

SAN DIEGO NEWS NETWORK

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Diego on a Dime: Five must-do's for spring in San Diego

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One of San Diego Zoo's newest - and most popular - babies, Yun Zi, plays with his mother, Bai Yun. (Photo by Ken Bohn, AP)

Ahhh, springtime – the season that makes everything better. The days are longer, flowers are prettier, fruits are sweeter and even your mood is sunnier. Something else that multiplies when we say goodbye to Old Man Winter tomorrow? Your calendar will soon be bulging with events, including everything from desert excursions to baseball games.

Indeed, life will be good. But don't go overboard. Overbooking can wreck havoc on your finances and stress levels. I've zeroed in on a short and simple list of must-do's this season to help you spring forward on the cheap.

Start with the blooms

With the decent rainfall in the past few months, expect to see rolling landscapes of colorful floral displays break out in various parts of the county. One of the most anticipated is our local showcase of vibrant desert wildflowers at [Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) ^[1].

However, these wildflowers are only at their best and brightest for two weeks, so don't dawdle. Check out their Web site for frequent wildflower updates, or you can call their 24-hotline before you make the drive out at 760-767-4684. Another must-see is the [Carlsbad Flower Fields](#) ^[2], with its 50 acres of ranunculus flowers in a rainbow of colors. Also check out their sweet pea maze, miniature rose garden and a glistening view of the Pacific Ocean.

Festival Fun

Spring sweeps in with a flurry of festivals throughout the county, celebrating everything from avocados to bluegrass music. Unless you leave all of your weekends free, you simply won't have time to visit them all. So take a look at the list below and mark your calendars with only the first few that pique your interest.

[Fiesta Old Town Cinco de Mayo](#) ^[3] – May 1 and 2

Join the party on San Diego Avenue with Mexican dancers, musicians, food and historical re-enactments.

Spring Busker Festival ^[4] – April 10-11

Watch out-of-the-ordinary street performers, like sword swallows, comedic stuntmen and Didjeridoo players converge on Seaport Village to battle for your attention.

EarthFair ^[5] – April 18

I was majorly disappointed last year when I found that all hot food vendors offered the same stomach-churning menu (at least on that sweltering day) of hot dogs, fries and grilled hamburgers. Where was all the heart-healthy, organic food at this eco-friendly festival? Maybe I'll find them this year. If not, at least join me in showing your support of green living with wildlife preservation education, displays of alternative energy vehicles, and pet adoption services.

Art Walk 2010 ^[6] – April 24 – 25

Art takes over Little Italy at this free festival showcasing fine art in many mediums, activities for kids, live musical performances and food booths.

Annual Fallbrook Avocado Festival ^[7] – April 18

Join Fallbrook as they celebrate being 'the avocado capital of the world' with arts and crafts, games, and creative foods featuring this green fruit.

Adams Avenue Roots Fest ^[8] – April 24-25

Head to Normal Heights and jam to bluegrass, country, Appalachian and Celtic music by roots artists on seven outdoor stages. Beer garden and lot of ethnic food, too!

Gator by the Bay: Zydeco, Blues & Crawfish Festival ^[9] – May 7-9

Check out 25 bands on five stages, dance lessons, food and Cajun cooking demos.

Baseball Bound

The Padres 2010 ^[10] home opener on April 12 against the Atlanta Braves kicks off another six-month season of Major League Baseball. The best place to catch all the action on a baseball-sized budget? Forget about buying seats and instead lay out a blanket at Park at the Park, the elevated grassy knolls behind the center field fence. You can stretch, lay out, even cartwheel if you wish. It opens 150 minutes before each game, costs just \$5 per fan and even includes a sandy "beach."

Set Up Camp

Don't wait until the crowded summer to explore our east county – now's the time to go! The warm days and mild nights are the perfect combo for hiking, swimming, kayaking, fishing and boating. My favorite campsite in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park ^[11] is Paso Picacho, with its canopy of tall, leafy trees, spacious sites and clean showers and bathrooms. Plus, it's only a 15 to 20 minute drive to Julian from there, so you can get your apple pie fix and immediately hike it off. Dog-owners will find that national forests are pet-friendlier than state parks, where you can't even take your dog on nature trails. So Instead, try camping at Cleveland National Forest ^[12], which has several developed campsites in Descanso and Palomar.

Go Wild Over Babies



Junvi Ola writes the blog *Diego on a Dime*. (Courtesy photo)

Sure, the San Diego Zoo ^[13] is a year-round favorite in San Diego, but springtime brings new life to this local attraction – literally. Many baby animals are born in the spring, as reproductive cycles are timed to match the best chance of survival. So splurge on a ticket to the Zoo or the Wild Animal Park , then make a beeline over to the nursery to see the new fresh faces of the wild.

See all of Junvi Ola's free or almost free things to do in San Diego at www.diegonadime.com ^[14].