

Super Mario Theme Park Zone To Debut In Japan Next Year

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The new area of the amusement park in the western city of Osaka was originally planned to open in July this year ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, with huge droves of tourists expected.

It will offer attractions where guests can jump and hit blocks to collect coins like Mario. (File)

Tokyo: A real-life "Super Mario" game -- where players jump to collect coins -- and a "Mario Kart" ride will open next spring at Universal Studios Japan, as gaming giant Nintendo makes its first foray into theme parks.

The new area of the amusement park in the western city of Osaka was originally planned to open in July this year ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, with huge droves of tourists expected.

But the long-awaited "Super Nintendo World" zone, which also features a ride based on the beloved green dinosaur Yoshi, will now open in spring 2021, the park said in a statement on Wednesday.

It will offer interactive attractions where guests can jump and hit blocks to collect coins and items, the park said, without elaborating on how this would work.

The opening was delayed as Japan imposed social distancing measures earlier this year to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

In late February the whole park closed its doors, but it has gradually resumed operations since June, with sanitary precautions in place.

If all goes to plan, the park's new area will still open before the Olympic Games, which were also postponed due to the pandemic until July 2021.

Ahead of the full opening, Universal Studios Japan will open a Mario-themed restaurant next week, featuring food and beverages inspired by the Italian plumber and his friends and enemies, along with a gift shop.

- AFP