## TourBook® Nevada

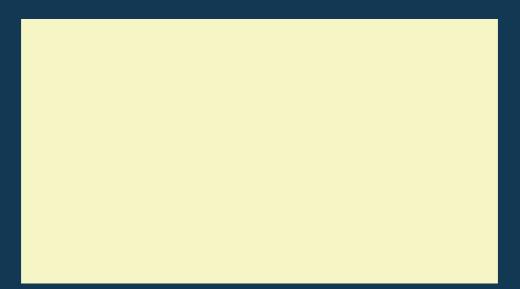


Every Player's Paradise<sup>SM</sup>



**Every Player's Paradise<sup>sM</sup>** Sponsored by Atlantis Casino Resort Spa Reno, Nevada **10% AAA Discount** 

## EXPERIENCE RENO-TAHOE'S FOUR-DIAMOND RESORT







 • Top-Ranked Restaurants • Luxurious Rooms & Suites • Concierge Tower & Lounge • World-Class Spa • Incredible Entertainment • Dynamic Casino Action



## CUSTOM BROCHURE





3800 S. Virginia St. | Reno NV 89502 | 800.723.6500



#### Hit The Road With Best Western® Hotels & Resorts

Wherever your travels take you, Best Western Hotels & Resorts will welcome you with superior accommodations and exceptional service.

#### AAA members save 5% or more when booking the AAA rate.

And when you join the AAA Preferred<sup>™</sup> Best Western Rewards<sup>®</sup> program, you'll earn bonus points and elite BWR member status.

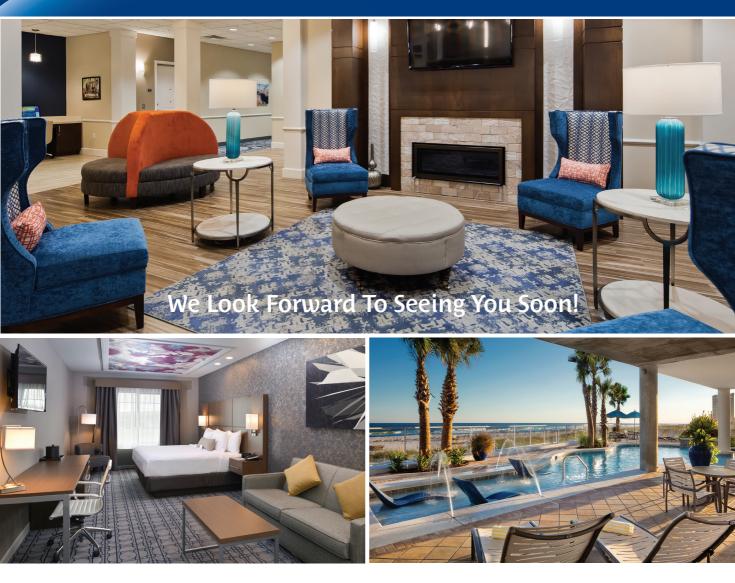
#### Book now at aaa.com/bestwestern





\*Restrictions apply. Visit bestwestern.com/AAA for program terms and conditions. BWH<sup>sM</sup> hotels are independently owned and operated. AAA and the AAA marks are service marks or registered service marks of the American Automobile Association. Best Western and the Best Western marks are service marks or registered service marks of Best Western International, Inc. ©2023 Best Western International, Inc. All rights reserved.









# FIND YOUR ESCAPE

Let our preferred *AAA Vacations*<sup>®</sup> cruise lines change the way you see the world.

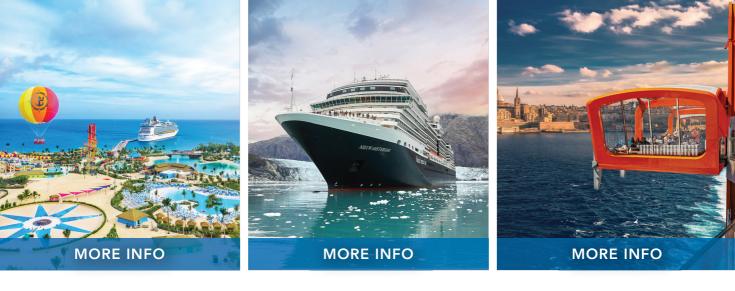
#### CLICK TO TAKE A LOOK

Enjoy exclusive AAA Vacations<sup>®</sup> amenities like onboard spending credit, stateroom savings, stateroom upgrades or complimentary specialty dining.

Whether it's a weekend getaway cruise to the Bahamas, counting castles as you sail along the rivers of Germany, or a dream cruise to the Greek Isles, you can travel with peace of mind, with a *AAA Vacations*<sup>®</sup> cruise vacation.

### Vacations.AAA.com/cruises

If you find a better rate within 24 hours of booking your qualifying AAA Vacations® cruise vacation, we'll match the lower rate and send you a \$50 credit certificate for future AAA Vacations® travel.











AAA Vacations®

### **EXCITING ITINERARIES**

**ENGAGING EXPERIENCES** 

**EXCLUSIVE VALUES** 







## Less wondering more wonderment

Allianz Travel Insurance can give you more confidence to plan the trips you've been putting off. With more covered reasons for up to 100% cancellation reimbursement—including epidemic-related illness—plus emergency medical benefits and 24/7 assistance for travel mishaps, you can spend less time putting off your dreams and more time living them.



Visit AAA.com/TravelInsurance or ask your AAA Travel Advisor how to protect your next trip– even if you've already booked.



Insurance + Assistance

Terms, conditions, and exclusions apply. Plan(s) underwritten by BCS Insurance Company or Jefferson Insurance Company. AGA Service Company is the licensed producer and administrator of these plans. Plans include insurance benefits and assistance services. Contact AGA Service Company at 800-284-8300 or 9950 Mayland Drive, Richmond, VA 23233 or customerservice@allianzassistance.com.

### Nevada

Get more travel information: AAA.com/tripcanvas AAA.com/traveltips AAA.com/roadservice AAA.com/autorepair AAA.com/office AAA TripTik® Travel Planner

Published by AAA Travel Services 1000 AAA Drive, Heathrow, FL 32746-5063 Copyright AAA 2024, All rights reserved

#### Stock # 4663 (v1 022024)

Cover Photo Credit: Valley of Fire State Park /  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{G}}$  iStockphoto.com / DenisTangneyJr

#### **Featured Information**

Icon Legend14	47
Good Facts To Know	18
Orientation Map	19

#### **City Listings**

Beatty	
Blue Diamond	
Boulder City	24
Carson City	24
Death Valley National Park	27
Elko	
Ely	29
Eureka	
Fallon	

Fernley	
Gardnerville	
Genoa	
Great Basin National Park	32
Henderson	
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest	
Incline Village	
Inyo National Forest	
Lake Mead National Recreation Area	41
Lake Tahoe Area	43
Las Vegas	55
Attractions	
Hotels	
Restaurants	123
Laughlin	128
Mesquite	
Minden	130
North Las Vegas	131
Overton	
Pahrump	133
Pioche	133
Reno	133
Sparks	141
Stateline	143
Tonopah	143
Verdi	144
Wells	144
Wendover	145
Winnemucca	145





## TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Do more. Worry less. Our AAA Travel Agents can make trip planning easy.

To find your AAA Travel Agent, go to AAA.com/offices

### tripcanvas Powered by AAA TRAVEL

 $\mathbf{A}$ 

Their Vacation Dreams, **Our Expertise.** 



AAA.com/TripCanvas

## 100% OF AAA DIAMOND-DESIGNATED HOTELS ARE NOW INSPECTED CLEAN

OUR OBJECTIVE MEASURE OF CLEANLINESS **RECOGNIZED** BY THE 26K HOTELS ANNUALLY INSPECTED ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, MEXICO & THE CARIBBEAN



## TESTED SURFACES

GUEST ROOM DOOR HANDLES, LIGHT SWITCHES, TV REMOTE, THERMOSTAT CONTROL, DESK SURFACE, BATHROOM VANITIES, FAUCET HANDLES AND TOILET FLUSH.

# OUR AAA INSPECTORS TEST

### DIAMOND PROGRAM

## TRAVEL WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST



AAA DIAMONDS GIVE YOU PEACE OF MIND WHEN CHOOSING A HOTEL

AAA.COM/DIAMONDS

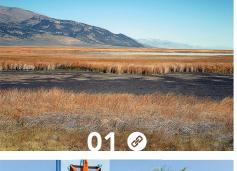
## ROAD Nevada TRIPS

While it may be tempting to head straight for the dazzling neon lights of the Las Vegas strip, don't miss North Las Vegas Boulevard—Where better to begin than the birthplace of Las Vegas? The Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Park preserves the site where a spring-fed creek created an oasis for Native Americans, traders and Mormon settlers. Be sure to have a full tank of gas as you embark on one of the many scenic journeys of Nevada's desert terrain.

U

Sponsored by:

BW Best Western. Hotels & Resorts











#### 01 RUBY LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SCENIC DRIVE

The Ruby Mountains are a picturesque habitat for bighorn sheep, mule deer and mountain goats, while the Ruby Valley wetlands are home to more than 220 species of birds.

#### 02 LAS VEGAS STRIP

#### 9.8 miles: 0 hours, 59 minutes

The dazzling sights of the Las Vegas Strip are best enjoyed at night. Amid the lights, shopping, dining and entertainment options are abound.

#### 03 WASHINGTON AVENUE TO SAHARA AVENUE, NV

#### 3.1 miles: 0 hours, 15 minutes

Visit North Las Vegas Boulevard, where you can experience the city's history from the age of the dinosaurs to its first settlers and its early casino days.

#### 04 REESE RIVER VALLEY SCENIC DRIVE

#### 87 miles: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Near the Reese River, meadows, abandoned ranch buildings and weathered boulders offer some interesting landscapes before the flat terrain to Battle Mountain.

#### 05 AMARGOSA RANGE SCENIC HWY

#### 61.1 miles: 1 hour, 6 minutes

For otherworldly desert landscape, head to the Nevada-California border onto SR 190, which follows the Amargosa mountain range through Death Valley, CA.

#### 06 CARSON VALLEY SCENIC DRIVE

#### 14.1 miles: 0 hours, 19 minutes

The Sierra Nevada mountains dominate the horizon on this drive. In Genoa, explore Courthouse Museum Genoa and Mormon Station State Historic Park.

For a complete list of itineraries and details visit aaa.com/roadtrips



Valley of Fire State Park, Overton / © iStockphoto.com / LeoPatrizi

Admit it. You were lured to Nevada—or more specifically, Las Vegas or Reno—by the possibility of turning five dollars into a million. Hitting the jackpot. Early retirement. A life of ease. Then reality set in. As it turns out you don't have the Midas touch after all, and in the excitement of dice tossing and the seduction of the slots, you forgot that while the state regulates casinos and gambling, odds ultimately favor the house. So here you are in the Silver State with no silver to show for your troubles. What to do?

Your dreams of independent wealth may have faded, but there are other, natural riches to be found. The high desert setting of Red Rock Canyon, the fiery sandstone formations at Valley of Fire State Park and the otherworldly spires and pillars of Cathedral Gorge all attest to nature's prowess at creating majestic landscapes.

When you consider Nevada's Great Basin location, a rugged and inhospitable region characterized by arid desert, mountain ranges and valleys hemmed in by mesas and buttes, it's easy to see why permanent white settlement didn't occur until the 1850s. While yucca, cacti, sagebrush, geckos and rattlesnakes can handle the formidable heat and scant rainfall, it was—let's face it—greed fueled by the potential of hitting pay dirt in makeshift mining districts that eventually brought rudimentary civilization.

## Nevada

Good Facts To Know	18
Orientation Map	19
Recreation Areas Chart	20
Alphabetical City Listings	23
MAJOR DESTINATION:	
Las Vegas	55

#### The Old West Meets Celine Dion

Cowboys have a home in Nevada, where old Pony Express stations line US 50, a trans-state highway that in remote sections still merits its nickname "The Loneliest Road in America." More futuristic means of travel are claimed to be seen along SR 375, designated the Extraterrestrial Highway for its many purported UFO sightings and proximity to the Air Force's top-secret Area 51.

Old mining towns like Virginia City retain vestiges of their frontier appearance from the days when the Comstock Lode's vast deposits generated boomtown prosperity and a surge in population, saloons and brothels. The assay office is open once again in the ghost town of Berlin, east of Gabbs on SR 844, which was settled in 1897 and abandoned just 14 years later—but this time it's strictly for the convenience of visitors to Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park, which encompasses the site.

And that brings us to Vegas (and its smaller but no less gaming-minded counterpart, Reno). Sin City is man's all-purpose shrine to excess. In the beginning there were gambling halls, which begat slot machines, which begat Strip hotels, which begat themed



megaresorts-and there seems to be no end in sight.

Marketed as the ultimate adult fantasyland via winking slogans like "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas," this 24/7 town is a bacchanalia for conventioneers, A-list celebs (and yes, families). It overflows with huge hotel complexes (CityCenter and The Cosmopolitan are two of the latest) and manufactured replicas of places like New York, Paris and Venice.

Vegas is many things: all-you-can-eat buffets, celebrity chef restaurants, high-voltage production spectaculars, a sidewalk pirate ship battle, choreographed dancing fountains and even an erupting volcano. All of the glitz and eye candy, however, plays second fiddle to the making—and taking—of money. But whether you walk away from the blackjack table penniless or exit the casino holding a fistful of bills in triumph, Las Vegas is going to show you a good time.

#### Recreation

You can't beat Lake Mead—and Lake Mead National Recreation Area along the Colorado River—for just about any water-based activity. Boaters seek out hidden coves that aren't reachable by car, and snorkelers and scuba divers take advantage of the lake's visibility and calm waters. Boulder Beach is popular with swimmers, sailboarders seek out breezy shores, and there's plenty of room for water skiing, kayaking and canoeing on this 110-mile-long lake.

Lake Mead, created when Hoover Dam was completed in 1935, also is known for striped bass, while rainbow trout prefer the waters of Lake Mohave. Other prime fishing spots can be found at Cave Lake State Park near Ely, where German brown trout are abundant, and at Wild Horse State Recreation Area, off SR 225 between Mountain City and North Fork, where more varieties of trout populate the reservoir.

Nevada means "snow clad" in Spanish, and despite blazing summer heat (at least in the southern part of the state) it's a natural for winter sports. A gorgeous ice-blue body of water set in the midst of the rugged Sierras, Lake Tahoe is ringed with resorts offering everything from downhill and cross-country skiing to iceskating. For heli-skiing check out the Ruby Mountains near Elko; snowmobilers and snowboarders head for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. Farther south, in places like Lee Canyon, near Mount Charleston, you can enjoy the same activities.

Lace up your hiking boots and explore miles of trails within Nevada's state parks. Red Rock Canyon, with

nearly 60 miles of hiking trails winding through striking desert scenery, is the perfect relaxing antidote if you've suffered a little too much Vegas wild and crazy, and it's less than an hour from the Strip. Another popular day trip is to Valley of Fire State Park near Overton, where the colorful rock formations resemble beehives, pachyderms and more.

The most popular backpacking and hiking trails within Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest are concentrated in the Ruby Mountains south of Elko, especially in the vicinity of Lamoille Canyon. A backdrop of rugged peaks (10 of which exceed 10,000 feet) and alpine-like vistas characterizes this unexpectedly lush wilderness area. Don't forget your long johns; nighttime temperatures can drop below freezing, even in summer.

Most state parks are open all year, although severe winter weather may limit their accessibility. The majority charge user fees for camping, day use and boat launching.

Cacti / © iStockphoto.com / wesvandinter





Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

#### **GOOD FACTS TO KNOW**

#### ABOUT THE STATE

**POPULATION:** 3,104,614.

AREA: 110,572 square miles; ranks 7th.

CAPITAL: Carson City.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 13,147 ft., Boundary Peak, White Mountains.

LOWEST POINT: 479 ft., on the Colorado River.

TIME ZONE(S): Pacific. DST.

#### GAMBLING

#### MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 21.

#### REGULATIONS

**TEEN DRIVING LAWS:** The minimum age for an unrestricted driver's license is 18. No unrelated passengers under age 18 are permitted for the first 6 months of licensure. Driving is not permitted 10 p.m.-5 a.m. for drivers under 18 unless to and from a scheduled event. For more information about Nevada driver's license regulations phone (702) 486-4368 (Las Vegas area), (775) 684-4368 (Reno/Sparks/Carson City) or (877) 368-7828 (Rural Nevada).

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts or appropriate child restraints are required for driver and all passengers. Children under age 6 or under 57 inches tall less must be in an approved child restraint. Children under age 2 must be in a rear-facing child restraint system. AAA recommends the use of seat belts and appropriate child restraints for the driver and all passengers.

**CELLPHONE RESTRICTIONS:** Texting, accessing the internet and handheld cellphone use while driving are prohibited for all drivers.

HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS: Required for all riders.

**RADAR DETECTORS:** Permitted. Prohibited for use by commercial vehicles.

**MOVE OVER LAW:** Drivers are required to slow down and vacate the lane nearest stopped police, fire and rescue vehicles using audible or flashing signals, when safe to do so. The law also applies to recovery vehicles, including tow trucks.

**FIREARMS LAWS:** Vary by state and/or county. Contact the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Legislative Building, 401 S. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701; phone (775) 684-6800.

#### HOLIDAYS

**HOLIDAYS:** New Year's Day, Jan. 1 • Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Jan. (3rd Mon.) • Washington's Birthday/Presidents Day, Feb. (3rd Mon.) • Memorial Day, May (last Mon.) • June-teenth, June 19 • Independence Day, July 4 • Labor Day, Sept. (1st Mon.) • Nevada Day, Oct. (last Fri.) • Veterans Day, Nov. 11 • Thanksgiving, Nov. (4th Thurs.) • Family Day, Nov. (4th Fri.) • Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

#### MONEY

**TAXES:** Nevada's statewide sales tax is 6.85 percent, with cities and counties allowed to impose additional levies of up to 1.25 percent for a maximum combined sales tax of 8.1 percent. The state also collects a lodgings tax of up to 13 percent (in addition to local taxes).

#### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**INFORMATION CENTERS:** State welcome centers are maintained in Boulder City at 100 Nevada Hwy. • at 195 US 50 at Lake Tahoe • in Las Vegas at 3150 Paradise Rd. • in Laughlin at 1555 S. Casino Dr. • on I-15 at Mesquite • on I-80 at West Wendover and on US 95 near Searchlight.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:

Travel Nevada 401 N. Carson St. Carson City, NV 89701 (775) 687-4322 **NATIONAL FOREST INFORMATION:** USDA Forest Service, Ogden Ranger District 857 W. South Jordan Pkwy. South Jordan, UT 84095 (801) 625-5112 **FISHING AND HUNTING REGULATIONS:** Nevada Department of Wildlife State Headquarters 6980 Sierra Center Pkwy., #120 Reno, NV 89511

(775) 688-1500

#### **RECREATION INFORMATION:**

Nevada Division of State Parks 901 S. Stewart St. 5th Floor, Suite 5005 Carson City, NV 89701-5248 (775) 684-2770 (775) 684-2777





### Rec

<b>Recreation Areas Chart</b>										S	TS	Ш	()	
Shaded columns below indicate available services and activities.	4G	KING	<b>HIKING TRAILS</b>	ŋ	RAMP	<b>BOAT RENTAL</b>	(5	ING	PET FRIENDLY	<b>BICYCLE TRAILS</b>	VINTER SPORTS	VISITOR CENTER	-ODGE/CABINS	FOOD SERVICE
Find thousands of places to camp at AAA.com/campgrounds	CAMPING	PICNICKING	HIKING	BOATING	<b>BOAT RAMP</b>	BOAT F	FISHING	SWIMMING	PET FR	BICYCL	WINTER	VISITOR	LODGE	FOOD 8
NATIONAL PARKS (See place listings.)														
<b>Death Valley</b> 3,336,000 acres. Bird-watching, wild-flower viewing; guided tours, horse rental, museum.														
<b>Great Basin</b> 77,180 acres 5 mi. w. of Baker near the Nevada-Utah border. Backcountry skiing; cave tours.														
NATIONAL FORESTS	(See	e pla	ice I	listin	igs.)									
<b>Humboldt-Toiyabe</b> 6,343,735 acres. Central, western, southern and northern Nevada and eastern California. Cross-country and downhill skiing, heli-skiing, hunting, sledding, snowboarding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, tubing; horseback riding trails, interpretive trails, scenic byway.														
<b>Inyo</b> 1,944,040 acres. Central California. Cross-country and downhill skiing, hunting, ice-skating, rock climbing, sledding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, tubing; gondola, horse rental, scenic byway.														
NATIONAL RECREATION A	REA	<b>S</b> (S	See	plac	e lis	sting	is.)							
<b>Lake Mead</b> 1,500,000 acres. Southeastern Nevada. Horseback riding, scuba diving.														
STA	ГЕ													
<b>Beaver Dam</b> 2,393 acres 6 mi. n.e. of Caliente on US 93, then 28 mi. e. on a gravel road. Interpretive trails.														
<b>Big Bend of the Colorado</b> 2,500 acres 5 mi. s. of Laughlin on the Needles Hwy. Scenic.														
Cathedral Gorge 1,608 acres 3 mi. n. of Panaca off														

US 93. Scenic. Horse trails, interpretive trails.



Recreation Areas Chart         Shaded columns below indicate available services and activities.         Image: Column State Sta	CAMPING	PICNICKING	HIKING TRAILS	BOATING	BOAT RAMP	<b>BOAT RENTAL</b>	FISHING	SWIMMING	PET FRIENDLY	<b>BICYCLE TRAILS</b>	WINTER SPORTS	VISITOR CENTER	LODGE/CABINS	FOOD SERVICE
<b>Cave Lake</b> 1,240 acres 8 mi. s. of Ely off US 93, then 7 mi. e. on Success Summit Rd. Cross-country skiing, ice fishing, ice-skating, sledding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing; interpretive programs.														
<b>Dayton</b> 160 acres in Dayton on US 50. Historic. Nature trail.														
<b>Echo Canyon</b> 1,080 acres 12 mi. e. of Pioche via SRs 322 and 323. Interpretive trail, RV campground.														
<b>Fort Churchill</b> 3,200 acres 8 mi. s. on US 95A, then 1 mi. w. on Old Fort Churchill Rd. Historic. Interpretive trail.														
Lahontan 30,522 acres 18 mi. w. of Fallon off US 50. Hunting, water sports; scenic drives. Note: Boat launches are currently unavailable due to low water levels.														
<b>Lake Tahoe-Nevada</b> 14,242 acres 4 mi. s. of Incline Village on SR 28. Cross-country skiing, water skiing.														
<b>Rye Patch</b> 20,241 acres 22 mi. n.e. of Lovelock off I-80. Water skiing.														
<b>South Fork</b> 3,924 acres 16 mi. s.w. of Elko via SR 228 to Lower South Fork Rd. Hunting, water skiing.														
<b>Spring Valley</b> 1,281 acres 20 mi. e. of Pioche via SR 322. Historic. Nature programs.														
Walker Lake 280 acres 11 mi. n. of Hawthorne on US 95. Bird-watching, water skiing; beach.														
Ward Charcoal Ovens 1,461 acres 7 mi. s.e. of Ely on US 6/50/93, then 11 mi. s.w. on Cave Valley Rd. Historic. Scenic. Bird-watching, wildlife viewing; ATV trail.														



Recreation Areas Chart         Shaded columns below indicate available services and activities.         Image: Column State Sta	CAMPING	PICNICKING	<b>HIKING TRAILS</b>	BOATING	BOAT RAMP	<b>BOAT RENTAL</b>	FISHING	SWIMMING	PET FRIENDLY	<b>BICYCLE TRAILS</b>	WINTER SPORTS	<b>VISITOR CENTER</b>	LODGE/CABINS	FOOD SERVICE
Washoe Lake 8,038 acres between Reno and Carson City e. of US 395. Hunting; equestrian area.														
<b>Wild Horse</b> 120 acres 67 mi. n. of Elko via SR 225, on the n.e. shore of the Wild Horse Reservoir. Bird-watching, cross-country skiing, hunting, ice-skating, sledding, snowmobiling.														
OTH	ER					-								
<b>Angel Lake</b> 13 mi. s.w. of Wells via SR 582. Bird- watching, canoeing.														
Floyd Lamb At Tule Springs 2,040 acres 15 mi. n.w. of Las Vegas on US 95. Horseback riding.														
Mount Charleston 30 mi. n.w. of Las Vegas via US 95 and SR 157. Sledding, snowshoeing.														
<b>Pyramid Lake</b> 125,000 acres (lake) off SR 445. Kaya- king, stand-up paddleboarding.														
<b>Ruby Lake</b> 37,632 acres 60 mi. s.e. of Elko. Bird- watching, hunting; wetlands.														

## STAY CONNECTED

### GET THE APP

AAA.com/mobile CAA.ca/services





### BEATTYHotels p. 23

A picturesque desert town in the Amargosa River Valley, Beatty is the Nevada approach to Death Valley National Park. Chloride Cliff, reached via a rough 5-mile dirt road off SR 374, offers an excellent view of Death Valley.

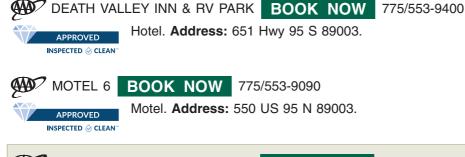
Also en route to the national park are the ghost towns of Rhyolite and Bullfrog. Six miles north of Beatty on US 95 is Bailey's Hot Springs. With a water temperature of about 104 F, the springs are open year-round.

Sixteen miles west of Beatty is Hell's Gate, a 3-mile stretch along SR 374 where the temperature takes a

sudden spike upward. There are no signs, but stick your hand out of the window to experience the phenomena.

Beatty Chamber of Commerce: 119 E. Main, P.O. Box 956, Beatty, NV 89003. Phone: (775) 553-2424 or (866) 736-3716.

**BEATTY MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY** is at 417 Main St. Like grandmother's attic, this museum is cluttered with so many items—many donated by local residents—that you're likely to stumble upon a treasure. Knowledgeable staff members will gladly provide information about the museum's collection, which includes mining tools; farm equipment; early town photographs; and Native American, Nye County and Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad history exhibits. **Phone:** (775) 553-2303.



STAGECOACH HOTEL CASINO BOOK NOW 775/553-2419



Hotel. **Address:** 900 E Hwy 95 N 89003. **Facility:** This modest hotel offers varying size rooms. Many of the rooms overlook an impressive pool area. Ask about the small movie theater for private events. 80 units. 2 stories (no elevator), interior/exterior corridors. **Pool:** outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub.



#### BLUE DIAMOND

#### • Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

Established in the 1940s as a company town for employees of a gypsum producer, Blue Diamond is at the southern entrance to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Gypsum is still mined in the area.

SPRING MOUNTAIN RANCH STATE PARK, 6 mi. n. on Blue Diamond Rd., is in a scenic location at the base of Wilson Cliffs. German actress Vera Krupp was the most notorious resident; although she sold the ranch

to Howard Hughes in 1967, it is not known whether Hughes himself ever visited. Visitors can explore the main ranch house and the grounds. A guided tour includes the bunkhouse and other outbuildings, the Wilson cemetery and interpretive trails showcasing native plants.

**Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (702) 875-4141. **GT** 



#### **BOULDER CITY**

#### • Hotels p. 24

#### • Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

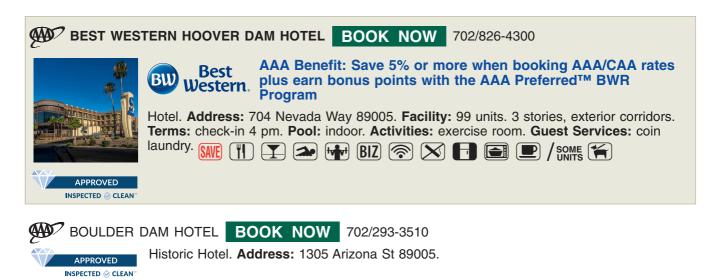
"The town that built Hoover Dam" sprang from the Mojave Desert in 1931 when a site was needed to house the thousands of Depression-era workers constructing the concrete behemoth on the nearby Colorado River. Aiming to keep the crews and project on schedule, gambling and alcohol were outlawed within the city limits. This is still one of only two Nevada cities that prohibit gambling.

Today, you can cool off with a cocktail anywhere in town. (When the weather's not outrageously hot, the outdoor patio at Boulder Dam Brewing Co., 453 Nevada Way, offers a kick-back spot to quaff a frosty pint.

Besides serving as a lodging base for visits to Lake Mead National Recreation Area *(see place listing p. 41)* and Hoover Dam, Boulder City's main draw is its historic Old Town. Chockablock with restaurants, sidewalk cafés, public art, boutiques and antique shops aplenty, this laidback little burg makes for a nice half-day trip from Vegas (one-way drive time from the Strip: about 30 minutes). **Boulder City Chamber of Commerce:** 465 Nevada Way, Boulder City, NV 89005. **Phone:** (702) 293-2034 or (866) 297-4750.

**Self-guiding tours:** A map and brochure featuring a walking tour of the Boulder City Public Art Scape is available at the chamber of commerce. A collection of some 30 outdoor sculptures—from classic bronzes to abstract creations—dots the sidewalks of Nevada Way and surrounding streets.

**Shopping:** Antique and curio shops abound in Boulder City. Back in Thyme, 524 Nevada Way, carries a fine selection of antique children's pedal cars, jewelry (including Native American pieces), vintage postcards, used books and more. Enter the time warp that is Sherman's House of Antiques, 1228 Arizona St., a mazelike emporium packed with all things aged and collectible. Pointing you to some two-dozen other Old Town retailers are shopping brochure/guide maps, available free from the chamber of commerce as well as from most stores and restaurants.



#### CARSON CITY • Hotels p. 26

Carson City, founded in 1858 and named for frontiersman Kit Carson, was designated as the state capital in 1864 and flourished as a result of the copious silver output coming from the Comstock Lode in nearby Virginia City. The capital of Nevada is conveniently located about midway between Reno and Lake Tahoe. This is rugged country, and the stretch of US 50 heading west to Lake Tahoe and the California border is especially scenic. From its junction with US 395 downtown, the highway cuts through the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (*see place listing p. 37*) and then follows the lake's southeastern shoreline.



The 19th-century silver-domed Capitol, with additions and restorations, is still in use today. The old Assembly and Senate chambers, including a museum display about the Capitol, can be visited. Self-guiding tour brochures are available at the Carson City Visitors Bureau. The Legislative Building, south of the Capitol, also is open to the public; phone (775) 687-4810 or (800) 978-2878. Antique firefighting equipment, old photographs and a series of Currier & lves prints depicting firefighters can be seen at the Warren Engine Company No. 1 Fire Museum, 777 S. Stewart St., by advance appointment; phone (775) 887-2210.

The 2.5-mile Kit Carson Trail winds through Carson City's extensive historic homes district. Carriage stone markers denote various city landmarks and provide anecdotes about some of the town's more notable personalities.

The historic Virginia and Truckee Railroad travels a path once blazed by the 1860s Comstock silver boom. Covering 16 miles of newly restored track, the Sisters in History sightseeing excursion between Carson City and Virginia City offers scenic vistas of the Carson River and the Sierra Nevada range, navigating tunnels and passing abandoned mine shafts and old cemeteries en route. Passengers might even catch a glimpse of wild mustangs.

Steam and diesel trains depart from the Eastgate Depot, 6 miles east of Carson City via US 50 to Flint Drive (following signs). One-way and round-trip outings run daily, late May through October; phone (775) 847-0380.

The Foreman-Roberts House Museum, 1207 N. Carson St., was built in approximately 1859 and was relocated to Carson City in 1874. The method of its arrival in town is still debated; the current theory is that it was hauled by mules or oxen on a rolling foundation of tree trunks. The Gothic Revival house, said to be the city's oldest, has a steeply pitched roof and gingerbread trim; period furnishings decorate the interior. Now the headquarters of the Carson City Historical Society, it is open to the public during special events and also can be toured by appointment for a \$3 fee; phone (775) 887-8865.

Local events include late October's 🐨 Nevada Day Celebration, a festival with a carnival and parade.

Outdoor activities are plentiful in Carson City and the surrounding area. Biking and hiking trails wind through parks, and the Carson River and area lakes provide ample opportunities for fishing. Hunting and horseback riding also are popular.

Golfers will feel like they've died and gone to heaven when confronted with the "Divine 9," nine golf courses dotting the Carson Valley in and around Carson City. Varied terrain with a dramatic backdrop of 10,000-foot mountain peaks presents challenges for every skill level; phone (866) 928-4653.

Century-old cottonwood trees shade the Carson Valley Golf Course, 2 miles south of Gardnerville off US 395; phone (775) 265-3181. Arnold Palmer was the architect behind the sculpted links at the Dayton Valley Golf Club, in Dayton; phone (775) 246-7888. Johnny Miller created the layout at the Genoa Lakes Golf Club & Resort in Genoa, situated on land that was a cattle ranch in the 1850s; phone (775) 782-4653. Altogether the Divine 9 offer 171 holes of championship golf.

Carson City Visitors Bureau: 716 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701. Phone: (775) 687-7410 or (800) 638-2321.

Self-guiding tours: A walking tour map featuring descriptions of historic Carson City sites and a walking tour map of the Kit Carson Trail are available from the Carson City Visitors Bureau.

CARSON HOT SPRINGS RESORT is at 1500 Old Hot Springs Rd.; take the College Pkwy. exit off US 395, go just e. on College Pkwy., just n. on Research Way, then just w. In operation since 1849, this resort complex features a large mineral pool where water flows out of the ground at a temperature of 121 F. Originating from deep below Earth's surface, the water contains sodium, sulfate, chloride, potassium and other therapeutic elements. The site was used in its natural state by Washoe Indians and later by emigrants and pioneers before Thomas Swift purchased the springs in 1880, building bathhouses, a clubhouse and a hotel.

The outdoor swimming pool is maintained at 98 F in summer, 102 F in winter. Massage services are available, and a restaurant, bar and nightclub are on the premises.

Time: Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (775) 885-8844 or (888) 917-3711.

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM, CARSON CITY is at 600 N. Carson St. The Dema Guinn Concourse is the gateway to a newly renovated and expanded facility that occupies the former Carson City Mint Building, where silver coins were minted 1870-93. Visitors will find an exceptional variety of artifacts from different time periods organized around various themes.

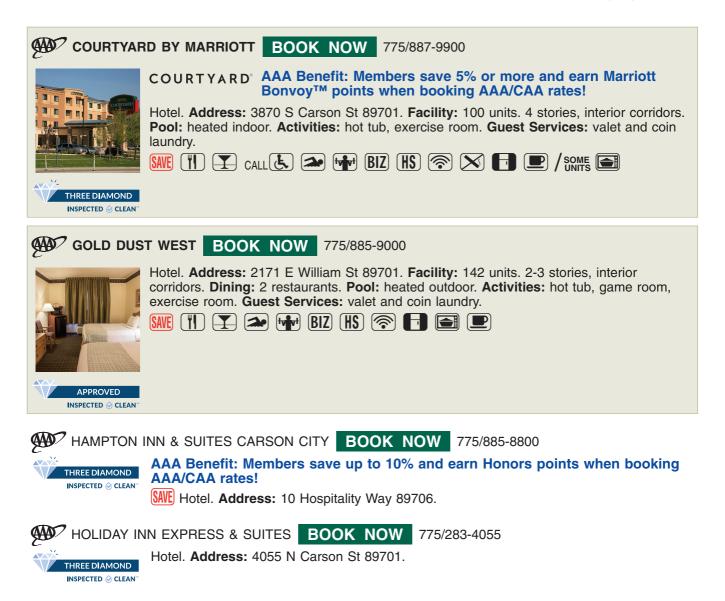
Nevada's Changing Earth chronicles the state's geologic history over millions of years, telling the story with original illustrations, rock specimens, field photographs and a walk-through representation of a Devonian-era sea. Among the stirring depictions of ancient life is a Columbian mammoth, excavated from Nevada's Black Rock Desert, fighting for survival in a small, mud-encrusted water hole.



#### 26 CARSON CITY, NV

Under One Sky focuses on Native Americans and their struggle to wrest an existence from a harsh land. A reconstruction of a Great Basin cave offers evidence of past human cultures. Visitors also can walk through a timeline of Nevada history, tour a reproduction of an underground mine and discover seldom-seen Nevada wildlife like the Great Basin rattlesnake and the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Reminders of the museum building's original function are the Coin Press No. 1—a 6-ton, steam-powered piece of machinery that struck the first coin to bear the CC mintmark—and a complete set of Carson City Morgan dollars.

Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. Phone: (775) 687-4810.





MY PLACE HOTEL CARSON CITY BOOK NOW 775/885-2900

APPROVED Hotel. Address:

INSPECTED & CLEAN

Hotel. Address: 17 Hospitality Way 89706.

### DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Elevations in the park range from -282 ft. near Badwater to 11,049 ft. at Telescope Peak. Refer to AAA maps for additional elevation information.

Death Valley National Park straddles the Nevada border in the east central part of California. Death Valley's formation began about 3 million years ago when forces within the Earth broke the crust into blocks. Some of these blocks tilted and rotated, creating the alternating mountain and valley pattern. During the ice ages large lakes intermittently occupied the basin; their evaporation left alternating layers of mud and large salt deposits that still are visible.

Native American peoples have occupied the area during the past 9,000 years, but the valley gained its forbidding name and reputation relatively recently. In the late autumn of 1849 a group of pioneers and gold seekers left Salt Lake City for California following the Old Spanish Trail. After 2 weeks of slow-going, a splinter group decided to take a route across the desert that would cut 500 miles from their journey.

Early on, the man with the map of the route abandoned the travelers, who were left to just head west. After a month of traveling the shortcut, the band again split into groups taking different routes. Each faction escaped the area on its own and met at Ash Meadows, east of Death Valley. More than 3 months after starting on the Old Spanish Trail, their journey ended, and with only one human death occurring in the valley.

Although miners later found precious metals in the area, the discovery of another mineral—borax—initiated the exploitation of the valley. The borax mining company built the roads over which the famous 20-mule teams drew wagon loads weighing as much as 40 tons.

A place of unexpected contrasts, Death Valley National Park encompasses 3,336,000 acres. The valley itself ranges from less than 10 miles to about 61 miles in width and is about 140 miles long. Elevations range from 282 feet below sea level near Badwater (the lowest point in North America) to 11,049 feet above sea level at Telescope Peak. One of the hottest regions in the world, the valley experienced a record temperature of 134 F in 1913, though summer temperatures in the 110s and 120s are the norm. Although summer thunderstorms sometimes send flash floods tearing down narrow canyons, the average yearly rainfall on the valley floor is less than 2 inches. In some years there has been no measurable rainfall at all.

Of the more than 1,000 species of plants found, 12 are unique to the park, including the shining milk vetch, napkin ring buckwheat and golden carpet.

The area also contains a wealth of geological phenomena: large sand dune formations, sculpted rocks, isolated valleys and volcanic craters. The canyon and mountain walls change color with the shifting sunlight.

Mankind's marks on the desert are limited. The park boundaries encompass the route of the Jayhawkers Trail taken from Utah's Great Salt Lake in 1849; the route taken by the Darwin-French party in 1860; the first mine worked in the region; several beehive charcoal kilns; and the ghost town site of Skidoo.

#### **General Information and Activities**

Death Valley attracts the majority of visitors between mid-October and late April. Major holiday periods during these months, along with Presidents Day, Easter week, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Death Valley Encampment in early November are particularly busy times.

Artists Drive is a scenic 9-mile route among the foothills of the Black Mountains; vehicles more than 25 feet long are prohibited. Golden Canyon, about 5 miles north of the entrance to Artists Drive, is cut by an easy 1-mile trail that winds through carved rock formations; parking and trail guides are available at the trail entrance. East of Furnace Creek, SR 190 leads to Zabriskie Point and views of an area of eroded, contoured hills.

Furnace Creek Visitor Center, on SR 190, has exhibits, literature and a 20-minute movie about the park. It is open daily 9-6, mid-June to early Oct.; 8-5, rest of year. Evening programs and naturalist walks are conducted November 1 to mid-April; phone (760) 786-3200. Horses can be rented at Furnace Creek Stables mid-October to mid-May; phone (760) 614-1018.

**Note:** Travelers are cautioned that the valley is subject to intense heat during the summer. Those affected by extreme temperatures should plan to travel in the cooler



#### 28 DEATH VALLEY NP — ELKO, NV

evening or night hours. Carry extra water. If your car breaks down, stay with it until help arrives. You should fill your gas tank before entering the park since only three gas stations operate amid its vast expanse—one each at Furnace Creek Ranch, Stovepipe Wells Village and Panamint Springs Resort. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

**ADMISSION** fee, valid for 7 days, is \$30 (per private vehicle); \$25 (per motorcycle); \$15 (per person arriving by other means); free (holders of National Parks Annual, Senior, Military or Access passes).

**PETS** on leash are allowed in the valley on all roads, but not in public facilities, on the trails or in the backcountry.

**ADDRESS** inquiries to Death Valley National Park, P.O. Box 579, Death Valley, CA 92328. Phone (760) 786-3200.

**SCOTTY'S CASTLE** is 25 mi. s.w. of US 95 on SR 267 at the valley's n. boundary. An amazing sight in this isolated

region, the vacation retreat was built in the 1920s by a wealthy Chicagoan. The house contains beautiful furnishings and art and is decorated as it would have appeared in 1939. Rangers in period garb conduct the 1-hour House Tour. The 1-hour Underground Tour explores the basement and tunnels and focuses on the technology used to build and live in this remote mansion.

