



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



# Best Las Vegas Restaurants

## Las Vegas, 1 Day

### Table of contents:

Guide Description	2
Itinerary Overview	3
Daily Itineraries	4
Las Vegas Snapshot	10

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Whether you're looking for critically acclaimed fare or an inexpensive place for lunch, you'll easily find a Las Vegas restaurant to satisfy your taste buds. For a first-class epicurean experience, try Rosemary's, Joel Robuchon's, Hugo's Cellar, or Mix. Spago, at Caesar's Palace, combines great food with very interesting people watching from the patio. For seriously authentic Mexican fare (and the best tamales), visit Dona Maria's. The Burger Bar at Mandalay Bay and Capriotti's offer casual dining and make good stops for lunch. For the mandatory Las Vegas buffet, try Bally's Sunday Brunch or the Mirage's Cravings.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Las Vegas



**Rosemary's Restaurant**  
Nouvelle American Cuisine



**Joël Robuchon at the Mansion**  
Chef Joel Robuchon's first U.S. restaurant



**Hugo's Cellar**  
Intimate & Romantic in downtown Las Vegas



**Mix**  
A terrific view and French food atop THEhotel at Mandalay



**Spago**  
Eat And Be Seen



**Dona Maria Tamales**  
Margaritas By The Pitcher



**Burger Bar at Mandalay Bay**  
Unusual burgers and micro brews!



**Capriotti's**  
Subs and Sandwiches!

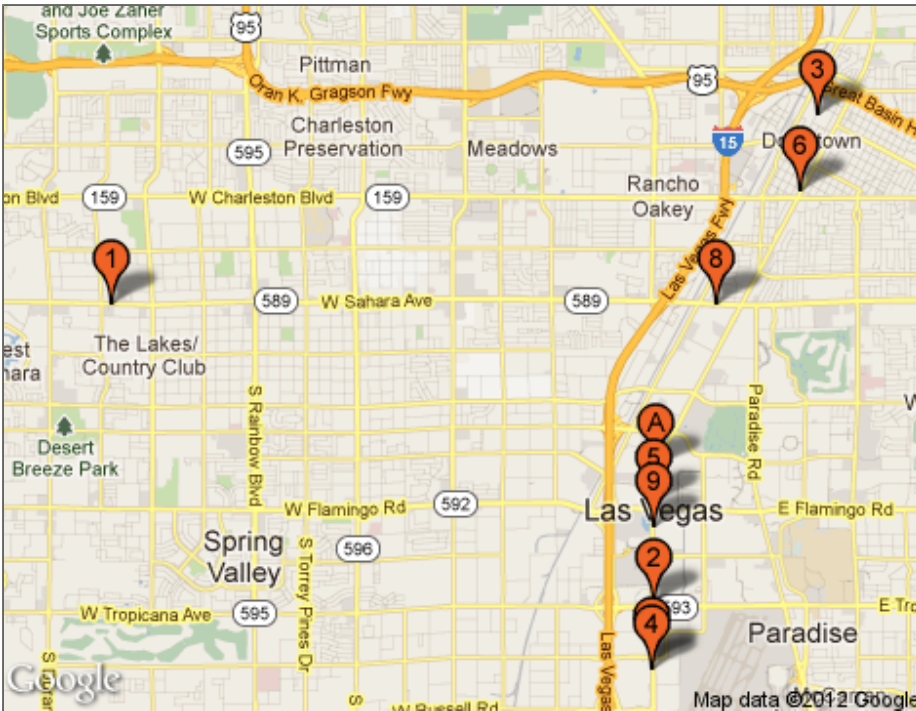


**Bally's Sterling Sunday Brunch**  
Famous & Elegant



**Mirage Cravings Buffet**  
Delicious Cravings!!

# Day 1 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

### contact:

tel: 702/869-2251

fax: +1 702 869 2283

<http://www.rosemarysrestaurant.com>

### location:

8125 W. Sahara

Las Vegas NV 89117

### hours:

Mon-Fri 11:30am-2:30pm

and 5:30-10:30pm; Sat-Sun

5:30-10:30pm

## 1 Rosemary's Restaurant

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Award-winning food in the Las Vegas suburbs, nine miles west of the Las Vegas Strip. CLOSED IN 2011

