



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



DrPleishner

# Las Vegas With The Kids

## Las Vegas, 4 Days

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# Guide Description










**AUTHOR NOTE:** Las Vegas may be known as an adult playground, but it still has plenty of things for families to do. Sight-seeing opportunities extend beyond the Strip and include outdoor and historical locations, but you could easily spend your entire vacation sampling the Strip's assortment of family-appropriate attractions like rollercoasters and animal exhibits. Many parents feel that sight-seeing on the Las Vegas Strip is generally best done during the day, when you'll encounter fewer of those adult elements that may make you want to cover your little one's eyes. Watch out for pamphlet hawkers at all times of the day—they're passing out adults-only ads. Later in the evening, as the general level of sobriety on the Strip decreases, you'll want to head back to your hotel, or perhaps to a show. Magicians, knights, and blue men perform nightly in shows that will please the whole family. If you're itching to do some gambling, just remember that children are not allowed on casino floors, so check with the hotel for recommendations on childcare. —Thank you to Paul Little for his photograph of the Excalibur.—

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Las Vegas








**DAY NOTE:** The Las Vegas Strip's most family-oriented hotels are the Excalibur and the Circus-Circus, both of which are full of entertainment and restaurants suitable for kids. Both have arcades and midways full of carnival-like games—not to mention the giant castle and circus tent themes. If you're traveling in the warmer months and want to spend time at the pool, the Mandalay Bay's lazy river and sandy beach may make you want to skip sight-seeing altogether, and adults will appreciate the hotel's more grown-up ambiance. A monorail links the Mandalay Bay, Luxor, and Excalibur hotels, which makes moving around those three properties easy. Children of all ages will like the Mandalay Bay's Shark Reef Aquarium with its array of fish and animals and its hidden city/sunken ship theme. Older kids may find more to enjoy at the Adventuredome at Circus-Circus, which is an indoor amusement park. To finish off the evening, try a great steak at Circus-Circus' Steakhouse or a more casual meal at Mandalay Bay's Burger Bar.

	<b>Circus Circus Hotel &amp; Casino</b> Clown Around
	<b>Excalibur</b> Knights & Dragons Included
	<b>Mandalay Bay Resort &amp; Casino</b> Best of the best
	<b>Shark Reef</b> North America's only predator-based aquarium
	<b>The Adventuredome</b> Small Indoor Theme Park
	<b>Steakhouse at Circus Circus</b> Great steaks, inviting atmosphere
	<b>Burger Bar</b> Build It, Bite It, Love It

## Day 2 - Las Vegas

**DAY NOTE:** Start off the day with some animal watching at the MGM's Lion Habitat or the Mirage's Dolphin Habitat/Secret Garden. When you're ready for lunch, try the Rainforest Café at the MGM or the California Pizza Kitchen at the Mirage. The Rainforest Café's tropical theme, aquarium, and waterfalls are popular with families, and the CPK serves everyone's favorite

food—pizza—but with trendy toppings. A ride to the top of the Stratosphere will give you a view from the tallest building west of the Mississippi, and older kids will beg to ride the scream-inducing rides at the top. For a night of family-friendly Vegas entertainment, everyone will enjoy magician Lance Burton at the Monte Carlo.

	<b>MGM Grand Lion Habitat</b> View Lions In Natural Habitat
	<b>Rainforest Cafe</b> Enjoy the wild things
	<b>Secret Garden &amp; Dolphin Habitat</b> View Exotic Animals
	<b>California Pizza Kitchen</b> Mama Mia
	<b>Stratosphere Tower</b> America's tallest observation tower
	<b>Stratosphere Thrill Rides</b> A Spin above the Rest
	<b>Lance Burton: Master Magician</b>

## Day 3 - Las Vegas

**DAY NOTE:** Take a day off from the Strip and head out of Las Vegas to either Hoover Dam or Red Rock Canyon. If you'd like to share a dose of history and an architectural wonder with your kids, visit Hoover Dam. Rising over 700 feet from the bottom of Black Canyon, this dam was built during the Great Depression and its sturdy construction ensures it will be standing for centuries to come. To take the kids for a day of hiking, drive to Red Rock Canyon. A one-way, 13-mile scenic road stops at numerous trails and scenic overlooks. Before you begin your drive, be sure to stop at the visitor center and learn about the Mojave Desert. Be careful with smaller children on trails that involve rock scrambling, and remember that this is the desert, home to the rattlesnake, scorpion, and cactus, so watch where you're sticking your hands and feet. Bring plenty of water and remember the sunscreen. You'll probably work up an appetite after hiking, and you can stop at the Red Rock Resort's Salt Lick for barbecue on the way back to the Strip. Give everyone plenty of time to rest up before catching another show in the evening. The Tournament of Kings has jousting and sword fighting—and you get to eat with your

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

fingers. The Blue Man Group is funky, funny, and, well, blue. At the Venetian, where the Blue Man performs, you'll want to take some time to wander through the Grand Canal Shops, and the Taqueria Canonita will give you a place to eat while you watch the gondolas.



## Hoover Dam

One of the world's largest dams



## Red Rock Canyon

Hiking, biking, and rock climbing just outside Las Vegas



## Salt Lick



## Taqueria Canonita

Overlooking the Venetian Canals



## Tournament of Kings

Pyrotechnics and special effects



## Blue Man Group at the Venetian Las Vegas

Family-friendly show at the Venetian



## SPEED: The Ride/Las Vegas Cyber Speedway

A Virtual Race Car



## Border Grill

Mexican Fare With A View

## Day 4 - Las Vegas

**DAY NOTE:** On your last day in Las Vegas, a visit to the Springs Preserve offers an educational experience, but in a fun, hands-on setting that comes complete with play areas. Kids and adults who are intrigued by that famously "unsinkable" ship, the Titanic, will want to see the Titanic Exhibit at the Luxor. For rollercoaster lovers, the New York-New York's rollercoaster will spin you around a miniature Big Apple, and the Sahara's Speed lives up to its name. For your last Las Vegas meal, enjoy the food while you watch the pool scene from a table at Mandalay Bay's Border Grill,.



## Springs Preserve

Oasis In The Middle Of The City



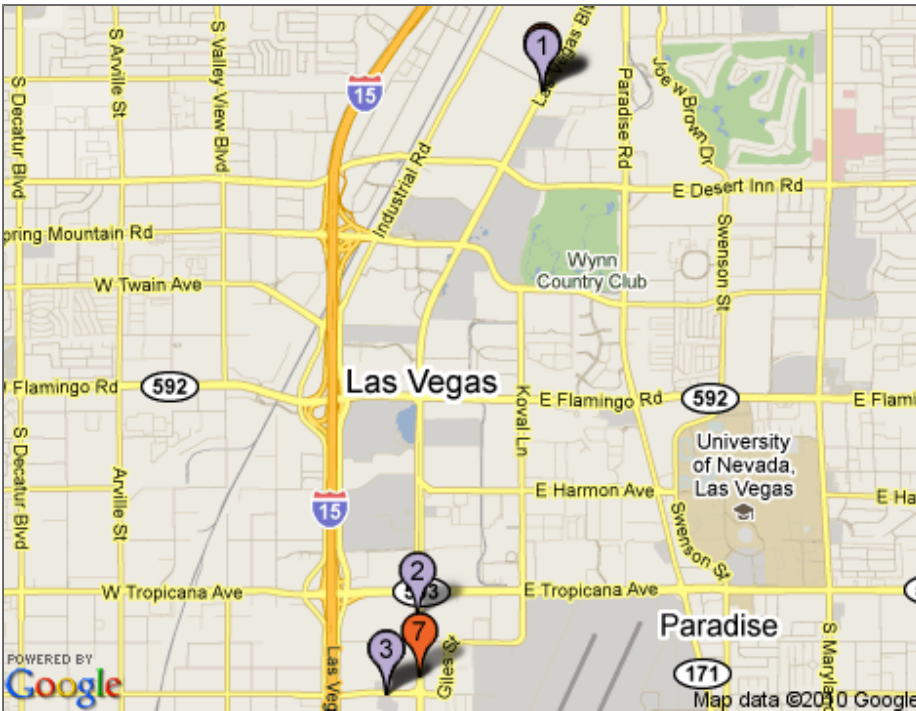
## Titanic: The Exhibition



## The Roller Coaster at New York-New York

Loops, spirals, and drops at up to 67 m.ph.