**Note:** Scotty's Castle is closed due to flood damage. Limited Flood Recovery Walking Tours may be available; phone ahead for details. In peak season, November through April, wait times may be up to 2 hours, so visitors should buy tour tickets when they arrive or make advance reservations. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (760) 786-2392 for tour information, (760) 786-3200 for national park information, or (800) 478-8564 for tour reservations. **GT**  $\overrightarrow{Art}$ 





**INSPECTED**  $\bigotimes$  CLEAN

Historic Hotel. **Address:** Hwy 190 S 92328. **Facility:** A spring-fed pool and 22 private luxury casitas are among the draws at this serene, recently renovated hideaway, where beautiful architecture and hundreds of date palms compliment the desert backdrop. 88 units, some efficiencies. 1-4 stories, interior/exterior corridors. *Bath:* shower only. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Terms:** check-in 4 pm. **Amenities:** *Some:* safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** sauna, tennis, trails, exercise room, massage. **Guest Services:** area transportation.

SAVE	EC0		CALL	tvivi	BIZ	<b>?</b>	$\mathbf{X}$	Ð		

#### ELKO • Hotels p. 29

The center of Nevada's cattle country, Elko served as a way station for wagon trains during the western migration. Tourism accounts for a large portion of the town's revenue.

The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the country's first such festival, is a 5-day event held in late January at the Western Folklife Center, 501 Railroad St.; phone (775) 738-7508. The event helps preserve the culture of the cowboy through music, stories, tall tales, dance, poetry and exhibits of cowboy gear. During July 4th weekend, the city hosts the SElko Basque Festival, which features dancing, music, food and traditional sporting events, including weightlifting and wood chopping.

South of Elko lie the Ruby Mountains, where miles of trails lead to backcountry lakes and marshes offering hunting, fishing and boating. Lamoille Canyon (see

*Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest p. 38)* in the Ruby Mountains is known for its steep glacial walls, free-flowing streams and scenic vistas.

**Elko Area Chamber:** 1405 Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801. **Phone:** (775) 738-7135.

**CALIFORNIA TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER,** 1 Trail Center Way, tells the story of pioneers who made their way to California 1841-69 through a combination of interior displays—art, video, multimedia exhibits and life-size dioramas—and outdoor encampments along with hiking trails near the Ruby Mountains, South Fork Canyon and the Humboldt River. **Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (775) 738-1849.





SAVE Hotel. Address: 674 Cimarron Way 89801.

#### ELY Hotels p. 29

Founded in 1868 as a silver-mining camp, Ely bloomed with the arrival of the Nevada Northern Railway, which chugged into town in 1906 bedecked with flags, bunting and sagebrush wreaths. When Ely converted to largescale copper mining, the town grew from 500 to 3,000 residents in a year.

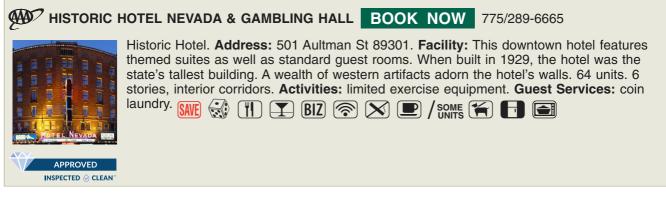
Kennecott Copper Corp.'s renowned Liberty Pit produced more than \$550 million in copper, gold and silver deposits. Kennecott also operated the giant Ruth pit, which produced from about 1905 to the late 1970s. Ely continues to be a center for mining as well as ranching and recreation.

The surrounding mountain ranges provide fine hunting and trout fishing. High-country hikers are fond of nearby Wheeler Peak Scenic Area, which includes 13,063-foot Wheeler Peak, Baker and Snake creeks, Big Wash Canyon and the upper parts of Lehman Creek. The garnet-studded rhyolite outcropping at the peak of Garnet Hill, 5 miles west off US 50, is popular with rock hounds. Boating, swimming and fishing are available at Cave Lake State Park (see Recreation Areas Chart).

The Renaissance Village in downtown Elv features a collection of early 20th-century buildings, including a prospector's cabin, a general store and a barn. The site, open Saturdays from June through September, hosts such regularly scheduled cultural activities as art workshops, plays and concerts. A farmers market is added on Saturdays beginning in late August.

Several old mining camps and ghost towns still can be found in the Ely vicinity; they include Cherry Creek, Fort Schellbourne, Hamilton, Lane City, Osceola, Taylor and Ward. Ely also is the western terminus of a scenic route consisting of US 93, US 50/6 and SR 487. Crossing the Schell Creek and Snake ranges, the route leads to the Utah border and Great Basin National Park (see place listing p. 32).

White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board: 150 Sixth St., Ely, NV 89301. Phone: (775) 289-3720 or (800) 496-9350.



#### **EUREKA**

Eureka lies along US 50 at the southern end of scenic SR 278. During the town's heyday in the 1870s, its leadbased economy and the attendant smelters led the town to be called the "Pittsburgh of the West." The population, which at one point reached nearly 11,000, supported 100 saloons, several newspapers, hotels, an opera house, five fire companies and a brass band.

The renovated Eureka Opera House, 31 S. Main St., which dates from 1880, presents a variety of cultural



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

#### 30 EUREKA — FALLON, NV

shows and serves as a convention, visitor and cultural arts center. The Eureka County Courthouse, at Ruby Hill Avenue and Main Street, typifies late 19th-century architecture. Completed in 1880, it features a large upstairs courtroom with a bench made of imported Spanish cedar. Rotating art exhibits can be viewed in the south hall. The courthouse is still in use today. Phone (775) 237-6006 for opera house and courthouse visitor information.

Eureka Sentinel Museum, at Bateman and Monroe streets, houses the original printing equipment of the newspaper, which began operations in 1870. It also exhibits mining and railroad displays, prints from the 1800s and articles from the Knobb Hill Firehouse; phone (775) 237-5010.

**Eureka County Tourism:** 31 S. Main St. (in the Springer Opera House), Eureka, NV 89316. **Phone:** (775) 237-6006.

**Self-guiding tours:** A walking tour map containing descriptions of the town's historic sites is available at the Springer Opera House and from a kiosk located at 11 N. Main St.

### • Hotels p. 30

Completion of Lahontan Dam in 1914 and subsequent reclamation and irrigation changed the area from barren desert to one of the state's largest farming districts. Major farm products include livestock, alfalfa and "hearts of gold" cantaloupes. Besides supplying water for irrigation, the impounded lake is popular for recreation as part of the 30,522-acre Lahontan State Recreation Area *(see Recreation Areas Chart)*.

Some of Nevada's earliest inhabitants left their calling cards nearby. Grimes Point Petroglyph Trail, within the Grimes Point Archeological Area, is one of the largest and most accessible rock art sites in the United States. It winds among hundreds of boulders, chocolate brown in color, that are inscribed with wavy lines, animal likenesses and human figures estimated to be some 6,000 years old. The short, self-guiding interpretive trail is 7 miles east of town on the north side of US 50. Guided educational tours also are offered; phone (775) 885-6000 for more information.

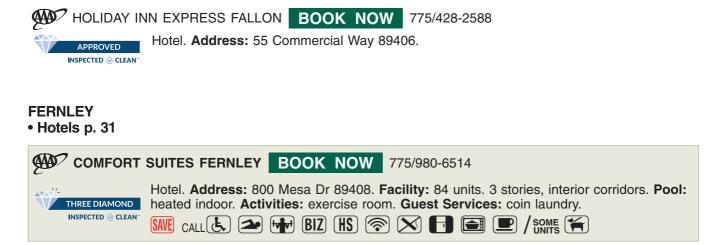
East of Fallon US 50 parallels the old Pony Express route for a number of miles. About 20 miles east of town is a 1-mile-long road leading to Sand Mountain and Sand Springs Pony Express Station. One of the few "singing mountains" in the country, Sand Mountain is composed of grains of sand that sometimes create a low moan as they shift. Fallon also is the headquarters for the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, home to the flight school commonly known as "TOPGUN."

The Bureau of Land Management offers free expeditions on the second and fourth Saturday of each month to Hidden Cave, an archeological zone 11 miles east of Fallon on US 50. Tours depart from the Churchill County Museum and Archives *(see attraction listing)*; phone the museum to confirm departure times.

**Fallon Convention & Tourism Authority:** 100 Campus Way, Fallon, NV 89406. **Phone:** (775) 423-4556 or (866) 432-5566.









AAA Benefit: Save 5% or more when booking AAA/CAA rates plus earn bonus points with the AAA Preferred<sup>™</sup> BWR Program INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN"

SAVE Motel. Address: 1405 E Newlands Dr 89408.

#### GARDNERVILLE Hotels p. 31

APPROVED

The Lahontan National Fish Hatchery, 4 miles south on US 395, raises two games species-the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and the cui-ui, a type of sucker fish-for stocking in western Nevada waters. The hatchery is open daily; phone (775) 265-2425.

Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce: 1477 US 395 N., Suite A, Gardnerville, NV 89410. Phone: (775) 782-8144 or (800) 727-7677.





#### 32 GENOA - GREAT BASIN NP, NV

#### GENOA

Founded by one of the traders sent out by Brigham Young in 1849 and originally called Mormon Station, Genoa became the first permanent settlement in Nevada. In 1859 Nevada's first territorial legislature met in Genoa for a 9-day session that drafted a declaration of cause for separation from Utah Territory. Recognizing the value of the famed Comstock Lode in financing the Union's efforts in the Civil War, Congress established the Territory of Nevada in 1861.

Norwegian immigrant Jon Torsteinson-Rue, better known as Snowshoe Thompson, is buried in Genoa. From 1856 to 1876 Thompson made 90-mile treks over the rugged, snow-covered Sierra Nevada range to deliver mail between Genoa and Sacramento, Calif.

MORMON STATION STATE HISTORIC PARK is off US 395, then w. on SR 206 (Genoa Ln.) to Foothill Rd. It contains a restored log stockade and a replica of the original 1851 trading post where pioneers often rested before continuing over the Sierra Nevada to California. The former trading post has been converted into a small museum. Exhibits focus on the history of Mormon Station, Genoa's original name and the surrounding area. Phone: (775) 782-2590.



Elevations in the park range from 6,200 ft. at Snake Creek to 13,063 ft. at Wheeler Peak. Refer to AAA maps for additional elevation information.

Approximately 5 miles west of Baker on SR 488 near the Nevada-Utah border, the 77,180-acre Great Basin National Park, established in 1986, contains many of the features common to the Great Basin, including impressive mountain peaks, lush meadows, sparkling streams, alpine lakes and a small glacier.

Rising abruptly 7,700 feet from the desert floor, the park exhibits a wide variety of plant and animal habitats that range from the Upper Sonoran life zone with its jackrabbits, sagebrush and cacti to the frigid Arctic-Alpine Tundra life zone at the highest elevations.

In spring and summer many kinds of wildflowers bloom on the mountain slopes. Pine, spruce, fir and mountain mahogany make up the forests, and wildlife includes mule deer, mountain lions, coyotes, porcupines and golden eagles. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, once locally extinct, were reintroduced to this area in 1979.

#### **General Information and Activities**

A highlight of the park is Lehman Caves, a limestonesolution cave. Cave walks, exhibits, films, maps and park information are offered at the Lehman Caves Visitor Center, 5.5 miles from Baker on SR 488. The center is open daily 8-5, Memorial Day weekend-Labor Day; 8-4:30, rest of year. Closed Jan. 1, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Phone (775) 234-7331.

The Great Basin Visitor Center, north of Baker on the west side of SR 487, is open Tues.-Sat. 11-5, early Apr. to mid-May; daily 8-5:30, mid-May to mid-Sept. Phone (775) 234-7331.

Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive extends 12 miles to the 10,000-foot elevation on the flank of Wheeler Peak. Hiking trails pass several alpine lakes to the 13,063-foot summit or to a rare ancient bristlecone pine forest. Park interpreters conduct various campfire programs in the summer. Drivers of motor homes and trailers longer than 24 feet should not attempt to negotiate Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive.

Camping is permitted at three campgrounds along Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive, at Baker Creek Campground on Baker Creek Road and at Strawberry Creek Campground on Strawberry Creek Road. Fishing for rainbow trout is popular in the park's many clear creeks. Anglers over age 11 need a Nevada fishing license and a trout stamp; both are available in Ely and online. There are no developed cross-country ski trails, but winter brings ample opportunity for backcountry skiing.

**Note:** A few warnings should be kept in mind when visiting the park. The area is dry, so carry plenty of drinking water when hiking and treat any surface water before use. Rattlesnakes are found at all elevations during warm weather, and extreme weather conditions are likely throughout the year. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

**ADMISSION** to the park is free. Camping fee is \$12.

**PETS** must be on a leash at all times. They are not allowed in buildings, in the cave or on any trails except Lexington Arch.

**ADDRESS** inquiries to Great Basin National Park, 100 Great Basin National Park, Baker, NV 89311; phone (775) 234-7331.

**BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST** in Great Basin National Park consists of 150 acres of trees considered to be among the oldest living things on Earth. Groves include Mount Washington, the largest, where the pines exceed 40 feet; Wheeler Peak, the most accessible; and Eagle Peak, on the steep ridge between Snake and Baker creeks.



**LEHMAN CAVES,** 5500 W. SR 488 within Great Basin National Park, consists of illuminated marble and limestone passages that have many colorful formations and curious shield or palette shapes. Although the first written mention of the cave was in an 1885 newspaper article, it may have been discovered earlier by homesteaders or miners. Absalom S. Lehman probably was the first to realize the significance of the underground galleries. After conducting his own exploration, he guided parties through the cave until his death in 1891.

**Note:** To prevent the spread of White Nose Syndrome, a disease that affects the bat population, all visitors must be screened and some individuals may be required to either change or clean clothing, shoes and other items prior to entering the cave. The tour covers about a half-mile and includes six stairways. Flash cameras are allowed, but tripods and backpacks are not. The cave temperature is 50 F, so a sweater or light jacket is recommended.

**Phone:** (775) 234-7517 for ticket information, or (775) 234-7331 for park headquarters. **GT** 

#### HENDERSON

- Hotels p. 33
- Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

Henderson was settled during World War II as a housing area for employees of a magnesium plant. The

town since has expanded into Nevada's main industrial center, with many plants concerned principally with chemical and metal production. Henderson is the southwest terminus of scenic SR 147, which follows the spectacular Lake Mead shoreline from Hoover Dam to Overton Beach.

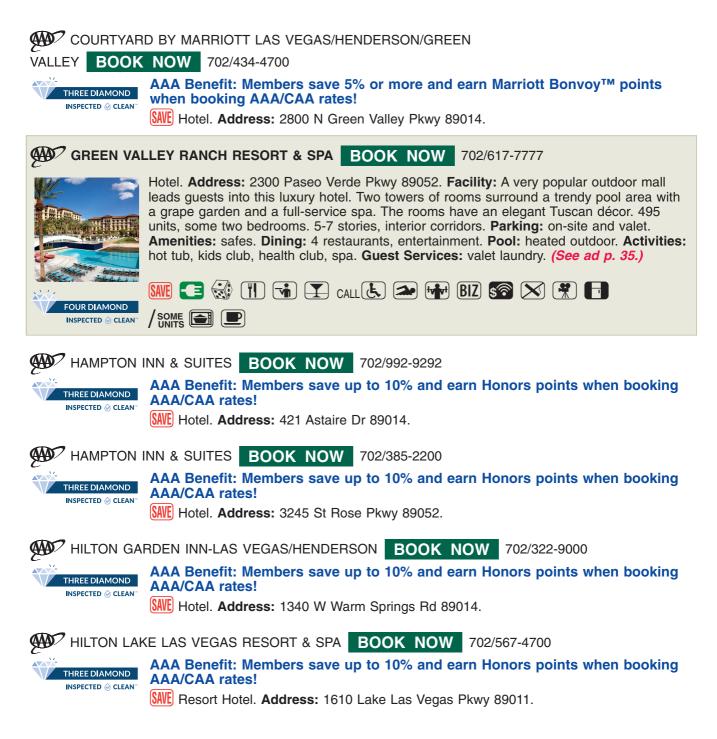
Held in mid- or late April, the vertex Henderson Heritage Parade and Festival offers live entertainment, ethnic food booths, dance, a parade and a car show.

The 35-mile-long River Mountains Loop Trail connects Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Hoover Dam, Henderson and Boulder City. Hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders are treated to views of Lake Mead, Las Vegas and the River Mountains; wildlife spottings include bighorn sheep and desert tortoises. Trailheads are at Equestrian Park, 1699 Equestrian Drive; Calico Ridge on Golda Way; and just south of the Railroad Pass Hotel & Casino at 2800 S. Boulder Hwy. Phone (702) 267-4000.

Henderson Convention Center and Visitors Bureau: 200 Water St., Henderson, NV 89015. Phone: (702) 267-2171 or (877) 775-5252.









Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.





## Immerse YOURSELF IN UNPARALLELED LUXURY

GREEN VALLEY RANCH offers the best resort experience just 20 minutes away from the Las Vegas Strip. With meticulous attention to detail, unparalleled luxury, exclusive amenities, and a commitment to providing an unforgettable experience, we redefine what it means to indulge in the finest things in life.

> 495 Luxury Rooms & Suites Complimentary Valet & Self-Parking

Award-Winning BEST OF LAS VEGAS Full-Service Spa, Salon & Fitness Center



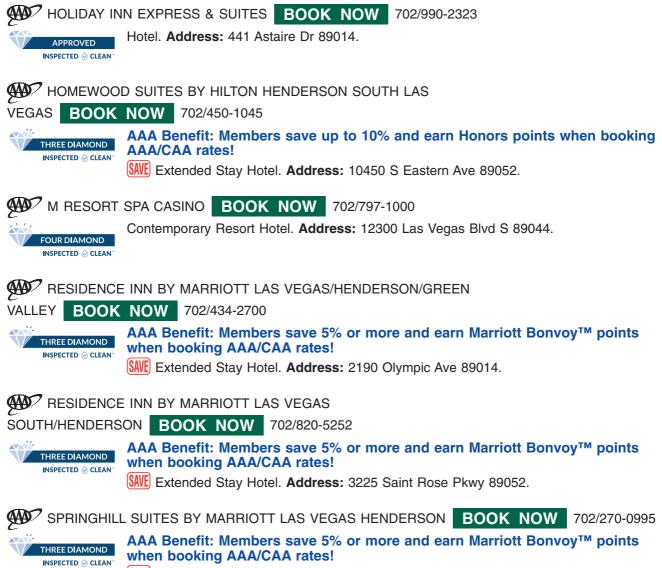




#### BOOK NOW

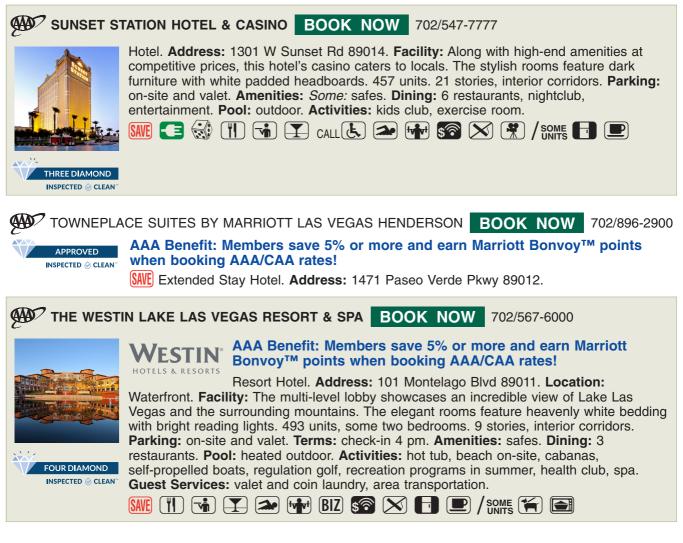


702.617.7777 • 2300 Paseo Verde Parkway • Henderson, NV 89052



SAVE Hotel. Address: 1481 Paseo Verde Pkwy 89012.





## HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST

Elevations in the forest range from 3,714 ft. in Younts Spring to 12,374 ft. at Dunderberg (Castle) Peak. Refer to AAA maps for additional elevation information.

Scattered across divisions in central, northern, western and southern Nevada and in eastern California, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the second largest national forest in the country, totaling 6,343,735 acres. Ranges in north-central Nevada include the Independence, Santa Rosa, Ruby, White Pine, Jarbidge, Schell Creek and Quinn Canyon. Part of the forest lies along the rugged Monitor, Toquima, Toiyabe, Shoshone and Paradise ranges of central Nevada and along the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada and the Spring Mountains near Las Vegas.

Jarbidge Wilderness is north of Elko, Nev.; no motorized vehicles are allowed, but six trails suitable for hiking and horseback riding traverse the area. The Ruby Mountains Wilderness, southeast of Elko, offers backpacking and other recreational opportunities within 90,000 acres of alpine lakes, glaciated canyons and rugged mountains. Other wilderness areas include Currant Mountain, East Humboldt, Grant Range, Mount Moriah, Quinn Canyon and Santa Rosa-Paradise Peak.



#### 38 HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NF — INCLINE VILLAGE, NV

Four national hiking trails are within the forest. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail traverses 74 miles of forest land; the Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail runs 67 miles along the Toiyabe Range; the Ruby Crest National Recreation Trail travels 33 miles across the Ruby Mountains; and the Mount Charleston National Recreation Trail ascends the 11,918-foot summit of Charleston Peak. Due to unpredictable weather conditions, hiking on these trails is best attempted June through October; high elevations can receive snow during any month of the year. Always confirm conditions with the Forest Supervisor's office.

Recreational activities within the forest include backpacking and hiking on nearly 1,000 miles of trails, as well as fishing, hunting, camping and picnicking. Several mountain biking trails have been developed near Austin in central Nevada. Winter sports areas are at Lee Canyon and Mount Rose. Winter sports such as heli-skiing, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are popular. Other areas noted for visual and recreational appeal are Lake Tahoe, the Sierra Nevada near Bridgeport, Calif., and Mount Rose.

The National Forest Adventure Pass is required in some of the campgrounds in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. For further information contact the Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, NV 89431; phone (775) 331-6444. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

**LAMOILLE CANYON SCENIC AREA** is in Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 20 mi. s.e. of Elko, Nev., via SR 227. A paved, two-lane scenic drive, overshadowed by towering cliffs, winds 12 miles along the canyon. Several overlooks with posted information enable visitors to observe the past effects of glacial activity. Wildflowers bloom abundantly in spring throughout the canyon's meadows. Rest areas are available May-Oct. **Phone:** (775) 738-5171.

#### **INCLINE VILLAGE**

• Hotels p. 39

#### • Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

Incline Village, the second largest community in the North Lake Tahoe area and the largest on the Nevada shore, spreads back toward the mountains from the lake's northeastern corner. The town takes its name from the Great Incline Tramway, built in 1874 to transport logs to the crest of the Carson Range; from there a flume sluiced them down to the Washoe Valley. This was Tahoe's quietest corner before development took off in the 1960s; today it's a popular resort town. Lakeshore Drive, a 3-mile stretch that parallels Tahoe Boulevard (SR 28), runs along the lake past priceylooking homes and condo developments shaded by lush growths of pines and conifers. Businesses and restaurants line busy Tahoe Boulevard.

Perhaps the most spectacularly scenic way to enter Incline Village is via SR 431, better known as the Mount Rose Highway. From downtown Reno, access US 395 South and get off at exit 59 (Damonte Ranch Parkway), following the directional signs to the beginning of this designated scenic route. The road immediately narrows from four lanes to two, and the flat Washoe Valley is left behind for the gently rolling, sagebrush-dotted Sierra Nevada foothills once the climb into the mountains begins.

The Mount Rose Highway doesn't actually ascend Mount Rose; it negotiates the rugged Carson Range of the Sierras, and Mount Rose, at 10,776 feet, is one of several impressively lofty mountain peaks in this wilderness region. The road quickly gains elevation in a series of serpentine bends, with designated pull-offs offering dizzying views of the valley far below.

A different vista reveals itself around each curve. Snow often covers the mountainsides—at this elevation, July and August are just about the only snow-free months of the year. It glints under the brilliant blue sky like diamonds, adding a fairy-tale beauty to the scene.

Mount Rose Summit, at an elevation of just over 8,900 feet, is the point where the highway crests the Sierras. After that the descent toward Incline Village and Lake Tahoe begins via another series of hairpin curves. The initial view of Lake Tahoe, a distant, sapphire-blue mirage framed by tall pine trees, is a stunner. The highway ends at SR 28; follow the roundabout to the second turn and head into Incline Village.

A right turn on Village Boulevard will take you down to Lakeshore Drive; turn left and watch for the entrance to Incline Beach (967 Lakeshore Dr.), a little park right along the shore. The pebbly beach here is often delightfully uncrowded, and the aromatic scent of pine fills the air. The water is calm—only the slightest ripple of a wave breaking at the shoreline—and amazingly clear. The reason? Nearly half of the precipitation falling on the Lake Tahoe Basin lands directly on the lake. The remaining rain and snowfall drains through soils of decomposed granite, which creates a filtering system. This magnificent outdoor setting is a lovely place to spend a peaceful hour.

South of town SR 28 runs through Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park, which extends from the lake to the summit of the Carson Range. Hidden Beach and Sand Harbor State Park are popular spots known for their large, rounded



boulder formations. The highway then climbs above the lake, offering sweeping views westward.

Sand Harbor State Park is the scene for the ⇒ Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, which runs early July to late August.

Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau: 969 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village, NV 89451. Phone: (775) 832-1606 or (800) 468-2463.

**TAHOE SCIENCE CENTER** is at 291 Country Club Dr. on the Sierra Nevada College campus. Located on the first floor of the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences building, the science center features interactive science exhibits, including one about Lake Tahoe. Visitors can step aboard a virtual research vessel to see how water quality is studied, check out a virtual lab with microscopic zooplankton, and manipulate topography in an interactive sandbox to see how watersheds work. Video presentations include 3-D movies (each 16 minutes) "Lake Tahoe in Depth" and "Mapping Change," which takes a look at Sierra forests, as well as 3-D visualization models of Lake Tahoe and Earth.

The center showcases sustainable design, construction and landscaping. Tours of the LEED Platinum-certified building are available by reservation.

**Time:** Allow 1 hour, 15 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (775) 881-7566. **GT** 

THUNDERBIRD LAKE TAHOE HISTORIC SITE tours depart from the Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau at 969 Tahoe Blvd. (SR 28). A shuttle bus takes visitors to this magnificent estate built in 1936 by George Whittell, an eccentric San Francisco millionaire. The prominent family's fortune was accumulated from gold rush-era banking, real estate and railroads. The somewhat reclusive Whittell developed a fancy for exotic animals and frequently brought his pet lion Bill and Mingo the elephant to his summer retreat.

A picturesque example of the "old Tahoe" style of architecture, the stone lodge was designed to blend into its secluded setting overlooking the lake. The heavily forested site on the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe affords amazing views. In addition to the Tudor Revival lodge, the 6-acre property encompasses a gatehouse, three cottages, a card house, a boathouse, three garages, a lighthouse and a barn for Whittell's elephant.

The 75-minute guided tour includes the lighthouse room; the old lodge; the servants' quarters; and a 600-foot tunnel leading to the boathouse, home to Whittell's 1939, 55-foot mahogany-hulled yacht *Thunderbird*. After hearing a few card-house poker stories, visitors enjoy the gardens and fountains. Exceptional iron, stone and woodwork can be seen throughout the estate.

**Note:** The tour requires being able to walk on uneven ground and climb steps. **Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (800) 468-2463 for tour reservations. **(GT)** 

# HYATT REGENCY LAKE TAHOE RESORT, SPA AND CASINO BOOK NOW 775/832-1234



FOUR DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN

**HYATT** REGENCY<sup>\*</sup> AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. **Address:** 111 Country Club Dr 89450. **Facility:** Nestled in the pines, this resort offers extensive recreational facilities and manicured grounds. Some rooms front a private Lake Tahoe beach, others overlook the pool. 422 units, some cottages. 3-12 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Terms:** check-in 4 pm. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, fishing, recreation programs, bicycles, playground, game room, lawn sports, picnic facilities, trails, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, area transportation.





## INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Elevations in the forest range from 3,700 ft. in Owens Valley to 14,505 ft. at the summit of Mount Whitney. Refer to AAA maps for additional elevation information.

Inyo National Forest parallels US 6 and US 395 for 165 miles between the eastern California towns of Inyokern and Lee Vining. The forest contains Mount Whitney—at 14,505 feet, the highest point in the contiguous United States—as well as portions of the Pacific Crest Trail and the John Muir Trail. Inyo National Forest shares in managing nine wilderness areas, including the Ansel Adams and John Muir wildernesses. Between US 6 and the Nevada border, the White Mountains rise to 14,246 feet and hold the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, with the oldest living trees on the planet; the Bristlecone visitor center is open to the public from mid-June through late October (weather permitting). Most of the Sierra's highest peaks are visible to the west from US 395.

Vehicle travel is restricted in Devils Postpile National Monument and the Reds Meadow area of the forest: Only vehicles with camping or disabled parking permits, and a few other exceptions, are allowed beyond the Minaret Vista turnoff between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., mid-June through Sept. 30. All others are required to use a shuttle bus that operates during the restricted times.

The 2-hour round-trip makes 10 stops, including the Devils Postpile ranger station, where trails lead to recreation areas. Shuttles, which operate mid-June to mid-September, depart the Mammoth Mountain Adventure Center every 20-30 minutes beginning at 7 a.m. The last return shuttle departs Reds Meadow at 7:45 p.m. A shuttle day pass is \$7; \$4 (ages 3-15). A shuttle 3-day pass is \$14; \$8 (ages 3-15). Phone (760) 872-1901. The daily entrance fee for vehicles is \$10 per private vehicle or \$20 for a 3-day pass. Permits are required for overnight access to the Ansel Adams and John Muir wildernesses.

Mammoth and June mountains have ski areas that are popular in winter, while mountain biking, hiking, camping, fishing and backpacking are the main summertime diversions. Gondola rides to the top of Mammoth Mountain provide outstanding views and access to hiking and mountain biking trails. Rides are available daily 9-3:30, mid-June through late Sept. (weather and wind permitting). Fare \$25; \$20 (ages 13-22 and 65-79); \$12 (ages 5-12); free (up to two children ages 5-12 per paying adult and ages 80+). Phone (760) 934-2571 or (800) 626-6684.

Minaret Vista, at 9,175 feet, offers a sweeping view of the Ritter Range. A store and café, as well as saddle and pack horses, are available at Reds Meadow. An interagency welcome center on Main Street in Mammoth Lakes is open year-round; closed Jan. 1, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Phone (760) 924-5500.

Roads throughout the remainder of the forest provide scenic drives. The Eastern Sierra Interagency Visitor Center is south of Lone Pine at the junction of US 395 and SR 136. Phone (760) 876-6222 or TTY (760) 876-6228.

For additional information contact the Superintendent, Inyo National Forest, 351 Pacu Ln., Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514; phone (760) 873-2400 or TTY (760) 873-2538. For wilderness information phone (760) 873-2483. Campground and wilderness permit reservations can be obtained online through www.recreation.gov. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

#### INSIDER INFO: High-Altitude Health

Temples throbbing, gasping for breath and nauseated, you barely notice the scudding clouds or the spectacular view.

You might be suffering from Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Usually striking at around 8,000 feet (2,450 m) in altitude, AMS is your body's way of coping with the reduced oxygen and humidity of high altitudes. Among the symptoms are headaches, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, insomnia and lethargy. Some people complain of temporary weight gain or swelling in the face, hands and feet.

You can reduce the effect of high altitude by being in top condition. If you smoke or suffer from heart or lung ailments, consult your physician before your trip. Certain drugs will intensify the symptoms. To avoid Acute Mountain Sickness, adjust to elevations slowly; a gradual ascent with a couple days of acclimatization is best if you have time. For example, if you are planning a trip to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, you might want to spend the first night in a lower altitude city such as Denver as opposed to heading directly to an environment with extreme elevations.

On the way up, eat light, nutritious meals and stay hydrated by drinking a large amount of water, taking care to avoid caffeine, alcohol and salt. In addition, your doctor may be able to prescribe medication that can offset the effects of high-altitude.

If you develop AMS, you should stop ascending; you will recover in a few days. If the AMS is mild, a quick descent will end the suffering immediately.

Other high-altitude health problems include sunburn and hypothermia. Dress in layers to protect yourself from the intense sun and wide fluctuations in temperature.



Finally, after you lounge in the sauna or whirlpool bath at your lodgings, remember to stand up carefully, for the heat has relaxed your blood vessels and lowered your blood pressure.

**BISHOP CREEK CANYON** is 16 mi. w. of Bishop, Calif., on SR 168. Lined by 1,000-foot granite cliffs, the canyon is popular with anglers from late April to mid-November at spots like North Lake, South Lake, Lake Sabrina, Intake II and Bishop Creek. Marked hiking trails traverse this idyllic wilderness region. **Phone:** (760) 873-8405 for the chamber or (888) 395-3952.

# LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION

#### • Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

This 1.5 million-acre recreation area, established in 1964, was created around Lake Mead, the massive Colorado River reservoir resulting from the construction of Hoover Dam. Exit wild river rapids. Enter motorboating, water skiing and fishing on a placid lake. Further downstream, the completion of Davis Dam in 1951 impounded Lake Mohave, another popular spot with the boat and Jet Ski set. In all, the recreation area extends about 140 miles along the Colorado River from the west end of Grand Canyon National Park, Ariz., down to Bullhead City, Ariz., and its neighbor across the river, Laughlin, Nev.

Though man remodeled nature to suit his thirst for water and hydroelectric power, that doesn't mean the native desert bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, lizards, snakes and tortoises were going to take a hike. Not by a long shot. They're all still here, where three of America's four desert ecosystems—the Mojave, the Great Basin and the Sonoran deserts—meet against a starkly beautiful backdrop of desert mountains, cliffs, canyons and plateaus.

If you're here on a day trip from Vegas and water sports aren't in the cards, point your ride down scenic Lakeshore Road. A good starting point is at the junction of Lakeshore and US 93, next to the Alan Bible Visitor Center. Skirting the shores of Lake Mead, the road winds through desert terrain, passing beaches, boat marinas and several nice viewpoints, some with sheltered picnic tables. From the suggested starting point to the Lake Mead Parkway entrance station, with a few short stops, budget about 30 to 40 minutes.

From fall through spring (soaring summer temps can spell heat stroke), go for a hike. One of the area's best hiking paths is the Redstone Trail, off the Northshore Road at Mile Marker 27. From the Lake Mead Parkway entrance station, it's a good half-hour drive, but well worth it. Sandy walking trails snake past huge, jumbled red rock formations similar to what you'll see at nearby Valley of Fire State Park. The difference is this hidden gem usually lacks the crowds you'll find up the road. Rock scrambling and photography opportunities are outstanding. Pack plenty of water, and perhaps, a lunch; there's a picnic area with shaded tables.

Back at the lakes, whip out your rod and reel. Striped and largemouth bass are the chief catches in Lake Mead; crappie and catfish are common in the waters of Callville Bay. Wherever you cast off, remember that either a Nevada or an Arizona fishing license is required.

If boats, kayaks and personal watercraft are too much fuss, go for a swim. There's a long, kid-friendly strand at Lake Mead's Boulder Beach. The lake bottom here is a bit rocky; those with sensitive tootsies should wear water shoes or sport sandals. **Note:** No lifeguards are on duty at Boulder Beach or anywhere else in the recreation area. Life jackets are recommended.

Most areas are open daily 24 hours; signs are posted for areas that close earlier. Alan Bible Visitor Center daily 9-4:30. Closed Jan. 1, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Food is available. Admission \$25 (per private vehicle); \$20 (per motorcycle); \$15 (per person arriving by other means). Lake-use fee \$16 (per boat). Passes are valid for up to 7 days. For further information contact Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 601 Nevada Way, Boulder City, NV 89005. Phone (702) 293-8990 for the Alan Bible Visitor Center. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

**HOOVER DAM** is along SR 172 (Hoover Dam Access Rd.), about 8 mi. n.e. of Boulder City. Soaring 726 feet high (about 60 stories), this curved wall of concrete is one of the highest arched-gravity dams ever constructed. It's also a hugely popular day trip from Vegas, and with good reason. The Depression-era engineering marvel (built 1931-35) sits in Black Canyon, a ruggedly dramatic Colorado River chasm that's home to the dam, its mega-wattage hydroelectric power plant and a visitor center/tourist complex with all the bells and whistles.

Hoover Dam was lucky enough to be born in the 1930s, the peak of the Art Deco craze. Witness the dam's main plaza, a Deco-style beauty graced with terrazzo floorembedded celestial diagrams and the twin, 30-foot-high bronze sculptures, the Winged Figures of the Republic (luck seekers take note: rubbing the statues' toes will reputedly bring you good luck). Walking across the top of the dam, take time to admire the beautiful bas-relief panels adorning the elevator towers, and stop in the



#### 42 LAKE MEAD NRA, NV

center at the Arizona-Nevada state line to grab a selfie as you stand in two states at once.

The Hoover Dam Visitor Center is a glass-and-steel building perched on the upper cliffs of Black Canyon; feel free to wander the excellent, upper level exhibits, many of them high-tech, interactive affairs. Once you tire of learning about turbines, transformers and penstocks, step out on the top level's outdoor observation platform for dizzying photo-ops, both of the dam and the downstream Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge *(see attraction listing this page)*. The Original Exhibit Building, built in the 1940s and located across the dam roadway, displays a vintage, raised-relief topographical map of the entire desert Southwest, a must-see for cartography geeks.

For the full, in-depth experience, the guided 30-minute Power Plant Tour begins 537 feet underground and views eight of the 17 commercial generators in the Powerhouse as well as a 30-foot-diameter penstock (pipe) where you can feel the vibration of the water rushing through it.

The Dam Tour is a behind-the-scenes 1-hour guided experience which takes visitors to the top of the dam via an original elevator and then walks them through historic tunnels and inspection tunnels at the center of the dam. Be sure to catch a glimpse of the Colorado River through the inspection ventilation shaft.

**Note:** Before reaching the dam you'll pass through a vehicle inspection station. Upon entering the visitor center, expect an airport-style security inspection. Food, weapons, knives and oversize backpacks and purses are prohibited; however, bottled water is permitted.

Phone: (702) 494-2517 or (866) 730-9097. GT

**LAKE MEAD**, extending behind Hoover Dam, is 110 miles long, averages 200 feet deep at normal capacity and has a 550-mile shoreline. Due to recent drought conditions, the lake's surface elevation is 1,060 feet (1,229 feet is considered a full pool).

Nevada recreational areas with marinas and launch facilities include Hemenway Harbor, 4 miles northeast of Boulder City; and Callville Bay, 22 miles east of North Las Vegas. An additional Arizona center is about 80 miles north of Kingman at Temple Bar. The lake also offers numerous primitive launch ramps without services.

Exhibits and a film about natural and cultural history are offered at the Alan Bible Visitor Center, 4 miles east of Boulder City at US 93 and Lakeshore Road, overlooking Lake Mead. A botanical and cactus garden surrounds the visitor center. *See Recreation Areas Chart.* 

Phone: (702) 293-8990 for the Alan Bible Visitor Center.

**Lake Mead Cruises** depart from the Lake Mead Cruises Landing at Hemenway Harbor at 490 Horsepower Rd., just off Lakeshore Rd. Excursion cruises on a Mississippistyle paddlewheeler include a narration about area history and the construction of Hoover Dam. Brunch and dinner cruises also are available April through October.

**Note:** Visitors traveling to Hemenway Harbor must pay the Lake Mead National Recreation Area access fee of \$25 per private vehicle; \$20 per motorcycle or \$15 per person arriving by other means. **Phone:** (702) 293-6180 or (866) 292-9191. **GT** (11)

**LAKE MOHAVE** extends 67 mi. s. from Hoover Dam to Davis Dam. Launching ramps, trailer sites, refreshment concessions, boat rentals and overnight accommodations are available at Katherine Landing, about 35 miles west of Kingman, Ariz., and at Cottonwood Cove, 14 miles east of Searchlight. Accommodations also are available a short distance away in Needles, Calif., and Bullhead City, Ariz. Willow Beach, 28 miles east of Boulder City on US 93, offers a launch ramp and concession facilities. Information about recreational facilities is available at all three sites.

**MIKE** O'CALLAGHAN-PAT TILLMAN MEMORIAL **BRIDGE** is along US 93, about 5.5 mi. n.e. of Boulder City. Linking Nevada and Arizona, this arched, 1,900-footlong concrete-and-steel span is some 1,500 feet downstream from Hoover Dam. Opened in 2010, the bridge was built to replace a longstanding traffic bottleneck: the two-lane section of US 93 that crossed the Colorado River atop Hoover Dam (now SR 172).

Thanks to a 6-foot-wide pedestrian sidewalk running its length, the bridge—which honors former Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan and Afghanistan war hero Pat Tillman—has become a major attraction. Lined with etched information panels, the sidewalk is accessible only from the Nevada side (it dead-ends at the Arizona side); follow signs to the Hoover Dam Access Road (SR 172) exit. The parking lot for visitors is about 2 miles down the road; if the bridge lot is full, an overflow lot is a couple hundred yards further down.

From this lofty perch you'll have a grand view of the Hoover Dam, not to mention a jaw-dropping (and stomach-churning, for those afraid of heights) perspective of the turquoise Colorado River 900 feet below, wedged between the rock cliffs that form Black Canyon. Prime time for photography is mid- to late-afternoon.

**Note:** Before reaching the bridge and Hoover Dam area you'll pass through a vehicle inspection security station. A switchback trail with 70 steps (and paved, wheelchair-accessible ramps) provides access to the pedestrian sidewalk. **Time:** Allow 45 minutes minimum.



