



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



# Best Vegas Budget Attractions

## Las Vegas, Henderson, 1 Day

### Table of contents:

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

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Las Vegas has plenty of low-cost things to see and do, which means visitors can still see an interesting selection of museums, exhibits, and shows for little or no money. For nature lovers, the Mojave Desert (try Lake Mead or Red Rock) provides beauty for next to nothing. Learn about Las Vegas history for only \$1.00 at the Clark County Heritage Museum. The tour at Ethel M's will satisfy your sweet tooth, and the IP's car collection displays one-of-a-kind vehicles. Visit Downtown for low-limits table and machines, and while you're there, enjoy the Fremont Street Experience and Neon Museum.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Las Vegas, Henderson



### Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

Beautiful desert area west of Las Vegas



### Fountains at Bellagio

The Bellagio's famous dancing waters



### Imperial Palace Auto Collection

One of a kind cars



### Neon Museum & Boneyard

Vintage Old Vegas neon signs



### Fremont Street Experience

Downtown Las Vegas' incredible light show



### Ethel M Chocolates



### MGM Grand Lion Habitat

Lions on the Vegas Strip



### Clark County Museum

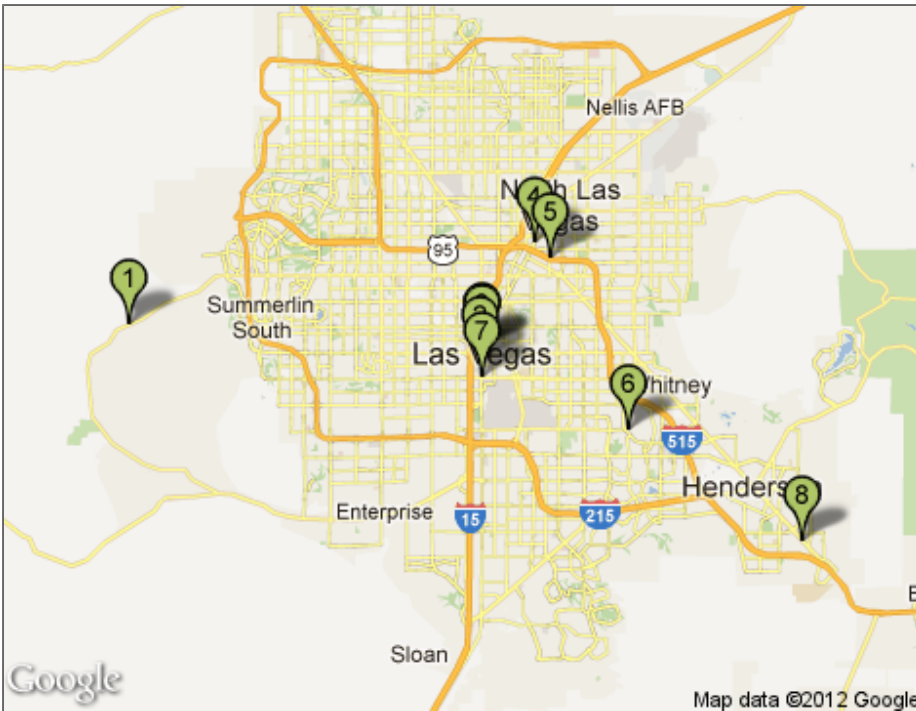
A museum with a street of authentic Old Vegas homes



### Flamingo Hilton Wildlife Habitat

Penguins and flamingos

# Day 1 - Las Vegas, Henderson



## QUICK NOTE

### contact:

tel: +1 702 363 1921

(Information)

<http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org/>

### location:

State Route 159 from  
Charleston Boulevard  
Las Vegas NV 89124

## 1 Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

**DESCRIPTION:** Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area's towering cliffs look similar to the colorful rock formations in Nevada's Valley of Fire or Utah's Zion National Park, but while it's reminiscent of other areas, Red Rock stands by itself, a lone island of mountains and springs in the middle of the Mojave Desert.

West of Las Vegas, Red Rock sits off State Route 159 (follow Charleston Boulevard west and it will turn into SR159). Admission to Red Rock is \$7 per vehicle, and includes admission to the new visitor's center, a map/newsletter. The visitor's center integrates information, art, and the environment of Red Rock itself. Most of the displays are outside, which is fine for the vast majority of the year in Southern Nevada. Mojave Max, the center's desert tortoise mascot, lives here, along with a few of his friends. The hands-on displays explain the forces that created Red Rock: fire, wind, water, and earth. Keep your eyes open for the colorful birds flying in and out of the inside of the exhibit--the center of the displays is planted with native vegetation.