# Day 1 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** The Las Vegas Strip's most family-oriented hotels are the Excalibur and the Circus-Circus, both of which are full of entertainment and restaurants suitable for kids. Both have arcades and midways full of carnival-like games—not to mention the giant castle and circus tent themes. If you're traveling in the warmer months and want to spend time at the pool, the Mandalay Bay's lazy river and sandy beach may make you want to skip sight-seeing altogether, and adults will appreciate the hotel's more grown-up ambiance. A monorail links the Mandalay Bay, Luxor, and Excalibur hotels, which makes moving around those three properties easy. Children of all ages will like the Mandalay Bay's Shark Reef Aquarium with its array of fish and animals and its hidden city/sunken ship theme. Older kids may find more to enjoy at the Adventuredome at Circus-Circus, which is an indoor amusement park. To finish off the evening, try a great steak at Circus-Circus' Steakhouse or a more casual meal at Mandalay Bay's Burger Bar.

### contact:

tel: 877/434-9175

fax: 702/734-5897

www.circuscircus.com

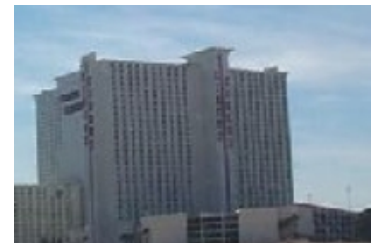
### location:

2880 Las Vegas Blvd. S

Las Vegas NV 89109

## 1 Circus Circus Hotel & Casino

**DESCRIPTION:** This is the last bastion of family-friendly Las Vegas -- indeed, for years, the only hotel with such an open mind. Which is also not to say that you should confuse this with a theme-park hotel. All the circus fun is still built around a busy casino. The midway level features dozens of carnival games, a large arcade (more than 300 video and pinball games), trick mirrors, and ongoing circus acts under the big top from 11am to midnight daily. The world's largest permanent circus, it features renowned trapeze artists, stunt cyclists, jugglers, magicians, acrobats, and high-wire daredevils. Spectators can view the action from much of the midway or get up close and comfy on benches in the performance arena. There's a "be-a-clown" booth where kids can be made up with clown makeup (easily washed off!) and red foam-rubber noses. They can grab a bite to eat in McDonald's (also on this level), and since the



mezzanine overlooks the casino action, they can also look down and wave to Mom and Dad -- or, more to the point, Mom and Dad can look up and wave to the kids without having to stray too far from the blackjack table. Circus clowns wander the midway, creating balloon animals and cutting up in various ways. The thousands of rooms here occupy sufficient acreage to warrant a free Disney World-style aerial shuttle (another kid pleaser) and minibuses connecting its many components. Tower rooms have newish, just slightly better-than-average furnishings. The Manor section comprises five white, three-story buildings out back, fronted by rows of cypresses. Manor guests can park at their doors, and a gate to the complex that can be opened only with a room key ensures security. These rooms are usually among the least expensive in town, but we've said it before and we'll say it again: You get what you pay for. A renovation of these rooms added a coat of paint and some new photos on the wall but not much else. All sections of this vast property have their own swimming pools, additional casinos serve the main tower and sky-rise buildings, and both towers provide covered parking garages. Adjacent to the hotel is **Circusland RV Park**, and is KOA-run, with 399 full-utility spaces and up to 50-amp hookups. It has its own 24-hour convenience store, swimming pools, saunas, whirlpools, kiddie playground, fenced pet runs, video-game arcade, community room, and Wi-Fi. The rate is \$45 and up, with peak rates around \$90. The very reasonably priced **Pink Pony** is Circus Circus's cheerful bubble-gum-pink-and-bright-red 24-hour eatery, with big paintings of clowns on the walls and pink pony carpeting. It offers a wide array of coffee-shop fare, including a number of specially marked "heart-smart" (low-fat, low-cholesterol) items. For gorging, there's always the **Circus Circus Buffet**. In addition to the ongoing circus acts, there's also the upgraded **Adventuredome** indoor theme park out back. There are three full-size casinos, all crowded and noisy, where you can gamble while trapeze acts take place overhead. **Facilities:** 7 restaurants; several fast-food outlets; casino; circus acts; midway-style carnival games; wedding chapel; 2 outdoor pools; video-game arcade; tour desk; car-rental desk; shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; executive-level rooms © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: 800/937-7777

fax: 702/597-7163

www.excalibur.com

**location:**

3850 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**2 Excalibur**

**DESCRIPTION:** One of the largest resort hotels in the world, Excalibur (also known as the Realm) is a gleaming white, turreted castle complete with moat, drawbridge, battlements, and lofty towers. And it's huger than huge. To heck with quiet good taste; kitsch is cool. And it's becoming harder and harder to find in a town that once wore tacky proudly. If your soul is secretly thrilled by overblown fantasy locations -- or if you just want a pretty good budget option on the Strip -- the Excalibur is still here for you. And yet, we just know that any minute now, the Lords of Taste will bring an end to its sword and sorcery imagery. Actually, the decorating fairies have already made some quiet changes (the deep reds in the public areas have been switched to creams) but nothing that really sullies the silliness. There are some ominous rumblings in keeping with



citysearch

the rest of Vegas's careening away from the "family-friendly" image -- gone is the animatronic dragon and wizard show out front, and inside there is a male-stripper act, Thunder from Down Under. It's really too bad because, without the excess, this is just another hotel -- a mighty big and chaotic hotel, thanks to a sprawling casino full of families and small-time gamblers, which is located smack dab in the middle of everything, including, naturally, the path between you and the elevators to your room. Newly redone rooms only slightly reflect the Olde English theme and feature the brown suede headboards that are all the rage, flatscreen TVs, spiffed-up bathrooms with new marble fixtures, and nice wallpaper. Guests who have stayed in Tower 2 have complained about the noise from the roller coaster across the street at New York-New York (it runs till 11pm, so early birds should probably ask to be put in a different part of the hotel). Frankly, we prefer stopping in for a visit rather than actually settling here, but we know single-minded others (read: Vegas is for gambling, and so is the majority of the vacation budget) who wouldn't consider staying anywhere else. The second floor holds the Medieval Village, where Excalibur's restaurants and shops are peppered along winding streets and alleyways, a sort of permanent Renaissance Faire, which could be reason enough to stay away (or to come). Up here you can access the enclosed, air-conditioned, moving sidewalk that connects with the Luxor. The pool area is getting a face-lift to add in better landscaping, fancy cabanas, and the like. There are plenty of restaurants, including **The Roundtable Buffet**, and a pretty good prime rib joint. Excalibur won our hearts forever by installing a branch of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts on the second level, on the way to the Luxor walkway. The **Tournament of Kings** is a medieval-style dinner show, and there's a very loud, claustrophobic casino. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 632 7777 / +1 877  
632 7800 (Toll free)  
<http://www.mandalaybay.com>

**location:**

3950 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89119

**3 Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino**

**DESCRIPTION:** Tropical lagoons, sandy beaches and island landscaping await at this premier vacation spot. The standard guest rooms are tastefully decorated and spacious. You will enjoy a large bath with imported stone accents and a soaking tub. The 135,000 square-foot casino is lush with foliage and flowing water. Dining choices include the Border Grill, Rock Lobster, Aureole, Fleur de Lys and Trattoria del Lupo, a Wolfgang Puck experience. Rumjungle provides an exciting and unique night on the town. The Moorea Beach Club located in the premises is open only to guests and offers lots of amenities. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: +1 702 632 4555 / +1 702 632 7777

[http://www.mandalaybay.com/entertainment/shark\\_reef.aspx](http://www.mandalaybay.com/entertainment/shark_reef.aspx)

**location:**

3950 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
Las Vegas NV 89119

**4 Shark Reef**

**DESCRIPTION:** This truly amazing state-of-the art aquarium has sharks, alligators, monitor lizards and other amazing creatures living in more than 1,000,000 gallons of salt water at the Mandalay Bay Resort. You will enjoy a beautiful display of blue sharks, stingrays, sea turtles, eels and a remarkable jellyfish display with black lights. This is a must-see exhibit for the whole family. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: 702/794-3939

<http://www.adventuredome.com>

**location:**

2880 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Park hours vary seasonally but are usually Mon-Thurs 10am-6pm; Fri-Sat 10am-midnight; Sun 10am-9pm

**5 The Adventuredome**

**DESCRIPTION:** Las Vegas poses some challenges for families--namely, what to do with the kids. The Adventuredome at Circus-Circus is the Strip's only remaining theme park, and while it might not have the size or technology of larger theme parks like those in Southern California or Orlando, it's a good place to spend an afternoon with the kids. One of its best features is that it is indoors, a major bonus during the summer. You'll find rollercoasters (including the world's largest indoor, double-loop rollercoaster), laser tag, and miniature golf, all in a small indoor theme park that has the same circus midway feeling reflected in the rest of the property. If you're looking for upscale, top-of-the-line, brand-new rides, you may be disappointed--Circus Circus is known as a budget destination almost as much as a family destination. Circus Circus and Adventuredome are on the northern part of the Strip, closer to downtown and the grittier side of Las Vegas, which may turn some visitors off. But if you're hoping to find a reasonably-priced, G-rated place away from the slot machines and poker tables, Adventuredome has five acres of family-appropriate entertainment. Visitors can purchase all-day passes or buy tickets to individual rides for \$4-\$7 per ride. Signature rides include the Canyon Blaster, a 55 m.p.h. double-loop rollercoaster; Disk 'O, which spins riders in circles; Rim Runner, the requisite water ride; Chaos, a whirling, spinning ride that sends you in several different directions; and the Inverter, a ride that will flip you over and make you scream.

