

How to cancel reservations and activities after testing positive for COVID-19

(Courtesy of Victoria M. Walker, The Points Guy)

It seems like everybody is testing positive for [COVID-19](#) right now. While positive cases of the virus are starting to fall, the U.S. is still averaging more than [700,000 new](#) coronavirus cases each day. That means a positive case may upend your travel plans even if you take all the necessary precautions.

Change and cancellation policies are pretty [straightforward](#) for most airlines and hotel chains. But what about those museum tickets or dinner reservations? If you've recently tested positive, they may be the last thing on your mind.

But can you get a refund or change the date of your reservation? Here's what you need to know about COVID-19 change and cancellation policies at museums, restaurants and tourist activities across the country.

Museums

If you want to change or cancel your museum reservation, you'll probably need to contact the museum directly to request a refund or request to exchange your ticket for a different day.

Museum of Modern Art

For instance, while New York City's [Museum of Modern Art \(MoMA\)](#) change and cancellation policy doesn't explicitly name the coronavirus, the museum has a flexible policy. MoMA says if your plans change and you're "unable to visit during your selected day/time," you should [contact the museum](#) for a refund or change your ticket.

And just a reminder that under the "Key to NYC" mandate, proof of vaccination isn't only required for indoor dining or gyms: theaters and museums are also included.

Getty Villa Museum

You don't have to pay to visit the Getty Villa Museum outside Los Angeles. Still, admission is done by [timed-entry reservation](#) — and they can be hard to come by, especially when everyone 2 and older needs a reservation. If your plans change due to a positive test or for another reason, you can cancel by emailing visitorservices@getty.edu or calling the museum.

National Museum of African American History and Culture

One of the most famous museums in Washington, D.C., is the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), which frequently runs out of its timed tickets within minutes of being posted.

A positive test may derail your travel plans to the museum, but you can still keep your slot by exchanging your pass for another day. The museum urges travelers to do this by calling 1-800-514-3849 or completing [this form](#).

Restaurants

It may seem small compared to a flight or a hotel room, but it's still important to remember to cancel any restaurant reservations you may have. Otherwise, you could be penalized by the reservations platform or charged a fee.

OpenTable

OpenTable has a pretty strict no-show policy. In fact, I almost got kicked off the platform a few years ago for bailing on reservations I'd forgotten I'd made.

The platform doesn't explicitly address what diners should do if they have to cancel a reservation due to testing positive for COVID-19 but says it encourages diners to cancel reservations they will be "unable to honor" at least 30 minutes in advance on the day of the reservation. The platform also noted that some restaurants have a 24- or 48-hour cancellation policy and says diners should contact the restaurant directly so they aren't marked as a no-show.

Either way, you'll want to make the best effort to get in contact with OpenTable (or the restaurant), as some restaurants require a credit card to book your reservation. If you fail to cancel your reservation, you could be on the hook for a fee.

Resy

Like OpenTable, [Resy](#) doesn't have a listed COVID-19 cancellation policy.

You won't have to pay a cancellation fee (if the restaurant has one) if you cancel online at least 30 minutes before your reservation. Keep in mind that some restaurants may require more advance notice for cancellations, so make sure to check directly with the restaurant for specifics.

If you don't check in for your reservation within 15 minutes after your reservation, Resy will consider you a no-show. Resy says it can "terminate or suspend" your account if you accumulate too many no-shows.

Other activities

If you're canceling plans due to a positive COVID-19 test, remember to consider any and all reservations you may have made, including theater tickets or tours of famous attractions and landmarks.

Broadway

Broadway [reopened in September](#), and it's been an [up-and-down experience ever since](#). Several shows have announced cancellations due to the coronavirus, and unfortunately, some shows are shut down for the season.

As my colleague [Ashley Kosciolk](#) (who had several Broadway tickets that were canceled) [noted earlier this month](#), many shows are offering flexible cancellations as part of Broadway's "Book With Confidence" initiative. That means if you have to change or cancel your ticket due to a positive test, for instance, some shows allow you to change or request a refund, sometimes just 48 hours before the show.

For instance, you can exchange your tickets for “[Harry Potter and the Cursed Child](#)” for the same show at a later date or request a refund if you purchased your ticket on or before Feb. 28, 2022. You’re entitled to this particular [policy](#) if you (or someone in your party) tests positive for COVID-19 during the 14 days before the show or if you’re caring for someone with the virus.

Concerts and festivals

Spring typically marks the beginning of festival season. Some of the biggest names — [Coachella](#), Stagecoach, Electric Daisy — are returning this year with some restrictions. Coachella and [Stagecoach](#), for example, require guests to show a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of the event or proof of vaccination.

Coachella says tickets will be honored if it has to reschedule festival dates. If you can’t attend the new dates, refunds will be processed within 30 days of the new date. Make sure to purchase your tickets [directly through the venue](#) because third-party policies could differ.

You might also find that your artist has to cancel an upcoming concert.

Singer Adele tearfully announced that she would postpone her [Las Vegas](#) residency due to a COVID-19 outbreak among her crew. The singer was supposed to perform a series of shows at the [Colosseum at Caesars Palace](#) through mid-April.

“We’ve tried absolutely everything that we can to put it together in time, and for it to be good enough for you, but we’ve been absolutely destroyed by delivery delays and [COVID-19],” Adele said on Instagram.

If you have a ticket, Ticketmaster urges you to “hang on” for now in the hopes that the show will take place later in the year. But the platform will give you a refund if you apply online, according to the [Daily Mail](#).

No matter what, be sure to read the terms and conditions: Tickets for the much-hyped When We Were Young festival slated for October in Las Vegas, as an example, are explicitly nonrefundable.

Empire State Building

The “world’s most famous building” has one of the most restrictive change and cancellation policies. The Empire State Building says all tickets are non-refundable, and no refunds are provided due to weather conditions, wait times or “any other reason.” So, unfortunately, if you test positive for COVID-19 ahead of your trip, you’ll have to eat the cost of your ticket.

Amusement parks

Disney [scrapped](#) its popular “book with confidence” policy, where guests could change or cancel their reservations up until the day before their trip, in the spring of 2021.

[Disney World](#) doesn’t have a specific pandemic policy but encourages guests to get vaccinated and confirm they’re free of [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Travelers who need to change or reschedule their reservations are urged to call the [Disney Reservation Center](#).

Guests at [Universal Orlando](#) can purchase an add-on “[Cancel For Any Reason](#)” rider that gives travelers the option to cancel 24 hours before their originally scheduled flight departure time or hotel check-in

time. The add-on costs \$44.95 per person for guests 3 and older. You may want to add this policy, as the fee for [canceling](#) your reservation less than 45 days before your trip is pretty steep — a whopping \$200 per reservation.

Bottom line

For free or low-cost venues like museums or restaurants, you won't lose too much money (if any) for canceling, but you should still give the platform a heads-up, so you aren't marked as a no-show.

What may be difficult is trying to get a refund at a venue or platform without a dedicated COVID-19 cancellation policy, so make sure you're comfortable with your plans before you book. For more expensive tickets to amusement parks or festivals, you may want to consider purchasing travel insurance that will provide a refund if you cancel your trip for any reason.

Either way, you'll want to double-check the fine print before you book activities and avoid booking with third-party venues to avoid dealing with a middle-man. Finally, if the venue offers it, book activities with flexible change and cancellation fees, even if it means paying a little extra.

A small add-on fee can potentially save you thousands of dollars — and a headache — in case you have to cancel your trip.