**DESCRIPTION:** No visitor would be blamed for never leaving the Vegas Strip -- it's the raison d'être of any Vegas tourist -- but a true foodie should make a point of finding the nearest moving vehicle that can get them to Rosemary's Restaurant. A 15-minute (or so) drive down Sahara (hardly anything) is all it takes to eat what may well be the best food in Las Vegas. (Certainly, it is consistently voted the best food in the Las Vegas Review-Journal's annual poll, by food critics and readers alike.) The brainchild of Michael and Wendy Jordan, both veterans of the New Orleans food scene (Michael actually opened Emeril's here in Vegas), Rosemary's Restaurant (named for Michael's mother) shows more than a few NOLA touches, from the food to the service, in a room that's warmer and more inviting than most others in Vegas. Note that you can get seats at the bar overlooking the open kitchen, great fun for foodie interaction and not a bad choice for singles, or for couples looking for an unusual romantic evening. The cuisine covers most regions of the U.S., though Southern influences dominate. Fifty local farmers help supply products. Seared foie gras with peach coulis, candied walnuts, and vanilla bean-scented arugula is like a quilt, with distinct flavors that all hang together nicely. Interesting sides include ultrarich bleu-cheese slaw, slightly spicy crispy fried tortilla strips, and perfect cornmeal jalapeño



Photo courtesy of Rosemary's Restaurant

hush puppies. A recent visit found the crispy striped bass fighting it out with the pan-seared honey-glazed salmon for "best fish dish we've ever had." Desserts are similarly Southern -- lemon icebox pie! -- and most pleasant. There is a nice little wine list with a broad range, especially when it comes to half-price bottles. They also specialize, unusually, in beer suggestions to pair with courses, including some fruity Belgian numbers; this is such a rare treat, if you drink, you must try some of their suggestions. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: 702/891-7925  
<http://www.mgmgrand.com/restaurants/joel-robuchon-french-restaurant.aspx>

**location:**

3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89119

**hours:**

Sun-Thurs 5:30-10pm; Fri-Sat  
5:30-10:30pm

## 2 Joël Robuchon at the Mansion

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Prix fixe menus come in 6, 8, or 16 courses.

**DESCRIPTION:** Joel Robuchon was named the "Chef of the Century," and he holds the record for the most Michelin Stars received. His namesake restaurant in Las Vegas is the only Vegas restaurant with the Michelin Three Star. It's also the winner of Forbes Five Star, the AAA Five Diamond, and a host of other accolades. For serious foodies, this is a destination worthy of giving up some gambling money—and if you plan on eating here, you should come prepared for a very expensive meal.

The classic French dishes are served a la carte or prix fixe, and prix fixe meals begin at \$115.00 per person. Chef Robuchon changes the menus seasonally. The restaurant's specialties are La Langoustine, Le Bar, and Le Mojito. The menu's most expensive item is the \$385.00 16-course Degustation, an amazing presentation of classically prepared French foods.

This is fine dining in the first degree. The décor is 1930s era Paris, there's a dress code, and the restaurant will arrange for limo service. Described often as "European," the small restaurant offers limited seating. Reservations are a must.  
© NileGuide



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**contact:**

tel: 702/385-4011  
<http://www.hugocellar.com>

**location:**

202 Fremont St  
Las Vegas NV 89101

**hours:**

Daily 5:30-11pm

## 3 Hugo's Cellar

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

An Old Vegas romantic classic.