In October, the Adventuredome loses its family-friendly ambiance when it transforms into Fright Dome. Fog machines, haunted houses, and professional actors come together to turn the park into a place too scary for those under 12. Be prepared for crowds and lines; this attraction is also popular with the locals, especially teens.

© NileGuide



Photo courtesy of The Adventuredome



**contact:**

tel: 702 794 3767

<http://www.circuscircus.com/dining/steakhouse.aspx>

**location:**

2880 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Su to Fr from 05:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Sa from 05:00 PM to 11:00 PM

**6 Steakhouse at Circus Circus**

**DESCRIPTION:** This restaurant has won several "Top Steak House" awards over the years. It offers a cozy, inviting atmosphere and some of the best steaks in town. You can also choose from entrees such as grilled chicken, and other goodies like Black Bean Soup, Caesar salad and Fresh Mushrooms sauteed in a fresh butter, sherry and lemon concoction. Desserts include Chocolate Covered Strawberries, Cheesecake and Chocolate Mousse Cake. It is located at the Circus Circus Hotel. The eatery is open for dinner all seven days of the week. © wcities.com



citysearch

**contact:**

tel: 702/632-9364

<http://www.mandalaybay.com/dining/burgerbar.aspx>

**location:**

3930 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89119

**hours:**

Sun-Thurs 10:30am-11pm;  
Fri-Sat 10:30am-2am

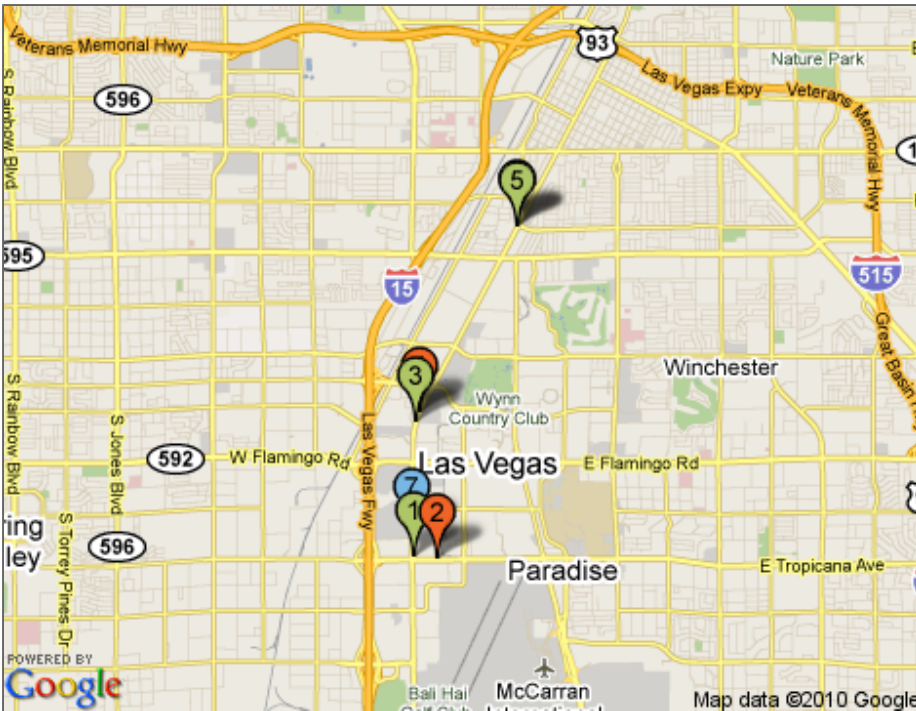
**7 Burger Bar**

**DESCRIPTION:** See how Vegas is? They know you might be watching your budget or just wanting something simple but not boring, so they give you a place that specializes in hamburgers "your way," as the ads go. We love this concept, but we can't help but wince when we see how loading up a basic burger into a personalized creation turns a humble patty into a check for \$15, and that's before we order fries and shakes. But we will eat at Burger Bar again because they start with Ridgefield Farm (most recommended) and Black Angus beef, and all the toppings (the usuals, such as bacon and avocado, but also six kinds of cheese, prosciutto, chopped scallions, and even anchovies and lobster, for Pete's sake), plus a choice of bun. It adds up to a hilarious and, if you have a deft touch, delicious experience (though we have not yet gotten them to prepare the doneness of the burgers to our proper specifications, so we advise you to be very clear about your pink-to-gray meat ratio preference). Shakes are creamy, fries aren't bad (we like the skinny ones better than the fat ones), though if you haven't before, try the sweet-potato fries. One of the most clever desserts in town lurks on this menu, a "sweet burger" -- a slab of really fine chocolate pâté "burger," on a warm donut "bun," topped with cunningly crafted strawberry "tomato" slices, mint "lettuce" and translucent passion-fruit "cheese." Note the weekend late hours. And skip the highfalutin' burger options -- Kobe beef is too soft to use as burger meat, while foie gras is just wasted in this context. In other words, don't show off, but do have fun. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Burger Bar

# Day 2 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Start off the day with some animal watching at the MGM's Lion Habitat or the Mirage's Dolphin Habitat/Secret Garden. When you're ready for lunch, try the Rainforest Café at the MGM or the California Pizza Kitchen at the Mirage. The Rainforest Café's tropical theme, aquarium, and waterfalls are popular with families, and the CPK serves everyone's favorite food—pizza—but with trendy toppings. A ride to the top of the Stratosphere will give you a view from the tallest building west of the Mississippi, and older kids will beg to ride the scream-inducing rides at the top. For a night of family-friendly Vegas entertainment, everyone will enjoy magician Lance Burton at the Monte Carlo.

### contact:

tel: 702/891-7777

<http://www.mgmgrand.com/entertainment/lion-habitat.aspx>

### location:

3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89119

### hours:

Daily 11am-10pm

## 1 MGM Grand Lion Habitat

**DESCRIPTION:** Hit this attraction at the right time, and it's one of the best freebies in town. It's a large, multilevel glass enclosure in which various lions frolic during various times of day. In addition to regular viewing spots, you can walk through a glass tunnel and get a worm's-eye view of the underside of a lion (provided one is in position); note how very big Kitty's paws are. Multiple lions share show duties (about 6 hr. on and then 2 days off at a ranch for some free-range activity, so they're never cooped up here for long). You could see any combo, from one giant male to a pack of five females who have grown from cub to adult size during their MGM time. Each comes with a trainer or three, who are there to keep the lions busy with play so they don't act like the big cats they are and sleep the entire time. But obviously, photo ops are more likely to occur as the more frisky younger set tussles, so what you observe definitely depends on who is in residence when you drop by. And, of course, actually seeing anything depends on how many other people think this is a two-star attraction; hordes of tourists are often pressed



Photo courtesy of MGM Grand Lion Habitat

against the glass, preventing you, not to mention your kids, from doing the same. © Frommer's

**contact:**  
tel: +1 702 891 8580  
<http://www.mgmgrand.com>

**location:**  
3799 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**  
8a-11p Su-Th, 8a-midnight F-Sa

## 2 Rainforest Cafe

**DESCRIPTION:** This fun spot is located right in the heart of the MGM Grand entertainment center near Studio 54 and the Lion Habitat. It is a recreated jungle with waterfalls, families of elephants and gorillas, and plenty of excitement. Specializing in exotic jungle concoctions made with rum and other exotic liquors, the cafe also offers milkshakes, salads, pasta, pizza and burgers. Check out the 'Cha!Cha!'s Breakfast Carnival, where you will have the opportunity to watch magicians perform daily from 8a to 10:15a. © wcities.com



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: 702/791-7111  
[www.mirage.com](http://www.mirage.com)

**location:**  
3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**  
Memorial Day-Labor Day  
daily 10am-7pm; Labor  
Day-Memorial Day Mon-  
Fri 11am-5:30pm, Sat-Sun  
10am-5:30pm. Hours subject  
to change