A one-way scenic drive takes visitors into Red Rock, and it has several places to stop for a hike or to take in a scenic vista; one area, adjacent to the Children's Discovery Trail, has a picnic area next to some springs. Water is plentiful here, so look for wildlife early in the morning and late in the day. You'll see lots of birds, but also look for burros and big horn sheep. Consult the map/newsletter to find a trail that fits your fitness



Photo courtesy of the\_tahoe\_guy

and schedule. Short hikes, like the Children's Discovery Trail, can be completed in under an hour, while a trip to the top of Turtlehead Peak will take you half a day or more. Winter is a great time to explore Red Rock. Temperatures are generally mild, but the mountains are covered in snow during the coldest months (dressing in layers is highly recommended). Spring and fall are short, but beautiful, with plenty of water from the snowmelt in the streams. Summer is usually far too hot for exploring Red Rock, although short hikes in the very early mornings are often doable. Remember to always bring plenty of water with you, no matter what the time of year, and sunscreen and lip balm are advisable. Hikers, bikers, and rock climbers flock to Red Rock. As you drive along the loop, look for the climbers dangling off the rocks of the Calico Hills, and always be on the lookout for bicyclists and pedestrians on the roadways. This area was settled in the late 1800s, and you can find remnants of its prior history. At Sandstone Quarry, you can see where the blocks of sandstone were carved, and at Pine Creek, a short hike will take you to the foundation of an old homestead. Agave roasting pits and petroglyphs are evidence of far earlier inhabitation.  
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**contact:**  
tel: +1 702 693 7111  
[http://www.bellagio.com/pages/frameset\\_noflash.asp](http://www.bellagio.com/pages/frameset_noflash.asp)

**location:**  
3600 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

## 2 Fountains at Bellagio

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Shows begin at 3:00 p.m. on weekdays and noon on weekends; shows are every half an hour until 8:00 p.m., and after that every 15 minutes until midnight. Inclement weather can cause cancellations.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Bellagio's Fountains sound like a simple concept: shooting jets of water timed to music. But what sounds simple is actually a complex choreography of technology, sound, and water. Designed by WET Design, an international company that specializes in elaborate water displays, the Bellagio's Fountains are spread over the nine-acre lake in front of the Bellagio. Over 1,200 nozzles and 4,500 lights work together to shoot water 400+ feet in the air—but that's not all the fountains do. They sway, they dance, and they wow the crowds that gather to watch them.

Shows start in the afternoon, but the best time to see the fountains is at night. The combination of music and the illuminated dancing water is enchanting. Many people have already seen the fountains on television shows or in movies (most famously, the George Clooney remake of "Ocean's 11"). Romantic, spectacular, and iconic, the Bellagio's Fountains are a free Las Vegas attraction that's appropriate for anyone of any age.

An underground well supplies most of the water for the fountains. Prior to the Bellagio, the Dunes and its golf course

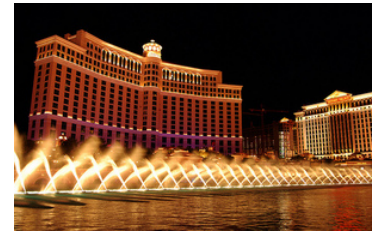


Photo courtesy of Kashyap Hosdurga

were located here—thus, the well, which watered the golf course. The Dunes was imploded to make way for the Bellagio.  
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**contact:**

tel: +1 702 794 3174  
fax: +1 702 369 7430  
<http://autocollections.com/>

**location:**

3535 Las Vegas Boulevard  
South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

### 3 Imperial Palace Auto Collection

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Vehicles are both on display and for sale. Check the website for free admission coupons.

**DESCRIPTION:** If you enjoy antiques or if you are an automobile buff, this is one attraction you don't want to miss. Housed inside the Imperial Palace Hotel, you will find Mussolini's 1939 Alfa Romeo and Hitler's 1939 Mercedes among the antiques. More than 200 vehicles are housed in the collection. Find the perfect gift at the museum gift shop. Children under five are admitted free of charge. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Gregory Moine

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 387 6366  
fax: +1 702 477 7751  
<http://www.neonmuseum.org>

**location:**

821 Las Vegas Boulevard  
Las Vegas NV 89101

### 4 Neon Museum & Boneyard

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Not as accessible as the displays downtown, but worth the extra effort to see this unusual museum of neon.

**DESCRIPTION:** What happens to the signs when old casinos are torn down to make room for new resorts? They go to the Neon Museum! In The Neon Museum's Bone Yard you'll see Binion's Horseshoe, the famous Silver Slipper, signs from the Golden Nugget and the Sahara. These works of art are both classic pieces of Las Vegas history and visual reminders of times past. Eventually, the Neon Museum will open a permanent exhibit on the Las Vegas Strip in the rescued and historic La Concha Motel lobby, designed by internationally famous architect Paul Revere Williams.

Tours at the Boneyard are by advance appointment only; admission is \$15.00 per person. Photography at the Boneyard is restricted to photos for personal use only. Several neon signs are on display at the Fremont Street Experience, and there is no charge to see those signs and no restrictions on photography.

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Photo courtesy of Kyle McCluer

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 229 6551  
http://www.vegasexperience.com

**location:**

Fremont Street  
Las Vegas NV 89101

**hours:**

Shows nightly

**5 Fremont Street Experience**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Fun, free entertainment in downtown Las Vegas.

