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By:



## [Grand Theft Auto San Andreas - review](#)

### *Rockstar's best game*

I'm not among those who rushed to buy a PlayStation 2 just to be able to play GTA San Andreas when it was first released, eight months ago to be more precise, and no matter how strange I found the idea of making a game for consoles out of a franchise born and raised for PCs, I've preferred to wait for a few more months and get the PC version. Therefore, I'm not able to tell you what are the differences and whether the PC version is better or worse than the Xbox or PS2 ones, but I can tell you that GTA San Andreas is one of the best games you have ever seen on PC. **City Lights, the GTA version** The first thing GTA San Andreas amazes you with is the impressive size of the universe where Carl Johnson aka CJ will have to struggle with the perils of a gangster's life. If you thought that GTA San Andreas will be just a sequel to GTA III or to Vice City, after the first moments spent in the game, you will think the previous titles were more like beta versions compared to Rockstar is offering now. Each of the cities that make the GTA San Andreas universe: Los Santos, Las Ventura and San Fierro are larger than the famous Liberty City and this is just one of the concepts employed by Rockstar to make San Andreas a better game than its predecessors. Obviously, the larger the universe the more missions and challenges you will have. Moreover, if you thought GTA Vice City had a wide variety of vehicles, know that in GTA San Andreas you will be able to take even bicycles, or any others means of transportation which will ensure you the supremacy of the city. Although the graphics is a little bit old-fashioned, and actually this one of the reproaches that can be brought to this game, my opinion is that is preferable to have continuity rather than wait endlessly for bits of the game to load. But don't get me wrong, the graphics might not be state of the art, but Rockstar did an excellent job in offering breath-taking landscapes, preferring to go for more subtle colors and a satirical presentation of famous locations from Los Angeles, Las Vegas or San Francisco rather than a high accuracy of the details. If you were accustomed to play HL2 or WoW at humongous resolutions, where every detail was carefully depicted, then GTA San Andreas might be a disappointment to you. But look on the bright side, you don't need the last hardware configurations to make CJ run from point A to point B. **Ladies and gentlemen, meet Carl Johnson** Another important change is related to the main character. If up until now, the GTA series employed Caucasian ferocious males with some Italian influences, San Andreas proposes something completely new: an Afro-American hero, CJ. This change has a lot of consequences related to gang members and their censorship free language. After a few hours of playing, the coarse language and the idiosyncrasies of the black people, not to mention the Spanish bits which are delightful, will certainly get into your system. By now, you are probably accustomed to CJ's story, so I won't get in any details about the plot of the game. I think it's more interesting to discuss the options available to our hero. CJ can be customized in every way: from the type of cloths to the number of tattoos and bling blings. And our hero is not some sort of super-villain, he's you ordinary gangster who has to be fed and taken to the gym to stay in shape. Rockstar has decided that the times of superheroes is over and that only practice makes perfect, so if you want have a hero that is able to take down every enemy, to drive like a race pilot, and to shoot as well as a trained assassin, then you have to practice. And things are even more complex, because CJ will evolve in the same way as a RPG hero does. If you complete a mission, you get your buddies out of a mess, you go to the gym and you shoot some enemies, you gain some respect, some stamina and all sorts of things. The missions CJ will have to accomplish are divided in two categories: those that are connected to the main story and those that aren't. Given the huge of the city, you will always find things to do, making GTA

San Andreas a game you will be able to play for days. The biggest novelty is that CJ has learned to swim and this gives the game a whole new perspective. Another important thing to notice is that unlike previous titles from the GTA franchise, in GTA San Andreas your objectives are much more detailed, which greatly simplifies missions. But this doesn't mean GTA San Andreas is an easy game and as things evolve, the missions will become more and more difficult. Some of them will be similar to the ones from previous titles and you'll even encounter familiar characters. **The radio's worth all the bucks!** I can't imagine GTA without music, and I don't even want to because Rockstar has fitted San Andreas with the best radio stations ever. They are much more varied and numerous compared to Vice City and they fully contribute to recreating the atmosphere of the '90s. Aside from the radio stations which cover a wide variety of music genres, San Andreas will also let you create your own radio station where you will be able to listen to your MP3s. And the radio's not the only thing sending you back to the '90s because the characters' clothes and city views are also playing an important part in recreating that special feeling. The truth is that even if there are nothing but great things to be said about the game's storyline, what really tops it all is Rockstar's effort to create a city in which you feel a rather compelling desire just to wonder about, and, truth be told, I've spent the first 3 or 4 hours of the game just walking around and admiring the landscape. And GTA San Andreas is as authentic as it gets. I don't know if there are many games in which you stumble upon characters moving around with a joint in their hand and whose speech consists mostly of expressions as "motherfucker" and others of the kind. Out of the games which can be included in the same category, only Mafia has succeeded in recreating a certain period and a universe to such a level of accuracy that you actually feel like having been there. **A game not to be missed** Whether you're a GTA fan or not, GTA San Andreas is a game you cannot afford to miss. And although the game is not perfect, in the end, you'll end up being addicted to it. I don't know if Rockstar will be able to come up with something better than GTA San Andreas, but this game will surely make history. One thing is for sure, GTA III's record of best selling game is seriously threatened by the new San Andreas. **Graphics: 9 Audio: 10 Gameplay: 10 Concept: 10 General impression: 10**SOFTPEDIA MARK: 10SCREENSHOTS