**DESCRIPTION:** Hugo's Cellar is indeed in a cellar, or at least below street level in the Four Queens hotel. No, they aren't ashamed of it -- quite the opposite. This is their pride and joy, and it is highly regarded by the locals. This is Old School Vegas Classy Dining. Each female guest is given a red rose when she enters the restaurant -- the first of a series of nice touches. The restaurant proper is dimly lit, lined with dark wood and brick. It's fairly intimate, but if you really want to be cozy, ask for one of the curtained booths against the wall. The meal is full of ceremony, perfectly delivered by a well-trained and



Photo courtesy of Hugo's Cellar

cordial waitstaff. Salads, included in the price, are prepared at your table, from a cart full of choices. In Vegas style, though, most choices are on the calorie-intensive side, ranging from chopped egg and bleu cheese to pine nuts and bay shrimp. Still, with a honey-orange-walnut vinaigrette, it's good enough to consider paying the \$14 a la carte fee and just sticking with it. Unfortunately, the main courses are not all that novel (various cuts of meat, seafood, and chicken prepared in different ways), but on a recent visit, not one of six diners was anything less than delighted. The filet of beef stuffed with crabmeat and wrapped with bacon is over the top for us, but others loved it, while the roast duckling rubbed with anise and flambéed at the table is a guilty pleasure, just the right effect for this Old School Vegas dining experience. The T-bone steak was tender enough to cut with a fork. Vegetables and excellent starchy sides are included, as is a finish of chocolate-dipped fruits with cream. The service is impeccable, and it really makes you feel pampered. The fact that salad, the small dessert, and so forth are included makes an initially hefty-seeming price tag appear a bit more reasonable, especially compared to Strip establishments that aren't much better and can cost the same for just the entree. While it's not worth going out of your way for the food (though here we admit that well-prepared Old School is better than careless nouvelle any day), perhaps it is worth it for the entire package. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: 702/632-9500

<http://www.chinagrillmgt.com/mixlv>

**location:**

3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89119

**hours:**

Daily 6-10:30pm

**4 Mix**

**DESCRIPTION:** This is highly revered French chef Alain Ducasse's first Vegas venture, and such a Big Deal needs a Big Deal setting, in this case, on the 64th (by their counting) floor of THEhotel at Mandalay Bay. It's yet another spectacular restaurant space in a hotel full of them, this one white on white on silver, a futuristic fantasy including a set design sort of like a giant beaded curtain made of blown-glass balls, which envelopes a curving stairway plopped down in the middle. Some tables are set in silver "pods" that remind one of Woody Allen's Sleeper. It looks like where the Jetsons might eat. It also has drama outside, thanks to top-of-the-tall-hotel Strip views. The playful yet hip attitude is reflected in the food, which is a little self-conscious. Still, it's hard to resist a place that starts with bread flavors such as ketchup or bacon, with a side of homemade peanut butter. But it's the sort of meal that grows progressively less "wow" as the evening wears on; early courses of melting amberjack sashimi topped with osetra caviar and a little lemon and salt are superb, as are the lovely foie gras terrines with nifty accompaniments. The signature Ducasse pressed chicken with foie gras in black truffle sauce probably would be just that much better if Chef himself were making it. Fish dishes are solidly good but not transcendent, and by the time the meal gets to, say, the rack of lamb, you may be thinking "Well, this is excellent, certainly, but not mind blowingly so." Which sounds like terrible nitpicking, but given the remarkable things going on in some other kitchens around town, and given the prices here, it's a fine line worth delineating. Still, the setting may make up for it. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of [www.bluewaikiki.com](http://www.bluewaikiki.com)

**contact:**

tel: 702/369-6300  
fax: +1 702 369 0361  
www.wolfgangpuck.com

**location:**

3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Dining room daily 5:30-10pm;  
cafe Sun-Thurs 11am-11pm,  
Fri-Sat 11am-midnight

