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## SD For Free: Chicano Park Day – Saturday, April 20

by [John P. Anderson](#) on April 19, 2013 · [2 comments](#)

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***By John P. Anderson***

*A weekly column dedicated to sharing the best sights and activities in San Diego at the best price – free! We have a great city and you don't need to break the bank to experience it.*

1. **Address:** [Map for directions here](#) (intersection of Dewey Street and National Avenue in Barrio Logan, 92113)
2. **Date and Time:** Saturday, April 20 from 10 AM – 5 PM
3. **Best For:** Good food, good fun, families, historians, artists
4. **Website:** [chicano-park.org/](http://chicano-park.org/)



This year Barrio Logan and Chicano Park have a lot of reasons to celebrate. This Saturday, April 20th, at the annual Chicano Park Day from 10 AM – 5 PM presents an opportunity to do so. Local residents and visitors will gather to celebrate the history and art of the park, as well as to enjoy time with friends and family. Live dance and music performances will be on display and food and crafts will be available for sale as well.

This year's Chicano Park Day will be the first since the park was added to the National Register of Historic Places on January 23, 2013. The 7.4 acre park was created in 1970 after local residents protested against a planned California Highway Patrol substation that was to be built on the site.

The largest, and best known, feature of Chicano Park are the murals that can be found everywhere – most prominently on the supports and columns of the freeway bridges that loom over most of the park. Most of the murals were painted between 1973 and 1989 but new murals are added and in recent years many of the older murals have been restored.

A recent addition to the park within the last month was covered by my SDFP colleague Brent Beltran in [this piece](#).

In addition to the historic designation of Chicano Park, Barrio Logan has seen some other major good news in the past twelve months. Adjacent to the park, 92 new apartments opened, and a brand new grocery store, Northgate Gonzalez, is just south of the apartments. John Lawrence highlighted [the importance of having a full-service grocery](#) in the area earlier this month. The

apartments are designated as affordable housing and are reserved for those on limited incomes. In a working class neighborhood in a city with seemingly ever-increasing (and already high) rents this should help to avoid residents of Barrio Logan being forced out to other areas.



Many challenges remain for the Barrio Logan community. As yesterday's article by the Environmental Health Coalition notes, the neighborhood is at the [top of the list state-wide for having serious environmental justice issues](#). Wedged between an industrial and military use waterfront and a massive freeway (which destroyed and displaced much of the neighborhood when built) the environment has long been a serious problem here.

Add in the mixed-use nature of the area, where commercial, industrial, and residential properties all rub shoulders and you can see the potential for long-term, chronic health issues. It's especially damning considering Barrio Logan abuts downtown San Diego and Coronado lies just across the bay. Nary a dry-dock, tugboat, or muffler shop to be found in those areas, certainly not next to a home or school.

There is reason for optimism, though, as Barrio Logan is in the process of updating the Community Plan and perhaps some of the zoning issues can be addressed. The Port of San Diego is also doing some good work including helping marine companies [switch from diesel to shore-based electrical power](#) while in dock, reducing emissions and noise levels.

What the future will hold for Barrio Logan is unknown but the progress seen in the past year bodes well. Whether the winds hold fair or turn foul one constant is sure to be the indomitable spirit of the Chicano community.

Walking through Chicano Park you will find many examples of this spirit and the force with which they have worked to better the lot of their people. Cesar Chavez stands prominently in the murals of the park and annals of American

history but so too do the artists that added his face to the walls and columns of the park.



The generation that created this park and that first brought murals to this space are passing the torch to a new generation and this annual celebration is a great opportunity to refresh and celebrate the spirit that forged the park and to be reminded of the bi-national nature of our unique place in the world.

If you plan on attending Chicano Park Day you may want to consider public transportation or bicycle since parking is likely to be at a premium. The Blue Line trolley station (Barrio Logan) is close, or the Green and Orange lines can be taken to Petco Park and then it's a short walk down National Avenue.

Additional information on bus and trolley service can be found via the [MTS website](#).

For more details on the event and performances please see [chicano-park.org/](http://chicano-park.org/)

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**John P. Anderson**

John was an accountant in a former life and now devotes his time to child-rearing, reading, writing, and working to ensure that San Diego is truly America's Finest City. Interested in environmental

issues, John enjoys connecting with others that want to improve the health of our world and community. You can find John at [www.johnpatrickanderson.com](http://www.johnpatrickanderson.com) or on Twitter (@j\_p\_a\_). Comments, suggestions, wisdom, and complaints are enthusiastically welcomed.

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bob dorn [April 20, 2013 at 8:47 am](#)

Hasta la Bahia! Y vayas con bici.

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John Anderson [April 20, 2013 at 9:00 am](#)

La bici siempre!

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