Zoo entry pass (either pedestrian or vehicle) to enter the Zoo and an Asia Trail/Panda Pass to view the giant pandas.
- Visitors reserve Asia Trail/Panda Passes onsite at the Zoo at one of eight giant panda statue stations. The entire process is digital and done through a smart phone.
- Asia Trail/Panda Passes are released throughout the day; the last available time slot is 3:30 p.m.
- Asia Trail/Panda Passes will be scanned for admission at the upper entrance to Asia Trail, which is across from the Visitor Center near the Connecticut Avenue pedestrian entrance.
- Keep in mind that Xiao Qi Ji is still young and sleeps a lot during the day. He may choose to rest in an area not in public view.
- With the coming summer heat, giant pandas will choose to spend more time indoors.
- As always, Xiao Qi Ji along with his parents can be viewed on the Zoo's live Giant Panda Cam.
- There is a detailed [FAQ online at nationalzoo.si.edu](#).
- The Zoo understands that many people want to see the pandas and can only accommodate a few. As restrictions ease, the Zoo will be able to add more passes for visitors.

Parking

- If arriving via car and plan to park at the Zoo, visitors must have a paid pass which is \$30 per vehicle. That pass acts as the entry pass for the guests in the vehicle.
 - All cars must enter the Zoo from the Connecticut Avenue vehicle entrance.
 - Please note that parking spaces are limited each day and may sell out. No parking passes will be sold onsite.
- Visit the Zoo's website to purchase a paid parking pass.

Open Exhibits, Animals on View and Exhibit/Building Closures

- For the safety of guests, staff and animals, some exhibits and areas where social distancing is impossible will be closed.
- To prevent large groups of people from crowding together, Daily Animal Demonstrations are canceled until further notice.
- For the latest information on open and closed exhibits, visit the Zoo's Visit page on its website.
 - **Open:**
 - American Bison (Two new animals!)
 - American Trail
 - Andean Bears
 - Asia Trail and Giant Panda House
 - Note: Asia Trail/Panda Passes are required and available for free onsite; limited capacity.
 - Cheetah Conservation Station
 - Elephant Community Center, Elephant Trails and Elephant Outpost
 - Great Ape House
 - Great Cats
 - Kids Farm
 - Lemur Island
 - Outdoor exhibits only: Reptile Discovery Center (Aldabra tortoise, Komodo dragon, American alligator, Philippine crocodile)
 - Outdoor exhibit only: Small Mammal House outdoor exhibit (wallabies)
 - **Open on the weekends (Saturday and Sunday):**
 - Reptile Discovery Center (indoors)
 - **Closed:**
 - Small Mammal House (indoors)
 - Gibbon Ridge
 - Amazonia
 - Carousel, train rides, tide pool, all playgrounds

Food and Retail

- The money you spend at the Zoo supports the Zoo's amazing animal and conservation programs.
- Several restaurants and food trucks are open including:
 - Elevation Burger
 - Sbarro's
 - Auntie Anne's/Carvel
 - Ben & Jerry's
- Only outdoor seating is available, and tables and benches are spaced according to social distancing best practices.
- Shop for souvenirs and gifts at the Panda Plaza gift shop (indoor) and various outdoor retail kiosks throughout the park. To maintain social distancing, the Great Cats gift shop will be closed.

Getting Around the Zoo

- For safety reasons and to ensure social distancing, the Guest Shuttle, which usually runs between the bottom of the Zoo and the Bus Lot, will not be operating.

- Electric scooters and strollers are available to rent for a fee at the Visitor Center and Lion Tiger Information Booth.
- Manual wheelchairs are free.
- Zoo staff follow strict cleaning and disinfecting protocols between each use.

Smithsonian National Zoo Membership

- Smithsonian National Zoo members will have two ways to reserve Asia Trail/Panda Passes, via [members-only advance registration](#) on the Zoo's website or in person after arriving onsite at the Zoo.
- Only Members are able to reserve Panda Passes in advance.
- Visit the Zoo's website to join online.
- To join on site, look for special Membership QR codes on signs in the Zoo.