

Florida Keys will reopen to visitors June 1 amid pandemic

May 18 2020



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, Florida Keys residents David Sloan, second from right, and Heather May Potter, right, approach a life-size sculpture of Marilyn Monroe adorned with a protective mask Sunday, May 3, 2020, in Key West, Fla. "Forever Marilyn," inspired by a famous photograph of the actress in a white dress with a blowing skirt, was crafted by the late American sculptor J. Seward Johnson and stands outside the island's Tropic Cinema. Johnson, best known for his life-size cast bronzes placed in public settings, was a part-time Key West resident. The Florida Keys are temporarily

closed to visitors because of COVID-19. People in the Keys and in many other parts of the world are being advised to wear masks in public to reduce potential virus transmission. (Rob O'Neal/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP)

The Florida Keys will reopen to tourists on June 1, more than two months after the island chain closed to visitors to minimize the spread of the coronavirus.

Checkpoints that barred visitors from coming into the Florida Keys will be removed next month and hotels and other lodging establishments, including campgrounds and vacation rentals, will also be allowed to reopen at 50% occupancy, Monroe County Emergency Management said in a [statement](#) on Sunday.

These businesses must implement sanitation stations and follow the American Hotel and Lodging Association's cleaning guidelines for COVID-19, the statement said. Airport screenings and bus restrictions will also be lifted in June.

The decision to reopen comes amid the low coronavirus infection rate in the Florida Keys, the Miami Herald [reported](#). As of Sunday, Monroe County had 100 positive [coronavirus](#) cases and three people deaths.

If the Florida Keys experience a surge in cases after reopening in June, "restrictions may be heightened and amenities may again be closed," the statement said.

The move to reopen was the "toughest decision" Monroe County officials had to make, Monroe County Spokeswoman Kristen Livengood told the Miami Herald.

The Florida Keys had been closed off to non-residents since March 22. Checkpoints at U.S. 1 and State Road 905 were set up five days later to bar visitors from coming into Monroe County.



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, cars pass an electronic messaging board on the Florida Keys Overseas Highway, Wednesday, March 25, 2020, in Key Largo, Fla. The coronavirus crisis has spurred Florida Keys officials to shut down the subtropical island chain to visitors until further notice. To reinforce the message, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office is planning to implement southbound traffic stops in the next day or two at the top of the Keys. (Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP)

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