



Edison International Field of Anaheim

ANAHEIM ANGELS



Neither of us was all that excited to visit and photograph Anaheim's ballpark. The last time we'd visited, it was the hugest monster of a stadium with 64,000 seats bleached by the sun and dirty from the smog. But during this visit, we were shocked to find a stadium reborn. This was not the Big A we had seen before. Instead, it was baseball's newest cathedral, colored in sandstone and featuring fountains and waterfalls. The renovation was more than a mere improvement...it was now a place where you could really enjoy watching a game.

—Submitted by Eric and Wendy Pastore of Staten Island, New York. They have their own ballpark-related web site at www.digitalballparks.com

Location

Would you be surprised if I told you that the home park of the Angels is near a number of Southern California freeways? I didn't think so. The park is easily accessible from either the Orange Freeway, also known as Highway 57, or the Santa Ana Freeway, which is really I-5 (the locals call it "The Five"), near the point where these two freeways intersect.

I strongly suggest you plan to arrive a little early, since the traffic back-ups on these highways are legendary.

And it is also no coincidence that Disneyland is less than three miles away, as The Walt Disney Company owns the Angels franchise.

History

The Angels joined the American League as an expansion franchise

in 1961, playing temporarily in other parks in Los Angeles until 1966, when their own home was completed in Anaheim. The original name of the facility was Anaheim Stadium, but it was often referred to as “The Big A in Anaheim,” largely due to the mammoth A-shaped structure in left-centerfield that housed the park’s scoreboard. Later that landmark was moved to the stadium’s parking lot, where it sits today—still with its halo on top.

For its first 15 seasons, the baseball-only facility resembled Shea Stadium, in that there were no seats in the outfield. When the NFL’s Rams moved east from Los Angeles, the stadium was completely enclosed to accommodate the larger football crowds. Then the Rams left, Disney took over the Angels, and the outfield seats were removed. That renovation project, which was conducted while the Angels were still playing games in the stadium, yielded two results: a nice baseball-only park, reminiscent in many ways of Coors Field, complete with a huge scoreboard and splashing waters beyond the outfield walls, and a corporate sponsorship name.

“The Ed,” as this stadium is sometimes called, has been the site of two All-Star Games, in 1967 (a memorable 15-inning affair) and in 1989, but no World Series games. The Angels came agonizingly close in 1986, when they



You can see Anaheim’s hockey arena, The Pond, from “the Ed’s” upper deck

were one strike away from winning the American League Championship Series and a trip to the Fall Classic. However, Boston’s Dave Henderson blasted a home run into Anaheim Stadium’s left field bleachers instead, and the Sox went on to win the game and, three days later, the series.

Milestones

Nolan Ryan, who amazingly hurled seven no hitters in his career, made Anaheim his second stop in the Majors. He threw two of those gems at The Big A, one in 1974 and the other in the following season. The Ryan Express also set

the Major League record for strikeouts in a season during a game here in 1973. Both Rod Carew and George Brett collected their 3,000th career hits in this stadium, Carew in 1985 and Brett in 1992. Reggie Jackson collected both his first career home run and his 500th here, the latter occurring in 1984. And Angel pitcher Don Sutton's 300th career win came here in 1986.

Joe's Likes and Dislikes

I attended two games here in 1997 while the massive renovation project was taking place. It was a bizarre scene to see huge areas within the stadium roped off as workers dismantled parts of the facility while games were being played. Even with the limited seating capacity during this time, there were more than enough seats to accommodate the fans who showed up to support the team.

When the \$100 million renovation was completed in 1998, a funny thing happened. A real *baseball* park had appeared where a sterile football stadium once stood. The fountains and scoreboards were a real treat, and the main entry plaza behind home plate was one of the most attractive in the Majors. HOK Sport, the architec-

Betcha didn't know

In 1982, while the park was completely enclosed, Angel outfielder Fred Lynn was chasing a fly ball when he crashed into the fence in left-centerfield, actually knocking down a section of it. And, yes, he did hold onto the ball for the out.

tural firm, had done a masterful job in rehabilitating the place.

Where to Sit

The renovation resulted in a seating bowl not unlike Coors Field or Camden Yards, two other HOK Sport projects. The sight-lines are quite nice from the upper deck (seats in the upper-deck "View" area cost \$10), and I recommend you try the area all the way down the left-field line for a nice view of

The view from the upper deck near the left-field foul pole shows the bullpens and fountains



the fountains, the bullpens and the Big A out in the parking lot. The bleachers in both left (\$7 for adults, only \$4 for children) and right field (\$8 for adults, \$6 for children) also provide a very nice, and economical, view of the action.

Tickets

Ticketmaster handles both telephone orders and online sales of Angels tickets. The phone number is 714-663-9000, and online sales can be accessed through the Angels' site.

On the Web

Visit www.angelsbaseball.com for the latest information on the team and its promotions, and access to Ticketmaster's site for online ticket orders.

Even More Baseball

Obviously, when you're in the heart of Southern California, you're close to a lot of professional baseball action. Dodger Stadium (323-224-1471 for tickets) is only 30 miles northwest on I-5, and the San Diego Padres (888-PADRES9) are 75 miles to the south. If you do head down to San Diego, try taking the Riverside Freeway east and then I-15 south. This way, you can visit one of the most beautiful ballparks in the Minors, the Lake Elsinore Diamond, home of the Storm (909-245-0305) of the California League. You might also want to check if Cal State Fullerton (714-278-3780), perennial College

World Series participant, has a home game while you're visiting Southern California.

Springtime

I'm always raving about how wonderful it is to attend spring training in Arizona. The weather is typically more predictable—and more delightful—than March in Florida. The Angels' spring home in Tempe is right in the middle of it all. Diablo Stadium (602-438-4300), built in 1993, is a comfortable, modern facility with a nice view of the jagged hills that dot the landscape in Arizona. HOK Sport also designed this lovely park.



Diablo Stadium in Tempe, Arizona