## 3 Secret Garden & Dolphin Habitat

**DESCRIPTION:** Siegfried & Roy's famous white tigers went from famous to infamous when one of them either did what tigers all do eventually and attacked his beloved owner/trainer, or -- depending on whether you buy the following story -- helped said beloved owner/trainer when the latter was having a medical emergency. Either way this saga is played, it explains why the **Secret Garden** attraction is still up; no matter what, the tiger is not to blame. We hope this attraction, a gorgeous area behind the dolphin exhibit, stays put for a long time. Here, white lions, Bengal tigers, an Asian elephant, a panther, and a snow leopard join the white tigers. (The culprit, Montecore, may sometimes be on exhibit.) It's really just a glorified zoo featuring only the big-ticket animals; however, it is a very pretty place, with plenty of foliage and some bits of Indian- and Asian-themed architecture. Zoo purists will be horrified at the smallish spaces the animals occupy, but all the animals are rotated between here and their more lavish digs at the illusionist team's home. What this does allow you to do is get safely very close up to a tiger, which is quite a thrill -- those paws are massive indeed. Visitors are given little portable phonelike objects on which they can play a series of programs, listening to Roy and former Mirage owner Steve Wynn discuss conservation or the attributes of each animal, and deliver anecdotes. The **Dolphin Habitat** is more satisfying than the Secret Garden. It was designed to provide a healthy and nurturing environment and to educate the public about marine mammals and their role in the ecosystem. Specialists worldwide were consulted in creating the habitat, which was designed to serve as a model of a quality, human-made environment. The pool is more than eight times larger than government regulations require, and its 2.5 million gallons of human-made seawater are cycled and cleaned once every 2 hours. It must be working because the adult dolphins here are breeding regularly. The Mirage displays only dolphins already in captivity -- no dolphins are taken from the wild. You can watch the dolphins frolic both above and below ground through viewing windows, in three different pools. There is nothing quite like the kick you get from seeing a baby



dolphin play. The knowledgeable staff, who surely have the best jobs in Vegas, will answer questions. If they aren't doing it already, ask them to play ball with the dolphins; they toss large beach balls into the pools, and the dolphins hit them out with their noses, leaping out of the water, cackling with dolphin glee. You catch the ball, getting nicely wet, and toss it back to them. If you have never played ball with a dolphin, shove that happy child next to you out of the way and go for it. There is also a video of a resident dolphin (Duchess) giving birth (to Squirt) underwater; her fourth calf (30 lb. and 3 ft. long) was born just before Mother's Day in 2003. You can stay as long as you like, which might just be hours. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 791 7111

fax: +1 702 791 7437

<http://www.cpk.com/>

**location:**

3400 South Las Vegas

Boulevard

Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Su to Th from 11:00 AM to

12:00 AM, Fr to Sa from 11:00

AM to 02:00 AM

## 4 California Pizza Kitchen

**DESCRIPTION:** California Pizza Kitchen situated in Mirage Hotel, offers unique hearth-baked pizza. The chef is open to experimenting and usually comes up with delicious innovations. The Pastas and salads available are just as mouth-watering as their Portobello Mushroom and Thai chicken pizzas. Soups are also served. For dessert, the Chocolate Banana Royale Cake is sumptuous treat. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of California Pizza Kitchen

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 380 7777 / +1 800 998 6937

[http://www.stratospherehotel.com/stratosphere\\_tower.html](http://www.stratospherehotel.com/stratosphere_tower.html)

**location:**

2000 Las Vegas Boulevard

South

Las Vegas NV 89104

## 5 Stratosphere Tower

**DESCRIPTION:** This is America's tallest observation tower, rising 1,149 feet above the city streets. Located at the Stratosphere Hotel, it houses two hair-raising rides. The 'Let It Ride High Roller' is the world's highest coaster and is guaranteed to provide the ride of a lifetime. The 'Big Shot' shoots riders 160 feet into the air where they experience zero gravity then free fall to the platform, which is 800 feet above the street. Tower admission prices are subject to change. © wcities.com



**contact:**  
tel: 702/380-7777  
www.stratospherehotel.com

**location:**  
2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**  
Sun-Thurs 10am-1am; Fri-Sat 10am-2am. Hours vary seasonally

## 6 Stratosphere Thrill Rides

**DESCRIPTION:** Atop the 1,149-foot Stratosphere Tower are three marvelous thrill rides. There used to be four, but they closed the roller coaster to make way for something even more stomach-churning. That's okay -- it was the least thrilling of the thrills. The **Big Shot** is a breathtaking free-fall ride that thrusts you 160 feet in the air along a 228-foot spire at the top of the tower, and then plummets back down again. Sitting in an open car, you seem to be dangling in space over Las Vegas. We have one relative, a thrill-ride enthusiast, who said he never felt more scared than when he rode the Big Shot. After surviving, he promptly put his kids on it; they loved it. Amping up the terror factor is **X-Scream**, a giant teeter-totter style device that propels you in an open car off the side of the 100-story tower and lets you dangle there weightlessly before returning you to relative safety. And now they have the aptly named **Insanity**, a spinning whirly-gig of a contraption that straps you into a seat and twirls you around 1,000 feet or so above terra firma. Insanity is right. **Note:** The rides are shut down in inclement weather and high winds. © Frommer's

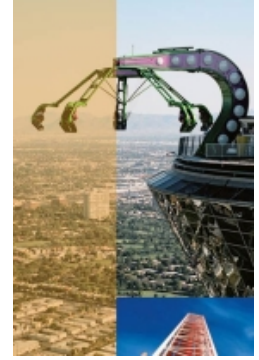


Photo courtesy of Stratosphere Thrill Rides

**contact:**  
tel: 877/386-8224  
www.montecarlo.com

**location:**  
3770 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

## 7 Lance Burton: Master Magician

**DESCRIPTION:** Magic acts are a dime a dozen in Vegas of late. Along with impersonator acts, they seem to have largely replaced the topless showgirls of yore. Most magic shows seem more than a little influenced by the immeasurable success of Siegfried & Roy. So when someone pops up who is original -- not to mention charming and, yes, actually good at his job -- it comes as a relief. Handsome and folksy (he hails from Lexington, KY), Burton is talented and engaging, for the most part shunning the big-ticket special effects that seem to have swamped most other shows in town. Instead, he offers an extremely appealing production that starts small, with "close-up" magic. These lovely, precise tricks, he tells us, are what won him a number of prestigious magic competitions. They are truly extraordinary, we are told by other professional magicians. We swear that he tossed a bird up in the air, and the darn thing turned into confetti in front of our eyes. Really. Burton doesn't have patter, per se, but his dry, laconic, low-key delivery is plenty amusing and contrasts nicely with other performers in town, who seem as if they have been spending way too much time at Starbucks. He does eventually move to bigger illusions, but his manner follows him -- he knows the stuff is good, but he also knows the entire thing is a bit silly, so why not have fun with it? His longtime support act is comedian/juggler Michael Goudeau, who is not only perhaps the only genuinely funny and talented support act on the Strip, but who also can juggle a beanbag chair, a chainsaw, and a peanut M&M all at once. His presence is just further proof of how right Burton's show is overall. All this and extremely comfortable movie theater-style plush seats with cup holders. Tuesday and Saturday at 7 and 10pm, Wednesday through Friday at 7pm.