# LAKE TAHOE AREA

Lake Tahoe was named "big water" by the Washoe Indians. According to Washoe legend, it was created during the pursuit of an innocent Native American man by an Evil Spirit. In an attempt to ward off the Evil Spirit, the Great Spirit bestowed upon the pursued man a branch of leaves, promising that each leaf dropped would magically produce a body of water that would impede the Evil Spirit's chase. The man, however, dropped the entire branch in fright, thus creating the giant lake.

It is estimated that Lake Tahoe holds enough water to cover the entire state of California to a depth of 14 inches. Its average depth is 989 feet; the deepest point is 1,645 feet, making Tahoe the third-deepest lake in North America. The water is remarkably clear, deep blue and also 97 percent pure—nearly the same level as distilled water. The first 12 feet below the surface can warm to 68 F in summer, while depths below 700 feet remain at a constant temperature of 39 F.

Twelve miles wide and 22 miles long, this "lake in the sky" straddles the California/Nevada line at an elevation of 6,229 feet. It lies in a valley between the main Sierra Nevada range and an eastern offshoot, the Carson Range. The mountains, which are snowcapped except in late summer, rise more than 4,000 feet above Tahoe's resort-lined shore. Most of the surrounding region is covered by the Eldorado, Humboldt-Toiyabe and Tahoe national forests.

Immigrants and miners were lured to the rugged Sierras by tales of fortunes made during the California gold rush. The discovery of the Comstock Lode increased traffic and depleted the Tahoe Basin's natural resources to a dangerously low level. Between 1860 and 1890 lumber was needed for fuel and to support the web of mines constructed beneath Virginia City, Nev. The subsequent decline of the Comstock Lode spared many thousands of trees.

By the early 20th century Lake Tahoe was a retreat for the rich, with luxury lakeside hotels springing up along its shores. After roads were paved during the 1920s and '30s, the lakeshore was no longer an enclave only for the wealthy.

The landscape is often snow-covered in winter, and skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts head to well-known

areas like Diamond Peak, Heavenly and Palisades Tahoe. Despite cold winters, however, the lake never freezes over due to the constant flow of water from the bottom to the surface. Popular summer recreational activities include mountain biking, hiking, fishing, golfing, kayaking, windsurfing, canoeing, horseback riding, snorkeling, water skiing, boating and swimming.

The Tahoe Rim Trail, a 165-mile loop running along the ridges and peaks surrounding Lake Tahoe, offers a splendid panorama of the lake, California's High Sierra and Nevada's Great Basin as well as a route used in summer by hikers and horseback riders and in winter for snowshoeing. Mountain biking is allowed in certain areas. For additional information contact the Tahoe Rim Trail Association; phone (775) 298-4485.

The headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service-Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit provides year-round information about wilderness permits and forest activities, including camping and hiking in summer and cross-country skiing in winter. The headquarters is open Mon.-Fri. 8-4:30 (weather permitting). For information contact Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 35 College Dr., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150; phone (530) 543-2600, or TTY (530) 543-0956.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center *(see attraction listing p. 47)*, on SR 89 between Camp Richardson and Emerald Bay in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., is operated by the U.S. Forest Service; phone (530) 543-2674.

The two main approaches to the Tahoe region are the North Shore via I-80 and the South Shore via US 50. The towns are smaller and the setting more rural along the North Shore, roughly the 14 miles between Tahoe City, Calif., and Incline Village, Nev. Major South Shore tourist destinations like South Lake Tahoe and Stateline, Nev., offer plenty of casinos, shopping and local restaurants.

Two-lane US 50 and SR 28 together encompass the lake; the total circumference is 72 miles. Scenic overlooks off this loop, such as Inspiration Point (near Vikingsholm), offer expansive lake and mountain vistas. SR 89 in the vicinity of Emerald Bay occasionally closes during heavy snowfalls. Road and weather updates are available from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); phone (916) 654-2852.

# For exclusive AAA member savings and benefits: AAA.com/hertz





# Lake Tahoe Area

This map shows cities in the Lake Tahoe Area where you will find attractions, hotels and restaurants. Cities are listed alphabetically in this book on the following pages.



ncline Village	
Stateline	

### Nearby California

Kings Beach	45
Dlympic Valley	45
South Lake Tahoe	
Tahoe City	
Fruckee	

# Nearby California

## **KINGS BEACH**

• Hotels p. 45

Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44



## **OLYMPIC VALLEY**

- Hotels p. 45
- Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

AERIAL TRAM is at 1990 Shirley Canyon Rd. The tram provides a full aerial view of Lake Tahoe and Olympic Valley, site of the 1960 Winter Olympics and a year-round recreation area, as it ascends to the 8,200-foot High Camp, the trailhead of the Pacific Crest Trail. In addition to hiking, visitors can play disc golf or shop. A museum at the summit commemorates the games.

HOTELS

Phone: (800) 403-0206.

**High Camp**, at the upper terminus of the Aerial Tram, boasts panoramic views of Lake Tahoe and the High Sierra and is where many beginner runs start. After riding the tram up the mountain to an elevation of 8,200 feet, visitors can take advantage of several recreational options. In addition, the Olympic Museum features memorabilia from the 1960 Winter Olympics.

Time: Allow 3 hours minimum. Phone: (800) 403-0206. 

#### EVERLINE RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 530/583-6300



THREE DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🥝 CLEAN

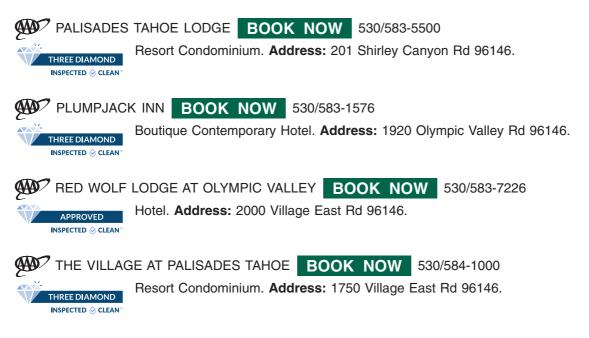
AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 400 Resort Rd 96146. Location: Located at Palisades Village area. Facility: In a spectacular mountain setting, the DESTINATION" property's extensive recreational activities are available in both summer and winter, including the resort's 18-hole golf course. 357 units, some

two bedrooms, efficiencies and kitchens. 9 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, fishing, regulation golf, tennis, downhill & cross country skiing, snowmobiling, snowboarding, sledding, ice skating, recreation programs, bicycles, game room, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, area transportation. Affiliated with Destination Hotels.

(\*\*) 🔽 call(&) 🏞 (\*\*) (BIZ) 🛜 (🗡) (\*\*) 🗗 (🗩) / some 🖃 (SAVE)





## SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- Hotels p. 47
- Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

This popular tourist mecca dominates the southern tip of Lake Tahoe. The lake and nearby mountains offer a wealth of recreational activities, making South Lake Tahoe a year-round destination.

**BLEU WAVE CRUISES** departs from Tahoe Keys Marina and Yacht Club 2435 Venice Dr. Two-hour sightseeing lunch cruises to Emerald Bay on Lake Tahoe's east shore offer stunning views of the lake, 3,000-foot-high mountains and Vikingsholm castle. While aboard the classic 70foot, 49-passenger yacht you might spot wildlife, including ospreys nesting around Emerald Bay. A sunset cruise also is available.

**Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (775) 588-9283 or (866) 413-0985. **GT** 

**GONDOLA SIGHTSEEING & ADVENTURE PEAK** is at 4080 Lake Tahoe Blvd. Eight-passenger gondola cabins transport riders on a 15-minute ride 2.4 miles up Heavenly Mountain, offering spectacular views of Lake Tahoe and the Sierras. The first stop is the observation deck (the gondola doesn't stop here on the way back down, so be sure to disembark on the way up). Wrapped around a granite outcropping at an elevation of 9,123 feet, the deck

has Adirondack chairs for taking in the amazing vistas, and you also can look through binoculars. On the ride down passengers experience a dizzying 3,500-foot vertical drop.

At the top of the gondola is Adventure Peak, with three ropes courses; the 3,300-foot-long Blue Streak Zipline, a 1,000-foot-long, four-line zipline; tubing hill; climbing zones; and a children's play structure. There are hiking trails of varying lengths and difficulty levels as well as Tamarack Lodge, offering a full-service bar as well as cafeteria-style dining and an ice cream sundae bar.

Wear sunscreen; water is provided at gondola stations to aid in acclimating to the high-altitude environment. **Note:** Parking in the lot behind Heavenly Village is \$25 per day and there is no validation; those who park in the shopping center lot across the street will be towed. The least expensive option is to walk from your hotel. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (775) 586-7000 or (800) 432-8365. The street will be towed.

**TALLAC HISTORIC SITE** is on SR 89 n. of Camp Richardson. These elaborate summer estates were built along the shore of Lake Tahoe by three socially prominent San Francisco families during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 1921 Baldwin Estate serves as both a house museum and as the site's visitor center. The 1894 Pope Estate, one of the most elaborate homes, can be seen on



tours led by costumed docents. The 1924 Heller Estate, also known as Valhalla, functions as an events center. Highlights include an art gallery where resident artists work and a schedule of concerts, plays and classic films presented during the summer.

**Phone:** (530) 541-5227 from 10-4 for historic site information, or (530) 544-7383 year-round to verify schedule. **(GT)**  $\overline{\mathbf{A}}$ 

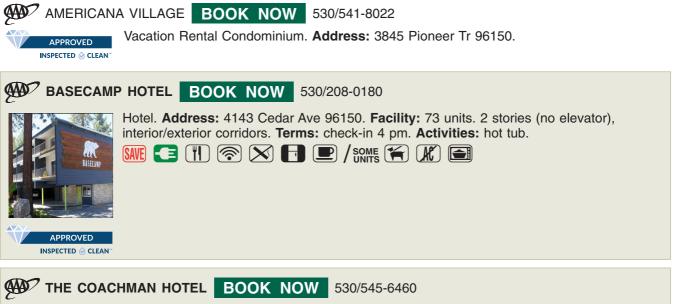
**The Pope Estate** is part of Tallac Historic Site, on SR 89 n. of Camp Richardson. Guided 60-minute tours are given of the historic 1894 Pope House, the oldest and largest of the three mansions at Tallac Historic Site. The house also serves as the site's interpretive center. Participants get a chance to see how the Popes and their servants lived as they tour the two-story house and various outbuildings, including the laundry, dairy, barn, gardener's quarters and

boat house. An arboretum has a waterfall, a pond and a gazebo.

Tickets can be purchased at the Baldwin Museum. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (530) 541-5227 or (530) 544-7383. **GT** 

**TAYLOR CREEK VISITOR CENTER** is 3 mi. n. on SR 89. The visitor center, operated by the U.S. Forest Service, offers naturalist-led interpretive programs; the Stream Profile Chamber, a diverted section of Taylor Creek and its stream environment that can be seen through floor-to-ceiling windows; and four short nature trails with educational signs.

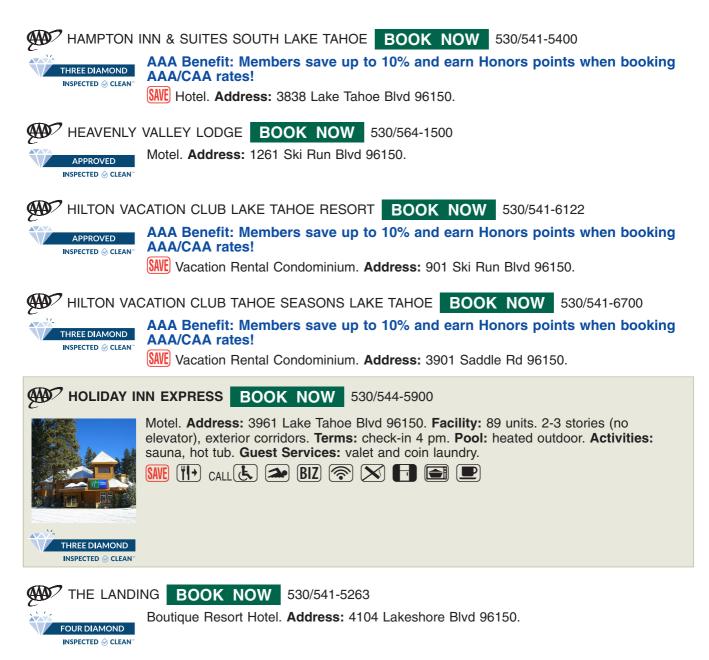
**Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (530) 543-2674.







#### 48 NEARBY • SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CA





# MARGARITAVILLE RESORT LAKE TAHOE BOOK NOW 530/544-5400



**(fyi)** Resort Hotel. Under major renovation, call for details. **Last Designation:** Three Diamond. **Address:** 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd 96150. **Facility:** Large rooms with seating areas and ample amenities add to the appeal of this property conveniently located at the bottom of a ski mountain and near a shopping area. The lobby even includes a koi pond. 399 units, some two bedrooms. 9 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** valet only. **Terms:** check-in 4 pm. **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated indoor. **Activities:** hot tub, exercise room. **Guest Services:** coin laundry.





# AAA DIAMONDS ARE NOW INSPECTED CLEAN

AAA Inspectors visit hotels and lodgings throughout the year. The Inspected Clean designation will be added to the Diamond badge as properties pass their ATP inspection. Check back to find more Inspected Clean properties!









# YOU DON'T DO THAT.

# SO WHY DO THIS?

# PARTNER WITH AAA TO SAVE LIVES.

Distracted driving **kills an average of 9 people** and **injures over 1,000** every day in America.<sup>\*</sup> Put down your phone. Lives depend on it.



Don't drive intoxicated. Don't drive intexticated.

A sobering message from AAA

AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted Tell us why you **#DontDriveIntexticated** 



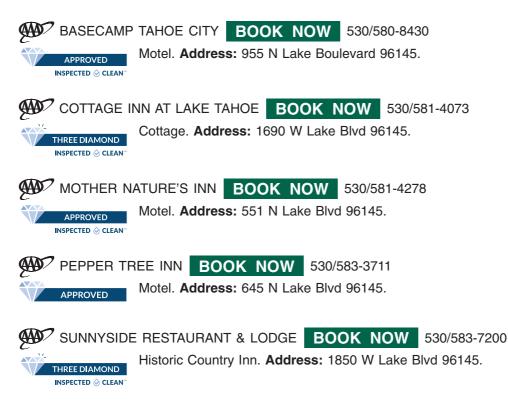
#### 52 NEARBY • TAHOE CITY — TRUCKEE, CA

# TAHOE CITY

- Hotels p. 52
- Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

All the glory of winter at Lake Tahoe is celebrated in early March during 😽 North Lake Tahoe SnowFest!

Events take place both on and off the mountain during the 10 days of festivities held each year at nearby resorts and towns throughout the North Lake Tahoe area. The coldweather season is celebrated with parades, fireworks, concerts, ski races, ice-carving demonstrations and a polar bear swim.



# TRUCKEE

- Hotels p. 53 Restaurants p. 54
- Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

Truckee, named for Washoe Indian Chief Trokay, was at one time a lawless lumber and railroad town, and some of that Old West charm still survives in restored 19th-century buildings and a train that runs through the middle of town. Winter sports enthusiasts take advantage of nearby skiing and snowboarding as well as the cross-country ski and snowshoe trails at Donner Memorial State Park.

Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce: 10065 Donner Pass Rd., Truckee, CA 96161. Phone: (530) 587-8808.

Self-guiding tours: Maps outlining a self-guiding walking tour of the historic downtown district are available from

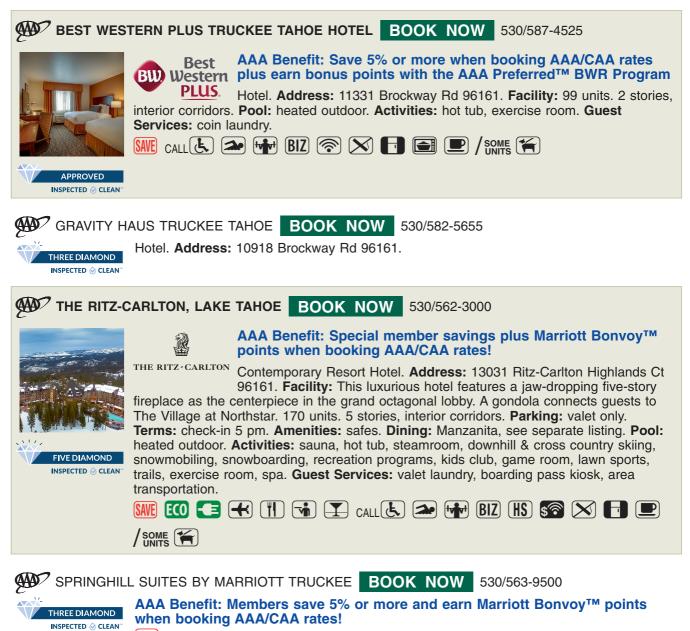
the California Welcome Center, in the train depot at 10065 Donner Pass Rd.

**DONNER MEMORIAL STATE PARK,** 2 mi. w. on Donner Pass Rd., is near the site where the ill-fated Donner party was stranded trying to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains during the severe winter of 1846-47. As members of the 89-person party died, some of those remaining resorted to cannibalism; only 47 were rescued.

The park visitor center has exhibits about the Chinese emigrant experience, construction of the railroad and early motoring adventures over Donner Pass. The Pioneer Monument is near the museum. One- to 2-hour guided hikes are offered in summer; phone ahead to confirm availability.

Phone: (530) 582-7892. 🔊 🔀 开





SAVE Hotel. Address: 10640 E Jibboom St 96161.





## WHERE TO EAT



This ends the Lake Tahoe Area section and resumes the alphabetical city listings for Nevada.





# Las Vegas

Destination Area Map	56
Fast Facts	57
Must Do: AAA Editor's Picks	58
1-day Itinerary	59
Top Picks for Kids	60
Arriving	61
Getting Around	62
Shopping	63
Nightlife	68
Big Events	72
Sports & Rec	73
Performing Arts	75
Production Shows	
Gambling	79
Casinos	.79
Attractions	93
Sightseeing	98
Hotels	
Restaurants 1	23

More ways to look, book and save: AAA.com/tripcanvas

# Then & Now

"Buy the ticket. Take the ride." These words of wisdom are courtesy of gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, who came to Las Vegas in search of the American Dream. Welcome to a place where sensory stimulation trumps a meaningful travel experience—and a royal flush beats all. Like the four dudes in the raunchy comedy "The Hangover," you're here to have fun, plain and simple. And don't try to analyze it because there simply *is* no rational explanation for a faux pyramid visible from outer space.

Over-the-top eye candy is Vegas' stock in trade. The world-famous Strip, a mere 4-mile stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard, is a glittery make-believe mini universe replete with a replica Brooklyn Bridge, dancing Italian fountains, a lava-spewing volcano and an Arthurian castle. Colorful enough by day, the Strip becomes a phantasmagoria of blazing neon and LED signage once the sun goes down. A constant cross-section of humanity shuffles up and down the sidewalks, wandering (and often stumbling) in and out of casinos where dice tumble and wheels 'n reels spin to a soundtrack of joyous victory shouts, gone-bust groans and a background cacophony of slot machine beeps, blips and pings.

Although children and non-gamblers will find plenty of things to do in Las Vegas, it is the over-21 visitor preferably with money to burn at the blackjack table— Vegas seeks to attract. The "City Without Clocks" tends to throw the body's natural rhythms for a loop; you may find yourself doubling down at 4 a.m., crashing hard at noon and eating pancakes for dinner at one of thousands of local restaurants. That's OK. Vegas doesn't judge. For a few days it allows you to escape the boss and the bills and be whomever you want to be.

Was it always this way? Hardly. "The Strip" was born with the opening of the El Rancho Vegas hotel in 1941. Things really took off when Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel's

Las Vegas Boulevard / © iStockphoto.com / f11photo







# Destination Las Vegas

This map shows cities in the Las Vegas vicinity where you will find attractions, hotels and restaurants. Cities are listed alphabetically in this book on the following pages.



Blue Diamond	23
Boulder City	24
Henderson	33
Lake Mead National Recreation Area	41
Laughlin	.128
Mesquite	.130
North Las Vegas	.131
Overton	.132
Pahrump	. 133

# **FAST FACTS**

#### **ABOUT THE CITY**

#### **POP:** 583,756 • **ELEV:** 2,181 ft.

#### MONEY

**SALES TAX:** Clark County's sales tax is 8.375 percent. The county also imposes a 12 percent tax on lodgings, with an additional 1 percent tax for properties within the city of Las Vegas boundaries.

#### WHOM TO CALL

#### EMERGENCY: 911

**POLICE (non-emergency):** 311, or (702) 828-3111 (also valid for TTY)

#### FIRE (non-emergency): (702) 383-2888

**HOSPITALS:** Desert Springs Hospital Medical Center, (702) 733-8800 • MountainView Hospital, (702) 962-5000 • Spring Valley Hospital Medical Center, (702) 853-3000 • Sunrise Hospital & Medical Center, (702) 961-5000 • University Medical Center, (702) 383-2000 • Valley Hospital Medical Center, (702) 388-4000.

#### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority: 3150 Paradise Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89109. Phone: (702) 892-0711 or (877) 847-4858.

Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce: 575 Symphony Park Ave., Suite 100, Las Vegas, NV 89106. Phone: (702) 641-5822.

#### TRANSPORTATION

AIR TRAVEL: McCarran International Airport (LAS) is about 10 miles south of downtown Las Vegas via Las Vegas

Pink Flamingo Hotel & Casino opened its doors 5 years later. Strip resorts—in contrast to downtown casinos like Binion's Horseshoe and the Four Queens—were more like stylish Hollywood clubs than rough-and-tumble gambling halls. Tourists arrived in droves to pull the slots and see the Chairman of the Board at the Sands.

Of course the swinging '60s Rat Pack era is long gone as are the days when the Mafia pulled strings. It was developer extraordinaire Steve Wynn who paved the way for the corporations that control the city to this day. In 1989 The Mirage set a new standard for lavishness and swept



Boulevard and 3.5 miles south of the Las Vegas Convention Center via Paradise Road, just a few minutes' drive from the Strip's southern end. One of the nation's busiest airports, it serves most major airlines. *For more information see Arriving, Air Travel.* 

**RENTAL CARS:** Hertz offers discounts to AAA members; phone (702) 262-7700 for the airport, (800) 654-3131 for the Strip.



## Visit AAA.com/roadtrips

**BUSES:** Greyhound Lines Inc., 200 S. Main St., is the major bus company serving Las Vegas; phone (702) 384-9561.

**TAXIS:** Major cab companies include Desert Cab, (702) 386-9102 • Yellow Checker Star Transportation, (702) 873-2000 • and Whittlesea Blue Cab, (702) 551-5151. Base activation fee is \$3.50 and \$2.76 for each mile, plus 54 cents for every minute the cab is waiting or traveling under 8 to 12 mph. Trips to the airport incur a \$2.40 surcharge.

Limousine service averages \$60-\$200 per hour; other fees may include an airport pick-up charge and/or a fuel surcharge. Licensed limousine services include AWG Ambassador, (702) 740-3434; Bell Trans, (702) 739-7990; and Presidential Limousine, (702) 438-5466.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) provides bus service to most parts of the city. The most useful to visitors are the Deuce double-decker buses serving the Strip. The buses operate 24 hours daily, run every 7-10 minutes and stop at nearly every Strip hotel property.

The Las Vegas Monorail operates Mon. 7 a.m.-12 a.m., Tues.-Thurs. 7 a.m.-2 a.m., Fri.-Sun. 7 a.m.-3 a.m., serving a 4-mile stretch of the Strip as well as the convention center. *For additional information see Getting Around, Public Transportation.* 

away the '80s doldrums while ushering in an age of contemporary megaresorts. Along with sleek towers, cartoonish architecture began springing up along the Strip. Exit Liberace. Enter Cirque du Soleil.

In 2015, another vestige of Vegas' past bit the dust when the circa 1955 Riviera Hotel closed to make way for a major expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center. City boosters hope it will help reenergize the struggling North Strip area, which recently saw the opening of the swank Sahara Las Vegas (formerly the SLS Las Vegas),

#### 58 LAS VEGAS, NV

the City of Rock outdoor concert venue and the groundbreaking on Asian-themed Resorts World Las Vegas, a \$4-billion hotel/casino.

In 2016, a new South Strip entertainment/dining promenade between the New York-New York and Park MGM resorts opened—its centerpiece a 20,000-seat indoor arena for concerts, sports and other events. Only time will tell if these projects become long-term success stories.

# Must Do: AAA Editor's Picks

- The massive Vegas Strip hotels look positively Lilliputian from the top of The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod (2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), the tallest freestanding tower in the U.S. If your stomach's made of steel, take a spin on the tower-top Insanity— The Ride.
- The "Ocean's Eleven" crew celebrated its successful Bellagio (3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) heist in front of the resort's dancing fountains—a signature Strip spectacle choreographed to lights and music. Head inside to smell the flowers at the Bellagio



**Conservatory,** a botanical display that changes its whimsical theme with the seasons and often takes a Lewis Carroll-esque turn down the rabbit hole.

- **CityCenter Las Vegas** (3720 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) brings contemporary architecture to the often-cartoonish Strip. Aesthetically speaking, this complex of buildings (three hotels and a residential tower) couldn't be further from outlandish Arthurian castles and chlorinated Venetian canals. Wander through The Shops at Crystals mall and sleek **ARIA Resort & Casino** (3730 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) for a high-end experience.
- The original heart of town beats under a 90-foot-high canopy embedded with 12.5 million LED lights.
   Fremont Street Experience (425 Fremont St.) shows feature eye-popping animation synchronized to music and run nightly on the hour from dusk to midnight.
- Everything from all-you-can-eat crab legs to Middle Eastern barbecue to cheesecake will threaten that taut belly at a Vegas **buffet.** Local restaurants include the gourmet high end (\$40 and up) with super spreads at the **Wynn Las Vegas** (3131 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), Caesars Palace and Bellagio.
- In the 1960s, mile-high marquee letters spelled out names like Sinatra, Liberace and Newton. Nowadays high-tech production shows rule the Strip. If you can't score seats for Cirque du Soleil's "The Beatles LOVE" show at The Mirage (3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) during your vacation, try "O" at Bellagio (3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) or "Mystère" at Treasure Island Hotel & Casino (3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S.).
- Hit the casinos and roll the bones, lay chips on double-zeros or put big money on a football game. Las Vegas will thank you—or perhaps wish you'd never come to town. The downtown joints offer lower minimum bets and slightly better payout rates. If you want the full Strip casino experience, try the plush gaming floor at Encore Las Vegas (3121 Las Vegas Blvd. S.).
- Jackpots come in handy at the Gold & Silver Pawn Shop (713 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), the once-anonymous establishment that's become a Vegas shopping sensation since "Pawn Stars" premiered on the History Channel. Fans will likely recognize some of the merchandise—from Civil War muskets to Muhammad Ali memorabilia—the "stars" have bought from customers.
- Pull a little black dress or designer dress shirt off the boutique rack and strut your stuff at a Strip nightclub. Choose a hot destination for dancing such as Tao at The Venetian Las Vegas (3355 Las Vegas)

The Mirage / © Alex Liivet / flickr / CC BY



Blvd. S.) and XS at Encore Las Vegas. And there's always the chance you'll see a celebutante behaving scandalously.

- Fun things to do on the Strip for free include watching the 50-foot-high faux volcano in front of The Mirage, which erupts nightly.
- Perhaps the most essential of all Sin City travel experiences is simply walking down the Las Vegas Strip at night and feasting your eyes on what is arguably the most dazzling display of **neon** and LED lights on the planet.

# Las Vegas 1-day Itinerary

AAA editors suggest these activities for a great short vacation experience. Those staying in the area for a longer visit can access a 3-day itinerary at AAA.com/TripCanvas.

#### Morning

- Kick off your day in Las Vegas with a leisurely walk down the renowned Strip, immersing yourself in the city's lively atmosphere. Make sure to explore the wide array of shopping opportunities available, from high-end designer stores to unique boutiques. After working up an appetite, indulge in an exquisite French breakfast at **Mon Ami Gabi** at **Paris Las Vegas** (3655 Las Vegas Blvd S.). Have a croissant breakfast sandwich or a ham-and-egg crepe as you watch the Strip rise and shine.
- Stay and hit the slots or play some table games in a casino decked out like "Gay Paree." After cashing out, head up. The hotel's **Eiffel Tower Viewing Deck** elevator opens at 9:30 a.m., and you'll soon be snapping views of the Strip from the 541-foot-high replica's observation deck.

#### Afternoon

- Go next door to Bally's, hike to the back of the hotel and hop aboard the Las Vegas Monorail. The north-south route stretches from the Las Vegas Convention Center to the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino (3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), with five stops in between. Another handy public transportation option, the double-decker Deuce bus, runs up and down the Strip 24/7.
- Hop on the northbound monorail to the end of the line (Sahara Station). Nearby, reaching 1,149 feet above terra firma, is The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod (2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). Ride the elevator to the observation decks, summon up your best James Cagney impression and shout "Made it, Ma! Top of the world!" as you take in the panorama of Vegas and the surrounding desert. If you're game for a high-altitude adrenaline rush, try one of the

tower-top thrill rides. Skip the pricey swag in The STRAT Hotel's gift shop and head back down Las Vegas Boulevard to Bonanza Gift & Souvenir Shops, the mother of all bargain-priced, gloriously tacky souvenir emporiums.

- If you're up for more gaming (of course you are), take a spin through the palatial casino at
   Caesars Palace (3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), one of the mid-Strip's longtime power players. Amid Caesars' marvelously cheesy faux Roman statuary and columns you'll find the sleek and chic Sushi
   Roku, serving Japanese dishes including sushi and sashimi. For a late lunch repast, order a bento box for a sampling of foods. The meals are great—and also pricey—but hopefully you've hit a jackpot or three.
- Walk it off by wandering through The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, where storefronts are clustered



Caesars Palace / © Alex Liivet / flickr / CC BY



#### 60 LAS VEGAS, NV

under portals and arches meant to evoke a winding village street in Italy. Christian Dior, Fendi and Gucci are among the tony names, boutiques like Versace sell \$200 sunglasses and a cloud-flecked, domed ceiling gives the mall its own version of night and day.

#### Evening

- The more of its old-school roots Vegas sheds, the more you'll want to relive those glory days. So order the osso buco at **Piero's** (355 Convention Center Dr.). Martin Scorsese shot scenes for his mob epic "Casino" at this classy joint; don't come dressed in shorts and a T-shirt.
- In between ducking into the casinos for a little action, take time to stand and crane your neck for the
   Fremont Street Experience (425 Fremont St.), an audiovisual display that plays out on the LED light-loaded canopy arching over four blocks of Fremont Street, the original heart of Las Vegas. Even the blazing neon of the casinos shuts down during this 6-minute blitz of computer-generated graphics and music.
- Vegas is *not* a town where you turn in early. Velvet rope nightclubs and ultra-sleek lounges are a fixture in nearly every hotel-casino on the Strip. The bumping and grinding isn't cheap (expect at least a \$30 cover charge), and you have to get past the bouncers. Current hot spots include **Tao** (in **The Venetian Las Vegas**, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) and **Marquee Nightclub** (in **The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas**, 3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S.).

# **Top Picks for Kids**

#### Under 13

- Not far from the Strip, The Springs Preserve (333 S. Valley View Blvd.) keeps young hands and minds busy at its excellent Origen Museum, packed with interactive exhibits that help little ones better understand desert ecosystems. Behind the museum is a "bat cave" with live animal exhibits, and the preserve's Desert Living Center has a play area. For lunch, the Divine Café offers a children's menu with cheese pizza and other kiddie-friendly bites.
- During your vacation, turn your tykes loose at the **DISCOVERY Children's Museum** (360 Promenade PI.), located in Symphony Park. With nine exhibition galleries, including Water World, Toddler Town and Young At Art, the three-story facility is full of hands-on displays and exhibits that are both educational and entertaining.

#### Teens

• For teens, few things top **shopping malls.** Hanging out. Texting. Flirting with hotties. Texting. Hitting the

food court. Texting. And oh yeah, there's shopping, too. At **Fashion Show** (3200 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), the Strip's flagship retail realm, stores like Hollister, Free People and Urban Outfitters will put a dent in their allowance. **The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace** (3500 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) also offer a H&M store along with teen-fave GUESS.

 Merry-go-rounds and choo-choo trains? Totally lame! Teens want big thrill rides, and they don't get any crazier than the hair-raisers atop the 1,149-foot-high
 The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod (2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). Big Shot, a free-fall type ride, shoots you to the tippy-top of the tower mast. Insanity—The Ride, a gnarly-looking claw-like contraption, swings and spins riders out beyond the tower's edge—a dizzying 900 feet above the Vegas Strip.



Always an awesome destination for a goofy-good

Big Shot at Stratosphere Tower / © iStockphoto.com / Valerie Loiseleux



time, **Madame Tussauds Las Vegas** (3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S., Suite 2001) houses more than 100 incredibly lifelike wax figures of celebs, including Fergie, Britney, Lady Gaga, J-Lo and Ultimate Fighter Chuck Liddell.

#### All Ages

- Baby boomers and Gen Xers have heard the KISS party anthem "Rock and Roll All Nite" more times than they care to remember, but that doesn't mean everyone—from graying grandparents to rowdy 6-year-olds—won't have a glow-in-the-dark blast putt-putting an 18-hole round at the indoor KISS By Monster Mini Golf (3700 W. Flamingo Rd. in Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino).
- More things to do include the Strip. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (3205 SR 159), just a 30-minute drive from the Strip. Kids release pent-up juvenile energy via hiking trails and endless opportunities for rock scrambling.
- With the family video gaming system left behind at home, parents might need emergency backup.
   Casino arcades should do the trick. At New York-New York (3790 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), the Big Apple Arcade has everything from high-tech video games to Skee-Ball. Gobbling even more quarters are the midway and video games at Excalibur Hotel & Casino's (3850 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) Fun Dungeon, which boasts carnival midway games. A Vegas classic, Circus Circus Las Vegas Hotel and Casino (2880 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has courted families with its Carnival Midway and live circus acts since 1968.
- Looking for more high-energy things to do today? Take a trip to Adventuredome, an indoor theme park in a pink glass dome at Circus Circus. You'll find rides for all ages, from kindergartners (a plane ride and Frog Hopper) to grade-schoolers (bumper cars, a swinging pirate ship) to teens (the El Loco roller coaster).
- An ocean of family fun in the middle of the desert, **Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay** (3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) rounds up creatures ranging from Komodo dragons and crocodiles to sea turtles and giant octopuses and displays them in a top-notch facility with an Indiana Jones-style adventure theme. Young'uns can handle anemones, starfish and other critters at the tide pool touch-tank. Fearsome sharks, graceful rays and evil-eyed barracuda swim in a 1.3-million gallon tank featuring a walk-through tunnel.

# Arriving

#### By Car

The major route into Las Vegas is I-15, which passes through the city from southern California to Arizona and



Air Travel at McCarran International Airport / © iStockphoto.com / ronniechua Utah. On Fridays and Sundays, traffic on I-15 between southern California and Vegas can be downright maddening; it's best to hit the road early. Other routes are US 95 from the northwest, which becomes the Las Vegas Expressway in the downtown area, and US 93/95 from the southeast.

Travelers from California should be prepared for desert driving, regardless of their departure point. Basic precautions include making certain that the car's engine and cooling system are working well, tires are inflated properly and the gas tank is filled adequately. It always is prudent to carry extra coolant or water in case of overheating during your trip.

#### **Air Travel**

McCarran International Airport (LAS) is about 5 miles south of downtown Las Vegas via Las Vegas Boulevard and 3.5 miles south of the Las Vegas Convention Center



via Paradise Road, just a few minutes' drive from the Strip's southern end. This is often the most convenient way to travel, as many domestic airlines offer cheap airfare.

Vegas can't wait to make you rich, evidenced by the host of slots and poker machines scattered throughout two terminals. On the west side of the airport is the older of the two terminals, T1. On McCarran's eastern side is the spacious, new T3, added in 2012 at a cost of \$2.4 billion.

T1 handles most domestic carriers, while T3 hosts all international flights and a handful of domestic airlines, notably JetBlue and United.

Exiting either T1 or T3, you'll see the taxi stands. During prime arrival times (Thursday evenings and all day Friday) the wait for a cab can be painfully long, especially at the busier T1. If you're the impatient type, it's best to book private transportation in advance. And if you're carrying a serious wad of cash there are town cars and limos for hire ready to whisk you away without delay.

Lucky for you, McCarran has a separate, dedicated Rent-a-Car Center. Not so much fun: the off-site center is 3 miles from the airport. Upon exiting the baggage claim doors, any of the blue-and-white Rent-a-Car Center shuttles, which run every 5 minutes, will take you there (check airport signs for exact boarding locations).

Entering the rental center, to your immediate right is the Hertz desk. Most of the other companies are along the back wall. Driving out of the center, you'll find easy access to I-215, I-15 and Las Vegas Boulevard.

Upon departure, return your wheels to the Rent-a-Car Center, 7135 Gilespie St., where you'll hop a shuttle back to the airport. Don't forget to factor in the extra time when deciding what time to leave your hotel.

Cab fare to the Strip hotels varies depending on traffic, route taken and which terminal you're departing from (T3 departures cost a few dollars more than T1), but in general, plan on \$20-\$25 to Tropicana Avenue (Mandalay Bay, Luxor Hotel and Casino, MGM Grand, Excalibur, the Tropicana and New York-New York); \$22-\$30 between Flamingo Road and Sahara Avenue (Bellagio, The Cosmopolitan, CityCenter, Caesars Palace, The Mirage, The Palazzo, Encore Las Vegas, the Venetian, The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod); and \$35 and up to the downtown area. Signs posted at all airport taxi stands provide estimated fares and trip times to individual hotels.

The airport's shared shuttle service, provided by Bell Trans, offers round-trip service to and from Strip hotels and downtown properties for \$30 per person. Bell Trans as well as AWG Ambassador and Kaptyn also offer private transportation via town cars, SUVs and limos starting at \$90. Reservations for shuttles are not necessary. But if you're interested in a private luxury ride, it's wise to book in advance; phone (702) 740-3434 (AWG Ambassador), (702) 739-7990 (Bell Trans) or (800) 990-0417 (Kaptyn).

Hertz offers discounts to AAA members; phone (702) 262-7700 for the airport, (800) 654-3131 for the Strip.

# **Getting Around**

#### Street System

Las Vegas is fairly compact, and even first-time visitors will have no trouble finding their way around. The two main areas of interest for visitors are the Strip and downtown (also known as Glitter Gulch and Casino Center).

Las Vegas Boulevard parallels I-15 and is the main north-south thoroughfare. Fremont Street downtown is the dividing line for Las Vegas Boulevard North and Las Vegas Boulevard South addresses. The part of the boulevard constituting the Strip extends from Sahara Avenue south to Hacienda Avenue. All of the big resort hotels are along this 4-mile stretch.

Downtown, anchored by Fremont Street, is the original hotel/casino area. Almost everything tourist oriented is located along Fremont between Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard, or a few blocks to the north or south.

Paradise Road and Maryland Parkway are major northsouth arteries east of the Strip. The area around the Las Vegas Convention Center, at Paradise and Desert Inn roads, is the location of the Las Vegas Country Club and several big hotels, notably Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino (formerly the Las Vegas Hilton). The University of Nevada Las Vegas campus sits between Paradise Road and Maryland Parkway, a short distance north of the airport.

The main east-west thoroughfares south of Fremont Street (in geographic order from north to south) are Charleston Boulevard, Sahara Avenue, Desert Inn Road, Spring Mountain Road/Sands Avenue, Flamingo Road and Tropicana Avenue. Residential subdivisions spread east, west and north of Las Vegas' core commercial area, bounded roughly east and west by Maryland Parkway and the Strip and north and south by SR 93/95/I-515 and the airport.

Although distances are fairly short between any two points in greater Las Vegas, traffic is often heavy on I-15, Flamingo Road, Tropicana Avenue and Las Vegas Boulevard. The Strip is frequently bumper to bumper especially at night—and crawling with pedestrians. Avoid driving on the Strip if possible; Frank Sinatra Drive, Koval Lane and Paradise Road are good alternatives.

#### Parking

Parking is rarely a problem in Las Vegas, as many of the hotels provide free guest, valet and customer parking.



Valet parking is a boon in a city where temperatures routinely top 100 F in the summer and the walk from an outer parking lot to the hotel's front door can take 10 minutes. The standard valet tip is \$4 or \$5; add a buck or two at high-end properties. You will incur daily parking fees, however, at MGM Resorts facilities: \$7-\$12 (self-parking 1-4 hours); \$15 (self-parking 4-24 hours); \$20 (valet parking up to 4 hours); \$25 (valet parking 4-24 hours). If you have restaurant or show reservations, keep in mind that valet parking lots sometimes fill up.

Several downtown hotel and commercial garages are open 24 hours; rates average from \$2-\$4 per hour, usually with a maximum charge of \$10-\$12 for the entire day. Check hours of operation, as some of the smaller independent lots close at midnight. Parking meters are available for on-street parking downtown. Just look for the Pay-to-Park machines, which accept coins as well as debit and credit cards. Rates and the maximum time to park are posted on each machine. If you're staying on the Strip and want to visit the downtown area, it's much easier to use public transportation to get there.

#### **Public Transportation**

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) provides bus service to most parts of the city. The most useful to visitors are the Deuce doubledecker buses serving the Strip (Las Vegas Boulevard). The buses operate 24 hours daily, run every 7-10 minutes and stop at nearly every Strip hotel property. The fare is \$6 for a 2-hour pass or \$8 for a 24-hour unlimited on/off access pass. Exact change is required when paying your fare aboard the bus. A handful of stops along the Strip offer curbside, self-serve ticket kiosks that accept credit and debit cards as well as cash (no change is provided).