**5 Spago**

**DESCRIPTION:** At this point in the game, Spago represents both the best and the worst of the celebrity chef phenomenon. If you eat at the Beverly Hills location, you might well have the very best meal of your life, and almost certainly something that demonstrates the reason why such a fuss is made about creative cooking. The problem is that Wolfgang Puck, the man who virtually invented the Chef-as-Household-Name concept, and certainly had as much to do as anyone with California cuisine becoming a viable food genre, has stretched himself too thin -- seven restaurants in Vegas alone. No one can keep a personal watch on that many locations, and the result is that this one, the first sign that Vegas was becoming a viable restaurant destination, is now simply not our first, nor even second, choice for you to spend your hard-won jackpot money. The inside menu changes seasonally, but the signature -- and reliable -- dish is a Chinese-style duck, moist but with a perfectly crispy skin. It's about as good as duck gets, served with a doughy, steamed bun and Chinese vegetables. Our other suggestion is to come here for lunch, and that's still not the worst plan. Salads, sandwiches, and pastas are all pretty and generously portioned, and the signature Puck pizzas, like prosciutto and goat cheese and pear, are still quite good (ask for the off-the-menu and legendary "Jewish pizza," with salmon and cr me fra che). Nothing is all that innovative, however (braised leek and ham quiche with apple-smoked bacon -- good, but you've seen it before), and nothing stands out. Desserts can actually be so poor -- such as a dry chocolate cake -- we won't even bother finishing them.   Frommer's



wcities

**contact:**

tel: 702/382-6538  
fax: +1 702 382 0937  
www.donamariatamales.com

**location:**

910 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89101

**hours:**

Sun-Thurs 8am-10pm; Fri-Sat  
8am-11pm

**6 Dona Maria Tamales**

**DESCRIPTION:** Decorated with Tijuana-style quilt work and calendars, this quintessential Mexican diner is convenient to both the north end of the Strip and Downtown. The cooks use lots of lard, lots of cheese, and lots of sauce. As a result, the food is really good -- and really fattening. Yep, the folks who did those health reports showing how bad Mexican food can be for your heart probably did some research here. The fat just makes it all the better, in our opinion. Locals apparently agree; even at lunchtime, the place is crowded. You will start off with homemade chips and a spicy salsa served in a mortar. Meals are so large that it shouldn't be a problem getting full just ordering off the sides, which can make this even more of a budget option. Naturally, the specialty is the fantastic tamales, which come in red, green, cheese, or sweet. They also serve up excellent enchiladas, chiles rellenos, burritos, and fajitas. All dinners include rice, beans, tortillas, and soup or salad. Sauces are heavy but oh-so-good. For dessert, they have flan, fried ice cream, and Mexican-style pumpkin pie.   Frommer's

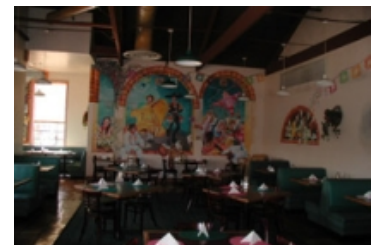


Photo courtesy of Dona Maria Tamales

**contact:**

tel: 7026329364  
<http://www.mandalaybay.com/dining/burgerbar.aspx>

**location:**

3950 Las Vegas Blvd S  
Las Vegas NV 89119-1005

**hours:**

Mo to Th from 10:30 AM to 11:00 PM, Fr to Sa from 10:30 AM to 02:00 AM, Su from 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM

**7 Burger Bar at Mandalay Bay**

**DESCRIPTION:** The ultimate burger experience, from the famous restaurateur Hubert Keller of Fleur de Lys, comes to Mandalay Place. Incorporating the finest varieties of beef, buffalo, turkey, vegetarian and vegan products, a range of gourmet toppings and delicious buns, Burger Bar has a little bit of everything for the creative eater. Complete the experience with a Sweet Burger dessert or a hand-crafted micro brew. © NileGuide

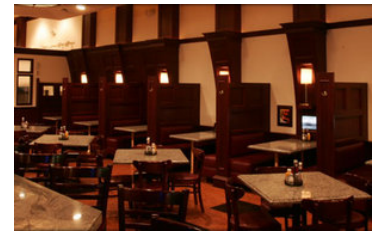


Photo courtesy of Burger Bar at Mandalay Bay

**contact:**

tel: 702/474-0229  
[www.capriottis.com](http://www.capriottis.com)