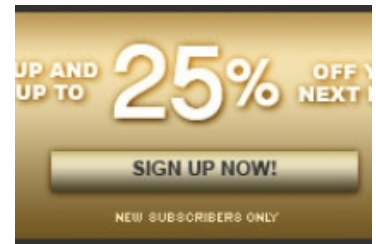
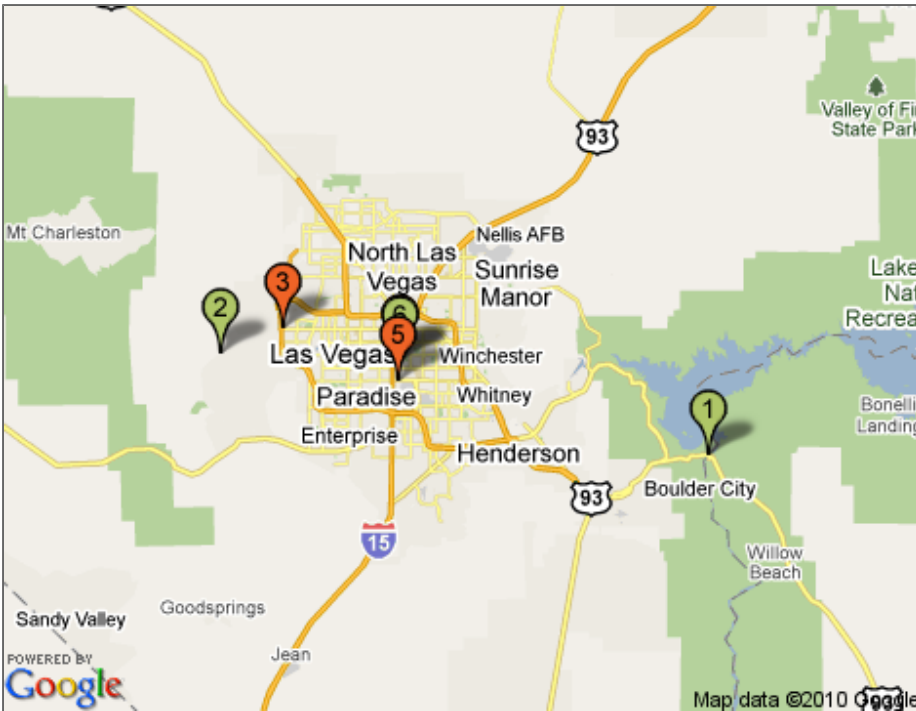


Photo courtesy of Lance Burton: Master Magician

# Day 3 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Take a day off from the Strip and head out of Las Vegas to either Hoover Dam or Red Rock Canyon. If you'd like to share a dose of history and an architectural wonder with your kids, visit Hoover Dam. Rising over 700 feet from the bottom of Black Canyon, this dam was built during the Great Depression and its sturdy construction ensures it will be standing for centuries to come. To take the kids for a day of hiking, drive to Red Rock Canyon. A one-way, 13-mile scenic road stops at numerous trails and scenic overlooks. Before you begin your drive, be sure to stop at the visitor center and learn about the Mojave Desert. Be careful with smaller children on trails that involve rock scrambling, and remember that this is the desert, home to the rattlesnake, scorpion, and cactus, so watch where you're sticking your hands and feet. Bring plenty of water and remember the sunscreen. You'll probably work up an appetite after hiking, and you can stop at the Red Rock Resort's Salt Lick for barbecue on the way back to the Strip. Give everyone plenty of time to rest up before catching another show in the evening. The Tournament of Kings has jousting and sword fighting—and you get to eat with your fingers. The Blue Man Group is funky, funny, and, well, blue. At the Venetian, where the Blue Man performs, you'll want to take some time to wander through the Grand Canal Shops, and the Taqueria Canonita will give you a place to eat while you watch the gondolas.

### contact:

tel: +1 702 293 8000  
<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam/>

### location:

PO Box 61470  
Boulder City NV 89005

## 1 Hoover Dam

**DESCRIPTION:** In less than five years, during the Great Depression, Hoover Dam was built in the middle of the harshest desert in the United States, taming the mighty Colorado River. At one time the largest dam in the world, Hoover Dam is still the largest concrete dam in the western hemisphere. Paid tours will take you 530 feet down inside the dam to view the massive turbines, turned by 90,000 gallons of water per second! The Visitor Center features interactive displays and a museum. Outside is beautiful Black Canyon and the monumental bronze statues, Winged Figures of the Republic. © NileGuide



**contact:**

tel: +1 702 363 1921  
(Information)  
<http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org/>

**location:**

State Route 159 from  
Charleston Boulevard  
Las Vegas NV 89124

**2 Red Rock Canyon**

**DESCRIPTION:** Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is less than 15 miles from the Las Vegas Strip, yet until recently, it was almost unknown. For years a destination for rock climbers, the area has miles of hiking and biking trails, interpretive sites and more photographic opportunities than you can count. The 14 mile Scenic Drive provides desert vistas and stunning views of Las Vegas. Often during the winter, Red Rock enjoys rain and snow on its 6000 foot mountain tops. © NileGuide



**contact:**

tel: 702/797-7535  
[http://lasvegas.citysearch.com/profile/41923870/las\\_vegas\\_nv/salt\\_lick.html](http://lasvegas.citysearch.com/profile/41923870/las_vegas_nv/salt_lick.html)

**location:**

10972 W. Charleston  
Las Vegas NV 89144

**hours:**

Sun-Thurs 11am-10pm; Fri-Sat 11am-11pm

**3 Salt Lick**

**DESCRIPTION:** An outpost of the much-beloved Austin barbeque spot, this looks both not at all like the Driftwood original and yet related in a double-first-cousin kind of way, with the same heavy pine wood tables and more importantly, the same heavenly smell. Many believe Salt Lick serves the platonic ideal of barbeque. That's not the case here. The meat is smoky, and the dry rub has its kick, but the results aren't as tender or as memorably flavorful. The sausage and ribs are better than the brisket, which is sublime back in Texas. Still, the all-you-can-eat plate is a good deal, and you can do takeout either on your way to a picnic in Red Rock Canyon or to munch back in your hotel after a long day of hiking. ~2010: This restaurant is closed~  
© Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Salt Lick

**contact:**

tel: 7024143773  
fax: 702 414 1100  
<http://www.venetian.com/>

**location:**

3311 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Mon-Thu 11am-10pm Fri-Sat 11am-12am Sun 11am-10pm

**4 Taqueria Canonita**

**DESCRIPTION:** From the colorful Mexican tiles to the bold chrome and Mexican music, this is a very authentic and trendy eatery. The tacos range from the traditional beef to the more exotic grilled mushroom tacos. Gorditas, Tostadas, Quesadillas, Platos and Tamales are all cooked to perfection, with a slightly southwestern flair. For dessert, try the Sweet Potato Flan or Margarita Mousse with tequila strawberries. Full bar service is available. Located inside the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian Hotel. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: 702 597 7600  
<http://www.excalibur.com/entertainment/tok.aspx>

**location:**

3850 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**5 Tournament of Kings**

**DESCRIPTION:** At the Excalibur Hotel, it is army against army and knight against dragon in this dinner performance straight from King Arthur himself. Enjoy a wonderful three-course dinner as you cheer on your jousting knight. It is an exciting evening that includes pyrotechnics, unparalleled horsemanship and amazing special effects. Bar drinks are available for an



Photo courtesy of Tournament of Kings

**hours:**  
6p & 8:30p M-Su

extra charge. Tickets are available by phone up to six days in advance. © wcities.com

**contact:**  
tel: (702) 414-9000  
<http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/Las-Vegas/Blue-Man-Group-at-the-Venetian-Las-Vegas/d684-3634LASBLU>

**location:**  
3355 Las Vegas Blvd. South  
Las Vegas Nevada 89109

## 6 Blue Man Group at the Venetian Las Vegas

**DESCRIPTION:** Kids and adults alike love the party atmosphere of the Blue Man Group, playing at the Venetian on the world-famous Las Vegas Strip! Combining music, comedy and multimedia theatrics, the Blue Man Group is a totally unique form of family-friendly entertainment.

The Blue Man Group are best known for their wildly popular theatrical shows and concerts. Stunningly visual, hysterically funny, wildly inventive and interactive, the Blue Man Group will keep the whole family entertained. Currently, their live stage shows can be seen in New York, Boston, Chicago, Las Vegas, London, Berlin, Amsterdam, Oberhausen, and the newest addition in Orlando.

One of the great things about seeing the Blue Man Group is their all-ages appeal. Kids love the lights, color and spectacle, while adults enjoy the humor and social commentary. While the spectacular show appeals to a wide audience, it is not recommended for children under five years of age.