Buses serve many other Las Vegas routes from roughly 5 a.m.-1:30 a.m.; one-way fares are \$2-\$5. For schedule, route and detailed fare information phone (702) 228-7433 or (800) 228-3911.

The RTC also has a bike share program. Unlimited 30minute rides in a 24-hour period is \$5.

The Las Vegas Monorail operates Mon. 7 a.m.-midnight, Tues.-Thurs. 7 a.m.-2 a.m., Fri.-Sun. 7 a.m.-3 a.m., serving a 4-mile stretch of the Strip from the MGM Grand to the Sahara Las Vegas (formerly the SLS Las Vegas Hotel & Casino) as well as the convention center.

Be aware that most of the monorail stations are located at the very rear of the hotel properties and riders must often walk long distances to reach the various front-ofhouse casino floors, restaurants and entertainment venues. If you're running late for dinner or a show, a taxi is usually faster. The monorail fare is \$5 per single ride, \$12 for a 1-day pass, \$22 for a 2-day pass or \$28 for a 3-day pass; self-serve ticket kiosks accept cash and credit cards. Phone (702) 699-8200 for general information.

Three trams provide free transportation on the west side of the Strip. An elevated train operates daily between the Park MGM and Bellagio, with a stop in between at City-Center. Farther north, The Mirage-Treasure Island tram operates Sun.-Thurs. 7 a.m.-2 a.m. Linking Excalibur, Luxor and Mandalay Bay, the third tram operates daily 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. **Note:** Southbound trams do not stop at the Luxor.

# Shopping

For decades, Sin City shopping meant shot glasses, ashtrays, snow globes, dice clocks, back scratchers and "I Lost My A\*\* in Las Vegas" T-shirts. Fear not, tacky souvenir fans. You can still find toy slot machines and fuzzy



Deuce double-decker buses serving the Strip /  $\textcircled{\sc online {\rm CC}}$  Alethea N / flickr / CC BY-SA





Fashion Show Mall / © David Shane / flickr / CC BY

dice just about any place in town. But over the past few decades the resorts wised up and realized that high-end designer shops could rake in any leftover cash not left behind at the high-stakes Pai Gao table. Today nearly every major hotel casino on the Strip has an upscale shopping arcade with tenants like Dior, Manolo Blahnik, Jimmy Choo and Ralph Lauren. Not only does Vegas re-create New York and Paris; the shopping opportunities for this destination now rival what you'll find in the real cities.

If you've come to Vegas expecting to find unique independent shops and boutiques they're certainly out there, although not on the Strip. To reach the burgeoning downtown Arts District and points east and west of Las Vegas Boulevard you'll need to drive or hail a cab.

Finally, if you forgot to pack the sunblock, avoid resort gift shops like the outrageously overpriced plague they are. Travel just a few blocks from the Strip, in any direction, and you'll find plenty of grocery and convenience stores just like the ones back home. On the Strip, there's a CVS Pharmacy between the CityCenter and Park MGM resorts.

#### Malls

**Fashion Show,** in the heart of the Strip at 3200 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is Las Vegas' flagship mall. An impressive set of anchors—Dillard's, Forever 21, Macy's, Macy's Men's Store, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue—is accompanied by a 5,400-square-foot Disney Store selling exclusive Vegas-themed items, a super-busy Apple Store (if your iPhone's on the fritz, definitely make a service appointment), smaller national chains like Lucky Brand Jeans, a sprinkling of upscale retailers and a fine selection of nearby restaurants. If you need more fun things to do, keep in mind that some weekends in the mall's center court, models strut the latest fashions during Live Runway Shows; phone (702) 369-8382 for show schedule.

**The Boulevard,** at 3528 S. Maryland Pkwy., a few blocks east of the Strip, is the city's oldest mall and has shops ranging from Old Navy to Victoria's Secret.

**Town Square Las Vegas**, just south of the Strip near the I-15/I-215 freeway interchange at 6605 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is an outdoor mall that counts Abercrombie & Fitch, Apple Store and a GameWorks arcade among its tenants. When the desert heat doesn't confine you to airconditioned indoor spaces, take your tykes to Children's Park at Town Square (in the center of the mall), where you'll find a playground, a pint-size hedge maze and a treehouse. Kids and grown-ups are welcome to cool off in the 35-jet fountain.

Opened in early 2015, **Downtown Summerlin** mall at the intersection of Sahara Ave. and the CR-215 beltway (behind the Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa) is most convenient to those staying in the West Vegas area. Anchored by Macy's and Dillard's, the open-air center includes more than 125 retailers and eateries, a luxe cinema and a Saturday farmers market.

#### Outlets

The **Las Vegas South Premium Outlets**, 7400 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is an indoor mall a few miles past the south end of the Strip. It offers more than 145 outlets, including Aeropostale, Coach, DKNY and True Religion.

Explore the shops at **Las Vegas North Premium Out**lets, 875 S. Grand Central Pkwy. (west of downtown near the I-15 Charleston Boulevard exit). This open-air mall is hugely popular with locals and visitors alike, so if possible avoid going on weekend afternoons when the place is a madhouse and parking headaches abound. Shoppers can land deals at more than 175 outlet stores, including Dolce



& Gabbana, Dooney & Bourke, Polo Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger.

#### **Specialty Districts**

**The LINQ** outdoor entertainment/shopping/dining complex, 3545 Las Vegas Blvd. S., sits just off the Strip between the Flamingo and LINQ hotels. Backed by the soaring High Roller observation wheel *(see attraction listing p. 94)*, this tree-lined promenade makes for a pleasant enough detour off the crowded boulevard. Among the handful of shopping spots you can browse are ladies' shoes purveyor Bella Scarpa and high-end hat shop Goorin Bros.

The open-air **Grand Bazaar Shops**, the newest major arrival on the Strip shopping scene, front the Bally's hotel, 3635 Las Vegas Blvd. S. The 2-acre mall hosts nearly 70 retailers and eateries occupying lengthy rows of tiny, uniformly industrial-type storefronts. And if you're expecting the usual line-up of high-end, brand-name boutiques like Prada and Louis Vuitton, think again. The bazaar is more akin to an upscale swap meet; think cellphone accessories, cosmetics, temporary tattoos, sunglasses and pro sports caps. The Swarovski boutique is gone, but the giant crystal starburst sculpture still displays a 3-minute light-and-sound show nightly at 9 p.m. and midnight.

**The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace**, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is an upscale complex with more than 160 specialty shops and restaurants meant to evoke a winding street in Italy. Fronting the Strip, a three-level entryway building decked out with marbled pillars and statues ushers you into this Roman-themed retail realm. In The Forum Shops proper, boutiques like Versace sell \$200 sunglasses under a cloud-flecked, domed ceiling that gradually changes from cerulean blue to deep twilight and back again, giving the mall its own version of night and day.

Storefronts are clustered under portals and arches. Among the tony names at The Forum Shops are Alfred Dunhill, Christian Dior, Fendi, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. There also are clothing, jewelry and specialty gift shops, art galleries and stores catering to kids. A central piazza is dominated by the dramatic Fountain of the Gods, which has statues of Neptune, winged stallions and two spearbearing warriors.

Anchoring the mall's west wing, the enormous Fall of Atlantis fountain features creepily lifelike animatronic figures who star in a 10-minute, pyrotechnics-packed show about the mythical island city. Shows begin on the hour from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily; admission is free. The fountain stands in the Roman Great Hall, a rotunda that also touts a wraparound video screen and a 50,000-gallon aquarium filled with tropical fish and rays. Need to kill time before the Atlantis show? Browse the hall's Martin Lawrence Galleries, where you'll covet Dalí lithographs, Warhol screen prints and plenty of other fine art you can't afford.

Also within Caesars Palace are the **Appian Way Shops**, a much smaller but no less exclusive arcade of shops and galleries that includes King Baby and Olive & Beauty, reliable spots to score a gift for friends or just yourself. They carry clothes, items for the home and gourmet products.

The Shoppes at Mandalay Place, on a sky bridge connecting Mandalay Bay and the Luxor, offers restaurants and an assortment of shops. Located in the heart of The Shoppes is **Karma and Luck** where you can find handmade jewelry, and home décor that will transform your spirit and your space. The store has a branch at The Mirage as well.



The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace / © Stephanie Harvey / flickr / CC BY



#### 66 LAS VEGAS, NV

Under a faux blue sky, more than 70 specialty stores and restaurants line a replica of a Venetian canal at the **Grand Canal Shoppes** of The Venetian (3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). "Streetmosphere" singers, actors and musicians, in addition to the Venetian Living Statues and The Venetian Trio, perform daily. Next door at the Venetian's sister hotel, The Palazzo (3325 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), **The Shoppes at the Palazzo** are home to Bottega Veneta, Christian Louboutin and Barneys New York.

Linking Wynn Las Vegas with Encore Las Vegas, the **Wynn and Encore Esplanades** are the go-to places if you have the money for exclusive boutiques like Alexander McQueen, Chanel and Wynn & Co. Watches. The rest of us will have to settle for window-shopping while sipping a \$5 bottled water (from the Encore hotel gift shop).

You say you want a shopping revolution? Across the Strip and south of the Wynn are the shops at The Mirage, among them the **LOVE Boutique**, a groovy Beatlesthemed gift shop next to the Cirque du Soleil show celebrating the Fab Four. Looking for a Sgt. Pepper lunchbox or a Yellow Submarine necktie? This is the place. Money can't buy you love, but it *can* buy a whole lotta "Beatles LOVE" swag.

The Bellagio (3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has a handful of ritzy shopping promenades. The largest is **Via Bellagio**, located at the north entrance near the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road. If you enter Bellagio from either the Caesars' or Bally's pedestrian bridges, you'll cruise directly into an air-conditioned, marble-columned arcade marked by names like Prada, Armani, Tiffany and Fendi.

Across the street at Paris Las Vegas (3665 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), high-end fashion boutiques and fancy wine and cheese shops line **Le Boulevard**, a modest-size shopping promenade that's easily navigable when compared to the maze next door at Planet Hollywood.

The **Miracle Mile Shops** at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino (3663 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) is an extensive shopping promenade (more than 200 stores and nearly 20 restaurants at last count) named for the famed "Miracle Mile" stretch of L.A.'s Wilshire Blvd. As you stroll and stroll and stroll past stores like French Connection, H&M, Sephora and Urban Outfitters, you'll wonder why they didn't pluralize the word "Mile." Some cool Middle Eastern theme elements are visible here and there (leftovers from the mall's defunct Aladdin Hotel-adjacent days), and the setting is quite nice—people movers, crystal chandeliers and a backlit sidewalk water feature, along with a laser show, an indoor rainstorm and dancing water fountains (all shows are free and scheduled throughout the day). But when all is said and done it's still a mall.

At CityCenter, **The Shops at Crystals** mall (3720 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has computer touch-screen directories that point you toward A-list stores like Prada, Louis Vuitton, Fendi and Tiffany & Co. Serving as the Strip-front gateway to CityCenter, the Crystals' exterior is a modernist, metal-clad jumble of geometric shapes. Inside the mall, a restaurant housed in an intriguing three-story, 70-foot-high "abstract tree house" is an eye-catcher.

The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas (3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has an eclectic collection of a dozen or so trendy shops, including the CRSVR Sneaker Boutique, vintage eyewear dealer RetroSpecs & Co. and the quirky Kidrobot, featuring artist-designed toys for kids and grown-ups. For apparel with hipster appeal check out the Vegas



Fremont Street Experience / © AAA / Diana Beyer



outpost of British clothing label AllSaints Spitalfields or DNA2050, purveyors of premium designer denim.

You'll find more retail areas, all interchangeable, at Excalibur, the Flamingo, the MGM Grand, the Luxor, the Park MGM, The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod and the Rio hotel's Masquerade Village.

Downtown at the **Fremont Street Experience** (Fremont Street between Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard; see attraction listing p. 93), vendors set up carts in the middle of the pedestrian-only casino promenade. Novelty gifts, cheap souvenirs and T-shirts are the norm, but look closely and you may spot quality merch. If not, there are plenty of caricature artists, henna tattoo booths and street performers ready to divest you of a few bucks.

At Fremont Street's open-air **Neonopolis** mall, **Toy Shack** (450 Fremont St., #117) is a trip down childhood memory lane for those old enough to remember Rock'Em Sock'Em Robots and Beanie Babies. Wandering the collectible-packed aisles, yelling "I used to have that!," you'll covet bobbleheads galore, a huge selection of Hot Wheels (vintage and new) and a whole galaxy of play sets and action figures—from old-school "Star Wars" to the latest Marvel heroes. Also in the mall, a few doors away, **Ultimate Sports Cards & Memorabilia** (#183) deals in autographed jerseys, balls, bats and helmets, plus other rare sports collectibles. Fans of TV's "Pawn Stars," take note: The owners of both shops appear on the show as expert appraisers.

The Fremont East District is home to **Emergency Arts** (across from the El Cortez casino at 520 Fremont St.), an artists' co-op housed in an old medical building.

The Fremont East District's latest revitalization project, the **Downtown Container Park**, is an open-air shopping/dining/entertainment complex located at the corner of Fremont and 7th streets (707 Fremont St.). A 40foot-tall, fire-spewing praying mantis welcomes you to this funky park, where independent boutiques, galleries and cafés are housed in metal cargo-shipping containers, some of them stacked three stories high. Among the more intriguing shops, BluMarble repurposes beer and liquor bottles into ingenious items; San Miguel Collection deals in Latin American art and crafts; 702DTLV traffics in trendy accessories and gifts; and Kappa Toys has play things that range from kitschy to educational.

The Container Park also hosts a handful of eateries and bars; try the cozy Bin 702 for pricey yet potent craft cocktails. Backing the complex is an outdoor live music stage. The central children's play area—boasting a climbable treehouse and 33-foot-high slide—buzzes with happy kids as long as the Vegas heat's not pushing 110-degrees. **Note:** Only ages 21 and older are permitted in the park after 9 p.m.; security guards at the entrance check *every*one's I.D.

Near the park is **The Market** (611 Fremont St.), a small gourmet grocery store offering fresh produce, a deli counter, a Stumptown coffee bar and a decent selection of craft beer. If you're looking to pick up snacks and drinks for the hotel room, it certainly beats Budweiser and Cheetos from the Fremont Street liquor stores.

Just south of downtown, the **Arts District** (also known as "18B") is bounded by Commerce Street, Hoover Avenue, Las Vegas Boulevard and Colorado Avenue, encompassing some 18 blocks. Art galleries, antique dealers and one-of-a-kind boutiques are sprinkled among run-ofthe-mill furniture stores, auto parts shops and bail bondsmen.

One way to explore the Arts District is to visit on First Fridays (held the first Friday of every month). Closed to vehicular traffic those evenings, the monthly street festival with live music, street performers, art and craft booths and food vendors makes the area one of the fun places to go in Vegas. Parking (\$3) is available at Symphony Park (intersection of W. Park Avenue and Promenade Place, next to the Smith Center for the Performing Arts), where a free shuttle departs for two stops near shops and galleries that stay open late. Recently, the First Fridays event expanded to include the Fremont East District. A free shuttle runs between the two districts and can be boarded in front of the Downtown Container Park.

If you do the Arts District on your own, check out these worthwhile destinations. A hot pink storefront announces **Retro Vegas** (1131 S. Main St.), an intriguing antiques emporium filled with kitschy furniture (think amoebashaped coffee tables and retro dinette sets), artwork and all sorts of vintage odds and ends. You'll find a similar inventory and slightly cheaper prices down the street at **Vintage Vegas Antiques** (1227 S. Main St.). **The Funk House** (1228 S. Casino Center Blvd.) is covered in murals and loaded with 1950s and '60s antiques, art glass, old advertising signs and folk art.

#### **Specialty Stores**

No Vegas visit is complete without a spin through the mother of all junk souvenir emporiums, **Bonanza Gift & Souvenir Shops** (2440 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). The Elvis aviator shades and fake sideburns you've been searching for? They're here. So is the classic green dealer's visor, the highly sought-after dice clock and the miniature "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" light-up sign for your mantle. Need a water-squirting slot machine or a rubber tomahawk? Welcome to a 40,000-square-foot paradise perpetually packed with fellow kitsch-lovers.

Roulette wheels. Craps tables. Slot machines. Dice. Chips. Cards. You could open your very own casino with





Gold & Silver Pawn Shop / © AAA / Diana Beyer

the merchandise for sale at the **Gamblers General Store** (800 S. Main St.), which also carries a nice selection of books and gambling-themed souvenirs.

Digital downloads are all well and good, but for those who love album cover art, liner notes and the crackle 'n pop of vinyl there's **Record City** (300 E. Sahara Ave.), a used record and CD treasure trove housed in a purple brick-and-mortar bunker near the north end of the Strip. Even better, though a bit out of the way, is **Zia Records** (4225 S. Eastern Ave.). A new magnet for turntable nerds, tidy **11th Street Records** (1023 Fremont St., between 10th and 11th streets) carries a nice, well-organized selection of used vinyl purveyed by a knowledgeable staff.

Ambling down the Strip, odds are excellent you'll spy fellow tourists toting bright yellow shopping bags from **M&M's World** (near MGM, fronting the Showcase Mall,

3785 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). Who among us can resist gobbling obscene amounts of the melt-in-your-mouth, not-inyour-hand treats? Judging by the crowd swarming all four floors of this super store, the answer is no one. Logoemblazoned clothing, toys, housewares, souvenirs of every kind—they're all here. So are self-serve candy-bythe-pound dispensers and a free, 3-D animated movie that screens every 30 minutes.

Want more sugar? Your dentist will be horrified to learn that a few doors away you can wash down that chocolate with a soda from the **Coca-Cola Store** (fronting the Showcase Mall, 3785 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). All things branded Coke—from coffee mugs to Christmas ornaments—occupy two floors of retail space. You can even belly-up to a full-service soda fountain counter on the second level.

Fresh on the sweets superstore scene, **Hershey's Chocolate World** (in front of New York-New York, 3790 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) tests the willpower of Hershey's and Reese's fans with two floors full of temptations ranging from mammoth peanut butter cups to fresh-baked treats (think chocolate chip scones and Reese's cookie sandwiches). Be sure to check out the Statue of Liberty replica carved from 800-pounds of milk chocolate. The sight of it alone is enough to trigger a toothache.

The once-anonymous **Gold & Silver Pawn Shop** (713 Las Vegas Blvd. is a must-visit for fans of the wildly popular "Pawn Stars" reality TV series. When the show is filming (typically on weekday afternoons), there's often a long line to get in. On average the shop sees an astounding 3,000 visitors per day. That's sufficient traffic to justify installing a hot dog stand in the parking lot. Once inside you'll shuffle past the pawn counters, where fans will recognize for-sale items procured by Rick Harrison, "Big Hoss" and the gang. Doing brisk business is a gift shop section selling an array of show-related souvenirs, including "I ♥ Chumlee" bumper stickers.

Adjacent to the pawn shop's south parking lot is **Pawn Plaza.** A small complex of metal "cube" modules reminiscent of Vegas' Downtown Container Park, the 12,000square-foot plaza houses several retailers, plus a few eateries to feed hungry "Pawn Stars" pilgrims.

Those seeking more places to eat should swing by **Luv-it Frozen Custard** (505 E. Oakley Blvd., just off the Strip near The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod). Since 1973 this tiny family-run stand has been cooling off overheated Las Vegans with frozen custard fabulousness. Try the Western Special, covered in hot fudge and caramel and topped with salted pecans.

#### Nightlife

"The City That Never Sleeps" lives up to its nickname. There's no shortage of things to do thanks to the velvet



rope nightclubs and ultra-sleek lounges that are a fixture in nearly every hotel-casino on the Strip. The Vegas club scene is littered with celebrity names—tabloid and otherwise—but the insanely long lines outside the hippest hot spots means there are still lots of regular folks who want to boogie with the beautiful people and are willing to pay a \$30 (and up) cover charge to do so.

If you're itchin' to hit the clubs during your trip, here are a few tips on getting past the bouncers. Ladies, dress to impress. The higher the heel and the shorter the skirt, the better your chance of getting inside before 2 a.m. Gentlemen, no backwards baseball caps, baggy pants or sneaks; the standard nightclub uniform is a button-down shirt (usually expensive, and always one size too small) and either dress pants or a \$150 pair of jeans. Most clubs don't heat up until 11 p.m. or midnight. If you're not on "the list," line up by 10 p.m.

Many clubs set aside tables for the extortionate practice known as "bottle service." Reserving a table usually requires that you buy several bottles of booze at sky-high mark-ups. If your wallet's fat, this is the fast track into nearly every club. Call your destination ahead of time or talk to the doorman when you arrive. **Note:** It's not a good idea to purchase so-called "VIP" nightclub passes from freelance hawkers on the Strip. Though the passes are usually legit, the promise of VIP treatment is almost always a scam. At the club you'll wait in line just like everyone else.

The chic indoor/outdoor poolside patio and top-drawer DJs at **XS** (in the Encore Las Vegas, 3131 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) draw an exclusive A-list crowd that doesn't sweat the stratospheric bar tabs; phone (702) 770-7300. Celeb sightings abound at **Tao** (in The Venetian, 3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), an Asian temple-themed swankatorium with high-energy dance floors, VIP sky boxes and an outdoor terrace overlooking the Strip; phone (702) 388-8588.

**Omnia** (in Caesars Palace, 3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) occupies the three-level venue formerly inhabited by the infamous PURE nightclub. Under the main room's massive, UFO-like chandelier, a mass of sweaty bodies grooves to EDM beats spun by big-name DJs; phone (702) 785-6200.

**Marquee Nightclub** (in The Cosmopolitan, 3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) offers the requisite luxury atmosphere (with eye-popping drink prices to match) and is one of the Strip's foremost miniskirt magnets; phone (702) 333-9000.

Five-level **Hakkasan** (in MGM Grand, 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has a high-end restaurant, chill-out lounge and massive, state-of-the-art nightclub boasting superstar DJs; phone (702) 891-3838.

For years, rock and pop bands scratched Vegas off their tour itinerary because the city lacked decent mid-size concert halls. That has changed with the opening of more intimate live music venues. Rocker dudes and chicks pack the high-tech **WE Hard Rock Cafe** on the Strip (at 3771 S. Las Vegas Blvd., in the Showcase Mall); phone (702) 733-7625. There's a **House of Blues** at Mandalay Bay (3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.); phone (702) 632-7600. Megasuccessful musician Carlos Santana performs as the venue's resident headliner. **Pearl Concert Theater** (in Palms Casino Resort, 4321 W. Flamingo Rd.) features top-notch touring acts; phone (702) 944-3200. **The Chelsea** (in The Cosmopolitan, 3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has a capacity of about 3,000 and regularly books big names; phone (702) 698-7000.

One of the Strip's newer live music hot spots, **Brooklyn Bowl** (in The LINQ complex, 3545 Las Vegas Blvd. S.)



Tao in The Venetian / © AAA / Inspector 39

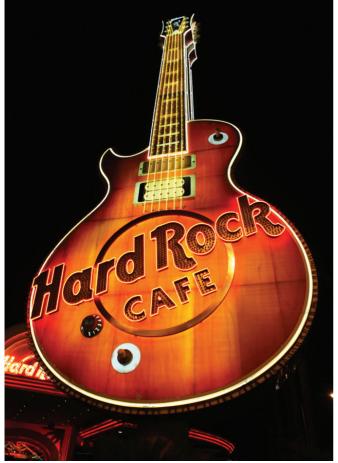


#### 70 LAS VEGAS, NV

rolls an intimate concert venue, a bowling alley and an excellent restaurant/bar into one cavernous space that can only be described as carnival sideshow meets industrialchic bordello. If you don't have tickets for the evening's show, drop by the bar for a late afternoon drink and chances are good you'll see and hear the night's headliner performing their pre-gig sound check; phone (702) 862-2695.

**Napoleon's** (in Paris Las Vegas, 3655 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) ditches thumping dance beats and Jägermeister shots in favor of champagne toasts, live jazz and dueling piano performances; phone (702) 946-7000.

CityCenter's ARIA Resort (3730 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has a nice mix of refined bars and lounges. Check out Lift Bar and the super-swank ALIBI Cocktail Lounge. Jewel, meanwhile, boasts a style that complements the modern luxury aesthetic of ARIA while including elements that are



Hard Rock Cafe / © Michael Dorausch / flickr / CC BY-SA

altogether unique: LED ribbons offer a vibrant counterpoint to vintage parquet detailing and richly tufted VIP banquettes. The nightclub's design offers an unprecedented experience of clear views and close proximity to all the action, which means that you can always see and be seen. Then there's the posh ambience of the Baccarat Lounge to enjoy at the edge of the Baccarat Room. Phone (702) 590-7111 for general ARIA Resort information.

Ring-a-ding-ding. Old-school Vegas lives at the **Fire-side Lounge at the Peppermill** (inside the Peppermill coffee shop, 2985 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), a dimly lit early '70s throwback decked out with velvety couches, pink neon, mirrored ceilings and a magic water-and-fire pit. Some of the vintage cool has been spoiled by the addition of flat-screen TVs, but after downing a few of the seriously stiff tropical cocktails it doesn't really matter. Phone (702) 735-4177.

If all this sounds too highfalutin, pull on the Tony Lamas and go to town at **Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill** (in Harrah's, 3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). The bartenders are jovial, the pours generous, and live country music kicks off every night at 9 p.m.; phone (702) 369-5000.

**Gilley's BBQ** (in Treasure Island, 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has live country bands (or DJs), line dancing, Southern barbecue and of course a mechanical bull (\$10 per ride). Try not to let the high drink prices get you riled; phone (702) 894-7111.

Another fave with the Stetson set is **PBR Rock Bar and Grill** (at Planet Hollywood's Miracle Mile Shops, 3663 Las Vegas Blvd. S., #730), where you can tip back an ice-cold Bud on the Strip-side patio, or hang inside and laugh at booze-emboldened daredevils getting thrown by the mechanical bull (FYI, city slickers: PBR stands for Professional Bull Riding); phone (702) 750-1685.

Tired and thirsty from wandering the Strip? **Beer Park** offers an impressive selection of other frosty brews. This rooftop covered patio at Paris Las Vegas (3655 S. Las Vegas Blvd.) is a great spot to kick back and peoplewatch or catch a game on one of the big screens; phone (702) 444-4500. Tip: If you haven't made it to the Bellagio yet to view the fountain show, grab one of the terrace tables for a prime position from which to observe the dancing waters.

In front of Harrah's (3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), the outdoor **Carnaval Court Bar & Grill** has "flair" bartenders (think Tom Cruise in "Cocktail") and rock and funk cover bands that play to raucous crowds not interested in the velvet rope scene. There's usually a cover charge on weekends; phone (702) 693-6138.

Several establishments add grub to the partying. Margaritaville (in the Flamingo Hotel, 3555 Las Vegas Blvd.



S.) is the Vegas outpost of Jimmy Buffett's wildly successful restaurant/bar chain. There's plenty of tequila on hand for thirsty Parrotheads. The "Cheeseburger in Paradise" and fries will set you back \$15 or so; Buffett tunes and classic rock blast from the sound system. Phone (702) 733-3302.

**The Park** is new on the scene of local restaurants. This outdoor space connects New York-New York, Park MGM and the T-Mobile Arena, so it's great for pre-event mingling. Enjoy patio seating at casual restaurants and take pictures by a water wall and massive shade structures that look more like works of art. Along with brews, the **Beerhaus** (3782 S. Las Vegas Blvd.) serves up entertainment in the form of bar games. The giant Jenga set is impressive. Phone (702) 692-2337.

It always feels like St. Paddy's Day at **Nine Fine Irishmen** (in New York-New York, 3790 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), where bangers and mash, Jameson shots and a wide selection of stouts fuel the party. Sip a pint on the casual Strip-front patio that has a view of the faux Brooklyn Bridge. Live Irish music begins nightly at 9; phone (702) 740-6463.

**Fremont Street** nightlife revolves around the popular overhead light show, people watching in between shows, casino gambling and the comp drinks that come with it. If it's live music you're after, rock bands and Elvis impersonators perform most nights on Fremont's outdoor stages. At Binion's (128 E. Fremont St.), the open-air, street-front **Whiskey Licker Bar** is a fun spot to rock out and knock back a few cold ones. Across the way, watch the Fremont freak show from the Golden Nugget's **Bar 46**, a streetside lounge with low-pro couches arranged around a crackling fire pit. **Note:** Many casinos now have free plastic cup dispensers posted at their exits. Use them for your drink while walking Fremont Street, or risk a pricey citation.

Nearby, anything goes at **Hogs & Heifers Saloon** (201 N. 3rd St.), a self-styled dive bar with boisterous, sexy cowgirl bartenders and live music some nights; phone (702) 676-1457. Hells Angels bonus: There's free motor-cycle parking directly out front.

Hops hounds head for **Banger Brewing** (at the east end of the Fremont Street Experience at 450 Fremont St., #135), a craft brewery and relaxed bar that offers its tasty beers by the pint, growler or in tasting flights (be sure to sample the jalapeno-infused Hefeweizen). Free brewery tours are given several times daily; phone (702) 456-2739.

A crop of hipster-geared cocktail bars inhabits the **Fremont East District.** At the **Downtown Cocktail Room** (a few steps south of Fremont at 111 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) you can sip retro cocktails in a dark, speakeasy-meetsbohemia atmosphere; phone (702) 880-3696. **The Griffin** (511 Fremont St.), a very un-Vegas lounge, draws a young crowd with red leather booths, cozy fireplaces and a jukebox heavy on indie rock; phone (702) 382-0577.

**Commonwealth** bar (525 E. Fremont St.) sports a 1920s Jazz Age decor and has a rooftop patio (live DJs on weekends) overlooking the Fremont East action below; phone (702) 445-6400. Across the street, catch a live band or DJ while channeling your inner Minnesota Fats at **Backstage Bar & Billiards** (601 E. Fremont St.). Pool tables run \$10 per hour. There's a cover charge for live music; phone (702) 382-2227.

A blast from the past, **Atomic Liquors** (917 Fremont St.) opened in 1945 as Virginia's Cafe but for most of its history has been a bar, saucing everyone from movie stars (the Rat Pack and Barbra Streisand were regulars)



Margaritaville / © Kalzen / flickr / CC BY





Auto Racing Fans at Las Vegas Motor Speedway /  $\textcircled{\sc op}$  iStockphoto.com / Onfokus

to destitute drunks. In the '50s, crowds gathered here to watch nuclear bomb tests in the distant Nevada desert. Nowadays the only thing getting bombed is you, thanks to a nice list of specialty cocktails and draft beers. Have a drink inside the bar (complete with vintage jukebox, pressed-tin ceilings and old-school "Danger: Radiation" signs), or chill on the patio fronting Fremont; phone (702) 982-3000. **Note:** Though the bar is only three walkable blocks from the Fremont East District, after dark it is best to take a cab.

Staying downtown? Want to go on a South Seas liquid vacation? Take a quick cab ride to **Frankie's Tiki Room** (1712 W. Charleston Blvd., just west of I-15) or **The Golden Tiki** (3939 Spring Mountain Rd., in Chinatown). These are must-visits for fans of classic tiki-bar kitsch and rum-loaded tropical drinks; phone (702) 385-3110 or (702) 222-3196, respectively.

Off-Strip, party like it's Oktoberfest at **Hofbrauhaus Las Vegas** (4510 Paradise Rd.), a boisterous German beer hall/restaurant specializing in the requisite schnitzel, steins of brew and live oompah bands; phone (702) 853-2337.

# **Big Events**

The **Pennzoil 400 Weekend** event, which includes NASCAR Cup and XFINITY Series races, brings racing fans to **Las Vegas Motor Speedway** in early March. Prize livestock are proudly exhibited during the 5-day **Clark County Fair & Rodeo** in Logandale, also held in April. Talented musicians from across the country perform at the **Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz and Rhythm and Blues Festival**, held at the **Clark County Government Center Amphitheater** in late April, ideal for an early spring trip.

Relive the Old West during May's **Helldorado Days**, which features Western get-ups, parades and a championship rodeo. During Memorial Day weekend, the Las Vegas Paiute Snow Mountain Indian Reservation, about a 20-minute drive north of downtown Vegas, hosts the **Snow Mountain Pow Wow**, where you can shop for Southwestern pottery or cheer on the participants of a spirited drum competition. Italian heritage is the focus of another cultural event, the **San Gennaro Feast**, which is held in mid-May and mid-September, and offers ethnic food, live entertainment and a variety of family-friendly activities.

If the betting strategies of Texas Hold 'Em, Omaha, Lowball and Hi-Low intrigue you, then check out the **World Series of Poker**, the gaming world's largest, richest and highest-profile event. It begins in late May and continues through mid-July at the **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino.** Anyone who meets the age and buy-in requirements is eligible to enter and win. As a Poker Hall of Fame member once observed, "All you need is a chip and a chair."

In June, the **Electric Daisy Carnival** draws hundreds of thousands of electronic dance music fans to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway for three days of superstar DJ sets. If you love EDM, or want to check it out while mulling over fun things to do in Vegas, now you know where to go.

The city's Spanish heritage is celebrated in mid-September during the **Mexican Independence Day** event, a day of music and cultural enlightenment. **Bite of Las Vegas**, also in mid-September, features concerts and some 30 restaurants offering attendees plenty places to eat.

In late October to early November, golf enthusiasts flock to watch the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open. The 3-day Age of Chivalry Renaissance Festival, held at



**Sunset Park** in mid-October, features everything from jousting demonstrations to an interactive dinner theater show.

Salute America's military achievements at **Nellis Air Show and Open House** in November. The 2-day event highlights the aerial maneuvers of U.S. Airmen. Thousands of runners from around the globe compete in the annual **Rock 'n' Roll Las Vegas Marathon and Half Marathon** in November.

The desert floor rumbles in early December when cowboys invade Las Vegas for the **Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.** The **Las Vegas Bowl**, a post-season college football bowl game, is played at **Sam Boyd Stadium** in late December. The year wraps up with **New Year's Eve**, a typically lively Vegas-style celebration with big-name entertainers, making it the ideal spot for fun things to do with friends.

#### Sports & Rec

The biggest games in this town are played at green felt tables, not sports arenas. Yet despite more money being *bet* on sports in Las Vegas than is ever taken in at the turnstiles, the city nevertheless presents a fine selection of spectator sports for locals and those on vacation alike. College basketball, especially, has a rich local tradition.

Las Vegas and its environs also offer a royal flush of recreational pursuits that include golf, tennis, racquetball and swimming. The desert climate, despite scalding summer days, invites outdoor recreation all year, so don't hesitate to plan a trip on what you might consider "off season."

The T-Mobile Arena, 3780 Las Vegas Blvd. S. between New York-New York and Park MGM, presents sporting events and concerts at this 20,000-seat venue. Phone (702) 692-1300.

Auto Racing Fans of automobile racing will find plenty of company at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 7000 Las Vegas Blvd. N., 17 miles northeast of Las Vegas off the I-15 Speedway Boulevard exit. The complex hosts NASCAR Cup and XFINITY Series as well as NHRA events; phone (800) 644-4444 for information.

Nearby, **The Carroll Shelby Heritage Center**, 6405 Ensworth St. houses the Carroll Shelby Museum and displays performance cars, including Shelby Cobras. Tours of the facility are available if you're trying to narrow down things to do this weekend; phone (702) 942-7325.

**Baseball** The **Las Vegas Aviators** suit up for professional baseball at **Las Vegas Ballpark**, 1650 S. Pavilion Center Dr., from early April through September. The name of this Class AAA, Pacific Coast League affiliate refers the area's aviation history. Phone (702) 939-7200 for ticket and schedule information.

The **Rebels** of UNLV play at the on-campus **Earl E. Wilson Baseball Stadium** during the college season. Phone (702) 739-3267 for ticket and schedule information.

**Basketball** The Runnin' Rebels of UNLV hope to one day live down an outlaw image that's swirled like an Old West legend around the team for years—often overshadowing enormous success with a truly exciting style of basketball.

The basketball program came to national prominence under former coach Jerry "Tark the Shark" Tarkanian, who first took the Rebels to the NCAA Final Four in 1977 and led them to a national championship in 1990. Tarkanian built the program into a perennial powerhouse and an object of local idolatry. The Rebels play on the UNLV campus at the **Thomas & Mack Center** between November and March; phone (702) 739-3267.



The Carroll Shelby Heritage Center / © Bernard Spragg. NZ / flickr / CC0





Las Vegas Ski & Snowboard Resort / © iStockphoto.com / Sportstock

**Boxing & MMA** Vegas and professional boxing have had a close relationship for almost 60 years. Despite a rocky history—government scrutiny, a confusing mishmash of championship titles (IBF, WBA and WBC) and the scandalous out-of-ring antics of a few of the sport's biggest names—title fights have always captured the public interest. The absurdly high purses, flamboyant promoters, glamorous ringside spectators and attendant media hoopla all seem appropriate against a neon-infused Sin City backdrop.

Some of the sport's most memorable bouts have taken place here: Muhammad Ali vs. Floyd Patterson, Ali vs. Leon Spinks, Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Marvin Hagler. George Foreman shocked Vegas and the boxing world by winning the heavyweight title at age 45 with his knockout of Michael Moorer in 1994. Mike Tyson infamously gnawed off a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear in the ring at the **MGM Grand Garden Arena** in 1997. Most big fights now take place at the MGM, something to keep in mind if you're figuring out where to stay while checking out airline flights; phone (702) 531-3826 or (800) 929-1111 for event information. The 12,000-seat Michelob Ultra Arena at **Mandalay Bay** is home to the WNBA World Champion Aces and the National Lacrosse League Desert Dogs, and also hosts a variety of concerts and events. **The Orleans** (all off-Strip) and **The Cosmopolitan** (on the Strip) are among a handful of venues that regularly present mid-level fight cards.

Longtime fans of "the sweet science" begrudgingly admit that MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) is now as popular as boxing—perhaps even more so. The big UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) events usually go down at MGM or Mandalay Bay.

**Football Allegiant Stadium** is home to the city's bigtime gridiron action with college and NFL games played here. UNLV's football Rebels play in the Mountain West Conference against the likes of Air Force, BYU and Wyoming. Home games are September through December; phone (702) 739-3267. The NFL team the Raiders typically play September to January; phone (800) 724-3377.

**Golf** Las Vegas' desert climate offers golfers excellent playing conditions, although the summer heat is formidable. Numerous championship and less demanding courses are open to the public.

All of the following offer 18 holes: **Angel Park Golf Club**, (702) 254-4653 or (888) 446-5358 (two 18-hole courses), 10 miles west via Summerlin Parkway to 100 S. Rampart Blvd.; **Desert Pines**, (702) 388-4400, 2 miles east of I-15 off Eastern Avenue at 3415 E. Bonanza Rd.; **Highland Falls Golf Course**, (702) 254-7010, at 10201 Sun City Blvd.; and the **Las Vegas Golf Club**, (702) 646-3003, at 4300 Washington Ave.

Snow Mountain, Sun Mountain and Wolf are the three 18-hole courses at the **Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort**, (800) 711-2833, 23 miles northwest of the city via US 95 at 10325 Nu-Wav Kaiv Blvd.

**Bali Hai Golf Club** is located near Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino and the airport at 5160 Las Vegas Blvd. S. The South Pacific-themed, par-71 course has fairways bordered by towering palms and exotic plants. Phone (888) 427-6678.

Each of these courses includes a clubhouse, golf shop, equipment rental and some food service. They are not lighted for night play. Early starts are recommended during the summer months.

The four-level **Topgolf** at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino is a high-tech driving range/sports bar that also features golf-themed games and a concert stage. Phone (702) 933-8458.



Hockey The NHL expanded their number of teams with the addition of the Vegas Golden Knights in 2017. Watch this fledgling team fight it out on the ice at the **T-Mobile Arena**, 3780 Las Vegas Blvd. S., from early October to early April.

**Jogging and Walking** Head out of the city to public land trails, drive a few blocks to a city park or to the university track, or just step outside your hotel door and pound the Strip. Serious runners will find the nearby mountain trails a tempting respite from summer's ovenlike heat. Realize, however, that elevations above 3,000 feet present different challenges.

**Bob Baskin Park,** 2801 W. Oakey Blvd., is nestled in a quiet residential area, and the park's walking path is cushioned. **Pueblo Park**, at Buffalo Drive and Lake Mead Boulevard west of the Strip, has a delightfully undeveloped feeling, while **Sunset Park**, 2601 E. Sunset Rd., is bustling and urban.

Just 17 miles west of the city, **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area** (see attraction listing p. 96) has more than 30 trails of varying lengths from which to choose—not to mention spectacular scenery. Pick up a free trail map at the visitor center.

**Rodeo** Every visitor to America's West should attend at least one quality rodeo to complete the regional experience. Winter visitors to Las Vegas can see one of the very best every December when the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo takes place over 10 days at the Thomas & Mack Center on the UNLV campus; phone (866) 388-3267 for ticket information.

**Tennis** A number of public facilities are scattered throughout the city. The following have at least two lighted courts: Darling Tennis Center, (702) 229-2100, at 7901 W. Washington Ave.; Sunset Park, (702) 455-8200, across from McCarran International Airport at 2601 E. Sunset Rd.; Winchester Cultural Center, (702) McLeod 455-7340. 3130 S. and at Dr.: Winterwood/Wengert Park, 2001 Winterwood Blvd. Phone Clark County Parks & Recreation at (702) 455-8200 for information about municipal facilities.

