

53 ways to survive without the 405

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July 13, 2011



Editor's note: These tips from the original Carmageddon could still be useful this time around. The dates have changed, of course; the 405 closure is Sept. 29-30.

In case you haven't heard, official Los Angeles wants you to get out of town the weekend of July 15-18, or to make it a stay-close-to-home time as demolition of the Mulholland Bridge [shuts down the 405 Freeway](#). For those of you planning to tough it out here in L.A., we asked some of our county colleagues to help us compile tips for turning 53 hours of Carmageddon fever into some good communal karma. Here's what we came up with:

Hunkering down



1. Honor the demise of the [Mulholland Bridge](#) by holding a mini-film festival of movies from 1960, the year it was completed. Some classic options include “[Psycho](#)” and “[Spartacus](#).” Or see how far you can get, screening your way through AFI’s list of [America’s 100 Greatest Movies](#).
2. Continue the mid-century theme by making a playlist that includes 1960 hits such as “It’s Now or Never” and “Only the Lonely.”
3. Adopt a pet from a local animal shelter, and spend the weekend introducing your newest family member to your home and neighborhood. Locate a nearby L.A. County shelter [here](#); call ahead to find out whether they have animals ready for same-day adoption.
4. Dust off some old board games and hold a Clue, Scrabble or backgammon marathon. At least that little Monopoly car will still be able to zip around the board, even if the rest of Southern California is stuck in a weekend-long Sigalert.
5. Plan your next vacation(s).
6. While away a few hours perusing the Los Angeles Public Library’s digital collections of old [movie posters](#), [travel posters](#), [fruit crate labels](#) and [photographs](#). (Just type in a keyword such as “Hollywood” and a year span of, say, 1959-1960, and start feasting your eyes on some [amazing shots](#).)
7. Join Los Angeles Times architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne in his yearlong “[Reading L.A.](#)” [project](#). The July titles include “The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory” and “Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir.”
8. Get an early jump on your holiday shopping without getting out of your pajamas by patronizing some of these L.A. County [online stores](#).
9. Get organized, and do some good at the same time: Clean out your pantry and donate non-expired canned goods to a [food bank](#). Go through closets for items to give to a [charitable thrift shop](#). Gather up loose change and earmark the proceeds for a cause you care about.
10. Take this [quiz](#) and see if your kitchen could earn an “A” from county public health inspectors.
11. Make sure you have emergency kits in your car and at home. Check out the Department of Public Health’s emergency preparedness site for its list of [10 essential items](#). Update your family [emergency preparedness plan](#) and practice it. And while you’re at it, check out the county Fire Department’s [fire prevention](#) resources, too.

Building community



12. If you have a pool, invite your neighbors over for a swim and an outdoor movie.
13. Go door-to-door and collect neighbors' phone numbers and email contacts for an emergency phone tree.
14. Organize a block party.
15. Buy a large canvas and set it on an easel in front of your house along with paints, brushes and a sign asking passersby to get artistic.
16. Enlist your neighbors in a community [walking group](#).
17. Start a [Neighborhood Watch](#) group.
18. Drop by your local [fire](#), [police](#) or [sheriff's](#) station and say hello.
19. Take an interest in where your neighborhood lands in the county's redistricting process by weighing in [here](#). The Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt a redistricting plan by August, 2011.
20. Make a list of 10 people you haven't spoken to in a long time and call them to say hello. Better yet, surprise each of them with a handwritten letter.
21. Check in on a sick or elderly neighbor and offer your services in the yard, kitchen or laundry room, or as an errand-runner for the afternoon. A ride to religious services might be appreciated, too.
22. Form a neighborhood group to ride in the new northbound 405 carpool lane that will stretch from the 10 to the 101 when the [Sepulveda Pass](#) project wraps up in 2013...and share the [gain](#) that comes after the [pain](#).

Out and about



23. Be the first on your block to experience the Natural History Museum's spectacular new [Dinosaur Hall](#), which opens July 16. Public transportation options are probably best; find them [here](#).
24. Frolic in a local park. Los Angeles County has more than 150 of them, so pack your Frisbee and a picnic and enjoy the summertime weather with your family. More information about park locations and amenities is [here](#).
25. Get a [library card](#). Or, if you already have one, make it a point to drop by over the weekend and learn about opportunities for [volunteering](#) or [donating](#).
26. Get a group together for a [Metrolink daytrip](#). San Juan Capistrano, anyone? Check out the station map [here](#) for other possible destinations.
27. Plug your address into www.walkscore.com and find out how walkable your neighborhood is. Then start hoofing it.
28. Patronize locally-owned businesses. (Many will show up, along with other amenities such as parks, on [Walk Score](#), above.)
29. Take a hike. [Trail systems](#) in Los Angeles range from easy strolls to challenging hillsides. Find one that's close to you.
30. Hit the links at a county [golf course](#). Skip the cart rental and enjoy the walk.
31. Stock up on healthy fruits and vegetables at your [local farmers market](#).
32. Grab your camera and head out in search of your neighborhood's most distinctive features, from lampposts and architecture to flowerbeds and wildlife. Share your photos on [Supervisor Yaroslavsky's website](#).

33. Whether your taste in entertainment runs more to “[Shrek The Musical](#)” at the Pantages or [Sarah McLachlan](#) at the Hollywood Bowl or “[Les Misérables](#)” at the Ahmanson, there’s a way to get there by [public transportation](#). And this is just the weekend to give it a try.

Make it a green weekend



34. Tear out your [lawn](#) and replace it with [native plants](#).

35. Plant a [tree](#). Or outsource the work to [TreePeople](#), in honor of someone you love.

36. Start a garden. The benefits—fresh air, exercise—will go well beyond the tasty vegetables and herbs you’ll harvest. Tips are [here](#).

37. If you’ve already got a garden, host a garden party (fancy hats optional) and send everybody home with a cutting.

38. Organize or join a [produce-sharing cooperative](#) on your block...and start off by pooling backyard lemons and making a giant batch of lemonade for everyone to share.

39. Start a backyard [compost](#) pile. (Read up first on all the [benefits](#) here.)

40. Get in line for some green by signing up your house for Energy Upgrade California at www.lacountyenergyprogram.org

41. Calculate your home’s [solar energy potential](#).

42. Grab your reusable shopping bags and flaunt them everywhere you shop in honor of the county’s new [plastic](#)

[bag ban](#).

43. If you live near the beach, or can get there on the bus, take to the sand and help clean it up. For a list of more organized clean-up activities, look [here](#).

44. Find out how and where to get rid of [used motor oil](#) or old computers and other “e-waste.”

45. Install some eco- and design-friendly rainbarrels to store rainwater from your roof for future use. (More information starts on Page 27 of this [county manual](#).)

Go car-free for a day—or forever



46. Ride the [subway for free](#) all weekend long. **Update: There are no free rides for Carmageddon II.**

47. Explore a wealth of [summer destinations](#) on public transportation.

48. While you're riding, check out the [art](#). Or really save energy and check out Metro's art [virtually](#).

49. Go out to eat without guzzling gas. The possibilities range from pastrami to rice porridge on Metro's [Dining Map](#).

50. Help plan and promote the next [car-free CicLAvia](#).

51. Look up the bike trail that's nearest to your house, and give it a try. Detailed path maps are [here](#).

52. Get a pedestrian's eye view of L.A. history by following one of these self-guided [Angel's Walk itineraries](#). Other downtown walks are [here](#).

53. Practice riding your [bike to work](#) ...and then when Monday rolls around, really do it. And congratulations, you made it through 53 hours without the 405 Freeway!

Posted 6/15/11

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