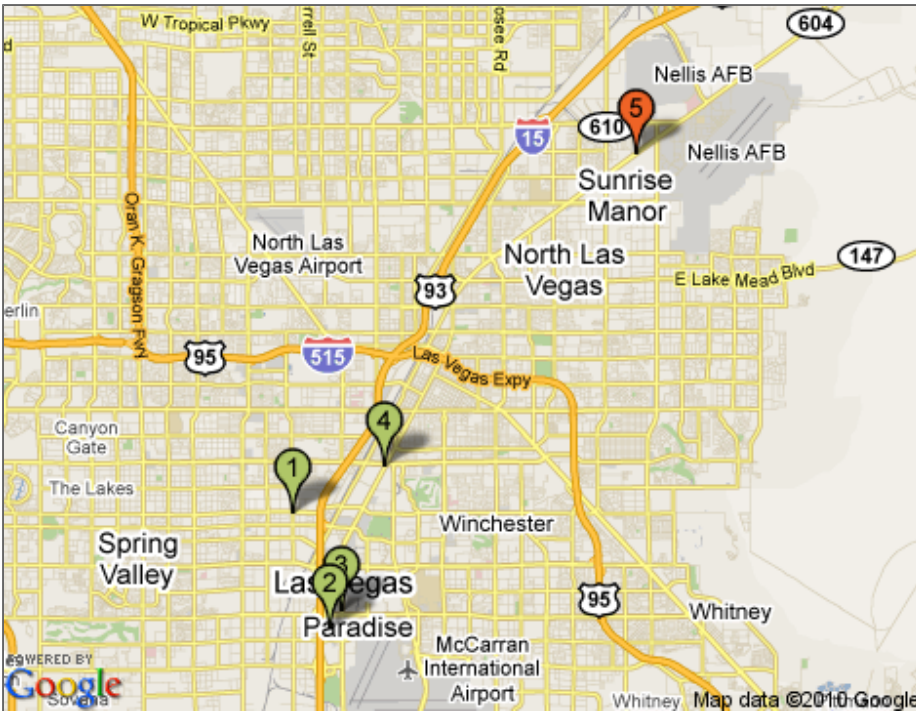
Please refer to the VIEW MAP link below for the theater layout and references to the RED and BLUE seating zones. © Viator



viator



# Day 4 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** On your last day in Las Vegas, a visit to the Springs Preserve offers an educational experience, but in a fun, hands-on setting that comes complete with play areas. Kids and adults who are intrigued by that famously “unsinkable” ship, the Titanic, will want to see the Titanic Exhibit at the Luxor. For rollercoaster lovers, the New York-New York’s rollercoaster will spin you around a miniature Big Apple, and the Sahara’s Speed lives up to its name. For your last Las Vegas meal, enjoy the food while you watch the pool scene from a table at Mandalay Bay’s Border Grill,.

### contact:

tel: 702/822-8344

fax: +1 702 822 8453

www.springspreserve.com

### location:

3333 S. Valley View Blvd  
Las Vegas NV 89107

### hours:

Summer daily 10am-10pm  
summer; winter daily  
10am-6pm

## 1 Springs Preserve

**DESCRIPTION:** By now, perhaps you've learned that "Las Vegas" is Spanish for "the meadows." This facility is set on the 180-acre site of the original springs that fed Las Vegas until it dried in the 1960s (told you that Hoover Dam comes in handy). These days, Las Vegas is an environmental nightmare, along with much of the rest of this planet, and this remarkable recreational attraction is here to educate us about the possibilities to reverse some of the damage. Set amidst nature and hiking trails, plus man-made wetlands, which is an interesting concept, the focal point is a large interpretive center that gives the history of Las Vegas from a land- and water-use perspective. The displays are creative and interactive, including a room with a reproduction flash flood that uses 5,000 gallons of water and one with a simulation of the experience of working on Hoover Dam. The other buildings are all done according to standards that have the least environmental impact, using modern construction versions of adobe and other green concepts. There are only 30 such structures in the world and seven of them are here. Each building tackles



Photo courtesy of wikimedia

an aspect of desert living and the environment, including one that instructs kids on the glories of recycling, complete with a compost tunnel to crawl through! Other displays focus on environmentally friendly kitchens and bathrooms while the gardens demonstrate environmentally friendly gardening, including a section instructing older people and those with disabilities how to garden despite their physical limitations. The outdoor kids' play area is made from recycled materials and has big animals to climb on, in case the kiddies have grown tired about learning responsible stuff. The cafe menu is designed by Wolfgang Puck with further green emphasis. Finally, this will be the eventual location of the Nevada state historical museum. Given the care, knowledge, and urgency of the issues addressed, this is an extraordinary facility for any town but particularly for this one. © Frommer's

**contact:**  
tel: 702/262-4400

**location:**  
3900 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89118

**hours:**  
No hours available at press  
time

## 2 Titanic: The Exhibition

**DESCRIPTION:** It's too easy to say "you've seen the movie, now see the exhibit." But that is sort of the case; if you were captivated by the Oscar-winning epic, you will definitely want to take in this exhibit on the unsinkable luxury liner that sank on its maiden voyage. While it's a can't-miss for buffs, it might still be of some interest for those with only marginal feelings about the massive 1912 disaster. It's a strangely somber subject for Vegas, but what can you do? It features displays explaining the ship's ill-fated maiden voyage; relics salvaged from the sunken liner; and even recreations of sample cabins from first, second, and third class, including atmospheric conditions, giving you a sense of how it felt to travel aboard what was an incredible vessel. There is even a large chunk of real ice standing in for the culprit berg. It's tastefully done, except for the proposed adjoining bar wherein patrons will be lifted into the establishments via lifeboat. Let's hope that one doesn't come to pass. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Titanic: The Exhibition

**contact:**  
tel: +1 702 740 6969  
[http://www.nynyhotelcasino.com/pages/ent\\_coaster.asp](http://www.nynyhotelcasino.com/pages/ent_coaster.asp)

**location:**  
3790 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

## 3 The Roller Coaster at New York-New York

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Formerly the Manhattan Express, now the ride is simply "The Roller Coaster"

**DESCRIPTION:** The New York-New York Las Vegas has wonderfully imitated the city of New York and its attractions. And the Manhattan Express Roller Coaster takes you for a joyride past the replicas of the Big Apple; Empire State Building, Chrysler Building to name a few. Speeding upto 67 miles per hour, the ride specialises in a 203-foot drop. The hotel also offers packages, which include, unlimited rides, souvenir T-shirts, food and drinks, and clown dolls. As for the experience - absolutely dizzying! © wcities.com

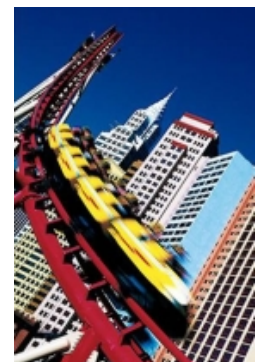


Photo courtesy of The Roller Coaster at New York-New York

**contact:**  
tel: 702/737-2111  
www.nascarcafelasvegas.com

**location:**  
2535 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**  
Sun-Thurs 11am-midnight;  
Fri-Sat 11am-1am. Hours may vary

## 4 SPEED: The Ride/Las Vegas Cyber Speedway

**DESCRIPTION:** Auto racing is the fastest-growing spectator sport in America, so it's no surprise that these two attractions at the Sahara are a popular stop. The first is an 8-minute virtual-reality ride, **Cyber Speedway**, featuring a three-quarter-size replica of a NASCAR race car. Hop aboard for an animated, simulated ride -- either the Las Vegas Motor Speedway or a race around the streets of Las Vegas (start with the Strip, with all the hotels flashing by, and then through the Forum Shops -- whoops! There goes Versace! -- and so forth). Press the gas and you lean back and feel the rush of speed; hit a bump and you go flying. Should your car get in a crash, off you go to a pit stop. At the end, a computer-generated report tells you your average speed, how many laps you made, and how you did racing against the others next to you. It's a pretty remarkable experience. Speed junkies and race-car buffs will be in heaven here, though those with tender stomachs should consider shopping at the well-stocked theme gift shop instead. **SPEED: The Ride** is a roller coaster that blasts riders out through a hole in the wall by the NASCAR Cafe, then through a loop, under the sidewalk, through the hotel's marquee, and finally straight up a 250-foot tower. At the peak, you feel a moment of weightlessness, and then you do the entire thing backward! Not for the faint of heart. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of SPEED: The Ride/Las Vegas Cyber Speedway

**contact:**  
tel: 702/632-7403  
fax: +1 702 632 6945  
www.bordergrill.com

**location:**  
3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89115

**hours:**  
Mon-Fri 11:30am-11pm; Sat-Sun 11:30am-10pm

## 5 Border Grill

**DESCRIPTION:** For our money, here's the best Mexican food in town. This big, cheerful space (like a Romper Room for adults) houses a branch of the much-lauded L.A. restaurant, conceived and run by the Food Network's "Two Hot Tamales," Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger. This is truly authentic Mexican home cooking -- the Tamales learned their craft from the real McCoy south of the border -- but with a nuevo twist. So don't expect precisely the same dishes you'd encounter in your favorite corner joint, but do expect fresh and fabulous food, sitting as brightly on the plates as the decor on the walls. Stay away from the occasionally bland fish and head right toward rich and cheesy dishes such as chiles rellenos (with perfect black beans) and chicken chilaquiles (a sister to the taco), or try new items such as mushroom empanadas. Don't miss the dense but fluffy Mexican chocolate-cream pie (with a meringue crust). In Mandalay Bay, 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S. tel. **702/632-7403**. www.bordergrill.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses lunch \$15-\$24, dinner \$21-34. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Fri 11:30am-11pm; Sat-Sun 11:30am-10pm. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Border Grill

# Las Vegas Snapshot

## Local Info

How do you define Las Vegas? This city in the desert is a gambling capital, vacation paradise, adventure destination, and a premier location for business conventions. Las Vegas is the city of neon and the city that never sleeps. Reality takes a hike when you enter the world of glittering casinos, and the hours trickle away in this realm of slot machines, roulette wheels, and high-stakes poker rooms. If you want to keep track of the time, be sure to wear a watch. Casinos don't have clocks, and they are open 24/7, year-round.