Many resort hotels and private clubs have tennis courts that visitors are allowed to use, but it is always a good idea to confirm the hotel's current visitor policy by phone. Hotels with tennis facilities include **Bally's Las Vegas**, (702) 967-4598, and **Westgate Las Vegas**, (702) 732-5009.

The **Frank and Vicki Fertitta Tennis Complex** on the UNLV campus requires reservations and charges a fee, but it is considered the city's finest tennis facility; phone (702) 895-4489.

Water Sports Many swimming pools are open daily Memorial Day through Labor Day. Contact the Las Vegas Parks and Recreation Department for information about pools and their schedules; phone (702) 229-7529.

The 1.5 million acres comprising **Lake Mead National Recreation Area** (see place listing p. 41), which is twice the size of Rhode Island, hold nearly limitless outdoor recreation opportunities—all just 35 miles east of the neon Strip. **Lake Mead** and **Lake Mohave** serve up great sport fishing for rainbow trout, striped bass, channel catfish, crappie and blue gill. Steady breezes and large expanses of open water lure board and boat sailors as well as powered watercraft. Annual passes are available; phone (702) 293-8990.

Guided kayaking trips beginning at the base of the Hoover Dam down the Colorado River, with a stop at a hot springs, are offered by Evolution Expeditions; phone (702) 259-5292.

Winter Sports Less than an hour's drive northwest of Las Vegas is **Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest** (see place listing p. 37). This wilderness area encompasses **Mount Charleston**, site of the **Lee Canyon Ski & Snow-board Resort**. The resort, which has a day lodge and three double chairlifts, is open Thanksgiving to Easter; chairlifts providing scenic views are open Friday through Sunday during the off-season. Phone (702) 385-2754.

**Other Diversions** Get a thrill from a 15-minute simulated sky-diving experience in a 21-foot vertical wind tunnel at **Vegas Indoor Skydiving**, 200 Convention Center Dr. Phone (702) 731-4768 or (877) 588-2359.

Close to the Strip at 3060 S. Highland Dr., **Las Vegas Table Tennis** provides top-of-the-line tables, coaching and even a training robot for Ping-Pong devotees; phone (702) 733-3800.

#### **Performing Arts**

Popular images of Las Vegas lean more toward the brazen theatrics of razzle-dazzle showmanship, luxury restaurants and clubs than they do the rarefied heights of serious theater. That does not mean that the fine arts receive short shrift. Plays, concerts and dance performances are presented at several area locations. *Neon magazine,* the entertainment guide included with the Friday edition of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal,* carries listings of cultural events to explore on your vacation.

**Dance** The **Nevada Ballet Theatre** presents both classical and contemporary works at **The Smith Center**, 361 Symphony Park Ave., a gorgeous \$470 million performing arts center that opened just west of downtown in 2012. City officials are wagering that tourists, as well as an increasingly urban and artsy local population, will embrace the new facility's high-brow offerings—everything from concerts to touring Broadway plays, perfect for group travel.

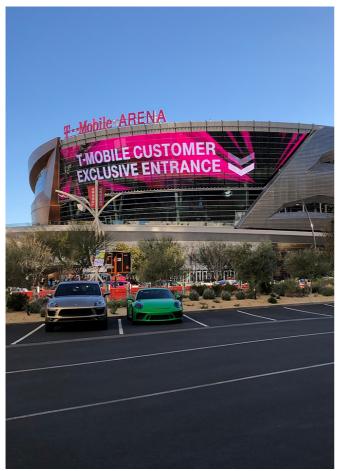


Free guided walking tours of the 5-acre Art Deco-style complex are given on Wednesday and Saturday mornings at 10:30; but be sure to make a reservation to get in on all the action. For Smith Center performance schedules, tickets and tour information, phone (702) 749-2000.

Film Repertory film series, as well as musical performances and art exhibits, are shown at the Winchester Cultural Center at 3130 S. McLeod Dr. For schedule information, phone (702) 455-7340.

The Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Rd., screens classic films and documentaries; phone (702) 507-3400.

Several off-Strip casinos and shopping malls have multiplex theaters. Check the Las Vegas Review-Journal entertainment section to explore options for what to do and see.



T-Mobile Arena / © Matt Walter / flickr / CC BY-SA

Music The 20.000-seat T-Mobile Arena has drawn big acts like Coldplay, Billy Joel, The Killers, Nicki Minaj and Keith Urban.

The Smith Center's main venue is **Reynolds Hall**, a state-of-the-art 2.050-seat theater that has hosted concerts by stars ranging from comedian/musician Steve Martin to jazz chanteuse Diana Krall. The hall also is the home of the Las Vegas Philharmonic. Cabaret Jazz, the center's intimate 240-seat, supper club-style room, lets you get an up-close look at live jazz jams; phone (702) 749-2000.

Symphony, jazz and chamber music performances, including concerts by internationally recognized musicians, are presented at the UNLV Performing Arts Center's Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall just a few miles from the Strip; phone (702) 895-2787 to learn more about your new music destination.

Theater The award-winning Department of Theatre of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas stages both contemporary plays and the classics throughout the year in the 550-seat Judy Bayley Theatre, on Maryland Parkway, and at the **Black Box Theatre**, on the first floor of Ham Fine Arts; phone (702) 895-2787 if you're a theater-lover wondering what to do today.

The small Troesh Studio Theater at The Smith Center stages plays and also presents film screenings for viewers looking to take a trip through various film genres; phone (702) 749-2000 for more information.

#### Production Shows

Casino venues are technically showrooms, but hardly anyone calls them that anymore; these days the emphasis is on state-of-the-art extravaganzas and extended residencies by show business superstars. Of course, every show eventually runs its course and gets replaced by what the casino is betting will be the next hot ticket.

For show tickets at discounts of up to half off, try Tix4Tonight, a ticket discounter with nine locations on the Strip (including the Fashion Show Mall and Bally's Grand Bazaar) and one booth downtown at the Four Queens. Production shows release unsold seats for that night's performances to Tix4Tonight, which then sells those tickets to customers on a first-come, first-serve basis. Discounts range from about 25 to 50 percent off. Tickets are typically released in mid- or late afternoon; on weekends lines begin forming as early as 9:30 a.m. Phone (877) 849-4868 for general inguiries. Information on specific ticket availability can be obtained only at the ticket booths.

If you're looking for fun things to do, try perusing promotional tourist magazines-found in your hotel room and taxi backseat pockets-as they're also good sources for show ticket discounts. Though you'll never see a half-off



coupon for the big headliner shows, the mags are flush with admission deals for mid-tier shows (think Legends in Concert).

Following is a representative sampling of current production shows that are scheduled to run for the foreseeable future. For show times, ticket prices, reservations, venue policies and other information, contact the hotel box office.

"Absinthe" (Spiegeltent, Caesars Palace). Risque. Raunchy. Ribald. Like the show's opening acrobatic act featuring a tower of precariously balanced chairs, Absinthe teeters on the edge of seriously bad taste. And if you're easily offended, stop reading now and go see Donny and Marie instead. Since 2011, well over a million guests have been alternately shocked and amazed by this wonderfully demented Cirgue du Soleil parody staged in an intimate European-style circus tent fronting Caesars. From tightrope walkers and strong men to burlesque dancers and an explicitly sensual trapeze act, the performers are introduced by a rude, tuxedoed MC named The Gazillionaire, who rattles off crude one-liners and often makes audience members the butt of his off-color jokes. Put simply, you'll either love this show or walk out early. Seating is in the round on cramped metal folding chairs. If you're looking for things for couples to do, be sure to reserve a back-row table for leg room and a comfortable buffer zone between you and The Gazillionaire. You've been warned. Note: Due to strong adult language and partial nudity, ages 17 and under are not permitted. Phone (855) 234-7469.

"The Beatles LOVE" (The Mirage) Fans of the Fab Four may want to put this show on their list of things to do. This show combines the innovative performances of world-class Cirque du Soleil artists with the timeless songs of the Beatles. The band's lyrics are interpreted through a series of scenes involving aerial acts, extreme sports and urban dance. The production's original score was created by using the master tapes at Abbey Road Studios, creating some ingenious song mash-ups in the process (imagine a fusion of "What You're Doing" and "The Word" for starters). You'll experience the Fab Four in a whole new way in a custom-built theater that features in-the-round seating and high-definition video projections. Phone (702) 792-7777 or (800) 963-9634.

**Bue Man Group**" (Luxor Hotel and Casino) will rock your world, blow your mind, and unleash your spirit. As three bald and blue men explore our world, together we'll discover music, laughter and surprises at every turn. By the end of this spectacular journey, you'll be saying "I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT JUST HAPPENED BUT I LOOOVED IT." Some 50 million people of all ages, languages and cultures know what Blue Man Group is really about. Now it's your turn. Phone (702) 262-4400.



Watch "Blue Man Group" at Luxor Hotel and Casino /  $\circledcirc$  iStockphoto.com / Vividus

"Jabbawockeez" (MGM Grand Hotel & Casino) are a world-famous dance crew who first gained fame in their national television appearance on America's Got Talent in 2006, before winning the MTV Hip Hop reality series, Randy Jackson Presents America's Best Dance Crew (ABDC) in March 2008. The crew uses their signature plain white masks and gloves to guide the audience's attention away from individual identities and toward a unified group. Known for their creativity, one-of-a-kind choreography, athleticism, and intricate synchronization, each member brings a different technique and perspective to form the original style that makes the Jabbawockeez so distinct. Phone (702) 531-3826.

**"KÀ**" (KÀ Theatre, MGM Grand Hotel & Casino) is storytelling at its best. The show combines acrobatic prowess, martial arts, puppets, interactive video projections and pyrotechnics to tell the epic story of a pair of



twins—a boy and a girl—who embark on a perilous journey to fulfill their shared destiny. As the massive stage shifts, the KÀ warriors battle on land and in the sky. Under age 3 are not permitted. Phone (702) 891-3140.

"Legends in Concert" (Tropicana Las Vegas) has been wowing Vegas audiences since 1983, first at the Imperial Palace (now LINQ Hotel + Experience), then at Harrah's, at the Flamingo and now at Tropicana. Celebrity impersonators offer remarkable imitations (singing, not lipsyncing) of Lady Gaga, Rod Stewart, Michael Jackson and a host of others, backed by a live band in a full-stage production. The lineup changes every few months, although you can count on Elvis making an appearance. Phone (702) 253-1333.

"Michael Jackson ONE" (Michael Jackson Theatre, Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino) is Cirque du Soleil's tribute to the King of Pop. Packed with music, dance, pyrotechnics and acrobatics galore, the 90-minute, state-ofthe-art extravaganza spotlights MJ's biggest '80s and '90s hits ("Billie Jean," "Bad," "I Just Can't Stop Loving You," etc.), and interprets them for a 21st-century audience. During the "Thriller" number, zombies run amok through the audience. And for "Man In The Mirror" there's even a hologram of a dancing/singing Jackson performing with the Cirque troupe. Since the moonwalk made its Vegas debut in July 2013, the show has become one of the hottest Cirque tickets on the Strip. Beat it to the box office as soon as you get to town. Phone (877) 632-7400 or (800) 745-3000.

"Mystère" (Mystère Theatre, Treasure Island) is still one of the most distinctive shows in town. Although it takes place within a single ring, "Mystère" in no way resembles a traditional three-ring circus. For one thing, the audience becomes intimately involved with this show. The music and lighting effects are ethereally beautiful, and the international cast of acrobats, clowns, jugglers, trapeze artists, dancers and musicians are uniformly superb. Suitable for all ages, this is a must-see. Phone (702) 894-7722 or (800) 392-1999.

"O" ("O" Theatre, Bellagio) is Cirque du Soleil's venture into aquatic theater. An international cast of 77 performs in, on and above water. By combining circus art, drama, choreography, aerial acrobatics and synchronized swimming, this innovative show pays tribute to the age-old magic of theater. International music performed by a 10piece orchestra accompanies the 90-minute show. Phone (702) 693-8866 or (888) 488-7111.

"Penn & Teller" (Penn & Teller Theater, Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino) have been staging their bad-boys-ofmagic act at the Rio since the early years of this century and show no sign of letting up anytime soon. If you enjoy optical illusions with a generous side of acerbic wit and biting social commentary, this is the show for you; the easily offended should stay away. Phone (855) 234-7469.

"V—The Ultimate Variety Show" (V Theater, Planet Hollywood) incorporates a broad range of entertaining talents, ranging from aerialists, acrobats and gymnasts who do amazing thing with their bodies to magicians who do amazing things with their minds (and some sleight of hand). Also entertaining are masters of percussion, comedians, and a fun and fascinating juggler who slings oneliners almost as quickly as juggling pins. Phone (702) 260-7200 or (866) 932-1818.

The hotel showrooms that don't feature ongoing productions continue the Vegas tradition of presenting celebrity headliners, along with rock concerts and occasional sporting events. During your vacation, you might catch a show at the David Copperfield Theater at the MGM



Experience Jabbawockeez at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino / © AAA / Diana Beyer



Grand, which regularly presents its namesake illusionist and rounds out its events calendar with musical acts. For more fun things to do with friends, the Planet Hollywood Showroom at Planet Hollywood primarily books comedians and magicians. At the Tropicana, the Laugh Factory is an intimate spot to catch stand-up comics nightly.

During your travel, don't forget to hit downtown's Fremont Street. In addition to the gaudy neon displays of the casinos, Fremont is lit up with classic signs from the 1940s, '50s and '60s that have been restored and installed at various locations.

### Gambling

The rattle of the "bones," then a sigh of disappointment or a cry of exultation—such are the sounds of Vegas, where gambling is by no means limited to the craps table. Slot machines, "21" or blackjack, keno, bingo, poker, baccarat, roulette and more all await the hopeful who travel to Sin City.

Gambling is easier than buying toothpaste, since casinos never close and most drugstores do. Rows of slots stand like sentries in most establishments—restaurants, gas station mini-marts, supermarkets, even Laundromats. From the airport baggage carousel area to your hotel lobby, the lure of potential fortune is omnipresent.

Visitors who resist the temptation to gamble are rare. If you decide to take a chance during your vacation but aren't a seasoned veteran, buy a how-to book (available in most gift shops) or do some Googling beforehand and bone up. Generally speaking, beginners should never approach any gaming table without at least some knowledge of the game to be played. Many casinos provide pamphlets and some even give classes for novice players.

One downtown destination, the Golden Nugget, offers plenty of fun things to do including free daily craps, poker, roulette and blackjack lessons. For the current schedule check the casino's website, or phone (702) 385-7111. Whatever you play, keep in mind that although the state regulates casinos and gambling, odds ultimately do favor the house. We're betting you already knew that.

In terms of betting and playing strategies, poker in all its permutations is the most complex. Baccarat requires a high stake to be successful, though "mini-baccarat," in which the dealer keeps the bank, provides cheaper play. The many ways of playing number combinations, the difficulty in understanding the payoffs and the speed at which it's played make craps the most challenging game of all. It also is difficult for dealers to learn. But while not for novice players, craps can be mesmerizing to watch as a spectator. Almost every casino has a race and sportsbook. If you're looking for things to do, you can wager on practically any horse race, boxing or UFC match, or professional or collegiate event. Currently popular at the sportsbooks is "In-Running" wagering, betting on sporting events already in progress. Among the sportsbooks offering the service are those at The Cosmopolitan, the Tropicana and The Venetian.

If you're a first-timer or haven't been to Vegas in ages, get your feet wet with slots or video poker machines. Though a few antiquated slots at a couple of the older downtown casinos still deal in coins, today's machines traffic in paper only. Instead of the sweet clang-clangclang sound of your jackpot coins dropping into the metal tray, you'll feed bills into the machine's maw. When it's time to "cash out," the machine will spit out a little paper ticket with your winnings (hopefully) printed on it. You can either take the bar-coded ticket to the cashier's window ("the cage") or use one of the casino's ATM-style redemption kiosks.

Picking a potentially lucky poker machine can be tricky business. The most common machines are named "Game King" or something similar, and they let you choose from a variety of poker games (Jacks or Better, Double Bonus Poker, etc.), all with varying strategies. Before putting your money on the line, a video poker vet would advise taking a look at the machine's pay-out schedules, as some machines offer better returns than others. Complimentary cocktail in hand, we like Deuces Wild Poker. At a 25-cent machine, always bet the maximum per hand—\$1.25—and always go for four or five of a kind or a royal flush. If the machine's not dealing a lot of deuces (wild), get up and walk away, fast.

Aware that some gamblers are shy and intimidated by surly dealers or fellow blackjack players behaving boorishly, the video gaming companies have rolled out machines that provide a virtual reality table game experience. Players sit around a big console similar to a regular 21 table, only the dealer is likely to be a buxom beauty projected on a video screen. Also gaining popularity are virtual craps tables, where you'll place bets on a personal touch screen and press a button to shoot jumbosized dice housed in a plexiglass-domed hopper. The best part? You can typically bet as little as \$1 per hand. If you need ideas for fun things to do with friends, virtual reality gambling is one group travel activity to consider.

#### Casinos

**ARIA RESORT & CASINO** is at 3730 Las Vegas Blvd. S. in the CityCenter complex. It impresses right off the bat, with a main entrance fountain that shoots long, high arcs of water, especially impressive when illuminated by different colors at night. The contemporary modernist look is

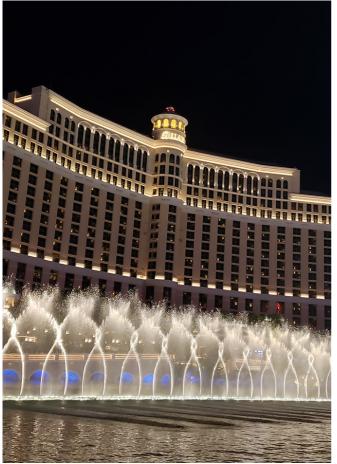


something of an anomaly in a town where hotels often mimic monuments to the past.

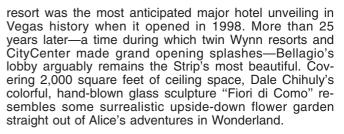
Walking through ARIA's casino is like being in an enormous designer cave with dark walls, wood paneling and high, wood-beamed ceilings. Beautiful chandeliers adorn plush, classy cocktail bars and lounges. Gaming tables are spiffy, and in keeping with the overall high roller ambience, table minimums (not to mention the slots and poker machines) are all sky high.

The pool areas are in a lovely garden setting with meandering paved pathways. Liquid Lounge is an adultsonly, high-end party pool with private cabanas and bars. **Phone:** (702) 590-7111 for general information.

**BELLAGIO** is at 3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (at Flamingo Rd.). Inspired by the village of Bellagio on the shores of northern Italy's Lake Como, this \$1.6 billion



Bellagio / ©Quinn Dombrowski / flickr / CC BY-SA



Just beyond the lobby is the single most significant component of Bellagio's design: the outstanding Bellagio Conservatory & Botanical Gardens. No less imaginative than Chihuly's glass flight of fancy, this whimsical and meticulously maintained garden's theme changes with the seasons, which means it's worth a visit every time you return to Vegas. The ever-present crowds bear this out.

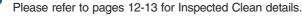
In the casino, billowy, softly lit awnings above the game tables give the space a classy, European-inspired feel although zombie-eyed slot machine slaves and rowdy frat boys stumbling down the aisles never let you forget you are indeed in Vegas. Out front is the resort's signature feature, the man-made, 8-acre Lago di Bellagio and its dazzling Fountains of Bellagio. Choreographed to music (songs range from *"Rondine al nido"* to *"Luck Be a Lady"*), some 1,200 water launchers create a mesmerizing water ballet that is hands down the best free show in town.

Phone: (702) 693-7111 for general information.

**CAESARS PALACE** is at 3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just n. of Flamingo Rd.). This Roman-themed resort, opened in 1966, is perhaps the epitome of overthe-top opulence meets preposterous Vegas cheese. You'd sooner find your way out of Rome's catacombs sans flashlight—than you would this massive property, with its never-ending casino and shopping labyrinth. A 20foot statue of the toga-clad ruler himself, presumably hailing a cab, stands at the Italian cypress-lined driveway leading to the main entrance.

Inside, the front-of-house gaming tables occupy a domed rotunda lined with sparkling gold lights. Beyond lies a realm marked by giant Roman statues and basreliefs, Corinthian columns, colonnades and a cocktail lounge housed in a replica of Cleopatra's Nile River barge. It's all fantastically tacky, a reminder of the good old days before the Emperors of Good Taste took over Vegas.

The huge Caesars Race & Sportsbook (sports betting venue) is next to The Colosseum, a 4,300-seat theater that hosts superstars of the music and entertainment industry. Out back is the Garden of the Gods Pool Oasis



(open to non-hotel guests with rental of a cabana or daybed), an impressive 5-acre spread of Greco-Roman themed swimming pools complete with private cabanas, cocktail bars and swim-up blackjack tables. The Qua Baths & Spa is an upscale 50,000-square-foot facility that features three Roman baths and offers a variety of massages, facials and other treatments.

Spend your winnings next door at The Forum Shops and Appian Way Shops *(see Shopping p. 63).* **Phone:** (702) 731-7110 or (866) 227-5938.

**CIRCUS CIRCUS LAS VEGAS HOTEL AND CASINO** is at 2880 Las Vegas Blvd. S. Opened in 1968, one of the Strip's oldest hotel casinos was also the first to court families with carnival midway games and live circus acts in a building shaped like a Barnum & Bailey big top. Outside on the marquee is a giant neon clown pointing you to the front door. Inside, slots and blackjack tables fill the ground floor; upstairs you'll find the midway games (think Skee-Ball and ringtoss), plus a video arcade.

Trapeze artists, acrobats, jugglers and contortionists typically perform high above the casino floor daily every half-hour from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. (the performance schedule varies on weekends). At the back of the property is the indoor theme park Adventuredome. Nearly 50 years have taken their toll on Circus Circus and the casino is showing considerable wear and tear, but it's still a solid choice if you're pushing a stroller or looking for someplace to take an antsy tween. **Phone:** (702) 734-0410. [T]

**THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS** is at 3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Flamingo Rd.). Wedged between Bellagio and CityCenter Las Vegas, the swank \$3.9-billion Cosmopolitan opened in 2010. And in one fell and übertrendy swoop, it not only managed to simultaneously upstage its next-door neighbor, CityCenter's ARIA, but convincingly pulled off a "hip Hollywood" vibe that for the most part has eluded Planet Hollywood across the street.

Still a glitterati magnet, the Cosmo packs nearly 3,000 plush, high-tech guest rooms in two hotel towers, which sit on a compact stretch of prime mid-Strip real estate that's roughly the size of Bellagio's lake next door. Tip: If you want a primo view of the lake's dancing fountains, request a room that faces north.

The casino is state of the art: Enter from the Strip and prepare to OD on eye candy. The gaming floor's centerpiece is a three-story bar and lounge veiled by a giant, curtain-like crystal chandelier. Made up of more than 2 million sparkling crystal beads and bathed in soft light (a rotating palette of pale violet, baby blue and gold), it simply dazzles.

Illuminating the casino pit are even more crystal chandeliers. Pull up a chair at one of the front-of-house slots



El Cortez Hotel & Casino / © Graeme Maclean / flickr / CC BY

and you'll gaze through floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Strip. For those who dislike the feeling of being in a windowless Vegas casino vacuum, unaware of time, it's a nice spot to play—provided that your gambling budget isn't easily stung by \$5 video poker hands.

James Bond fans should head for the hotel lobbyadjacent Vesper Bar, where the signature cocktail is the gin-and-vodka "Vesper" martini invented by 007 in the book *Casino Royale*. On the second and third floors you'll find shops, restaurants, nightlife venues, some intriguing modern art installations and a miniscule sportsbook. **Phone:** (702) 698-7000, or (877) 551-7778 for general information.

**THE CROMWELL** is at 3595 Las Vegas Blvd. S. at jct. Flamingo Rd. In 2014, a complete overhaul of the circa 1979 Barbary Coast casino (later renamed Bill's Gamblin' Hall) discarded one of the Strip's last remaining low-roller



dives in favor of the exclusive boutique hotel, The Cromwell. In a plum, mid-Strip location, shiny floors, dark woods, gold accents and the Barbary Coast's original, refurbished red-and-gold chandeliers set the scene. Flanking the small, narrow casino's center walkway are modern gaming tables (\$5-\$25), flashy video slots, an elevated hotel lobby bar, Bound, and the swanky lounge, Interlude. The Cromwell keeps it intimate with 188 rooms, including 19 suites, with a focus on hospitality, amenities and personalized service.

Upstairs you'll find the rooftop Drai's Beachclub and Nightclub, as well as TV chef Giada De Laurentiis' firstever restaurant. It's all a far cry from the dear departed Barbary, with its Victorian stained-glass panels, stainedblack carpets, lukewarm beer and perma-cloud of cigarette smoke. RIP, old friend. **Phone:** (702) 777-3777.

**EL CORTEZ HOTEL & CASINO** is at 600 E. Fremont St. (at 6th St., in the Fremont East District). Opened in 1941 and at one time briefly owned by mobsters Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky, the Spanish Colonial-style El Cortez was for several decades a casino primarily frequented by low-rolling locals and near-penniless hobos. But with the gentrification of the Fremont East District, this downtown survivor now sees mobs of hipsters crowding the \$3 craps, \$5 blackjack and \$1 roulette tables (yes, you read those dollar amounts correctly).

From Spanish archways to the classic neon sign atop the red-tile roof, the facade appears much the same as it did more than 70 years ago. So does the time-warp keno lounge, which looks like the perfect setting for a "Twilight Zone" episode. The rest of the casino floor, last renovated in the mid-2000s, is holding up fairly well and has a healthy amount of newer video slots. However, compdrink service is notoriously slow, that is if you can ever manage to flag down a cocktail waitress. **Phone:** (702) 385-5200 for the casino, or (702) 384-6502 for the Barber Shop. [1]

**ENCORE LAS VEGAS** is at 3121 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Desert Inn Rd.). In late 2008, when Steve Wynn's ultra-deluxe Encore opened next door to its older twin, Wynn Las Vegas, the local media declared the casino mogul insane for premiering a new resort in the middle of an economic meltdown. They've been wrong about Wynn before. The Encore is essentially an extension of Wynn Las Vegas (the bronze towers are connected by a shopping arcade and share amenities), but it's just as impressive as the original.

James Bond would feel right at home in the classy casino. There's a subtle Asian feel at work on the gaming floor, an intimate space done in brilliant reds, soft golds and off-whites. The eye-catching glass chandeliers look like bouquets of twisted red licorice, elegant drapes adorn the perimeter and the carpet sports a pattern of paisley butterflies. In keeping with the design philosophy of the original Wynn, guests do not enter the resort by running a gauntlet of gaming tables; instead you're greeted by a peaceful, plant-filled atrium.

The 2,034-room, all-suite hotel features five restaurants, including Sinatra, an upscale Italian eatery with the Chairman's "From Here To Eternity" Oscar displayed near the front door. There's also a 60,000-square-foot spa and gym, but if you prefer, dance away the calories at the chic poolside nightclub XS. **Phone:** (702) 770-7000 or (888) 320-7123.

**EXCALIBUR HOTEL & CASINO** is at 3850 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Tropicana Ave.). Excalibur grants all who step foot within the castle a spectacular reprieve from



Flamingo Las Vegas / © Kristina D.C. Hoeppner / flickr / CC BY-SA



the life mundane. The distinctive Arthurian castle façade sets this themed-resort apart from the rest of the Strip. Red and blue spires top Excalibur's massive white, turreted castle; two huge hotel towers rise behind it. Out front, lords and ladies reach the main casino entrance by crossing a medieval drawbridge complete with periodauthentic, people mover conveyor belts.

The sword-and-sorcery theme is carried out within the casino with coats of arms on the walls, decorative turrets and "Camelot"-inspired stained glass panels. On the lower level below the casino you'll find the fun for all Fun Dungeon, which features video and carnival midway games. Entertainment at the resort includes Tournament of Kings, a Medieval Times-type dinner show with jousting and nail-biting action befitting the Middle Ages. There's also Thunder From Down Under, an Australian male revue starring strapping knights minus their shining armor, and a tribute act, The Australian Bee Gees, who bring to life the iconic catalogue of songs.

On the second floor, Castle Walk is the place to procure souvenirs, gifts for family and friends, and Renaissance Faire-type gifts (think dragon and fairy figurines).

**Phone:** (702) 597-7777 for general information, or (702) 597-7600 for show tickets.

**FLAMINGO LAS VEGAS** is at 3555 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just n. of Flamingo Rd.). Today's Las Vegas Strip would be unrecognizable to the crowd who attended the Dec. 26, 1946, ribbon-cutting at Bugsy Siegel's showplace, the fabulous Pink Flamingo Hotel & Casino. The hotel towered a whopping four stories above the desert floor. The opening night headliner was Jimmy Durante, who demolished a \$1,600 piano onstage. Top that spectacle, Gaga.

The third hotel built on the Strip is now its most senior citizen, although decades of tearing down, rebuilding and remodeling mean that not one of the original buildings survives. Three massive hotel towers featuring more than 3,500 guest rooms and suites—including the recently renovated Flamingo Rooms and Suites, and the new Bunk Bed Rooms and Suites form a horseshoe around the sprawling central pool and wildlife habitat area. Among the lush, 25 acres, you'll find a wide variety of rescued animals, including more than 60 exotic birds including Chilean flamingos, 20 turtles and more than 300 large fish, as well as a bronze plaque commemorating the site of Siegel's original structure. The resort also hosts a variety of entertainers including Paula Abdul, Piff The Magic Dragon and the late-night adult revue X Burlesque. Phone: (702) 733-3111.

**GOLDEN GATE HOTEL & CASINO** is at 1 Fremont St. Opened in 1906 as the Hotel Nevada, this downtown Vegas classic is the city's oldest hotel still in operation. A mid-1950s name change to the Golden Gate brought an old-timey San Francisco feeling to this snug gambling crib at the corner of Fremont and Main streets. Low ceilings, dark wood paneling and Art Deco lamps create a vintage vibe.

Saddening old-school Vegas fans, a 2012 renovation and expansion did away with the casino's ragtime piano music and historic photos of the City by the Bay. Also gone is the birthplace of the 99-cent shrimp cocktail, the casino's beloved Shrimp Bar & Deli.

On the bright side, the casino is spiffier than ever, and low minimum bets mean the craps and blackjack tables (a 3-2 payout is standard for the latter) are usually mobbed. Above the pit, banks of HDTVs blaze bright with sports action. Between the tables, go-go dancers shake their moneymakers to 80s dance pop. If you're packing a hefty bankroll, throw down some bills in the plush high-limit blackjack room. In the hotel lobby, history geeks can ogle displays of antique slot machines and Golden Gate artifacts. **Phone:** (702) 385-1906 for general information.

**GOLDEN NUGGET HOTEL**, downtown at 129 E. Fremont St., is a Glitter Gulch classic. "The Nug" looks almost nothing like it did when an ex-vice squad cop from L.A. spent a million bucks to have it built back in 1946. This was entrepreneur extraordinaire Steve Wynn's first major Vegas project; he bought the property in the early 1970s and spent a decade spiffing it up. While there's no mistaking the Nugget's casino for the luxe gaming floor at the Encore Las Vegas, it's arguably the nicest on Fremont Street.

Accented with dark wood paneling, mirrored walls and soft gold ambient lighting, the casino offers a good mix of table games and slots, plus a classy little poker room. The sportsbook, though small by Strip standards, is the largest you'll find in this neighborhood. The pool complex features a cool, three-story glass tube waterslide that goes *through* a 200,000-gallon shark tank. In the hotel's Gold Tower Lobby is the world's largest publicly displayed gold nugget, a nearly 62-pound whopper known as the "Hand of Faith." Troy Liquor Bar draws a loose, non-pretentious party crowd that packs the balcony overlooking the action on Fremont Street.

**Phone:** (702) 385-7111 for general information, or (866) 946-5336 for shark tank tour reservations. **GT** 

LINQ HOTEL + EXPERIENCE is at 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just n. of Flamingo Rd.). In 2015 the former Far Eastthemed Imperial Palace hotel fully morphed into the slick, hip LINQ following a \$230-million, nearly 3-year renovation. Now the porte cochere and casino entrances are all



sleek, shiny steel, reminiscent of CityCenter's mall down the street. At night, the exterior is illuminated by a rotating palette of colored lights.

Enjoy celebrated chef Guy Fieri's first Las Vegas restaurant, Guy Fieri's Vegas Kitchen & Bar, award-winning Hash House a Go Go and direct access to O'Sheas Casino, Off The Strip and Chayo Mexican Kitchen + Tequila Bar. Entertainment and nightlife options the new integrated RE:MATCH bar and 3535, a unique take on the lobby bar, as well as magician Mat Franco.

On the casino floor, The LINQ Hotel + Experience features Las Vegas' most immersive space where friends can play a wide variety of virtual reality, e-Sports, skill-based and electronic table games while surrounded by interactive art and entertainment. Home to The Book, sports fans can curate the ultimate fan experience using innovative technology, bringing them closer to the game.

Also featured is Influence, The Pool at The LINQ for adult guests only, and Spa at The LINQ with Himalayan Salt Caves, a salon and a fitness center.

For anyone seeking a sky view of Las Vegas, there's the 550-foot-tall observation wheel High Roller just steps away at The LINQ Promenade *(see attraction listing p. 94).* Additional attractions and entertainment in the open-air entertainment, retail and dining district include FLY LINQ, the first zipline on the Strip, and Jimmy Kimmel's Comedy Club. **Phone:** (800) 634-6441.

**LUXOR HOTEL AND CASINO** is at 3900 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (s. of Tropicana Ave.). One of the most recognizable resorts in Las Vegas and an icon on the city's skyline, Luxor is the ideal destination for any occasion. Its 30story pyramid is home to one of the strongest lights in the world, a 42.3 billion-candlepower beam projected from the pyramid's apex and said to be visible from outer space.

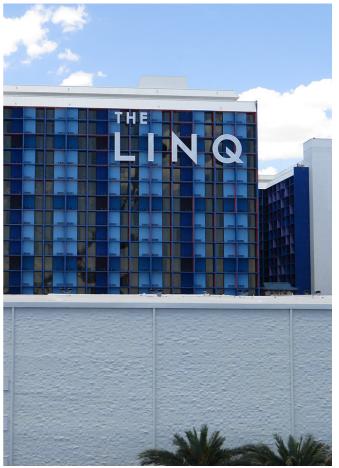
Outside, at the foot of the sphinx, you can board a free monorail linking Luxor with its neighboring properties, Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino and Excalibur Hotel & Casino. Inside, the pyramid provides comfortable rooms, savory restaurants and 120,000 square feet of casino gaming where the cheapest table minimums are \$10.

If staying at the hotel, you're in for a unique setup. Guest rooms are along the pyramid's sides. The four elevators (called "inclinators") that ascend from the base of each corner to the open-air hallways do so at a precipitous 39-degree incline.

If only visiting the casino, it's worth riding to an upper floor to marvel at the view of this cavernous, angled space, which is said could fit nine Boeing 747s stacked atop each other. **Phone:** (702) 262-4444 for general information, (702) 262-4400 for box office, or (800) 557-7428 for tickets.

**MAIN STREET STATION** is at 200 N. Main St. (at Stewart Ave.). It's worth tearing yourself away from the action on Fremont Street and walking 2 short blocks north to this under-the-radar casino decorated with a wonderful collection of Victorian antiques and artifacts. Pick up a free walking tour brochure in the lobby and peruse gorgeous pieces and decor like the ornate mahogany registration desk, pressed-tin ceilings, beveled and stained glass windows from turn-of-the-20th-century actress/singer Lillian Russell's mansion, and the bronze doors and facade of London's Kuwait Royal Bank.

Antique chandeliers abound in the casino; dangling over the pit are three glowing bronze beauties taken from the



LINQ Hotel & Casino / © Ken Lund / flickr / CC BY-SA



Coca-Cola Building in Austin. The main entry rotunda is graced by an Art Nouveau chandelier from the Figaro Opera House in Paris. Arguably the most beautiful space is the Garden Court Buffet, a big airy room filled with natural light and decorated with lazy ceiling fans, Victorian furniture and crystal beaded chandeliers that once hung in the San Francisco Opera House. One of the loveliest allyou-can-eat settings in town, its only competition in our book is the buffet space at the Wynn Las Vegas.

Still not convinced to give the place a look? Out front on Main Street you can check out Buffalo Bill Cody's private railcar. The casino's Triple 7 Restaurant and Microbrewery pours tasty pints. The slots are noticeably looser here than on the Strip. And an actual, graffiti-covered chunk of the Berlin Wall backs the urinals in the men's restroom. Gentlemen, here's your chance to properly salute the Iron Curtain. **Phone:** (702) 387-1896.

**MANDALAY BAY RESORT & CASINO** is at 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of the Luxor Hotel and Casino). This 43-story resort has just wrapped up a major remodeling project, which has given guest rooms a modern redo. The property contains more than 3,200 rooms, 10 signature restaurants and numerous shops. This lush tropical oasis features an 11-acre lagoon complete with a sand-and-surf beach, whirlpools, three exotic pools, a lazy river ride, a wave pool, 100 cabanas and a beachside casino.

The hotel's very impressive Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay (*see attraction listing p. 96*) has more than 2,000 animals and 100 species. Lush vegetation and walls of faux stone standing in for mysterious jungle temples form a backdrop for large tanks filled with piranhas, rays, ocean-dwelling schools of fish, colorful coral reef varieties and 12 different kinds of sharks.

The 12,000-seat Michelob Ultra Arena hosts top entertainment and is home to the WNBA World Champion Aces and the National Lacrosse League Desert Dogs. A monorail links Mandalay Bay to the Excalibur Hotel, with a stop at the Luxor Hotel and Casino on the return trip. Unmatched proximity, Mandalay Bay is a 0.5 mile walk to Allegiant Stadium. **Phone:** (702) 632-7777 or (877) 632-7800.

**MGM GRAND HOTEL & CASINO** is at 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just n. of Tropicana Ave.). A gargantuan 45-foottall bronze statue of Leo the MGM lion guards the front of this ridiculously huge complex, among the largest hotels on the planet. The massive, emerald-green hotel tower has four wings and soars 30 stories into the Vegas sky. The casino is so big (the size of four football fields) you may need a GPS to find your way back to the Strip.



Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino / © Erin Khoo / flickr / CC BY

Entering the impressive lobby, its ornate ceiling studded with gilded gold stars, you're greeted by a golden statue of the MGM lion perched atop a dais of flowers. Sometimes you'll see the big cat sitting inside a boxing ring or MMA cage if there's a big fight going down at MGM Grand Garden Arena; the venue also hosts major concert tours.

Most casino table minimums are in the \$15-\$25 range (par for the Strip), and the wide variety of slots (more than 2,500 mechanical bandits) will make your head spin. Curiously, the always-jumpin' BetMGM Sportsbook, though loaded with big-screen HDTVs, seems a tad small for a casino this huge.

For cocktails and booty-shakin' to the beats of big-name resident DJs like Steve Aoki, head to Hakkasan, MGM's massive, five-level, over-the-top nightclub and dining venue. You'll find it in the entry rotunda near the Stripfront doors; prepare to shell out a fortune for the cover charge and drinks.



At CBS Television City Research Center you can give a thumbs-up or down to the latest program offerings from CBS, MTV, The CW and other Viacom networks—your effort usually rewarded with coupons for casino eateries and shops. To register for the screenings, follow the signs to The District shopping/dining promenade.

A major player on the Vegas pool party scene, Wet Republic has saltwater pools and VIP bungalows, plus a sundeck stage where party guys and gals guzzle \$18 daiquiris and groove to DJs and live bands.

**Phone:** (702) 891-7777, or (877) 880-0880 for reservations.

**THE MIRAGE** is at 3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (between Flamingo and Spring Mountain rds.). When The Mirage opened in 1989 it raised the spectacle bar for Vegas megaresorts to a new level. The tropical South Seas theme creates one of the greenest hotel backdrops on the Strip. A variety of palm trees (not just the usual desertacclimated date palms), manicured shrubbery and clipped lawns are kept green with constant sprinkler system help. Pools, waterfalls and dolphin sculptures also are sprinkled about the grounds.

Inside is an atrium with a 100-foot-tall glass dome that shelters a living rain forest of palms, banana plants and other vegetation. This also may be the only Vegas hotel where visitors will feel like lingering at the registration area, courtesy of a 20,000-gallon tropical reef aquarium built into the wall behind the check-in desks.

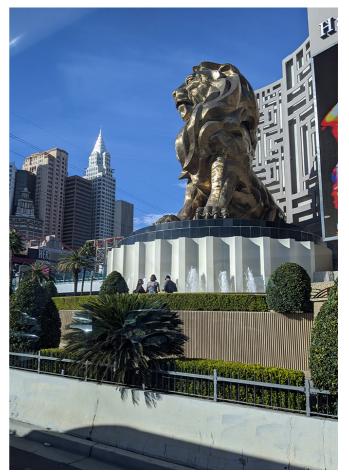
The Mirage pioneered the Vegas sidewalk spectacle with its erupting volcano. A man-made mountain rising some 50 feet from a palm-fringed lagoon, the volcano boasts effects by WET, the company behind the Fountains of Bellagio. Massive fireballs are choreographed to a hypnotic music score composed by the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart and performed by internationally renowned percussionist Zakir Hussain. A state-of-the-art sound system utilizing recordings of actual eruptions allows sidewalk observers to feel the ominous pre-eruption rumbling. Not enough excitement for you? The Mirage also is the home of Siegfried & Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat (see attraction listing p. 96).

Phone: (702) 791-7111 or (800) 374-9000.