**location:**

324 W. Sahara Ave  
Las Vegas NV 89102

**hours:**

Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 11am-5pm

**8 Capriotti's**

**DESCRIPTION:** It looks like a dump, but Capriotti's is one of the great deals in town, for quality and price. They roast their own beef and turkey on the premises and stuff them (or Italian cold cuts, or whatever) into sandwiches mislabeled "small," "medium," and "large" -- the last clocks in at 20 inches, easily feeding two for under \$10 total. And deliciously so. The "Bobby" (turkey, dressing, and cranberry sauce, like Thanksgiving dinner in sandwich form) would be our favorite sandwich in the world had we not tried the "Slaw B Joe": roast beef, coleslaw, and Russian dressing. But other combos, such as the aforementioned Italian cold cuts, have their fans, too, and Capriotti's even has veggie varieties. There are outlets throughout the city, but this one is not only right off the Strip but also right by the freeway. We never leave town without a stop here, and you shouldn't either. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Capriotti's

**contact:**

tel: 702/967-7999  
<http://www.harrahs.com/casinos/ballys-las-vegas/restaurants-dining/sterling-brunch-detail.html>

**location:**

3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Sun 9:30am-2pm (last reservation at 1:30pm)

**9 Bally's Sterling Sunday Brunch**

**DESCRIPTION:** Now, the admittedly high cost of this brunch seems antithetical to the original purpose of a buffet: a lot of food for minimal money. However, if you're a dedicated buffet fan, this is probably a better spree than one of the many new high-priced restaurants. It works out to less money in the long run, and you will get, for your purposes, more bang for your buck. It's a fancy deal -- linen and silver-bedecked tables, waiters to assist you, if you choose -- and while the variety of food isn't as massive as at regular buffets, the quality is much higher in terms of both content and execution. We're talking unlimited champagne, broiled lobster, caviar, sushi, and rotating dishes of the day (items such as monkfish with pomegranate essence, tenderloin wrapped in porcini mushroom mousse, and even ostrich). No French toast that's been sitting out for days here! Perfect for a wedding breakfast or just a big treat; stay a long time and eat as much as you can. © Frommer's



wcities

**contact:**

tel: 702/791-7111

[http://lasvegas.citysearch.com/profile/11649299/las\\_vegas\\_nv/mirage\\_hotel\\_casino.html](http://lasvegas.citysearch.com/profile/11649299/las_vegas_nv/mirage_hotel_casino.html)

**location:**

3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**hours:**

Daily 7-10pm

**A** **Mirage Cravings Buffet**

**DESCRIPTION:** Aesthetically, an incredible transformation from classic Vegas buffet (read: blah) style to a gleaming, streamlined look, all shining steel and up-to-the-minute high-design concept shades of green, blue, and red. Gone are the heaping mounds of shrimp and other symbols of Vegas excess and bargain. In its place are plenty of live-action stations, but minimal offerings, just a scant few in the (admittedly inclusive) categories. This probably helps with waste, but if you are used to matters the other way, it does feel stingy. Seniors won't like the poor signage; kids may get tired long before completing the lengthy circuit. No worries: The line starts with excellent pizza. Look for pot stickers and Chinese barbecue pork, quite good barbecue, tangy Japanese cuke salad, slightly dry but flavorful Mexican slow-roasted pork. A trip to the made-to-order salad station is so pokey, you'll need to find the other salads that are hidden with the open-faced sandwiches (where you can also find the gefilte fish). The desserts are generally disappointing. Despite the drawbacks -- we're probably just overthinking it anyway -- this remains popular with buffet connoisseurs. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Mirage Cravings Buffet

# Las Vegas Snapshot

## Local Info

Las Vegas defies definition. This city in the desert is a gambling capital, vacation paradise, adventure destination, and premier business convention center rolled into one. 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.

### 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 magnifique 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.

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