Las Vegas hotels range from utilitarian to luxurious, and options for entertainment come in every variety, from adults-only to family-friendly. As a business destination, Las Vegas wins hands down with the volume of facilities and services available for either large conventions or small business get-togethers. Upscale eateries by chefs like Wolfgang Puck and Emeril Lagasse are found throughout Las Vegas, both on and off the Strip. Award-winning shows from Cirque du Soleil and adaptations of Broadway hits such as *The Phantom of the Opera* grace the hotels' showrooms. Late-night entertainment is plentiful and diverse. Beyond the casinos, the Mojave Desert holds adventures like world-class rock climbing and mountain biking. Whether you are planning to move here, attend a business meeting, skydive, get married, or just relax and enjoy, you will find Las Vegas is a city that defies definition.

### The Strip: Las Vegas Boulevard

The fabled five-mile area known as the Las Vegas Strip holds more hotel rooms than any other city in the world. You'll find famous and remarkable hotels, each with its own theme and ambiance. Bellagio's dancing fountains and Italian Renaissance aura ooze luxury. Caesars Palace recreates the glory of Rome, Vegas-style. The Venetian takes on another Italian city and era, duplicating Old World Venice, complete with canals and gondoliers. Old standbys include the Flamingo and the Mirage, with its white tigers and erupting volcanoes. See the Paris Las Vegas with outstanding replicas of the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe and magnificent Parisian atmosphere and charm. Treasure Island

offers daily live pirate battles, free of charge. At the "bottom" or south end of the strip, risen from the ashes of the Hacienda Hotel, the magnificent Mandalay Bay takes you to the tropics, including a pool with waves you can actually surf. At the top of the Strip, you will find the Stratosphere Tower visible from miles away. It is the highest free-standing building in the western half of the United States, with views from the top that are indescribable.

You don't have to stay right on Las Vegas Boulevard to enjoy neon and glitz. Just off the Strip, places like the Rio, the Palms, and the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino are only a taxi ride away and offer easier access to areas beyond the Strip.

### Downtown: Fremont Street

The original Las Vegas, where people hung out in the '30s and early '40s, is still thriving, but with a new face known as the Fremont Street Experience. The Fremont Street Experience closed the fabled street to vehicle traffic, and its 90-foot overhead canopy contains state-of-the-art LED lights that create jaw-dropping images. Some tourists actually prefer this area to the Strip because room prices are generally lower. It's an easy walk from one casino to the next, and it's reminiscent of the early, nostalgic days of Las Vegas. The Neon Museum has a permanent display along Fremont Street featuring Old Vegas signs, from Vegas Vic to Aladdin's Lamp. Nightly light shows on the canopy of the Fremont Street Experience are free, and street vendors hawk everything from spray-paint art to henna tattoos. In addition, there are famous hotels such as The Plaza (formerly known as Union Plaza), overlooking Fremont Street, and the classic Golden Nugget. For nostalgia buffs, there is also the Golden Gate Hotel Casino, renovated to its earlier classic glory and appearance and still famous for the 99-cent shrimp cocktail.

### Beyond the Strip

In the last two decades, Las Vegas has added residents at an astonishing rate, creating outlying neighborhoods full of homes and, of course, hotels and casinos. To the west of the Strip, Summerlin sits just outside Red Rock Canyon and contains three hotel/casinos, along with several

golf courses. East of the Strip, Henderson/Green Valley puts visitors a quick drive away from Lake Mead National Recreation Area and is home to the trendy Green Valley Ranch Resort, which starred in its very own reality TV show for a while. In North Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Motor Speedway draws racing fans from all over the United States, and places like the Cannery give them a place to stay close to the track.

If playing the tables isn't risky enough for you, you may want to try some of Las Vegas' outdoor adventures. Red Rock Canyon is ranked among the top five rock climbing destinations in the world and contains over 2,000 climbing routes. Bootleg Canyon in Boulder City is home to a network of mountain biking trails and a new zip-line adventure that speeds riders along a suspended cable high above the canyon.

### Las Vegas Weather

Las Vegas is located in the Mojave Desert, which means that from roughly mid-May to late October, you can expect very hot temperatures, often over 100 degrees. The climate is quite dry, except during brief rainstorms—in which case be careful of flash flooding. If you're planning any outdoor activities, drink lots of water, wear sunscreen, and go as early in the day as possible. Better yet, save your desert explorations for the winter months, approximately November through April.

© NileGuide

© NileGuide

## Hotel Insights

### Las Vegas Hotels Highlights

Deciding where to stay in Las Vegas can be challenging, simply because of the sheer number of choices. You'll want to consider the atmosphere, theme, and location of your accommodations. Room rates run the gamut from decadent to budget priced. With few exceptions, Las Vegas hotels offer everything you might need on-site—restaurants, shows, shopping, spas, sometimes even bowling alleys and movie theaters, and, of course, casinos. Once you arrive, you won't have to leave your hotel unless you want to.

### The Las Vegas Strip

## Las Vegas Snapshot continued

On the Strip, luxury permeates the new Wynn Las Vegas and its neighbor, Encore. Built on the site of the old Desert Inn, Wynn and Encore have been showered with both praise and awards for their five-star accommodations. Further south on the Strip, the Bellagio is probably best-known for its dancing fountains, but the amazing synchronized water show is secondary to the interior of the hotel. The Chihuly glass creation over the lobby is fascinating, and is a good indication of the Bellagio's attention to detail. Other notable Las Vegas luxury hotels include the Mandalay Bay and The Hotel at Mandalay Bay (which are interconnected), the Venetian, and Caesar's Palace. The Trump International, which does not offer gaming, is another consideration for travelers looking for pampering, sophistication, and opulence.

If your budget calls for less extravagance, you have plenty of options, such as the Paris Las Vegas, New York-New York, Excalibur (the medieval theme is terrific for families), Luxor (otherwise known as the big pyramid), Treasure Island, or the Sahara, all of which are located on the Strip. Except for the Sahara, each of these hotels entertains visitors with distinct themes from other cities and/or other time periods. The Paris recreates the famous French city on a small scale, complete with an Eiffel Tower. Both the New York-New York and the Sahara have rollercoasters, and the Sahara offers the Las Vegas Cyber Speedway for your inner race car driver. The Treasure Island's nightly pirate show has always been popular, and they recently changed the show to "Sirens of the TI," so the show now includes a perennial Las Vegas favorite: scantily clad dancing girls. For a G-rated show, you can always go nextdoor to watch the volcano erupt at The Mirage.

### Downtown

Staying downtown will give you more of that Old Vegas feeling, without pyramids or rollercoasters. Downtown is a good place to stay if your major reason for visiting Las Vegas is strictly to gamble. None of Downtown's hotels have been imploded (yet), so favorites like the Golden Nugget, Binions, and the Plaza (formerly the Union Plaza) are still there. Downtown's nod to the modern era is the Fremont Street Experience, which closed Fremont Street

to traffic and connected the hotels with an overhead canopy that displays nightly light shows. If you're traveling with kids, however, Downtown hotels don't offer much in the way of entertainment for the under-21 age group.

### Off the Strip

Off the Strip and in Las Vegas neighborhoods, the hotel casinos are smaller, and will appeal to visitors who want to stay away from the crowds on the Strip. The hip, upscale Palms is just a few blocks west of the Strip, as is the all-suites Rio. Station Casinos offers a chain of hotel casinos throughout Las Vegas, including the Gold Coast, the Texas, and Boulder Station. The Orleans, a few blocks west of the Strip, frequently hosts reasonably-priced concerts and events. Non-gaming hotels include the Alexis Park and the Renaissance, and most major chains, such as Marriott and Holiday Inn, have non-gaming hotels in Las Vegas.

© NileGuide

© NileGuide

## Restaurants Insights

The good news about Las Vegas restaurants is that the city has officially shed its status as a restaurant backwater. The bad news is that eating out in Las Vegas isn't nearly as cheap as it used to be.