**NEW YORK-NEW YORK** is at 3790 Las Vegas Blvd. S. Manhattan comes to the Mojave Desert at this colorful, comic bookish re-creation of the Big Apple. New York-New York opened when over-the-top themed resorts were all the rage, and it's still one of the Strip's busiest spots. A faux NYC skyline, rising incongruously above the intersection of Las Vegas Boulevard and Tropicana Avenue, has scaled-down replicas of iconic skyscrapers like the Empire State and Chrysler buildings. Fronting the Strip, a pint-size version of the Brooklyn Bridge funnels pedestrians to the casino entrance.

The casino sports a futuristic Art Deco look reminiscent of the silent film classic "Metropolis." Deco-style murals and huge black-and-white photos of Manhattan line the walls. Sleek wooden canopies decked out with gold neon swooshes, waves and squiggles stand over the table games. In the middle of the action is the chic Center Bar; nearby, The Bar at Times Square packs 'em in with its dueling pianos show. Chocolate lovers should visit the Chocolate Bar.

The BetMGM Sportsbook isn't much larger than a NYC studio apartment. The food court, one of the Strip's coolest, has casual eateries situated along walkways that recall Greenwich Village right down to the street signs and false storefronts. Upstairs, kids make a beeline for the Big



MGM Grand Hotel & Casino / © mliu92 / flickr / CC BY-SA



Apple Arcade, which has everything from high-tech video games to Skee-Ball to the angry New Yorker-inspired "Wac-a-Mayor."

A Statue of Liberty replica out front is rendered so faithfully that it was pictured (by accident) on the U.S. Postal Service's 2011 Lady Liberty Forever stamp. It stands atop a stone pedestal rising from a mini New York Harbor. Around the base are plaques writ with 9/11 tributes. Looping around the entire complex is The Big Apple Coaster, a red-tracked, Coney Island-style roller coaster with yellow cars painted to resemble Big Apple taxis.

The Park, a Strip-front plaza linking the resort with the Park MGM Las Vegas (formerly the Monte Carlo Resort & Casino), opened in spring 2016. The outdoor entertainment area is home to the new T-Mobile Arena. **Phone:** (702) 740-6969, or (800) 689-1797 for general information.

**THE PALAZZO** is at 3325 Las Vegas Blvd. S. An extension of its sister hotel, The Venetian, The Palazzo eschews the cheap buffet and bachelor party crowd in favor of an opulent Italian esthetic. The hotel suites, with their sunken living rooms and super-size baths, are ultra plush.

The casino is, well, just another casino, but certainly spiffier than some of the neighborhood's aging gaming floors. The classy lobby gets high marks for its domed skylight and translucent fountain sculptures. Adjacent high-end shopping, a glut of fine dining and the comfy Lagasse's Stadium sportsbook (where celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse runs the show and closes shop early if there's not a big game on TV) round out the list of luxury features. **Phone:** (702) 607-7777, or (702) 607-2665 for Lagasse's Stadium hours.

PARIS LAS VEGAS is at 3655 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Bally's Las Vegas). Luring you in from the Strip with a Gallic theme gone wild, this Parisian pastiche transports you to the City of Light, minus the \$1200 airline ticket. What will you do with all that money saved? Pump it into a slot machine, naturally. Here you'll gamble beneath a blue sky-painted ceiling, amid faux Parisian building facades and a scaled-down version of the Alexandre III Bridge. Some 90 table games (minimum bets start at \$10) sit under iron-grillwork canopies that look as if they came straight out of a 1920s Paris train station. Beyond the gaming floor, cobblestone streets wind past the shops and cafés of Le Boulevard (see Shopping p. 63). The Voie Spa & Salon is a luxe 25,000-square-foot facility that offers premium services for a mind-and-body wellness experience.



The Palazzo / © Srikrishna Bingi / flickr / CC BY

Outside are the luxury resort's signature landmarks. The Eiffel Tower Viewing Deck (see attraction listing p. 93) is a 50-story, half-scale replica with an observation deck at the 460-foot level and Chef Joho's acclaimed fine dining restaurant on the 11th floor. The Eiffel Tower's enhanced lighting offers a free, recurring show featuring synchronized and choreographed twinkling and colored lights for visitors to enjoy nightly. Just across from the valet entrance rises an ersatz Arc de Triomphe. The 34-story hotel tower itself is modeled after the famed Hôtel de Ville. Finally, the Strip-front hot air balloon sign, emblazoned with "Paris" in neon script, was inspired by the French-built Montgolfier balloon, which in 1783 made the world's first manned balloon flight. Commemorate mankind's ingenuity by downing a 100-ounce strawberry daiguiri, served in a collectible ceramic balloon cup and available for a small fortune at the outdoor Arc Bar directly beneath the Eiffel Tower.



The 13 restaurants include a distinctive array of fine cuisine such as French bistro Mon Ami Gabi, Italian-American offerings at Martorano's and the romantic Eiffel Tower Restaurant.

After dark, the Chateau Nightclub & Rooftop draws big crowds. **Phone:** (702) 946-7000 or (877) 796-2096.

**PARK MGM LAS VEGAS** is at 3770 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (n. of Tropicana Ave. between New York-New York and CityCenter). In Vegas, it's tough keeping up with the Joneses, especially when your neighbors are named City-Center and The Cosmopolitan. Both ultra-luxe properties have made high-profile opening splashes since the Park MGM (formerly the Monte Carlo Resort & Casino) was built back in '96. But if you thought this mega complex, modeled after the famed Place du Casino in Monaco, might be over the hill, think again.



Paris Las Vegas / © James Watt / flickr / CC BY

Park MGM has modernized and mostly de-themed its Strip-front entrance, and has become the first fully smokefree resort on the Las Vegas Strip. Though the facade still incorporates neoclassical columns and arches, the hotel's ornate statuary and fountains have been replaced by a broad, streamlined entry plaza dotted with flagstone fountains and small trees, and flanked by new sidewalk bars/restaurants. The look is decidedly less Monaco, more upscale shopping mall. Is that a good thing? You be the judge.

Inside, we love Park's straightforward, rectangular casino layout, which doesn't necessitate never-ending hunts for the baccarat tables or the bathrooms. You'll find plenty of \$10 tables here (\$5 minimums are common during offpeak hours), plus a cozy, mahogany-paneled poker room. If you're mystified by marker pucks and "come bets," a free craps lesson is available daily at 11 a.m.

The 5,200-seat Dolby Live at Park MGM hosts bigname musical acts.

At the rear entrance, the elegant, marble-floored lobby evokes the grandeur of a classic European hotel. If you're staying in the 32-story hotel tower, catch some rays and daydream of jackpots while drifting down the pool area's 400-foot-long lazy river.

The Park, a Strip-front plaza linking the resort with the MGM Park casino, opened in spring 2016. The outdoor entertainment area is home to the new T-Mobile Arena.

A free monorail connects MGM Park with next-door CityCenter and the Bellagio farther up the Strip. **Phone:** (702) 730-7777.

PLANET HOLLYWOOD RESORT & CASINO is at 3667 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Flamingo Rd.). Built on the site where the old Aladdin Hotel was imploded in 1998, this resort traded in a kitschy-cool Middle Eastern theme for a flashy, vaguely deco design. Beyond the facade's wavy wall of colorful LED lights and video billboards lies a swank, high-energy casino, with pricey table minimums to match. That doesn't seem to faze the guys playing in the Pleasure Pit, where sexy girls in red bustiers deal blackjack and go-go dance above the tables. With its comfy leather chairs and wall of HDTVs, the Playing Field Race & Sportsbook is one of the Strip's best mid-size venues for money-line maniacs. Guests can enjoy a variety of lounges and restaurants including Gordon Ramsay Burger and the award-winning Spice Market Buffet. The Scene Pool Deck at Planet Hollywood offers the Strip's first and only stand-alone wave machine, the FlowRider, as well.

As for the "Hollywood" angle, if you don't count the resident headliners (see Production Shows p. 76), eagleeyed visitors will recognize the casino as a filming location



for "What Happens in Vegas" and "Think Like a Man Too." The resort also features the 6,700-seat Zappos Theater, which showcases resident headliners such as Gwen Stefani, Christina Aguilera, Def Leppard and "Criss Angel MINDFREAK<sup>®</sup>" in the newly renovated Criss Angel Theater. The adjoining Miracle Mile Shops offers more than 170 retailers and restaurants. **Phone:** (866) 919-7472 for general information.

**PLAZA HOTEL & CASINO** at 1 Main St. (at Fremont St.) combines a vintage Rat Pack attitude with modern styling and personal customer service for the ultimate Vegas experience. Located in the heart of downtown Las Vegas, just steps away from the west end of the Fremont Street Experience.

First opened in 1971, the Plaza has undertaken several multimillion dollar renovation projects in recent years to improve the guest experience. Luxe Rooms on the top floors of the North Tower offer enhanced guest accommodations with various décor, energy efficiency and tech upgrades, including Amazon Echo Dots.

The Plaza hosts numerous events in its 30,000 square feet of refurbished ballroom and meeting space. Larger outdoor events are held at the Plaza's Core Arena, downtown's only equestrian and multipurpose facility. Hundreds of slot machines, from the latest games to traditional coin machines, and nearly two dozen table games comprise an 80,000-square-foot casino floor.

Production shows and comedians headline the classic Vegas showroom, while guests enjoy a variety of dining options led by the renowned Oscar's Steakhouse in the hotel's iconic glass dome overlooking the Fremont Street Experience. **Phone:** (702) 386-2110, (702) 386-2507 for showroom tickets, or (800) 634-6575 for the hotel.

SAHARA LAS VEGAS is at 2535 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Sahara Ave.). Built on the bones of the legendary Sahara hotel and opened in 2014, this North Strip resort ditches the old cheesy-fabulous Moroccan theme in favor of a contempo aesthetic aimed at a trendy, young crowd. At the Strip-front porte cochere you're greeted by a bizarre, 32-foot-high, silver Gumby-like statue (often compared to Patrick Star from "SpongeBob SquarePants") that's meant to be a caricature of SLS hotel chain founder, Sam Nazarian. Way cool? Or way hideous? Your call.

The 60,000-square-foot casino space is less cluttered, more streamlined than the Sahara days. Overhead, exposed AC ducts and track lighting give the ceiling a warehouse-hip feel. Suspended above the Center Bar, a rectangular LED screen shows mind-warping 3-D videos of geometric shapes, jellyfish and a floating human face that'll have you convinced someone spiked your drink.



Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino / © Chris Parker / flickr / CC BY-ND

Nearby, a hybrid sportsbook/burger restaurant/beer garden has Strip-side patio seating. Retail choices include the "Goods" shop (alpaca-hair blanket, anyone?). Throughout the hotel you'll notice a prevalent monkey motif: chimps, gorillas and apes featured in everything from artworks and sculptures to the backs of the casino dealer vests. Why the primate theme? SLS ("Style, Luxury, Service") doesn't explain, but the monkey business may have something to do with those dreaded 6:5 blackjack payouts. A handful of excellent eateries and party spots round out the resort directory. **Phone:** (702) 761-7000 or (855) 761-7757.

**TREASURE ISLAND HOTEL & CASINO** is at 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (at Spring Mountain Rd.). Don't tell Johnny Depp, but the shot-callers at Treasure Island don't think pirates are cool. When the hotel opened in the early '90s, its full-blown buccaneer theme pulled in plenty of



families—but somewhere along the line it was decided that little ones exclaiming "Look, mommy! Pirates!" apparently didn't generate nearly as much cash as hipsters dropping Benjamins at the baccarat tables. Exit most of the casino's "Pirates of the Caribbean"-style décor. Enter a subtler ambience reminiscent of a South Seas paradise.

Among the usual mix of casino table games and a decent array of slots is an amazing, intricately carved woolly mammoth tusk. It's on display near the front entrance. The sportsbook, one of the Strip's nicest, has comfy leather chairs. And in what has become a city-wide trend, TI employs sexy blackjack dealers at the "Gilley Girls Party Pit," located near Gilley's Saloon, Dance Hall & Bar-B-Que. Near the back of the casino you'll find the Mystère Theatre and a tram connecting TI with The Mirage next door. **Phone:** (702) 894-7111, or (800) 944-7444 for general information.

**TROPICANA LAS VEGAS** is at 3801 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (at Tropicana Ave.). When the Tropicana opened in 1957 it was known as "The Tiffany of the Strip." The fabulous Folies Bergère production packed the showroom. James Bond stayed at the hotel in the 1971 007 flick "Diamonds are Forever." But in recent years the Trop had become old and tired—until a renovation and expansion put new kick in the old showgirl's legs.

White marble walkways, white walls, orange-and-gold carpeting, potted palms and cream-colored slot machine seats all give the casino a bright, airy South Beach feel. Just inside the front doors a line of smart gaming tables sits beneath a vaulted, stained glass ceiling. Incorporating more than 4,000 square feet of colorful, Victorian-style glass, it's a beauty.

For sports junkies there's a tidy little book near the hotel registration desk. Steps away from the casino floor you can grab a cocktail and fret over your bet in the Tropicana Lounge.

Attention LGBTQ+ community: In a recent trend, the Trop has been actively promoting itself a gay-friendly hotel by way of casino/hotel amenities (pool parties, cock-tail bars, etc.). **Phone:** (702) 739-2222.

**THE VENETIAN LAS VEGAS** is at 3355 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just n. of Harrah's-Las Vegas). Situated on the former site of the legendary Sands Hotel, The Venetian brings a re-creation of Europe's most romantic city to the Strip.

The Venetian captures the spirit of Venice with famous landmarks, winding canals, authentic gondolas and soaring architecture. The faux Doge's Palace facade, fronted by a mini Venetian lagoon and flanked by a replica St. Mark's Campanile (bell tower) and Rialto Bridge, certainly impresses. Inside, a gorgeous Sistine Chapelesque fresco graces the entry hall ceiling. Marble columns, statuary, piazzas, bridges and cobblestone walkways pay faithful homage to the "Queen of the Adriatic"— especially in the swank Grand Canal Shoppes (see Shopping p. 63).

Hungry? Food Network fanatics will find a lineup of familiar chefs (Lagasse, Keller, Puck and the "Cake Boss") helming a slew of high-end restaurants. Gondola rides, both in the Strip-front lagoon and on the waterways of the Grand Canal Shoppes, are big with families and couples. The always-buzzing, 120,000-square-foot gaming floor, features a 10,000-square-foot sportsbook which is home to one the most impressive video screens in North America. It also offers 118 luxurious betting stations.

**Phone:** (702) 414-1000 for general information, or (702) 414-4300 for information about gondola rides.

WESTGATE LAS VEGAS RESORT & CASINO, 3000 Paradise Rd. (just s. of Sahara Ave.), opened in 1969 as



Tropicana Las Vegas / © Ellie / flickr / CC BY-SA



the International Hotel but was known as the Las Vegas Hilton for most of its storied history.

Not far from the Strip, this landmark has an air of oldschool 1970s and '80s glam that feels worlds removed from the new Vegas bling of trendsetters like The Cosmopolitan. But while the clientele consists mostly of conventioneers (the Las Vegas Convention Center is next door), the property isn't a sleepy old relic. The classy casino, decorated with crystal chandeliers, is a fun place to play. The gaming floor is on the small side, but dealers are friendly and there's a good mix of tables.

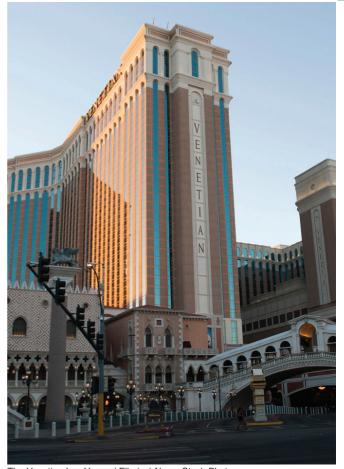
The casino's signature feature is the massive Race and Sports SuperBook, which claims to be the world's largest and resembles NASA's mission control center on steroids. A wall of monster video screens broadcasts sports action, and just outside the front doors you can mark up your Daily Racing Form. The book features new LED video screens, VIP box seating and remodeled betting windows.

The hotel also is a must-visit for devotees of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. An increasingly bloated and bespangled Elvis busted onstage karate moves and belted out his hits in the hotel's showroom for 837 consecutive sold-out shows from 1969 to 1976. A bronze likeness of Presley in the hotel lobby makes for a nice photo op. **Phone:** (702) 732-5111, or (888) 732-7117 for general information.

WYNN LAS VEGAS is at 3131 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (just s. of Desert Inn Rd.). Built in 2005 on hallowed Vegas turf—the former site of the legendary Desert Inn—über entrepreneur Steve Wynn's luxury megaresort broke new ground in casino design. The hotel—a 50-story, coppercolored, crescent-shaped tower—eschews the theme resort model in favor of a simple, bold architectural statement. Entering the main lobby, you're greeted not by beeping slots and a rowdy mob of craps players, but rather a tranquil atrium filled with trees, plants and natural light. Lovely tile mosaics add splashes of color to the marble floors. Soft jazz plays on the sound system. Tourists pose for snapshots.

Moving on to the elegant casino, high-minimum tables are the norm, and the pricey machines don't offer much relief for low-stakes gamblers. A little hunting, though, will turn up a few 25-cent slots. Card sharks love the classy poker room.

Though not visible from the Strip, in front of the hotel stands a 140-foot-tall faux mountain complete with waterfalls and lush landscaping; you'll find it near the pedestrian bridge connecting Wynn with the Palazzo across the street. Resort restaurants range from casual eateries to fine dining, though be aware in the Wynn universe "casual" does not mean cheap. Win a bundle in the casino? Go shopping at the high-end Wynn Esplanade, or book a



The Venetian Las Vegas / Ellaria / Alamy Stock Photo tee time for the on-site 18-hole golf course designed by Tom Fazio. **Phone:** (702) 770-7000 or (888) 320-7123.

#### INSIDER INFO: Explorer Pass

The Las Vegas Explorer Pass is an all-access digital pass that allows visitors to save on admission to some 40 top area attractions, shows, performances and tours. The pass saves travelers up to 56 percent off the combined admission price. Some of the available attractions include the High Roller observation wheel, Hoover Dam Highlights Tour, the hop-on hop-off Big Bus Tours, Madame Tussauds Las Vegas, the Hollywood Cars Museum and SkyPod at the STRAT. The Las Vegas Explorer Pass is available in increments of two to seven attractions and is valid for 60 days from the first date of use. The All-Inclusive Pass allows explorers to see as much as they



can for a specific amount of consecutive days. Passes are available online at gocity.com/las-vegas, or over the phone at (800) 887-9103.

#### Las Vegas Buffets

Gambling, big-name entertainers, superior restaurants and over-the-top casinos have always lured visitors to Las Vegas. But for those with hearty appetites there is no bigger attraction than the buffets. They're a Vegas tradition, the gustatory pillars of a "City That Never Sleeps" and apparently can never get enough to eat. Mountains of shrimp. Piles of golden fried chicken. Monster prime rib. Row after row of sushi rolls. An avalanche of crab legs. Desserts in every color of the rainbow. Just one meal at a Vegas buffet has the potential to put new stretch marks on your stomach, the ultimate souvenir for your upcoming vacation.

The father of the Vegas "all you can eat" affair was Herb McDonald, a casino publicist who reasoned that if you felt like you got a bargain meal, the more willing you'd be to part with money in the casino. The Strip's first buffet was the El Rancho Vegas hotel's Chuck Wagon. When it opened in 1946, dinner cost a dollar. Today there are more than 60 hotel buffets in the greater Vegas area, from perfunctory spreads to the new breed of super buffet. That's a lot of bloated bellies.

There was a time when the low-priced buffet was the only game in town. Not today. Food quality has improved, the selection is wider, and of course prices have shot higher. You can still find dirt-cheap smorgasbords (mostly in the off-Strip casinos frequented by locals), but at the megaresorts dinner prices average around \$35 per adult and climb as high as \$55 for the gourmet chow at current hot spot, Bacchanal Buffet at Caesars Palace. Keep in mind that breakfast (excluding Sunday brunches) and lunch prices at all buffets are always a few dollars cheaper.

Penny-pinchers looking to gorge themselves for under \$20 will need to head off-Strip. Gold Coast, (702) 367-7111, has a decent supper spread, plus classic carving stations (prime rib and turkey) just like its pricier brethren. Downtown, try the Garden Court Buffet at Main Street Station, (702) 387-1896.

In the \$25 to \$30 range quality gets better, and at this price tier you'll usually find all-you-can-eat shrimp. The buffet at the Westgate (formerly the LVH), (800) 732-7117, offers a made-to-order pasta station and beats most of the mid-range offerings over on the Strip. Visit the Buffet at Luxor, (702) 262-4000, for a casual Las Vegas dining experience complete with brunch items, a carving station, homemade pizza station, a 30-foot salad bar and scrumptious dessert selections.

North of \$30 you find the good stuff. Spice Market Buffet at Planet Hollywood, (702) 785-5555, has nine food stations (including an excellent Middle Eastern counter) that dish up grub a cut above your typical steam table fare. The Cravings buffet at Mirage, (702) 791-7111, lays out something for every taste, including bloat-worthy Mexican and Asian stations. The Cosmopolitan's Wicked Spoon buffet, (702) 698-7000, does a nice daily brunch. The MGM Grand Buffet, (702) 891-6373, offers an array of cuisine that is sure to satisfy any type of hunger. Rio's Carnival World & Seafood Buffet, (702) 777-7777, whips up a huge international feast that devotees swear is the best in town.

Bellagio, (702) 693-7111, and Caesars Palace, (702) 731-7110, are the top of the line both in taste and price. These are bounteous spreads with an array of quality meats, plenty of made-to-order stations and outrageous dessert selections.

Want to worship at multiple temples of gluttony for a single, discounted price? Look into the Buffet of Buffets deal. For a 24-hour period, a wristband grants you unlimited access to six buffets at Vegas hotels owned by Caesars Entertainment. If your stomach can handle it, phone (702) 862-3530 for details.

Vegas buffets are hugely popular and don't accept reservations. For dinner, arrive before 6:00 or after 9:00 to avoid long lines.

#### Long Hauling

Some cabbies (especially departing the airport) like to practice the despicable art of "long hauling," in which they'll drive those unfamiliar with Vegas a circuitous route in order to boost the fare. McCarran International Airport posts approximate rate information on doors 1 and 4 of Terminal 1 as well as at Terminal 3's taxi stands, so be aware. With Strip- and downtown-bound passengers aboard, a favorite trick is driving south from the airport through the tunnel under the runways, then taking the I-215 and I-15 freeways to your hotel. This route is almost always a long haul, which can inflate the fare \$8-\$12. The only instances in which the tunnel and/or freeways might constitute a legitimate route are if you're destined for South Vegas, Henderson or far West Vegas. Also, if surface street traffic is particularly heavy, a reasonable case can be made for reaching downtown via I-15 by way of Tropicana Ave. (though never the tunnel).

Otherwise, rides from the airport to major Strip and downtown hotels should always be via north-south streets Swenson/Paradise Rd., Koval Ln., Las Vegas Blvd. (the Strip) or Frank Sinatra Dr./Industrial Rd. When you hop in the cab, politely tell the driver "Please don't take the tunnel and freeway." He may argue it'll be faster. Stand firm, especially if your hotel is on the Strip. If you suspect



you're being long-hauled, inform the driver you're hip to the scam and will report him to the Nevada Taxicab Authority (phone 702-668-4000), which in an effort to combat the long-hauling epidemic sometimes operates a taxi checkpoint at the airport's south tunnel entrance. There's no need to add an expensive and unnecessary headache to your trip.



# Explore Things To Do, visit AAA.com/tripcanvas

**BELLAGIO GALLERY OF FINE ART** is at 3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S. in the Bellagio Hotel. The gallery houses a diverse range of rotating fine art exhibits from around the world. Exhibits featured in the past have included works from Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. The current exhibition, Caldonia: Concert and Film Posters from the Ralph Deluca Collection, presents posters of African American performers who changed the shape of American music, including such musicians as Louis Armstrong, James Brown, Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder.

Under age 17 must be accompanied by an adult. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 639-7870 or (888) 488-7111. **GT** 

**CITYCENTER LAS VEGAS** is at 3720 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (between Bellagio and Park MGM). This high-profile complex includes three hotel properties—ARIA Resort & Casino, Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas and Vdara Hotel & Spa—the all-residential Veer Towers and The Shops at Crystals, an upscale shopping mall. Between ARIA and the Waldorf Astoria are a handful of sculptures along the walkway between the two hotels, including Claes Oldenburg's and Coosje van Bruggen's whimsical "Typewriter Eraser, Scale X."

Skybar, on the 23rd floor of the ultra-luxe Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas, boasts nice views of the Strip. In front of the Vdara, on an island across from the valet driveway, is "Big Edge," a large-scale sculpture created from salvaged kayaks, canoes, rowboats and other vessels. This attention-getting piece fits right in with other examples of wacky Vegas eye candy.

The Veer Towers have a yellow-and-black checkered exterior and lean in opposite directions at a 5-degree angle. Adding to the prevailing futuristic Jetsons vibe is the people-mover tram that winds through CityCenter on an elevated track and an art installation of otherworldly colored light in the Crystals tram station, designed by artist James Turrell. This self-described "city within a city" even creates its own wind canyon effect, a loud whining hum that's quite evident on breezy days as you walk from ARIA to the Waldorf Astoria.

**DISCOVERY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM** is at 360 Promenade PI., in the Donald W. Reynolds Discovery Center in Symphony Park on The Smith Center campus. The threestory facility contains nine hands-on exhibits about science, arts and early childhood development.

Among the interactive exhibits are a 70-foot, 12-level jungle gym, a water play area that teaches about the movement of water and a pirate ship where puppet shows take place. In Solve It!, children are given clues and have to investigate and solve a mystery. Another exhibit focuses on nutrition and explains how food portion sizes and physical activity are integral to a healthy lifestyle. There's also a padded, desert-themed play area for toddlers. Traveling exhibits also are offered.

**Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (702) 382-5437 or (702) 382-3445.

**EIFFEL TOWER VIEWING DECK** is at Paris Las Vegas, 3655 Las Vegas Blvd. S. This half-scale, 541-foot-tall replica of the Paris, France landmark has a caged observation deck at the 460-foot level that encircles the top of the tower. The panoramic vista from this elevated perspective at the heart of the Strip will remind you just how big Vegas has become. There's a bird's-eye view of Bellagio (and its fountains), CityCenter, Bally's Las Vegas, Caesars Palace and other resorts in the immediate area. Viewing telescopes allow you to zero in on specific landmarks. A free, nightly light show on the tower's exterior occurs every 30 minutes on the hour and half hour from dusk until midnight.

**Note:** The Eiffel Tower Viewing Deck ticket office is inside the casino, fairly close to the front doors. Take the escalator up to the second level and the tower elevators. **Phone:** (702) 946-7000 or (888) 727-4758.

**FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE** comprises the 5-blk. stretch of Fremont St. between Main St. and Las Vegas Blvd. The city's original casino row is on Fremont Street, long ago nicknamed "Glitter Gulch" for its colorful riot of neon signs. Unlike the widely spaced megaresorts on the Strip, here the casinos are smaller and closer to one another, forming a pedestrian-only gambling mall.

A 90-foot-wide canopy arching over four blocks is the centerpiece of the Fremont Street Experience. Nearly 50 million, state-of-the-art LEDs and an ear-splitting, 600-million watt sound system combine for this immersive extravaganza. Known as "Viva Vision," the canopy's underside blazes bright with light and high-definition video





Eiffel Tower Viewing Deck / © Sean MacEntee / flickr / CC BY

presentations synchronized to music from legendary musical artists.

Grab a drink, crane your neck and get ready for an all-out audiovisual blitz. The "experience" also features live music, sidewalk artists and street performers of every stripe. The constant parade of stilt walkers, showgirls decked out in full regalia, go-go dancers, Elvis impersonators and people dressed as celebrities and movie characters all makes for hugely entertaining people watching. Adventurers can fly from the 11-story slot machine-inspired SlotZilla Zipline which offers two flights, both flying over the city's original Las Vegas Strip: the upright seated Zip-Zilla or the prone-style Superhero-Zoom. **Phone:** (702) 678-5600, or (702) 678-5780 for SlotZilla.

**HIGH ROLLER** is at 3545 Las Vegas Blvd. S. at The LINQ Promenade; a nearby parking lot is behind the LINQ complex at jct. Koval Ln. and Winnick Ave. This 550-foot-tall structure claims the title for world's tallest observation wheel. Up to 40 people can fit inside each of the 28 air-conditioned pods, which have bench seating. Each wheel rotation lasts 30 minutes. The wheel moves so slowly that it never completely stops for boarding; you just saunter in while it's in motion. Starting at dusk, the wheel is illuminated by more than 2,000 color-changing LED lights.

Keep in mind that you'll have to put up with some views of parking garages and the backs of hotel buildings for some of the ride, but you'll ultimately be rewarded with an amazing 360-degree view of Sin City. You'll see the Strip, including the Bellagio fountains and Paris Las Vegas' Eiffel Tower, and the Spring Mountains off in the distance. Throughout the ride the entertainment switches between music and a video that is shown on a half-dozen HDTV screens. While the video narrator's humor leaves a bit to be desired, you will benefit from him sharing some wheel facts and pointing out Vegas landmarks.

**Note:** Passengers' belongings will be searched by security prior to the ride. **Time:** Allow 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (702) 322-0593 or (800) 634-6441.

**KISS BY MONSTER MINI GOLF** is at 3700 W. Flamingo Rd. in Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. This indoor, glow-inthe-dark, 18-hole miniature golf course includes state-ofthe-art video, KISS props and a large openmouthed Gene Simmons head with an extended tongue. Other features include a state-of-the-art arcade, the "Love It Loud" Rock N Roll Wedding Chapel and a KISS memorabilia gallery. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 558-6256.

**MADAME TUSSAUDS LAS VEGAS** is on the s. side of The Venetian hotel via the moving walkway that leads from the Strip to the casino entrance; follow signs. Enter this museum and you first find yourself "mingling" at a cocktail party with such Hollywood stars as Sean Connery, Johnny Depp, Liz Taylor and Angelina Jolie. None of the figures are behind ropes, so you can have your picture taken with the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio or Cameron Diaz. Oprah and Larry King are here, too.

There are the usual musical suspects—Michael Jackson, Madonna, JLo, Elvis, Britney and Tim McGraw—as well as recent additions Justin Bieber, Bradley Cooper and Zach Galifianakis. Sports stars include Shaquille O'Neal, Tiger Woods and Evel Knievel. Vegas legends run the gamut from old school—Bob Hope, Liberace, Tom Jones, Wayne Newton, Debbie Reynolds and the Rat Pack—to stars of today, like Criss Angel and Celine Dion. And yes, President Barack Obama is in the Spirit of America room, along with John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Benjamin Franklin.



Three particularly popular exhibits are Club Tussauds, where anyone can party with the stars in a sleek, ultralounge setting, The Hangover Bar and Viva Vegas, which showcases the culture, vibe and personalities that have helped and continue to make Las Vegas the worldwide attraction it is today. The Marvel Comics character-themed 4-D theater also is part of the attraction. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 862-7800.

**MARVEL'S AVENGERS S.T.A.T.I.O.N.**, 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S. at Treasure Island Hotel & Casino, is a superhero fanatic's dream. You'll explore the headquarters of the Scientific Training and Tactical Intelligence Operative Network, where you'll learn all about The Avengers and go through agent training.

A complimentary interactive app tells the story behind Marvel characters as you move through a series of rooms, each dedicated to a popular superhero. You can opt to answer quiz questions along the way to test your knowledge. Displays feature a collection of film props and costumes, from Thor's hammer to Ironman's suits, with the majority of the items actually used on-screen.

**Note:** Food and beverages are not permitted in the attraction. **Phone:** (702) 897-7626 (box office), or (702) 894-7111 (hotel general information).

THE MOB MUSEUM, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ORGANIZED CRIME & LAW ENFORCEMENT is at 300 Stewart Ave. A variety of immersive exhibits, films and high-tech audio displays are showcased in this restored neoclassical building, the former federal courthouse where some of the Kefauver Committee organized crime hearings took place in the 1950s. The collection, encompassing four floors, explores the history of the Mob in the United States; how this criminal network was brought down by raids, arrests and indictments; the Mob's portrayal in movies, books and pop culture; and what organized crime is doing today and how law enforcement is responding.

Visitors get an up-close look at such infamous figures as Al Capone, Bugsy Siegel and John Gotti. Also offered are depictions of men like Eliot Ness, Elmer Irey and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who worked tirelessly to bring mobsters and criminals to justice. Interactive exhibits include a crime lab (ages 11 and older), a firearms training simulator (ages 13 and older) and a touch wall where visitors can explore the intricate world of organized crime today.

In the basement, the Prohibition era is brought back to life at The Underground, an immersive exhibit featuring a speakeasy, a working distillery and private VIP room located behind a hidden door. After 5 p.m., all guests must be age 21 and older to visit The Underground or participate in the distillery tour. **Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (702) 229-2734. **GT** (1)

**PINBALL HALL OF FAME** is e. of the Strip at 1610 E. Tropicana Dr. (just w. of Spencer St.). Pinball aficionados should head straight for this collection of more than 200 vintage machines and arcade games, most of them from the '60s, '70s and '80s, pinball's glory days. They include Night Rider, complete with buxom truck stop waitress artwork; Bally's Captain Fantastic, featuring the Rocket Man himself, Elton John; and the Wizard, with the Who's Roger Daltrey and Ann-Margret striking a provocative pose on the back glass. There are also more modern games, including Star Trek and Game of Thrones.

Wonderfully cheesy pinball art graces machines with names like Kings & Queens, Aquarius, Star-Jet and Impacto. Rarities include Gottlieb's Challenger, a two-player,



The Mob Museum, National Museum of Organized Crime & Law Enforcement /  $\circledcirc$  Phil Guest / flickr / CC BY-SA



head-to-head machine with flippers at opposite ends of the table, and The Pinball Circus, a vertical machine. Handwritten index cards provide brief histories. Machines in various stages of disrepair await restoration. You'll also see classic arcade games (shooting gallery rifles, mechanical baseball) and early '80s video games like Space Invaders and Asteroids. **Phone:** (702) 597-2627.

**RED ROCK CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVA-TION AREA** is about 16 mi. w. on Charleston Blvd. (SR 159) from jct. I-15 exit 41; follow signs to the visitor center. Even the drive to this 197,000-acre conservation area is spectacular, leaving behind the Strip's neon glitter for stark desert landscapes. The varied terrain encompasses sandstone hills, ravines, canyons and rugged peaks. Ponderosa pine, creosote bush, Joshua tree and many types of cactus plants are among the native flora; wildlife includes cactus wren, red-tailed hawks and bighorn sheep.

Casual sightseers can experience Red Rock Canyon by traveling the 17-mile scenic drive, which branches off SR 159 and is one way for both vehicles and cyclists. Hiking trails are accessible from designated parking lots. More than 30 hiking and multiuse trails lead you to iconic desert views, some through canyons, and if you're here in the right season you may spot a waterfall or tinaja.

The Moenkopi Loop, a 2-mile trail that begins at the visitor center, is an easy hike up to a lookout point. But most visitors head for the Calico Hills, the area's main red rock formations, where a hiking trail runs along the base of the rocks. Another popular hike is the Calico Tanks Trail (2.5 miles round-trip). This moderately strenuous trek skirts some nice red and white sandstone formations before heading up into a pretty side canyon, where lots of big rocks offer opportunities for a little off-trail scrambling and exploring.

The visitor center has a display of Native American rock art and a video slide show about the growth of Las Vegas over the past century. Chat with a volunteer at the information desk. Hands-on outdoor exhibits offer a crash course on the area's natural features.

**Note:** Red Rock Canyon can get very crowded from fall through spring, especially on weekends; visit mid-week or get an early start if you prefer a little more solitude. Timed entry reservations are required for the Scenic Drive between October-May for entry between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (702) 515-5350 for general information.

SHARK REEF AQUARIUM AT MANDALAY BAY is at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino (3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). Fearsome creatures of the deep—and no, we don't mean the bleary-eyed souls hunched over the craps table—reign at this aquarium, which has three major exhibit areas: Jungle, Temple and Shipwreck. Jungle highlights include a tank of piranhas (usually encircled by camera-toting tourists waiting for an elusive baring of razor-sharp teeth), a Komodo dragon residing in a glasswalled pen and four fresh-water Johnston's crocodiles.

The Temple has an Indiana Jones adventure themewalkways lined with exotic foliage and faux stone walls. It's entered via the walk-through Reef Tunnel, with seethrough Plexiglas offering views of tropical fish and some small sharks and rays. Here you'll find a touch pool inhabited by the usual suspects (anemones, urchins, crabs, starfish), a very cool moon jellyfish tank, a giant Pacific octopus and beautifully bizarre-looking lionfish.

The Shipwreck exhibit looks like the cargo hold of a sunken pirate ship, with glass walls looking into a 1.3-million gallon tank filled with all kinds of sharks, big schools of ocean-dwelling fish, endangered green sea turtles and barracuda giving you the evil eye. This is a top-of-the-line facility and a great place to take the kids for a couple of hours when it's too hot to sightsee. Animal encounter programs are offered for an additional fee.

**Note:** The aquarium entrance is inside the hotel, near the convention halls and swimming pool area. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 632-4555.

**SIEGFRIED & ROY'S SECRET GARDEN AND DOL-PHIN HABITAT** is at 3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S. at The Mirage. Visitors can view the white lions of Timbavati, rescued from the brink of extinction by a conservation program established by entertainers Siegfried & Roy. Tigers, panthers and leopards also can be seen lounging or swimming in naturalistic settings. The Dolphin Habitat contains areas where the animals can be observed frolicking from above and underwater.

Such hands-on animal encounters as the Dolphin Trainer 101 and the Painting with the Dolphins experience are available for an additional fee; phone ahead for more information. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 791-7111 or (702) 791-7588.

THE SPRINGS PRESERVE is between US 95 and Alta Dr. at 333 S. Valley View Blvd. This outstanding 180-acre cultural and educational facility has six main exhibit areas: The Nevada State Museum (see separate listing), the Origen Museum, the Desert Living Center, the Botanical Garden, Trails and Train Rides and Boomtown 1905. The Origen Museum is packed with interactive exhibits aimed mainly at kids. A simulated flash flood and videos of desert wildlife are among the many displays that cover the geological and biological history of the Mojave Desert. Other highlights include Dinosaur Tracks complete with real ichnogenus Grallator footprints;





The Springs Preserve / © iStockphoto.com / SweetyMommy

the Hoover Dam Exhibit with a film and a scaled recreation of the dam; The Railroad, home to a railroad car along with sculpted figures telling stories about railroad life; and Land Auction which immerses visitors into the 1905 land auction that launched the boom town of Las Vegas. Be sure to catch the 8-minute film narrated by Martin Sheen (in the Big Springs Theater just off the lobby); this quick natural history overview has great photography and awesome sound.

Outside, the Living Collections is a live animal exhibit area featuring snakes, desert tortoises, lizards, gophers and other native Mojave species. The Desert Living Center, housed in five energy-saving and environmentally friendly buildings, contains classrooms, labs and galleries for temporary exhibits. Live animal presentations and science shows are given. Boomtown 1905 is a life-size recreation of the first Las Vegas streetscape. Across from Boomtown is WaterWorks, housed in the Charleston Heights Pumping Station, an operational pumping facility where visitors experience a behind-the-scenes look at the journey water takes to reach your tap.

The 8-acre Botanical Garden is laced with walking trails and features interpretive stations (there are more hiking trails on the north side of the complex). A seasonal butterfly habitat in the garden is open every spring and fall. Weather too hot for a walk? Hop aboard the preserve's replica trackless train, which tire-wheels you on a narrated, 20-minute tour along the 2.2-mile Exploration Loop Trail.

Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas is on the grounds of The Springs Preserve at 309 S. Valley View Blvd. The history of Nevada comes alive at this impressive interactive museum, where video touch screens, audio stations and even holograms help tell the story of the Silver State. The 13,000-square-foot main gallery covers it all, from the Great Basin's geology and prehistoric beasts (including the skeleton of a 250 millionyear-old ichthyosaur) to Native Americans, early settlers, miners, railroaders and ranchers.

You'll also find exhibits covering the Hoover Dam and Nevada's atomic bomb testing site. Old-school Vegas aficionados will treasure display cases filled with vintage hotel/casino ephemera, antique slot machines and sparkly showgirl costumes. The Hallway Galleries carry all the Glitz and Glamor of Las Vegas displaying just some of the 8,000-piece Folies Bergère costume archive. Las Vegas: Wedding Capital of the World showcases a traditional western wedding dress, one of many from the collection. A temporary gallery hosts changing exhibits.

Note: The museum is open Thursday through Monday. Phone: (702) 486-5205 or (702) 822-8753.

**THE STRAT HOTEL, CASINO & SKYPOD** is at 2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S. The STRAT Hotel literally towers over its neighbors, offering a spectacular panorama of the city from both indoor and outdoor observation decks. Visitors catch a ride in the elevator to the top of SkyPod, the 1,149-foot-tall tower, to an outdoor selfie spot on level 112. Here adventurers can ride Big Shot, a free fall-type ride that shoots you up to the very tippy-top of the SkyPod mast at 45 mph. The tower is purportedly the largest freestanding observation tower in the country.

Head on down to level 109, home to Insanity, a mechanical clawlike contraption that swings out beyond the tower's edge and spins riders around in circles 900 feet above the Strip. Also here is X-Scream, a short-track, teeter-totter type roller coaster, taking riders 27 feet out





Stratosphere Tower / © iStockphoto.com / mvp64

from the edge of the SkyPod tower for yet another gutclutching scare. The two-level indoor and outdoor deck, wrapped in floor-to-ceiling windows, has comfy couches where you can kick back and take in the view. And what a view it is: The massive Strip resorts look positively Lilliputian from this elevated perspective, with distant Red Rock Canyon and the Spring Mountains visible to the west. SkyJump on level 108 lets daredevils experience a bungee-like plummet of 829 feet with speeds topping 40 mph from the SkyPod tower. A wedding chapel is for use on level 103.