Las Vegas is now home to a variety of accomplished, award-winning chefs, some of whom will be well-known to foodies. Wolfgang Puck was one of the first celebrity chefs to set up shop in Las Vegas, beginning with Spago at Caesar's Palace; Puck now has five Strip restaurants, including Postrio at the Venetian Hotel in the Grand Canal Shoppes. Thomas Keller has a place at the Venetian, Bouchon, which serves the fabulous bistro food he made famous in Napa Valley. Other culinary heavy-hitters in Las Vegas include Hubert Keller's Fleur de Lys at Mandalay Bay; Joel Robuchon's eponymous restaurant at the Mansion at MGM (also his L'Atelier, for more casual dining); and Alex Strada's Alex at Wynn. Emeril Lagasse has four restaurants in Las Vegas, most recently opening a sports bar and grill, Lagasse's Stadium, at the Palazzo.

Some Las Vegas restaurants integrate great food with beautiful décor and feasts

for your eyes. Aureole at Mandalay Bay is known for its food and its wine angels, who fly through the wine racks to retrieve your selection of wine. Mix is acclaimed for its view and interior design just as much as for its food. Atop the Eiffel Tower at Paris Las Vegas, you can enjoy French cuisine at the Eiffel Tower Restaurant while watching the Strip below you. For a more expansive view, the Top of the World Restaurant at the top of the Stratosphere will serve you gourmet entrees while you take in the view from the tallest structure west of the Mississippi—and the restaurant rotates.

In the years before Las Vegas restaurants went seriously upscale, the city's better restaurants were known for thick steaks. The Golden Steer has been in business for over 50 years, and it's the perfect place to get a feel for the days before megaresorts. Downtown, Hugo's Cellar at the Four Queens is another long-time Las Vegas favorite. Also located Downtown, Chicago Joe's and Dona Maria's Tamales offer diners authentic Italian and Mexican food, minus celebrity anything. West of the Strip, Rosemary's award-winning food draws both visitors and locals—it's in a rather nondescript shopping mall, but diners will be too enchanted with the food to notice anything else.

Naturally, if you're in Las Vegas, you'll have to try a buffet. Even though they're no longer the cheapest choice for meals, Las Vegas buffets are now known for their varied selections of food. The Golden Nugget was one of the first buffets to raise the price but also the quality of their food, and The Buffet is still worth visiting. The Mirage's Cravings, Bally's Sterling Sunday Brunch, and the Rio's Village Seafood Buffet are great places to experience the new and improved Las Vegas buffet.

© NileGuide

© NileGuide

## Things to Do Insights

Finding things to do in Las Vegas is easy.

The Strip is dedicated to entertainment, from its lavish hotel casinos to its animal exhibits. Beyond the Strip, you'll find museums, an Arts District, and beautiful desert scenery.

Wander through any of the Strip's resorts to find plenty of gambling opportunities (you may want to join the casino's "club" for a

## Las Vegas Snapshot continued

variety of deals, if they have one). If you're not interested in gambling, almost every hotel has a spa designed to massage and pamper. Caesar's Palace, Planet Hollywood, and the Venetian have elaborately themed and designed shopping areas, complete with overhead skies in the ceiling that change from day to night periodically. Caesar's has talking statues and the Venetian features canals and gondolas. Animal lovers may enjoy the Mirage's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat, the Mandalay Bay's Shark Reef, or the MGM Grand's Lion Habitat. Rollercoasters are a feature of New York-New York, the Sahara, and the Stratosphere. Downtown, the Fremont Street Experience and Neon Museum give visitors all the bright lights they can handle along a pedestrian walkway that connects the Downtown casinos together.

Las Vegas museums offer a great deal of history about Southern Nevada. The state's oldest non-native building is located at the Old Mormon Fort (only a partial wall remains within another building). The Springs Preserve is a new museum that features walking trails along with environmentally-friendly buildings and hands-on exhibits about Southern Nevada. The Atomic Testing Museum details the history of the atomic bomb. The Downtown Arts District, along Charleston Avenue, is a growing community of galleries and restaurants. On the first Friday of every month, they hold a street festival.

Exploring the desert surrounding Las Vegas will take you to red sandstone cliffs and rock formations, rare desert springs, and a massive man-made lake. Lake Mead, the reservoir created by Hoover Dam, sits adjacent to the Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada's first state park. Look for bighorn sheep in this area. Red Rock Canyon, to the west of Las Vegas, is a popular destination with rock climbers, hikers, and horseback riders. To escape from the desert heat, visit Mt. Charleston, also known as Spring Mountain National Recreation Area. Las Vegas is also a good place to use a base camp for day trips in Death Valley, Zion National Park, and the Mojave National Preserve. Helicopter or plane tours to one of the rims of the Grand Canyon are also popular. The South and North Rims are part of the national park, and the West Rim,

which is on Hualapai tribal land, features the Skywalk, a glass walkway that juts out over the canyon.

For guided tours:

**Las Vegas Tours** Haunted Vegas Tour (<http://www.hauntedvegastours.com/>) Papillion-Neon Light (+1 888 635 7272/<http://www.papillon.com/>) Scenic Airlines (+1 702 638 3300/<http://www.scenic.com/>) Sundance Helicopters (+1 800 653 1881/<http://www.helicoptour.com/>)

**Grand Canyon Tours** Adventure Photo Tours (+1 702 889 8687/<http://www.adventurephototours.com/>) Eagle Canyon Airlines, Inc (+1 800 634 6801/<http://www.scenic.com/>) Grand Canyon Airlines (+1 866 235 9422/<http://www.grandcanyonairlines.com/>) Grand Canyon Coaches (+1 702 577 9056/<http://www.grandcanyoncoaches.com/>) Scenic Airlines (+1 702 638 3300/<http://www.scenic.com/>)

**Death Valley Tours** Adventure Photo Tours (+1 702 889 8687/<http://www.adventurephototours.com/>) Pink Jeep Tours (+1 888 900 4480/<http://www.pinkjeep.com/>)

**Horse Back Riding Tours** Cowboy Trail Rides, Inc. (+1 702 387 2457/<http://www.cowboytrailrides.com/>) Sagebrush Ranch Adventures (+1 866 552 7838/<http://www.sagebrushranchadventures.com/>) Sunset Cowboy Dinner Ride (+1 877 444 4464/<http://www.awesomeadventureguide.com/>)

**Adventure Tours** All Las Vegas Tours Inc. (+1 800 566 5868/<http://www.alllasvegastours.com/>) Sun Buggy Fun Rentals (+1 866 728 4443/<http://www.sunbuggyfunrentals.com/>) Sunset Cowboy Dinner Ride (+1 877 444 4464/<http://www.awesomeadventureguide.com/>)  
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### Fun Facts

**Las Vegas State:** Nevada **Country:** United States

### Las Vegas by the Numbers:

Population: 599,087(city); 1,986,542(metro area)

Average winter temperature: 45-51°F/ 7-10.5°C

Average summer temperature: 84-91°F/ 29-33°C

Annual rainfall: 4.1 inches/ 10.4 centimeters

Days of sunshine: 310

Area: 85 square miles/ 220 square kilometers

Elevation: 2178 feet/ 664 meters

Year Las Vegas was established: 1905

Average number of conventions per year: 22,454

### Quick Facts:

Major industries: Mining, manufacturing(gaming equipment, chemicals, aerospace products), gaming, conventions and tourism.

Year gambling was legalized in Nevada: 1931.

Country dialing code: 1

Area code: 702

Electricity: 110 volts AC, 50Hz; round two-pin plugs are standard.

Time zone: GMT-8(GMT-7 during daylight savings)

### Did You Know?

Las Vegas is Spanish for "the meadows."

Spanish explorers first came through the area in 1776.

More than 100,000 marriage licenses are issued in the city each year.

Over 37,000,000 visitors travel to Las Vegas annually.

The average visitor's gambling budget is \$532.00.

Number of hotel/motel rooms available in Las Vegas: 140,529.

Of Las Vegas' visitation, 24% are from Southern California and 15% are International.

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## Las Vegas Snapshot continued

### Weather

Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temperature C												
Average High	13	17	20	25	31	37	40	38	34	27	18	13
Average Mean	8	11	14	18	24	29	32	31	27	20	12	8
Average Low	2	5	8	12	17	22	25	25	20	13	6	2
Temperature F												
Average High	57	63	69	78	88	99	104	102	94	81	66	57
Average Mean	47	52	58	66	75	85	91	89	81	69	55	47
Average Low	37	41	47	54	63	72	78	77	69	57	44	37
Rainy Days	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	3
Rain Fall (cm)	1.5	1.8	1.5	0.4	0.6	0.2	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.8	1.0
Rain Fall (in)	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4

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