**Note:** The ticket center is located on the casino level. Visitors must pass through an airport-style security checkpoint before boarding the elevators for the ride up. Age and height restrictions apply to rides. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (702) 380-7777 or (800) 998-6937.

VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK—see Overton p. 132.

### Sightseeing

There are other ways to spend time and money in Las Vegas than inside a casino during a vacation or business trip. A daylong sightseeing tour of the city and nearby attractions can be a relaxing intermission from a hectic agenda of casino hopping, checking out various restaurants and shows.

#### **Aerial Tours**

Air tours of the Grand Canyon or Lake Mead area are available from Las Vegas or Boulder City for those looking for a different kind of airlines and air flights. The following list represents a sampling of companies available and is provided for information only: Grand Canyon Airlines, (702) 835-8484; Maverick Helicopters, (702) 261-0007 or (888) 261-4414; and Wit Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters, (702) 736-7243.

#### **Boat Tours**

A combination tour of Hoover Dam and a cruise on Lake Mead is offered by Lake Mead Cruises; phone (866) 292-9191 to get in some time on the water between airline flights.

#### Bus, Four-wheel-drive and Van Tours

Guided bus tours of downtown and surrounding points of interest, including the Grand Canyon's South and West Rims, Hoover Dam and Lake Mead, are offered by Gray Line Las Vegas; phone (702) 739-7777 or (877) 333-6556.

HAUNTED VEGAS TOUR & GHOST HUNT departs from Tuscany Suites and Casino (255 E. Flamingo Rd.). This 2.5-hour bus tour of Las Vegas highlights the haunting grounds of such public figures as Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel and Elvis as well as the so-called "Motel of Death," where numerous celebrities have died. You'll hear creepy tales about the area and its supernatural residents and also take part in a ghost investigation using EMF meters, temperature guns and "ghost finder" dowsing rods. The tour includes stops at a spooky haunted park; a bridge said to be the hangout of two spirits; and the former home of comedian Redd Foxx, who supposedly still roams the Las Vegas residence seized by the IRS in 1989 due to unpaid taxes. Admission includes dowsing rods and a pizza dinner. A 4-hour ghost hunt to Goodsprings also is offered.

Phone: (702) 677-6499 or (866) 218-4935. GT

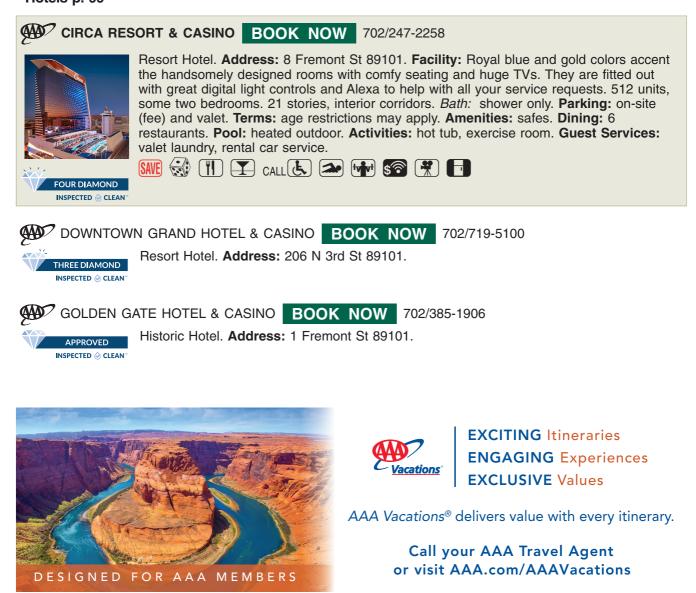
**VEGAS MOB TOUR** departs from the Tuscany Suites and Casino (255 E. Flamingo Rd.). Organized crime buffs



will enjoy this 2.5-hour bus tour of Vegas locations associated with the city's riveting—and violent—mob history. Dressed in full pinstriped regalia, guides discuss such notorious Mafia figures as Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, Anthony "The Ant" Spilotro, Frank Cullotta and Sam "Momo" Giancana while shuttling passengers to sites where murders, robberies and other mob activity occurred. After the tour, guests are invited to "Geno's Pizza Party."

**Time:** Allow 4 hours minimum. **Phone:** (702) 677-6499 or (866) 218-4935. **GT** 

#### DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS • Hotels p. 99





#### LAS VEGAS

Hotels p. 100 • Restaurants p. 123

# ARIA RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/590-7111

# MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. **Address:** 3730 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158. **Facility:** This large property has a metropolitan feel featuring contemporary art and natural lighting. Guest rooms provide the latest technology including touch pads to request personalized services. 3562 units. 54 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 8 restaurants, also, Bardot Brasserie, Carbone, CATCH, Javier's Finest Foods of Mexico, Jean Georges Steakhouse, Julian Serrano, see separate listings, nightclub, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, cabanas, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, rental car service. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.



# ARIA SKY SUITES BOOK NOW 702/590-9550



**FIVE DIAMOND** 

INSPECTED 🥝 CLEAN

FOUR DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN

```
MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!
Contemporary Hotel. Address: 3730 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158.
```

**Facility:** The pampering begins with a complimentary limo ride from the airport to a private drive where guests are greeted by name. The suites are styled with spectacular opulence and high-tech integration. 440 units, some two and three bedrooms. 59 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, also, Bardot Brasserie, Carbone, CATCH, Javier's Finest Foods of Mexico, Jean Georges Steakhouse, Julian Serrano, see separate listings, nightclub, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, cabanas, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, rental car service. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.

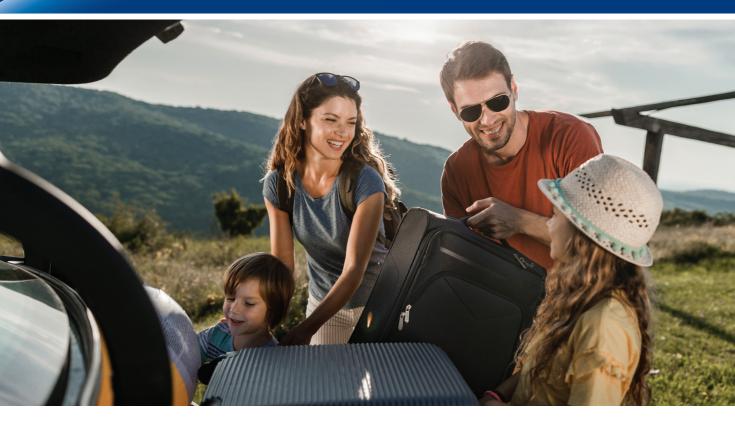




▲ For getaways off the beaten path, visit AAA.com/campgrounds or AAA.com/maps for thousands of places to camp.



## BW Best Western. Hotels & Resorts

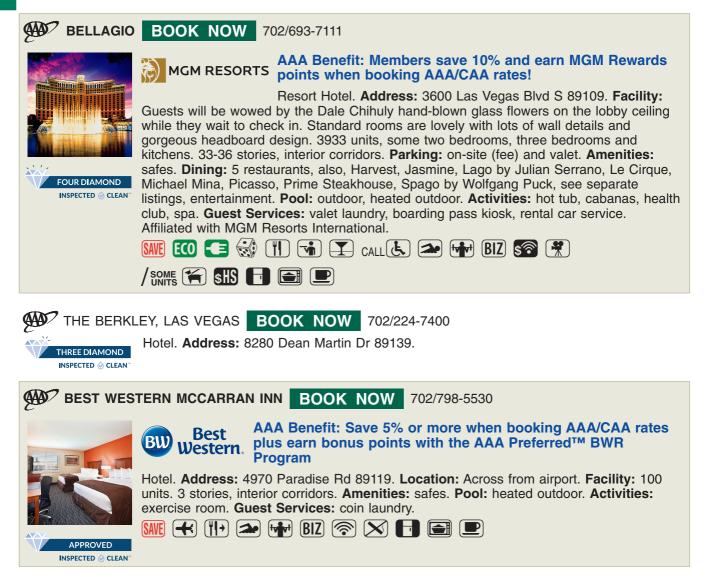


# Hit The Road With Best Western<sup>®</sup> Hotels & Resorts

Members save with the AAA rate, plus earn bonus points and elite member status when joining the AAA Preferred<sup>™</sup> Best Western Rewards<sup>®</sup> program.

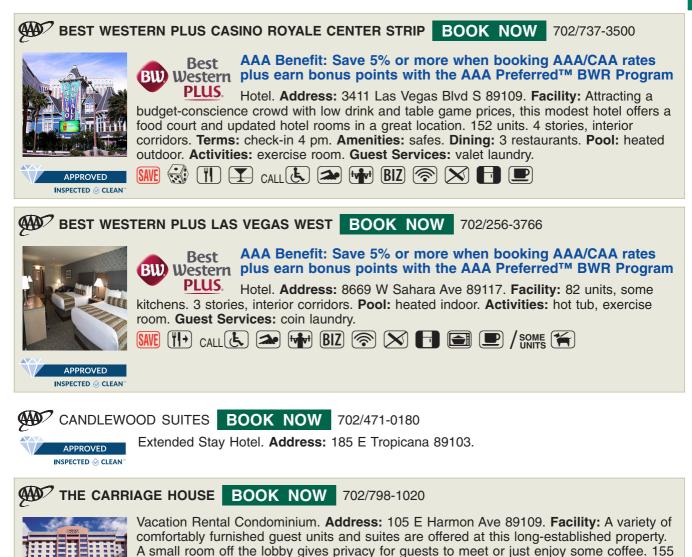


Restrictions apply. Visit bestwestern.com/AAA for program terms and conditions. \*Amenities and extras may be available only in North America. BWH<sup>™</sup> hotels are independently owned and operated. AAA and the AAA marks are service marks or registered service marks of the American Automobile Association. Best Western and the Best Western marks are service marks or registered service marks of Best Western International, Inc. ©2023 Best Western International, Inc. All rights reserved.











SAVE

THREE DIAMOND

condominiums, some efficiencies and kitchens. 9 stories, interior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, tennis,

BIZ 🛜 🗙 🗖 🚍 🗩

exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.

CONRAD LAS VEGAS AT RESORTS WORLD BOOK NOW 702/676-7000



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: 111 Resorts World Dr 89109.

# THE COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS BOOK NOW 702/698-7000



FOUR DIAMOND

MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. **Address:** 3708 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. **Facility:** The very trendy hotel features a three-story chandelier in the lobby and four multi-level lounges at the center. Rooms live up to the Cosmopolitan name with the trendiest decor and fun hidden details. 3043 units, some two and three bedrooms. 61-75 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 20 restaurants, also, Beauty & Essex, China Poblano, STK, see separate listings, nightclub, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, tennis, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, rental car service. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.



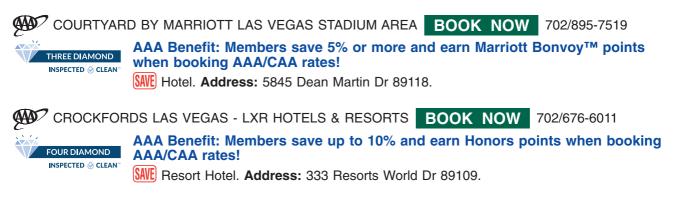
COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT LAS VEGAS CONVENTION

CENTER BOOK NOW 702/791-3600



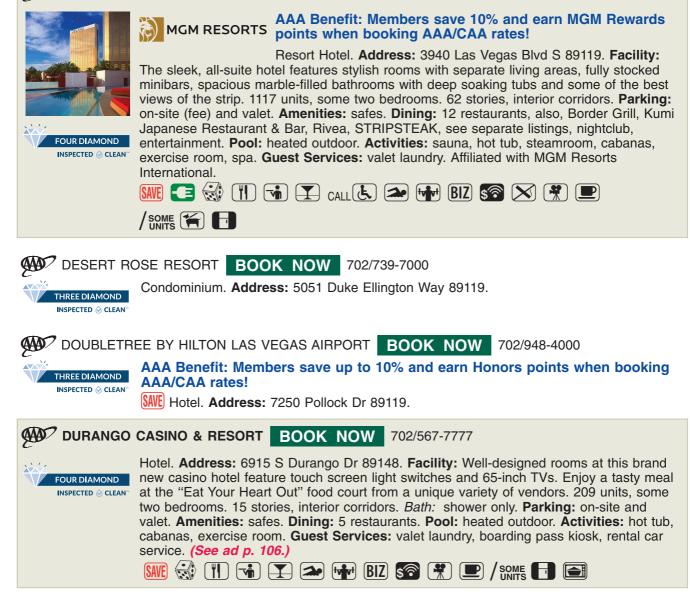
AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 3275 Paradise Rd 89109.





# DELANO LAS VEGAS BOOK NOW 702/632-7777



ELARA BY HILTON GRAND VACATIONS **BOOK NOW** 702/669-6700 **fyi** Vacation Rental Condominium. Under major renovation, call for details. **Last Designation:** Three Diamond. **Address:** 80 E Harmon Ave 89109.





# Home Sweet Home<sub>TM</sub> Welcome To Our Oasis In The Desert

Inspired by the warm colors of the desert, Durango Casino & Resort is a new luxury resort destination by Station Casinos in the Southwest Valley near I-215 and Durango, just a short drive from The Strip. Durango offers chic room and suite accommodations, a vibrant restaurant row, an eclectic Hall of Foods and a lively casino and STN Sportsbook. The property offers complimentary valet and convenient free parking.

Book Now



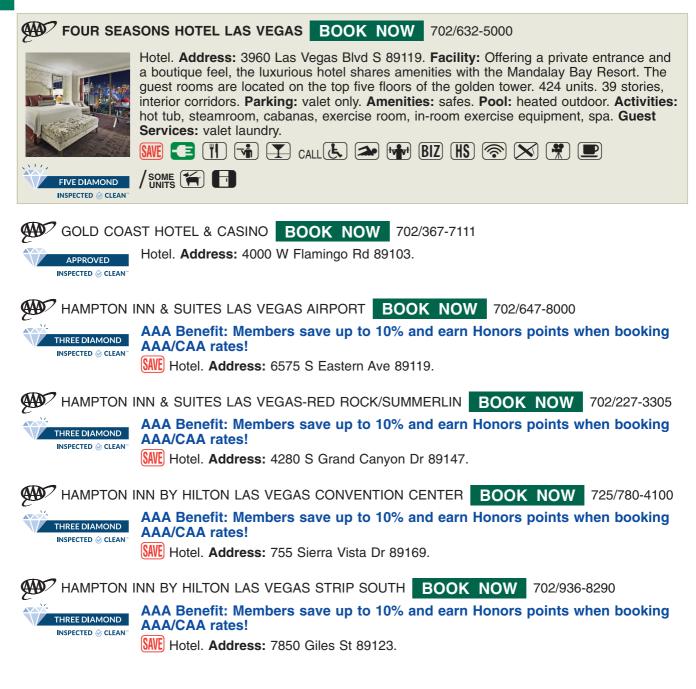
800.731.7333 | 6915 S. Durango Drive | Las Vegas, NV 89148

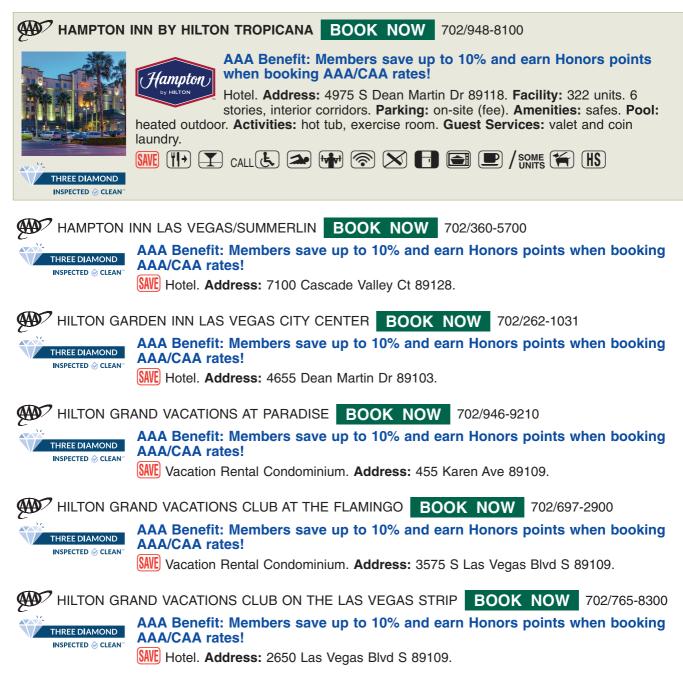


LIFESTYLE

facebook.com/durangoresort
@durangoresort

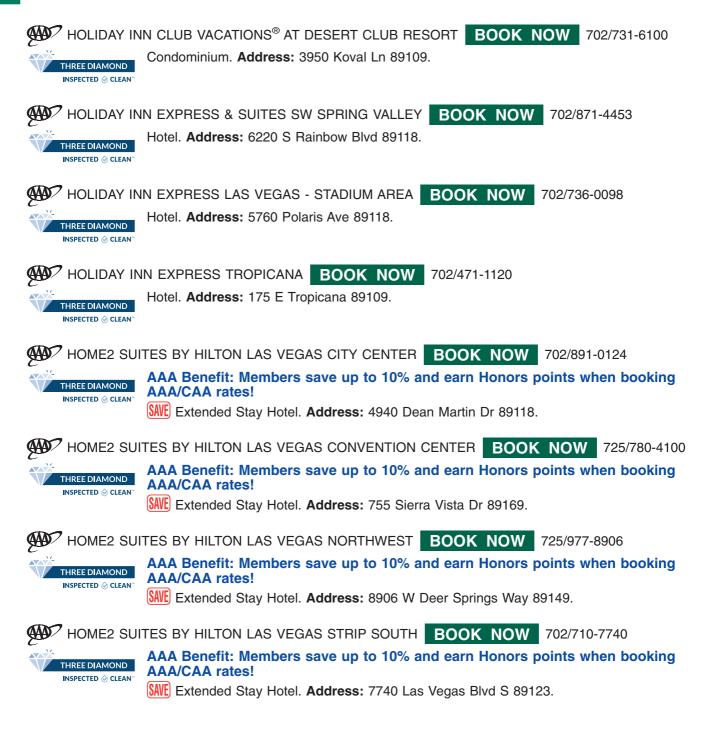








#### 110 LAS VEGAS, NV









AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 4365 E Craig Rd 89115.

HOMEWOOD SUITES BY HILTON LAS VEGAS CITY CENTER BOOK NOW 702/598-0101



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Extended Stay Hotel. Address: 4625 Dean Martin Dr 89103.

### HYATT PLACE LAS VEGAS BOOK NOW 702/369-3366



**AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also receive free breakfast at Hyatt Place/Hyatt House with their World of Hyatt membership!** 

Hotel. **Address:** 4520 Paradise Rd 89169. **Facility:** 202 units. 6 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee). **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** exercise room. **Guest Services:** valet laundry.



HYATT PLACE LAS VEGAS AT SILVERTON VILLAGE BOOK NOW 702/575-6201



HYATT PLACE. AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also receive free breakfast at Hyatt Place/Hyatt House with their World of Hyatt membership!

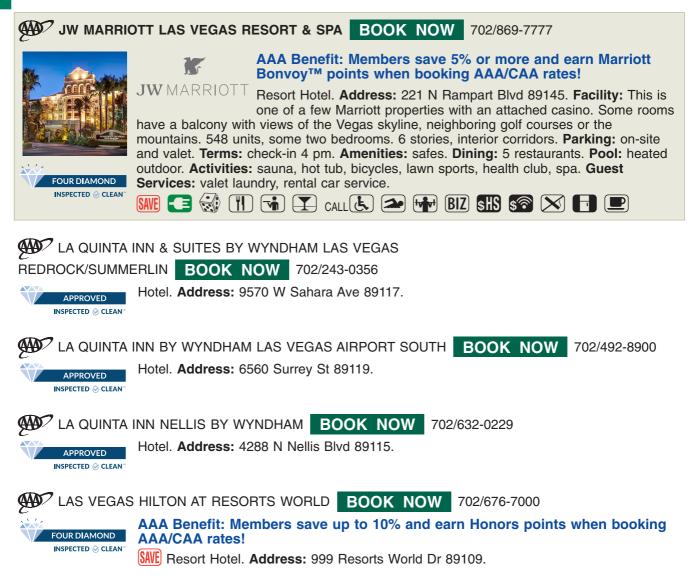
Hotel. **Address:** 8380 Dean Martin Dr 89139. **Facility:** 150 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, exercise room. **Guest Services:** valet laundry.





## on the road: AAA.com/safety





# Use the free travel planning tools at AAA.com/maps



## LAS VEGAS MARRIOTT BOOK NOW 702/650-2000



INSPECTED 🎯 CLEAN



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 325 Convention Center Dr 89109. Facility: 278 units. 17 MARRIOTT stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Amenities: safes. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, exercise room. Guest Services: valet

and coin laundry.

SAVE ECO 💶 🖺 🖬 玊 call 🔄 🗻 🖬 BIZ 🌠 🔀 😤 🗖 💻

## LUXOR HOTEL AND CASINO BOOK NOW 702/262-4000



APPROVED

INSPECTED 🧼 CLEAN

MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 3900 Las Vegas Blvd S 89119. Facility: A 350-foot, glass-faced pyramid crowned by a vertical light beam is the central feature of this Egyptian-themed hotel. Rooms features vary by style and location. The Towers offer the most upgrades. 4397 units, some two bedrooms. 22-30 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** sauna, hot tub, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, rental car service. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.



MANDALAY BAY RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/632-7777



# MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. **Address:** 3950 S Las Vegas Blvd 89119. **Facility:** Home to the largest convention center on the Strip, this striking, gold hotel has a unique Atlantis theme. Rooms are upscale and provide floor-to-ceiling windows and spacious marble bathrooms. 3209 units, some two and three bedrooms. 62 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 12 restaurants, also, Border Grill, Kumi Japanese Restaurant & Bar, Rivea, STRIPSTEAK, see separate listings, nightclub, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** sauna, hot tub, steamroom, cabanas, exercise room, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.







THE MIRAGE BOOK NOW 702/791-7111

Hotel. Address: 3400 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.

NEW YORK-NEW YORK HOTEL & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/740-6969



THREE DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN

FOUR DIAMOND

# MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 3790 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. Facility: This New York skyline-shaped hotel carries the big city theme throughout with replica streets and several New York-style eateries. The building's unique shape provides for many oversize rooms. 2024 units, some two bedrooms. 30-45 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 14 restaurants, also, Nusr-Et Las Vegas, see separate listing, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, cabanas, game room, exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, rental car service. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.

AVE ECO 🐳 👖 🖬 🍸 call 🕭 좌 🖬 BIZ 🌆 🔀 😤



SOME 😭 F 🗩





AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

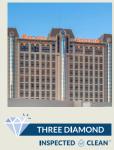
SAVE Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: 3772 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.

THE ORLEANS HOTEL & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/365-7111

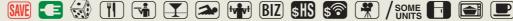


Hotel. Address: 4500 W Tropicana Ave 89103.

PALACE STATION HOTEL & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/367-2411



Hotel. **Address:** 2411 W Sahara Ave 89102. **Facility:** This property, catering primarily to the locals, includes many casual restaurants and a fine dining steakhouse. The cream-color rooms feature white stone-topped furniture and comfortable chairs. 575 units. 18 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, exercise room. **Guest Services:** valet laundry.



PALMS CASINO RESORT BOOK NOW 702/942-7777



Contemporary Hotel. Address: 4321 W Flamingo Rd 89103.

## PALMS PLACE HOTEL BOOK NOW 702/942-7777



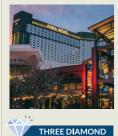
THREE DIAMOND

Vacation Rental Condominium. **Address:** 4381 W Flamingo Rd 89103. **Facility:** Connected to the Palms Casino by an indoor walkway, this hotel offers spacious, residential-style rooms with kitchenettes and amazing views. The luxurious white marble bathrooms are something to see. 180 condominiums, some efficiencies. 38 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, exercise room. **Guest Services:** valet laundry.





## PARK MGM BOOK NOW 702/730-7777



#### AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards MGM RESORTS points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 3770 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. Facility: The serene greens throughout this hotel resemble a casual day in a park. The trendy rooms feature crisp white beds, red wall accents and brass fixtures. The room TV pulls out for many viewing angles. 2605 units. 25 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, also, Bavette's Steakhouse & Bar, see separate listing, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



### THE PLATINUM HOTEL BOOK NOW 702/365-5000

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED & CLEAN

INSPECTED 🎯 CLEAN

Vacation Rental Condominium. Address: 211 E Flamingo Rd 89169.

## RED ROCK CASINO RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 702/797-7777



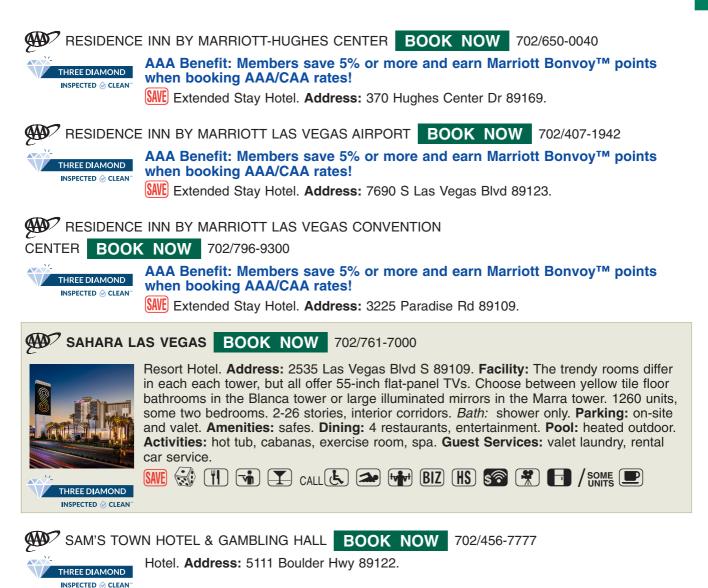
Resort Hotel. Address: 11011 W Charleston Blvd 89135. Facility: This elegant west-side property caters to locals with a bowling alley and movie theater. It also features contemporary rooms and suites, a large casino, trendy lounges and high-end restaurants. 795 units, some two bedrooms. 17 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 12 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, kids club, game room, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service. Affiliated with Preferred Hotels & Resorts. The call (€) → (1)



RENAISSANCE LAS VEGAS HOTEL BOOK NOW 702/784-5700







Roadside assistance when you need it most: AAA.com/roadservice



### SANTA FE STATION HOTEL CASINO BOOK NOW 702/658-4900



INSPECTED 🎯 CLEAN

Hotel. **Address:** 4949 N Rancho Dr 89130. **Facility:** Catering to the locals, this casual hotel offers a trendy lounge, a bowling alley and a movie theater. The modest rooms are large, have comfortable chairs and are competitively priced. 200 units. 4 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, kids club, game room, exercise room. **Guest Services:** valet



## THE SIGNATURE AT MGM GRAND (ALL SUITES) BOOK NOW 702/797-6000



INSPECTED 🎯 CLEAN

(SAVE)

MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Vacation Rental Condominium. **Address:** 145 E Harmon Ave 89109. **Facility:** Scattered across three gold towers, the property's extremely large guest units boast upscale appointments, a fully-equipped kitchen or kitchenette and crisp bedding. Valet parking is complimentary. 747 condominiums, some efficiencies and kitchens. 38 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** valet only. **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, exercise room. **Guest Services:** complimentary and valet laundry.

(1) 🗶 call & 🛥 🖬 BIZ SHS 🛜 🔀 😤 🗖 🖃 🖃

## SKYLOFTS AT MGM GRAND BOOK NOW 702/891-3832



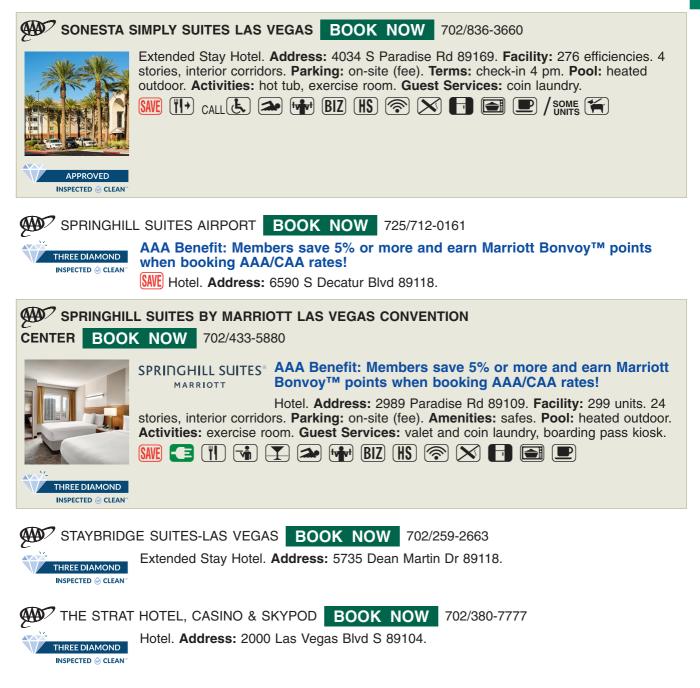
FOUR DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🧼 CLEAN

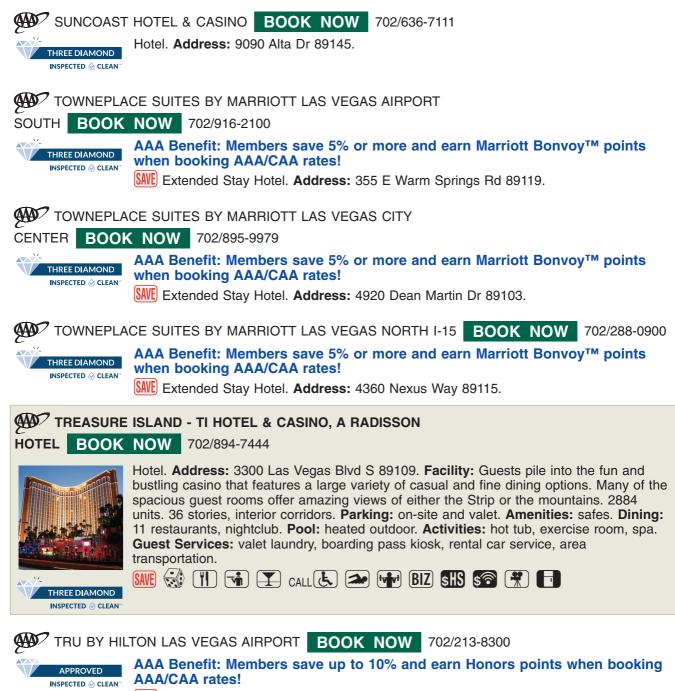
# MGM RESORTS AAA Benefit: Members save 10% and earn MGM Rewards points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Boutique Hotel. **Address:** 3799 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. **Facility:** Perched high on the 29th and 30th floors of the MGM Grand Hotel, the property's units are all two-story townhouses that yield anywhere from 1,450 to 6,000 square feet of space. 51 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms and kitchens. 1 story, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 16 restaurants, also, Craftsteak, Joel Robuchon, L'Antelier de Joel Robuchon, see separate listings, nightclub, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, rental car service.









SAVE Hotel. Address: 6862 Gilespie St 89119.



APPROVED

INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN

CTED & CLE



Guest Services: valet laundry. Affiliated with MGM Resorts International.



VIRGIN HOTELS LAS VEGAS, CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON BOOK NOW 702/693-5000



FOUR DIAMOND

AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 4455 Paradise Rd 89169.





## WALDORF ASTORIA LAS VEGAS BOOK NOW 702/590-8888



FIVE DIAMOND

INSPECTED 🔗 CLEAN

AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

WALDORF ASTORIA HOTELS & RESORTS Contemporary Hotel. **Address:** 3752 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158. **Facility:** Some of the most stunning rooms in the city are found here, offering stellar city views from floor-to-ceiling windows, massive marble bathrooms with deep-soaking tubs and plenty of closet space. 392 units, some two bedrooms

and kitchens. 22 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** valet only. **Terms:** check-in 4 pm. **Amenities:** safes. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** hot tub, steamroom, cabanas, health club, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, area transportation.



WESTGATE LAS VEGAS RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 702/732-5111



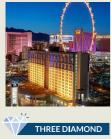
INSPECTED 🎯 CLEAN

SAVE

Resort Hotel. **Address:** 3000 Paradise Rd 89109. **Facility:** This legendary hotel was home to huge named celebrities like Elvis and Liberace. Some suites will bring guests back to the Rat Pack days, and the standard rooms are more modern. 2780 units, some two and three bedrooms. 29 stories, interior corridors. **Parking:** on-site and valet. **Amenities:** safes. **Dining:** 9 restaurants, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. **Activities:** sauna, hot tub, steamroom, tennis, exercise room, spa. **Guest Services:** valet laundry, area transportation.



## WESTIN LAS VEGAS HOTEL & SPA BOOK NOW 702/836-5900



THREE DIAMOND

AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

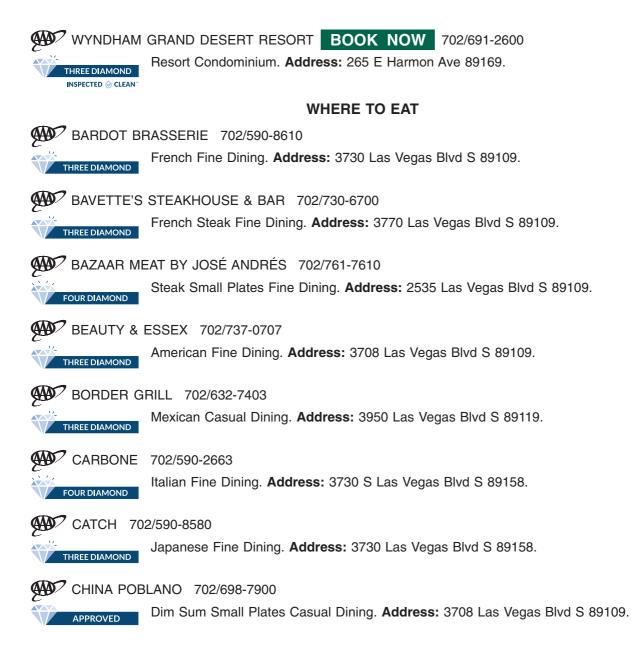
Hotel. Address: 160 E Flamingo Rd 89109. Facility: 826 units. 16 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, rental car service.



WYNDHAM DESERT BLUE RESORT BOOK NOW 702/238-1200

Condominium. Address: 3200 W Twain Ave 89103.







#### 124 LAS VEGAS, NV

### **MA** CRAFTSTEAK 702/891-7318 Steak Fine Dining. Expert Advice: Elegant simplicity is the culinary approach found here and the results are fantastic. Cooking emphasizing natural, pure ingredients translate into FOUR DIAMOND a satisfying experience. Signature dishes include lobster bisque, beef short ribs and Wagyu steaks. Features: full bar. Reservations: suggested. Address: 3799 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Tom Colicchio's Craftsteak CUT BY WOLFGANG PUCK 702/607-6300 Steak Fine Dining. Address: 3325 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. FOUR DIAMOND EIFFEL TOWER RESTAURANT 702/948-6937 French Fine Dining. Address: 3655 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. FOUR DIAMOND EMERIL'S NEW ORLEANS FISH HOUSE 702/891-7374 Creole Seafood Fine Dining. Address: 3799 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. THREE DIAMOND HAKKASAN 702/891-7888 Cantonese Dim Sum Fine Dining. Address: 3799 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. THREE DIAMOND HARVEST 702/693-8865 Regional American Fine Dining. Address: 3600 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. THREE DIAMOND JASMINE 702/693-8166 Chinese Fine Dining. **Expert Advice:** One of the most romantic restaurants on the Strip, every table has a view of the magnificent Bellagio water show. The tables nearest the FOUR DIAMOND windows are in high demand and well worth reserving. The chef creates new and classic Cantonese, Szechuan and Hunan dishes such as imperial Peking duck, and fresh seafood from a live tank. Features: full bar. Reservations: suggested. Address: 3600 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet. D CALL JAVIER'S FINEST FOODS OF MEXICO 702/590-3637 Mexican Fine Dining. Address: 3730 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158. THREE DIAMOND



#### JEAN GEORGES STEAKHOUSE 702/590-8660



**FIVE DIAMOND** 

Steak Fine Dining. Address: 3730 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158.

#### **JOEL ROBUCHON** 702/891-7925

French Fine Dining. **Expert Advice:** Just off the casino floor, this fine-dining gem is one of the city's most highly touted restaurants. Guests can expect not a meal but an experience. The sumptuous menu caters to the sophisticated palate, and the wine list has been called "liquid art." Genteel, flawless service prevails in the intimate and refined dining room. **Features:** full bar. **Reservations:** required. Semiformal attire. **Address:** 3799 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109. **Parking:** on-site (fee) and valet.

#### Elegant formal dining room featuring French cuisine

#### JULIAN SERRANO 702/590-8520

Spanish Small Plates Fine Dining. **Address:** 3730 Las Vegas Blvd S 89158.

KUMI JAPANESE RESTAURANT & BAR 702/632-9100

Japanese Sushi Small Plates Fine Dining. **Address:** 3950 S Las Vegas Blvd 89109.

#### LAGO BY JULIAN SERRANO 702/693-8865

Italian Small Plates Fine Dining. **Address:** 3600 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.

LAKESIDE 702/770-3310

FOUR DIAMOND

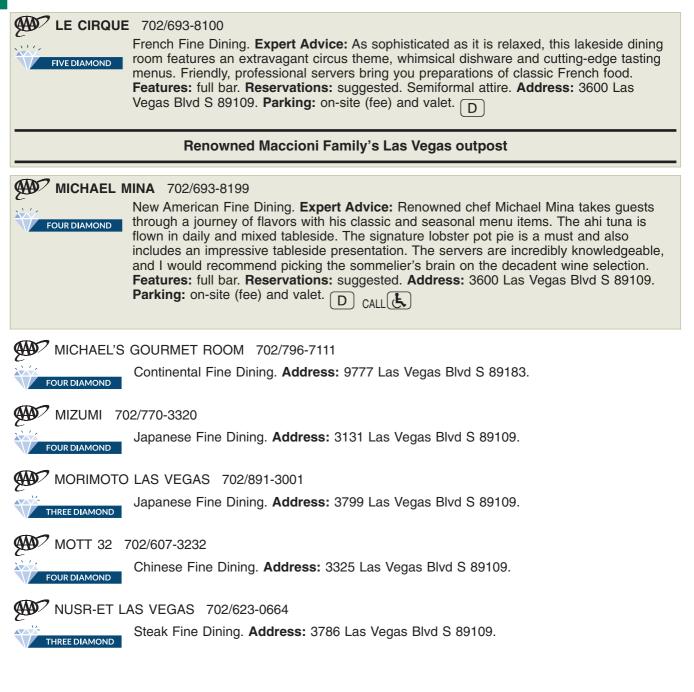
Seafood Fine Dining. Address: 3131 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.

#### L'ANTELIER DE JOEL ROBUCHON 702/891-7358

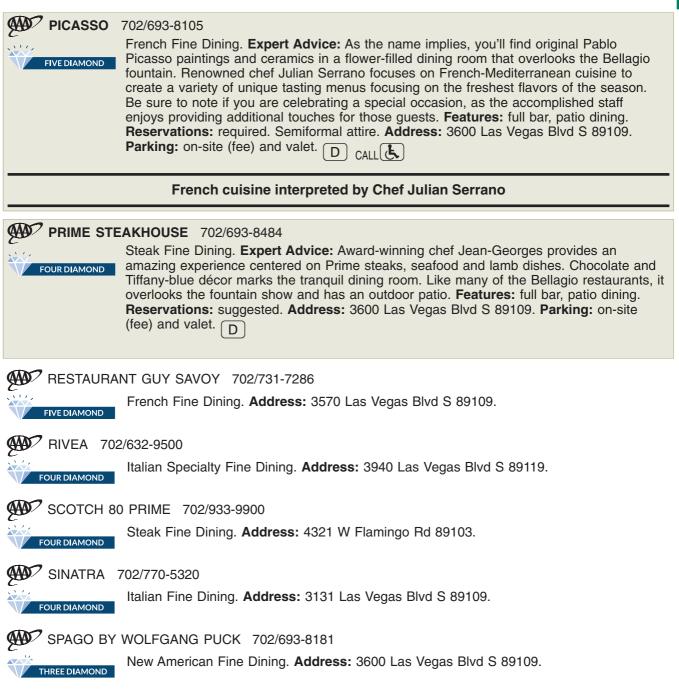
FOUR DIAMOND FOUR



#### 126 LAS VEGAS, NV









#### 128 LAS VEGAS - LAUGHLIN, NV

STK 702/698-7990	
	Steak Fine Dining. Address: 3708 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.
STRIPSTEAK 702/632-7414	
	Steak Casual Dining. Address: 3950 Las Vegas Blvd S 89119.
SW STEAKHOUSE 702/770-3325	
FOUR DIAMOND	Steak Fine Dining. Address: 3131 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.
TIM HO WAN 702/990-8888	
APPROVED	Asian Casual Dining. Address: 4321 W Flamingo Rd 89103.
TOM COLICCHIO'S HERITAGE STEAK 702/791-7330	
	Steak Fine Dining. Address: 3400 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.
TOP OF THE WORLD 702/380-7711	
	American Fine Dining. Address: 2500 S Las Vegas Blvd 89109.
VETRI COCINA LAS VEGAS 702/944-5900	
FOUR DIAMOND	New Italian Fine Dining. Address: 4321 W Flamingo Blvd 89103.
WING LEI	702/770-3388
FOUR DIAMOND	Chinese Fine Dining. Address: 3131 Las Vegas Blvd S 89109.

#### LAUGHLIN

- Hotels p. 129
- Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

A mini Las Vegas on the banks of the Colorado River, Laughlin is popular with road-tripping Southern Californians and Arizonans in search of a cheaper alternative to Sin City. Nevada's southernmost town mingles with the California and Arizona borders, and is notorious for being one of the desert Southwest's most sizzling—literally spots, as summer highs hit 115 with punishing regularity. A dip in the Colorado River, which flows south past Laughlin's eight major waterfront hotel casinos, feels



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

about as refreshing as taking a Jacuzzi in a sauna. But video poker-heads are impervious to the heat outside, settling down for an afternoon of pairs, straights and (hopefully) royal flushes in the air-conditioned comfort of the casinos.

Originally called South Pointe, Laughlin was the brainchild of Don Laughlin, a hotelier from Minnesota who made it big in Vegas. His Riverside Motel was the first motel/casino in the area, and Laughlin had dreams of transforming the South Pointe region into a visitor destination. As he expanded his modest property into a large resort, Laughlin made big bucks. He spent his play money on classic cars, which eventually ended up in Don Laughlin's Classic Car Collection *(see attraction listing).* 

By the 1980s modern-day Laughlin was on the map and Laughlin was rich enough to fund the building of the Laughlin Bridge, which connects Laughlin with Bullhead City, Ariz., at the north end of town. Today Laughlin's gleaming high-rise hotels attract a steady stream of bargain-hunting seniors (midweek rates regularly dip under \$50) and families who prefer the area's outdoor activities to the roller coasters and video arcades of Vegas.

The Riverwalk, a paved pedestrian walkway linking seven of Laughlin's eight riverfront hotels, is one of the easiest ways to get around. The path, dotted with park benches, is a relaxing place to watch the setting sun paint the mountains across the river in shades of purple and pink. Couples and families stroll past on their way to dinner. Jet boats zip down the middle of the Colorado. Quacking ducks float along the shoreline.

In summer's heat it's a long, sweaty walk from the north end (Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino) to the south end (Harrah's Laughlin). Instead, take the River Passage Water Taxi. All of the major hotels have a water taxi dock, where you can catch the pontoon-style boats (one-way fare \$5, all-day pass \$20) to your gaming, dining or entertainment destination of choice. For more information phone (702) 299-0090.

Visitors also come to Laughlin for its annual festivals. More than 50,000 chrome cowboys roar into town on their steel steeds during late April's Laughlin River Run, one of the West Coast's largest motorcycle events, for 5 riproarin' days of custom bike shows, poker runs, rock concerts, stunt shows and a traveling museum.

Laughlin Visitors Information Center: 1555 S. Casino Dr., Laughlin, NV 89029. Phone: (702) 298-3321 or (800) 452-8445.

**Shopping:** Hotel gift shops are the places to browse. But you also can spend a desultory afternoon wandering the Laughlin Outlet Center, at 1955 S. Casino Dr. across the street from the Aquarius Casino Resort. The two-story, airconditioned brand name outlet mall has more than 50 stores, including Reebok and Quiksilver. For those allergic to shopping there's a fast-food court and a multiplex movie theater. Phone (702) 298-4497.

**Nightlife:** Nightlife revolves around gambling, hotel bars (karaoke, DJs and cover bands) and casino showrooms (lounge singers, dancers and comedians). The Celebrity Theater at Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino, (800) 227-3849, and the Rio Vista Outdoor Amphitheater at Harrah's Casino Hotel, (702) 298-4600, book casino-circuit touring acts like Los Lobos, Jeff Dunham and Bonnie Raitt. The Laughlin Event Center, 500 E. Bruce Woodbury Dr., offers concerts and sporting events; phone (702) 298-2453.

**DON LAUGHLIN'S CLASSIC CAR COLLECTION** is in Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino at 1650 S. Casino Dr., on the third floor of the hotel's south tower (use the escalators, or ask an employee or security guard for directions if you get sidetracked making your way through the casino). If you can tear yourself away from the slots, this collection of vintage vehicles is worth a look. While the museum houses a single car from Laughlin's private collection, most on display are from other private collections or are privately owned cars on consignment by their owners.

The main Exhibition Hall is packed with a rotating collection of fully restored cars that may include T-Birds, Corvettes, Cadillacs, Packards, Rolls-Royces, Ferraris, an Austin Roadster, a Hollywood Graham, and other automobiles, all in shiny showroom condition. You'll also see vintage motorcycles; a few concept and race cars; a collection of pins and patches from military members; and antique roulette wheels, craps tables and slot machines. The floor-to-ceiling windows at the far end of the hall offer nice views of the Colorado River.

The Classic Auto Showroom is in front of the resort, near the main valet entrance at the north hotel tower. This glass-walled annex facing Casino Drive displays more than 15 classic cars and several antique slots—a little taste of what's on display inside.

Phone: (702) 298-2622.





#### 130 MESQUITE - MINDEN, NV

#### MESQUITE

- Hotels p. 130
- Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

Nestled in a lush valley, Mesquite is home to seven challenging golf courses with dramatic views of the Virgin

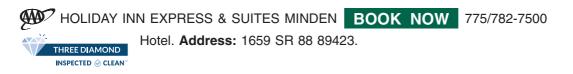
Mountains. There also are several large hotel/casinos for those who prefer to play indoors. Depending on which direction you're headed, this is either your first or last chance in Nevada to gamble.



#### MINDEN • Hotels p. 130

**DANGBERG HOME RANCH HISTORIC PARK** is at 1450 SR 88. German immigrant Heinrich Friedrich Dangberg built a log cabin in the sagebrush wilds of the Carson Valley in 1857. He later went on to become a successful rancher, businessman and politician, and several buildings were added to the site over the years. The last member of the family moved out in 1995. Guided walking tours take visitors through the main level of the Dangberg residence, with photographs, artifacts and furnishings depicting a ranching family's lifestyle in late 19th- and early 20th-century Nevada. A variety of bird species can be spotted throughout the year. Special events include concerts, living history presentations and storytelling.

Note: The historic park is located down an unpaved road off SR 88. Time: Allow 1 hour, 15 minutes minimum. Phone: (775) 783-9417. GT





#### NORTH LAS VEGAS, NV 131

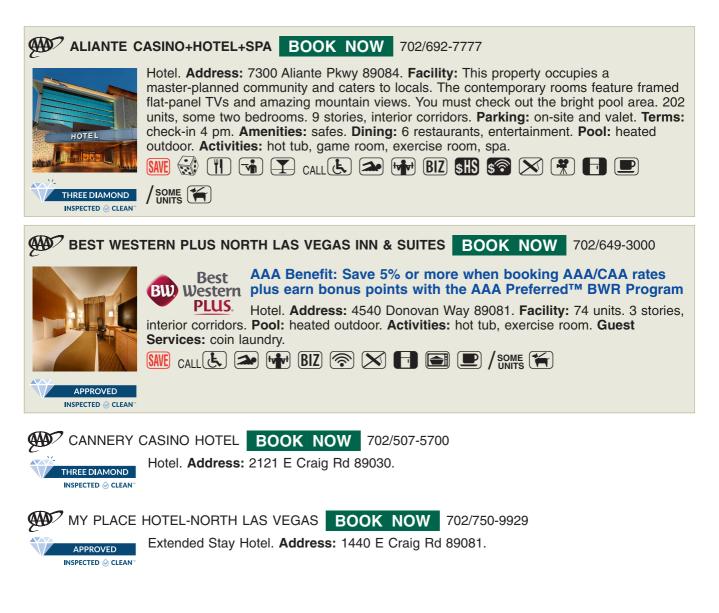
#### NORTH LAS VEGAS

• Hotels p. 131

#### • Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

About a 15-minute drive north of the Strip, gamers can still find a few casinos popular with locals in this commu-

nity just off I-15. The area is also a popular departure point for helicopter tours of greater Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon. Duffers can play a round at Aliante Golf Club, 3100 Elkhorn Rd., while those seeking a blast from the past can catch a show at the West Wind Drive-In, 4150 W. Carey Ave.





#### SPRINGHILL SUITES BY MARRIOTT LAS VEGAS NORTH

SPEEDWAY BOOK NOW 702/522-9200

THREE DIAMOND

AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 2910 E Craig Rd 89030.

#### OVERTON

#### • Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56

Founded by Mormon pioneers, Overton lies just north of the site of a prehistoric Anasazi Indian Pueblo, Pueblo Grande de Nevada, known as the Lost City, which extended 30 miles on both sides of the Muddy River. The Puebloans of Lost City were farmers who built aboveground dwellings with several rooms that were used to store crops.

Overton also lies at the northern end of a scenic route that follows the northwestern shore of Lake Mead. The route is made up of SR 169 to Overton Beach and SR 147 from Overton Beach to US 95/93 and Hoover Dam.

Moapa Valley Chamber of Commerce: P.O. Box 361, Overton, NV 89040. Phone: (702) 398-7160.

VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK is 22 mi. s.w. on SR 169 and about 55 miles n.e. of the Vegas Strip via I-15 exit 75 (a 1-hr. drive). This 40,000-acre park, hugely popular with Vegas day-trippers, is a real beaut. Valley of Fire occupies part of a basin about 6 miles long and 3 to 4 miles wide; its rough floor and jagged walls bristle with formations of eroded red sandstone that date back 150 million years. The fiery colors give the park its name. This surreal visual effect is more pronounced in the softer light of late afternoon than under the blazing highnoon sun.

If you access the park at the West Entrance Station, the first scenic turn-out on the main road (Valley of Fire Road) leads to the "beehives," red sandstone formations that look just like what they're called, only much bigger. Scenic highlights on the park's west side include Arch Rock, which sits atop a large mass of sandstone; Atlatl Rock, a towering sandstone wall with a large rock art panel (climb the metal staircase to the viewing platform just below the petroglyphs); and an area of petrified logs, reached by a graded dirt road turn-off.

The park's most rewarding scenic drive is the White Domes road, which begins near the visitor center. In addition to the domes there's a spectacular little canyon, not especially deep but filled with a jumble of striking red rocks.

Near the East Entrance Station is Elephant Rock, one of Valley of Fire's most photographed features. Walk the short desert trail to a spot just below this geological formation, which does indeed resemble a pachyderm. The undulating, gently winding park road passes a variety of beautiful red rock desert landscapes like the Seven Sisters, a group of large formations.

An *atlatl* (Aztec for spear thrower) was a device used before the invention of the bow and arrow to increase the speed and distance a spear could be thrown. Atlatl Rock contains a petroglyph depiction of this tool. Mouse Tank, a natural basin that collects scarce rainwater, was named for a reclusive Paiute Indian who lived in this area in the 1890s. A quarter-mile trail to the tank offers views of prehistoric petroglyphs.

The visitor center, on Valley of Fire Road about 4 miles east of the West Entrance Station, has a small museum with well-done exhibits about the park's history, geology and ecology. Guided hikes and activities for children are offered seasonally. **Note:** The nearest gas stations are in Overton and at the Moapa Valley Travel Plaza off I-15 exit 75.

Phone: (702) 397-2088. 🔊 😭 开

AAA Diamonds are now Inspected Clean:

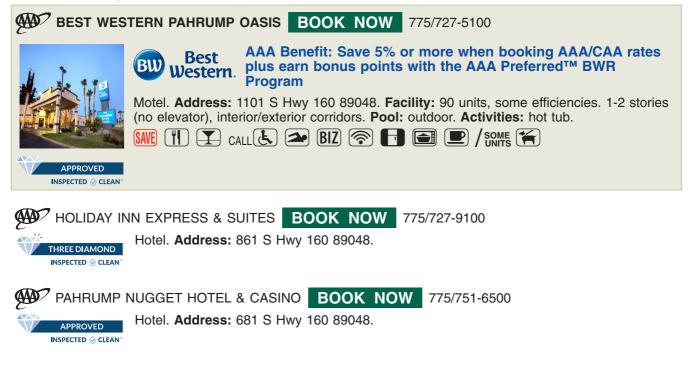
## AAA.com/diamonds



#### PAHRUMP

• Hotels p. 133

• Part of Las Vegas area— see map p. 56



#### PIOCHE

Pioche was one of the roughest mining camps in the West during the 1870s. Some 75 souls had been laid to rest in the town's Boot Hill before the first interment that was due to natural causes. The lack of success in solving disagreements led to such epitaphs as "Fanny Peterson, July 12, 1872. They loved til death did them part. He killed her."

The former Lincoln County Courthouse, 69 Lacour St., is better known as the Million Dollar Courthouse. Although contracted and budgeted at a cost of \$16,400 in the early 1870s, cost overruns, graft and bond interest had ballooned that figure to almost \$1 million by the time the debt was finally paid off in 1936. By then the courthouse had been condemned; the building and the four lots on which it stood were sold 25 years later for \$150. Now restored, it contains a re-created jail, courthouse and district attorney's office as well as town memorabilia and a mining exhibit; phone (775) 962-5544 or (775) 962-5426.

**Pioche Chamber of Commerce:** 644 Main St., P.O. Box 127, Pioche, NV 89043. **Phone:** (775) 962-5544 or (775) 962-5246.

#### RENO

#### • Hotels p. 136 • Restaurants p. 140

When most people hear the words "gambling" and "Nevada," they automatically think of Las Vegas. But if you grew up in the 1960s and '70s—and especially if you lived in northern California—"The Biggest Little City in the World" was where it was at.

Back then Nevada meant casinos, craps tables and bigname entertainment. It was where adults went for a little bit of naughty fun since, except for horse racing and poker, gambling wasn't legally allowed anywhere in California. Even the 4-hour drive to get to Reno was an adventure, on a highway that crossed the rugged Sierra Nevada mountain range. Once travelers reached the "Welcome to Nevada" road sign it was a different world; even the grocery stores had slot machines.



#### 134 RENO, NV

During Reno's heyday more than 3 decades ago, big hotel-casinos like Harrah's and Club Cal-Neva lined Virginia Street, downtown's main drag. The Mapes Hotel, which stood on the north bank of the Truckee River, was one of the state's first lavish hotel-casino complexes.

Then a period of decline set in, fueled mainly by two related factors: the phenomenal success story of Las Vegas, and the increasing popularity of northern California casinos operating on Native American lands. The Mapes closed in 1982 and was demolished in 2000. Downtown still has shuttered stores and hotels, but that doesn't mean Reno's dead. Garish casino signs advertise deals like steak and eggs for \$4.99. And the Reno Arch otherwise known as the sign touting "The Biggest Little City in the World"—still arches proudly (and blazes with neon after dark) over Virginia Street.

These days the city is all about repurposing. Former hotel-casino buildings have been converted to condos. Fitzgeralds, an old-school casino that was a longtime downtown fixture before closing in 2008 has metamorphosed into the Whitney Peak Hotel, a multiuse facility that includes a 1,000-person capacity concert hall. It also encompasses BaseCamp, a bouldering park that boasts the world's tallest competitive rock climbing wall. The 164-foot outdoor structure scales the building's east face and looks down on the Reno Arch; phone (775) 398-5400.

One of the more visible spruce-up efforts is the revitalization of the area along the Truckee River. The river's narrow, swift-flowing waters run right through the middle of downtown and are the centerpiece of Wingfield Park. The landscaped walkways running along both sides of the riverbank are a nice place to stroll.

Kayakers and tubers navigate the Truckee's series of man-made rapids. The park also is the starting point of the Reno-Tahoe Odyssey, a relay race that follows a 178mile course. Teams of 12 runners negotiate the river on a route that travels through the Sierra Nevada and along a portion of Lake Tahoe shoreline before circling through the northern Nevada high desert back to the race's starting point. The 2-day event takes place at the end of May or early June.

Cinco de Mayo Festival is celebrated in late April or early May at the Grand Sierra Resort. For 10 days in mid-June, the likes of barrel racing, bull riding and steer wrestling at the Reno Rodeo draw huge crowds. One of the rodeo's highlights is the Mutton Bustin' competition, in which kids who want to be cowboys get a gentler taste of what it's like to be on top of a buckin' bronc by riding sheep. It all happens at the Reno-Sparks Livestock Events Center, 1350 N. Wells Ave. Among Reno's other annual events is the Hot August Nights, which offers classic car cruises and a '50s-style sock hop. September brings the excitement of the SGreat Reno Balloon Race, one of the largest hot air balloon rallies in the country, and the SGR National Championship Air Races, which takes place at the Reno-Stead Airport.

Greater Nevada Field, 250 Evans St. at the east end of downtown, opened in 2009. The home stadium of the Triple-A Reno Aces seats just over 9,000 fans. Home games are played from early April through late August or early September; for schedule and ticket information phone (775) 334-7000.

Reno's also big on bowling, and major tournaments take place here regularly. The National Bowling Stadium, downtown at 300 N. Center St., is much more than a tenpin alley, although it has 78 championship lanes as well as a 440-foot video screen that projects state-ofthe-art scoring graphics. The bronze sculpture of a family on their way to the bowling alley, just inside the front lobby entrance, makes for an amusing photo op. Phone (775) 335-8800.

Hotel-casino complexes like Harrah's and three interconnected properties—Circus Circus, the Eldorado and the Silver Legacy—ably carry on Reno's gambling tradition. There's also plenty of action outside the downtown core, namely at the Peppermill, the Atlantis and the Grand Sierra.

And for a taste of old-school Reno, you must make the pilgrimage to The Nugget, downtown at 233 N. Virginia St. You'll have to brave the secondhand smoke that pervades this small, seen-better-days casino on your way to The Little Nugget diner, the original home of the Awful Awful burger (as in "awful good" and "awful cheap"). The chargrilled patty is tucked into an onion bun, garnished with lettuce, tomato, red onion and "secret sauce," and presented atop a veritable mountain of fries. It's unpretentious yet satisfying, much like the city itself.

**Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority:** 135 N. Sierra St., Reno, NV 89501. **Phone:** (775) 827-7600.

#### Shopping

Do your shopping thing at one of several area malls. Among the more than 100 stores at Meadowood Mall, at S. Virginia Street and S. McCarran Boulevard (exit 63 off US 395 South), are JCPenney, Sears and twin Macy's (one for men, one for women). There's also a large food court.

The Summit, 13925 S. Virginia St. at Mount Rose Highway (US 395 exit 57B), is an outdoor mall with anchor store Dillard's and popular retailers like JoS. A. Bank, Old Navy and Williams-Sonoma. A free shuttle and fire pits make shopping at this spread-out complex more comfortable during the chilly winter months.



Downtown's Riverwalk, along the Truckee River between Arlington Avenue and Lake Street, also is the location of Reno's budding arts district, where there are a handful of galleries and some eclectic boutiques. Reno eNVy, a block north of the river at 135 N. Sierra St., carries all sorts of customized T-shirts. La Terre Verte, 3 N. Virginia St., has environmentally friendly jewelry, gifts and home accessories.

Most of the casino complexes have at least a couple of shops. There's a mini-mall on the lower level of the Grand Sierra; among the 10 or so retailers is Pro Image, which offers a full line of team jerseys (including Reno Aces items), caps, clothing and novelties. The handful of tiny boutiques at the Peppermill includes Bella Bottega (ladies wear), Garbati-Bottega (menswear) and Regali Bottega (luxury gifts). Road hogs, meanwhile, will want to check out the motorcycle apparel and collectibles at Chester's Harley-Davidson in the Silver Legacy.

#### Nightlife:

Reno after dark is all about the casinos. Big-name entertainers appear regularly at the Atlantis, the Silver Legacy, the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino and Nugget Casino Resort in nearby Sparks (*see place listing p. 141*). At the showroom in the Eldorado Resort Casino, downtown at 345 N. Virginia St., shows range from Cirque du Soleil-type extravaganzas to traveling Broadway productions. Check the free weekly publication *RN & R* (Reno News and Review) for a schedule of current and upcoming events.

The casinos also offer no shortage of karaoke contests, country hoedowns and theme nights. By day The Beach, at the Grand Sierra, is a happening poolside party complete with a hot tub, real sand and a volleyball court, but in the evening the atmosphere turns more relaxed—drinks under the stars (weather permitting), ambient music and a distant backdrop of mountains. Head inside, where DJs provide entertainment at LEX Nightclub Thursday through Saturday nights; start the weekend early with Pre-Game Thursdays.

Nightclubs and lounges can't quite match the A-list hotness exemplified by the Vegas club scene, although they certainly try. EDGE Nightclub, at the Peppermill, has chic red and black decor and a dance floor where lasers pierce the sea of gyrating beautiful people. The club's outdoor terrace features an infinity pool and waterfall overlooking the rooftops of a faux Italian village. One of the more popular places in town to congregate is the Peppermill's Fireside Lounge, where plush individual booths are equipped with a state-of-the-art sound system and high-res plasma screens showing the latest music videos.

Kick back with a custom microbrew and a wood-fired pizza at Brew Brothers, in the Eldorado. DJ nights and

live rock band karaoke provide the entertainment. Creative cocktails complement blues and jazz performances most Friday and Saturday nights at the Sapphire Lounge, in Harrah's.

Aura Ultra Lounge, in the Silver Legacy, is a sleek nightspot with an elliptical bar, bottle service and a VIP section for big spenders. Rum fanciers will want to partake of the libations at the Rum Bullions Island Bar, where you can down a flaming kava kava while indulging in a game of beer pong. And be sure to check out the casino's Mining Rig. This 120-foot-tall replica of a vintage mining machine stands beneath a 180-foot dome that simulates the Reno sky from sunrise to sunset. Hourly laser light shows with sound effects illuminate the hulking piece of machinery.

There are other options if you want to escape the casinos for a spell. Big-ticket concerts and sports events take place at the Reno Events Center, downtown at 400 N. Center St.; phone (775) 335-8815 for the box office. The 1,000-seat Cargo Concert Hall, 255 N. Virginia St. at the Whitney Peak Hotel, also hosts live concerts; phone (775) 398-5400.

If you're not in the mood for a frenetic evening, settle in at the Ceol Irish Pub, 538 S. Virginia St. In addition to a large selection of Irish and Scotch whiskies and beers on tap, this friendly hangout has dart boards, trivia night on Thursdays and live music beginning at 9 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

FLEISCHMANN PLANETARIUM AND SCIENCE CENTER, at the n. edge of the University of Nevada, Reno campus at 1664 N. Virginia St., presents programs about the night sky. Periodically changing Star Shows depict astronomical events of the past, present and future. Films shown on the SkyDome screen surround the audience with realistic images. Sound-and-light shows also are featured. Exhibits focus on astronomy and earth sciences.

**Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (775) 784-4812 for general information.

NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM (THE HARRAH COLLECTION), 10 S. Lake St., displays more than 200 antique, vintage, classic and specialinterest automobiles. Street scenes with period automobiles and artifacts depict different eras of the 20th century. The facility also offers changing exhibits, a multimedia theater presentation and vintage clothing. Many of the cars on display have been featured in movies or were owned by celebrities.

Guided tours are available daily at 1:30 or by appointment. Self-guiding audio tours are available in English and Spanish. **Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (775) 333-9300. **GT** 



#### 136 RENO, NV

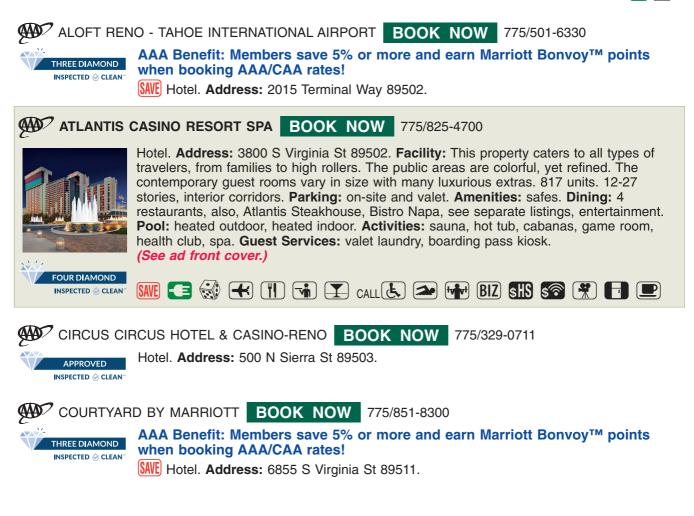
**TERRY LEE WELLS NEVADA DISCOVERY MUSEUM** is just s. of downtown at 490 S. Center St. (between W. Liberty and Stewart sts.). Bright, clean and airy, the museum (known locally as "The Discovery") offers interactive galleries designed with both kids and grown-ups in mind.

Exhibits range in focus from Nevada history to the artistic and scientific endeavors of Da Vinci to the intricacies of human anatomy. Other features are a replica of an Ichthyosaur skeleton; an 80-foot-long model of the Truckee River; and the Cloud Climber, a three-story climbing structure. The Discovery also hosts traveling exhibitions.

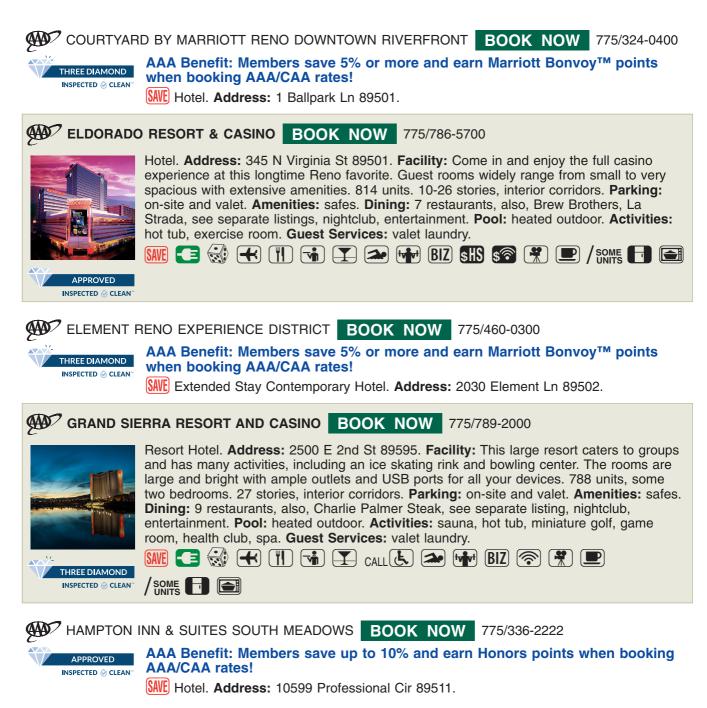
Families are permitted to bring snacks or lunch to the museum, but food and drinks can only be consumed in a

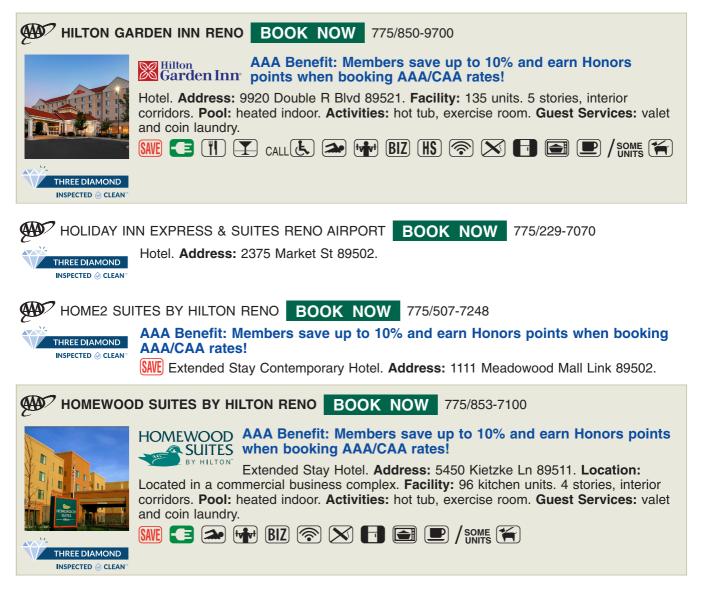
designated area inside the museum. Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. Phone: (775) 786-1000. [1]

W.M. KECK EARTH SCIENCE AND MINERAL ENGI-NEERING MUSEUM is on the University of Nevada campus in the Mackay School of Mines (1664 N. Virginia St.). The facility houses a large collection of minerals, mining artifacts, historical photographs and a 1,250-piece silver service created by Tiffany & Co. for industrialist John W. Mackay. A paleontology collection includes 500 million-year-old trilobites and fossils from the Ice Age. Guided tours are available by appointment. Time: Allow 45 minutes minimum. Phone: (775) 784-4528.



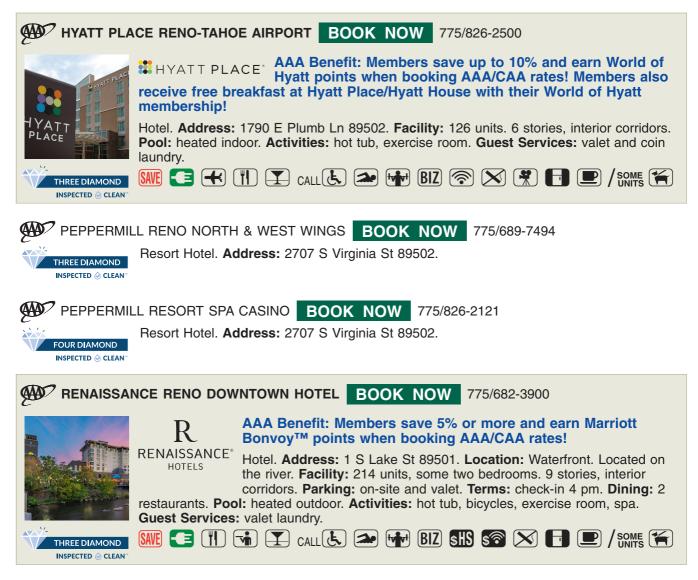






AAA Car Battery Service. Delivered & Installed on the Spot! aaa.com/carbatteryquote





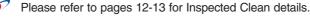


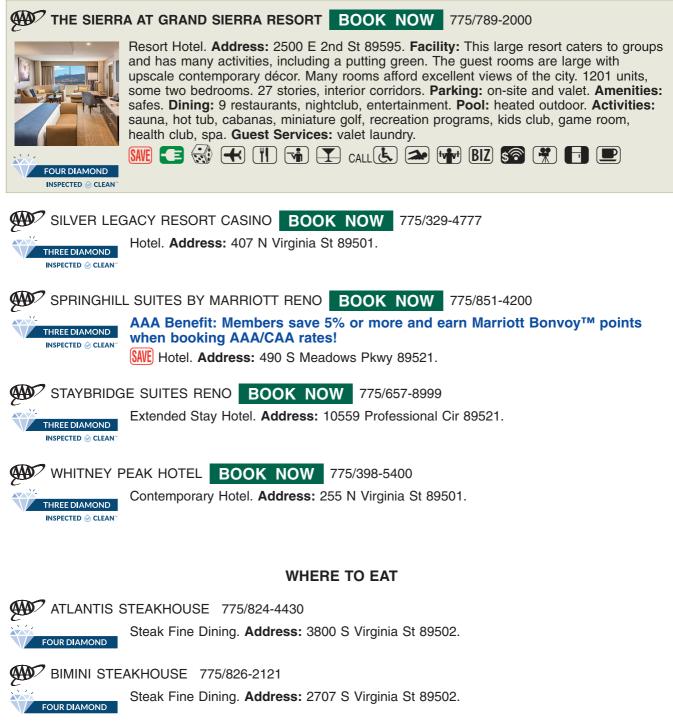
Stay secure year-round

Begin or Renew your membership today:

- Online at AAA.com/Membership
- Visit your local club office
- Call 800-Join-AAA (564-6222)











#### SPARKS • Hotels p. 142

Sparks was established in 1904 when railroad buildings were moved by the Southern Pacific Railroad to Reno's eastern border. It was named after the state's governor at the time, John Sparks.

An outdoor railroad exhibit and a number of casinos are on Victorian Avenue. Victorian Square Plaza, a pedestrian mall off I-80 via Rock Boulevard or Pyramid Way, holds events year-round. In summer kids can get wet running through an interactive sidewalk fountain.

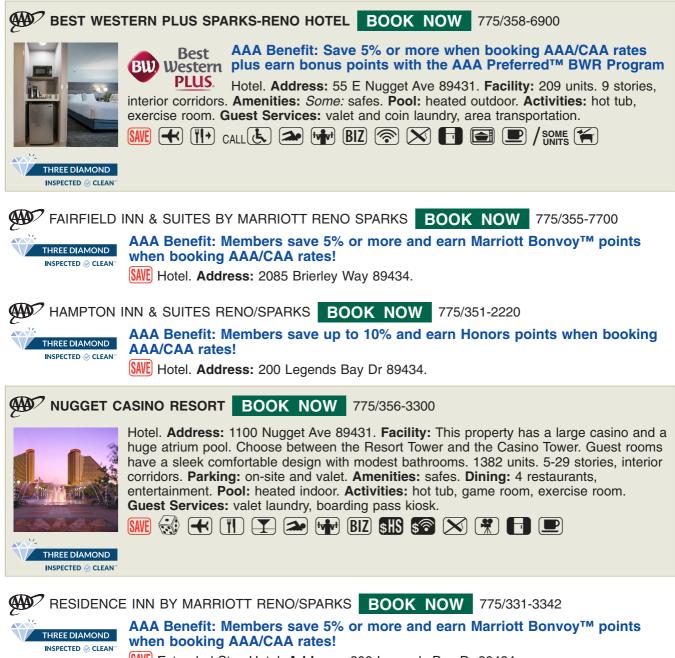
From Sparks motorists can take SR 445 north through Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation to the southern end of Pyramid Lake. The two-lane road quickly leaves suburbia behind as it heads north through sagebrush-speckled, austere high desert country punctuated by the barren peaks of the Virginia Mountains. It's a scenic drive beneath a huge sky filled with dramatic cloud formations, and the first look at the lake's turquoise waters is beautifully surreal. At the junction with SR 446, turn right and head southeast toward Nixon; the lonely road follows the shoreline, a landscape dominated by craggy rocks and the flat, shimmering lake. SR 446 ends at SR 447; take SR 447 south to I-80, then I-80 west to Sparks to complete the loop.

**Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce:** 449 S. Virginia St. #200, Reno, NV 89501. **Phone:** (775) 636-9550.

**Shopping:** Scheels, a 295,000-square-foot all-sports store at 1200 Scheels Dr. (near the intersection of I-80 and Sparks Boulevard), has a vast selection of gear and clothing for sports enthusiasts as well as a 16-car Ferris wheel, two 16,000-gallon aquariums full of tropical fish, a sports simulator where shoppers can test their athletic skills, a deli and fudge shop, and a Walk of Presidents—in other words, enough diversions to take up most of the day.

Roadside assistance when you need it most: AAA.com/roadservice





SAVE Extended Stay Hotel. Address: 300 Legends Bay Dr 89434.

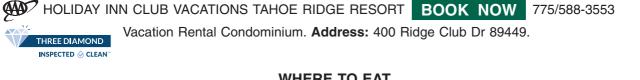


#### STATELINE

- Hotels p. 143 Restaurants p. 143
- Part of Lake Tahoe Area— see map p. 44

Tahoe Chamber: 169 US 50, 3rd floor, P.O. Box 7139, Stateline, NV 89449. Phone: (775) 588-1728.





### WHERE TO EAT

CIERA STEAK & CHOP HOUSE 775/588-3515

Steak Fine Dining. Address: 55 Lake Tahoe Blvd (US 50) 89449.

#### TONOPAH • Hotels p. 144

THREE DIAMOND

Tonopah had its beginning in 1900 when prospector Jim Butler idly chipped away at a ledge that sheltered him during a thunderstorm and noticed that the rock looked like silver ore. By the time the boom he started reached its peak 13 years later, production in the area had netted \$9.5 million. The town shared the area's mineral wealth with nearby Goldfield.



Hit the Road with Financial Services Providing peace-of-mind benefits for members. Visit your local AAA office or online at: AAA.com/Financial

All products not available at all locations.





## VERDI

• Hotels p. 144



#### WELLS • Hotels p. 144

THREE DIAMOND

INSPECTED @ CLEAN

HAMPTON INN & SUITES BY HILTON WELLS BOOK NOW 775/752-2099

AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 1091 Cobre St 89835.



## **Nearby Utah**

#### WENDOVER • Hotels p. 145

Located on the Utah-Nevada border at the western edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert, Wendover was established in 1907 as a Western Pacific Railroad stop. In 1940 the Army established an air base just south of town. During World War II it became a major training center for bomber pilots, including the crews that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

From vicinity hillsides it is possible to see the curvature of the earth. Looking east across the vast, level expanse of the Great Salt Lake Desert, the straight lines of the interstate and parallel railroad tracks and utility lines appear to curve away to the horizon. **WENDOVER AIRFIELD MUSEUM** is at 345 S. Airport Apron. Operating between 1942 and 1969, this is one of the most intact World War II-era training airfields in the country. A museum housed in the operations building, just south of the control tower, has exhibits pertaining to this former Army airfield and Air Force base. Aircraft models, vintage flight instruments, flight gear and military uniforms are displayed. An 8-minute video is shown in the former pilot's lounge on the main floor. One-hour guided tours of the base, which includes an atomic bomb loading pit, are available.

Phone: (435) 665-2308.



This ends the Wendover section and resumes the alphabetical city listings for Nevada.

#### WINNEMUCCA

Thousands of pioneers passed through Winnemucca on their way to California and Oregon. In 1845 children in a wagon train bound for California played a game of tossing pebbles into blue buckets hanging from the wagons. The "pebbles" were later identified as gold nuggets, and although many have searched, the "Blue Bucket Mine" never has been found.

The infamous Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid were said to have left their mark on Winnemucca. In 1900

they purportedly celebrated their robbery of the First National Bank by sending the bank president a studio portrait of themselves.

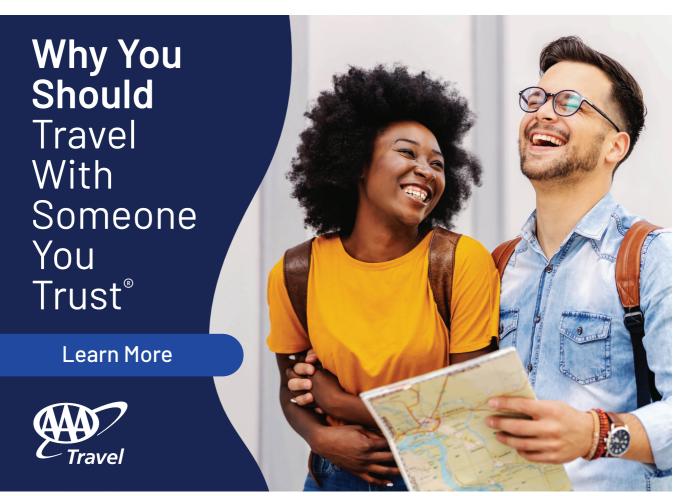
The town also is home to one of the largest Basque populations in North America. The early Basque immigrants found the open range of the Great Basin suitable for raising sheep. Today their customs, food and language flourish in Winnemucca. The Basque Festival, held in June, celebrates this heritage.



#### 146 WINNEMUCCA, NV

Humboldt Museum, at Maple Avenue and Jungo Road, chronicles the region's history with antiques and memorabilia, including a collection of vintage cars and Native American artifacts. The excavation of a 13,000-year-old mammoth from nearby Black Rock Desert is chronicled in the ice age exhibit; phone (775) 623-2912. Minerals found in the area include gold, silver, tungsten, barite and mercury, in addition to opals and turquoise. Winnemucca Convention and Visitor Authority: 50 W. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, NV 89445. Phone: (775) 623-5071 or (800) 962-2638.

**Self-guiding tours:** Walking tour maps highlighting Western and Basque history are available at the visitor authority.





## **ICON LEGEND**

- SAVE) AAA Discounts & Rewards® member discount
- ECO Eco-certified by government or private organization.
- Electric vehicle charging station on premises.
- Smoke-free premises

#### In select cities only:

(fyi) Indicates the property has not been inspected, but is included as an "information only" service.

## SERVICES

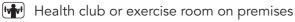
- Airport transportation
- Fet friendly (Call for restrictions/fees.)
- (**II**) Restaurant on premises
- Restaurant off premises
- Room service for 2 or more meals
- 📕 于 Full bar
- 🖬 🗋 Child care
- **BIZ** Business center
- Accessible features (Call property for available services and amenities.)

## **AMENITIES**



## Full-service casino

🔎 Pool



- (HS) High-speed Internet service
- **\$HS** High-speed Internet service (Call property for fees.)



🛜 Wireless Internet service

S Wireless Internet service (Call property for fees.)

No wireless Internet service



- Refrigerator
- Microwave
- Coffeemaker
- 🔏 No air conditioning
- 🚺 🛛 No TV
- 🙍 No telephones

## SAFETY FEATURES

- S No sprinklers
- **SD** No smoke detectors

## DINING

- 🔪 Designated smoking section
- **B** Breakfast
- L Lunch
- D Dinner
- 24 Open 24 hours
- (LATE) Open after 11 p.m.

## **ATTRACTIONS**

- **GT** Guided Tours available
- Camping facilities
- - $\left[\mathcal{X}\right]$  Recreational activities
  - -A- Picnicking allowed
  - Designates an attraction of exceptional interest and quality. AAA GEM - a Great Experience for Members<sup>®</sup>.