**DESCRIPTION:** Poor Downtown. For years now, it's been overlooked in favor of the Strip. And no wonder: It's so . . . small . . . by comparison. Even its once-dazzling collection of hotel marquee lights seems like candles next to the klieg-light voltage of the Strip. But things are cheaper down here, people; and speaking of people, if you get tired of feeling not pretty or rich enough for the Strip, you are not alone. Come join us in admiring the project that closed off the heart of "Glitter Gulch" and turned it into a much more user-friendly pedestrian mall. The Fremont Street Experience is a 5-block open-air landscaped strip of outdoor snack shops, vendor carts, and colorful kiosks purveying food and merchandise. Overhead is a 90-foot-high steel-mesh "celestial vault"; at night, it is the most successfully revamped **Viva Vision**, a high-tech light-and-laser show (the canopy is equipped with more than 12.5 million lights) enhanced by a concert-hall-quality sound system that takes place five times nightly. There are a number of different shows, and there's music between the light performances as well. Not only does the canopy provide shade, but it also cools the area through a misting system in summer and warms you with radiant heaters in winter. It's really cool, in that Vegas over-the-top way that we love so much. Go see for yourself; you will be pleased to see how a one-time ghost town of tacky, rapidly aging buildings, in an area with more undesirables than not, is now a bustling (at least at night), friendly, safe place (they have private security guards who hustle said undesirables away). It's a place where you can stroll, eat, or even dance to the music under the lights. The crowd it attracts is more upscale than in years past, and, of course, it's a lot less crowded than the hectic Strip. This helps give a second life to a deserving neighborhood. **Note:** A good place to view the Sky Parade light show is from the balcony at Fitzgerald's Casino & Hotel. And in a further effort to retain as much of classic Las Vegas as possible, the **Neon Museum** is installing vintage hotel and casino signs along the promenade. The first installation was the horse and rider from the old Hacienda, which presently rides the sky over the intersection of Fremont Street and Las Vegas Boulevard, while the Lamp from the old Aladdin Hotel twinkles at the northwest corner. Eventually, the Neon Museum hopes to have a complex at their Neon Boneyard, using the old La Concha Motel, itself a piece of classic Vegas architecture thankfully saved from the wrecking ball, as a centerpiece. It's uncertain when the complex will open, but in the meantime, you can do a self-guided walking tour of sign installations in downtown. (Go to [www.neonmuseum.org](http://www.neonmuseum.org) for information.) © Frommer's



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: 888/627-0990  
www.ethelschocolate.com

**location:**  
2 Cactus Garden Dr  
Henderson NV 89120

**hours:**  
Daily 8:30am-7pm

## 6 Ethel M Chocolates

**DESCRIPTION:** This tourist attraction draws about 2,000 visitors a day. Ethel Mars began making fine chocolates in a little candy kitchen in the early 20th century. Her small enterprise evolved to produce not only dozens of varieties of superb boxed chocolates, but also some of the world's most famous candies: M&Ms, Milky Way, 3 Musketeers, Snickers, and Mars bars. Alas, the tour lasts only about 10 minutes and consists entirely of viewing stations with an audiotape explaining the chocolate-baking process. You learn very little. But the place does look like a bakery rather than a factory, which is nice, as no one wants to see their chocolates handled without love. Even more sadly, you get only one small chocolate as a sample -- delicious, but hardly satisfying. Surely, this is by design; now overwhelmingly in the mood for sugar, you are more likely to buy some of their expensive chocolate.

**Note:** Come before 2:30pm, which is when the workers start to pack up and go home. What's really worth seeing is outside: a lovely and extensive **2 1/2-acre garden** displaying 350 species of rare and exotic cacti with signs provided for self-guided tours. It's best appreciated in spring, when the cacti are in full bloom. There's a little gazebo in which to sit and enjoy the garden, which would be quite peaceful were it not for the busloads of tourists in the area. Behind the garden, also with a self-guided tour, is Ethel M's "Living Machine," a natural wastewater treatment and recycling plant that consists of aerated tanks, ecological fluid beds, constructed wetlands, reed beds, and a storage pond. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Ethel M Chocolates

**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

## 7 MGM Grand Lion Habitat

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**  
A family-friendly, free activity on the Las Vegas Strip

**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



wcities

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

**contact:**

tel: 702/455-7955  
<http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/Depts/parks/Pages/clark-county-museum.aspx>

**location:**

1830 S. Boulder Hwy  
Las Vegas NV 89015

**hours:**

Daily 9am-4:30pm

**8 Clark County Museum**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

The homes, depot, and train at the Clark County Heritage Museum are all authentic--not recreations. Admission is only \$2.

**DESCRIPTION:** Someday, one of these casino moguls (yeah, we're lookin' at you, Trump) is going to take just some of those megamillions they are pouring into yet another Strip hotel and put it into the museum that this bizarre town, and its ridiculously rich 100-year history, deserves. Until then, this dear little place will have to do its best -- and that best is actually pretty good. With everything from dioramas of dinosaurs to a small street filled with original buildings, including the 1932 Boulder City train depot, this is a throwback to ghost towns and other low-tech diversions. Sweet, informative, and you can't beat the price. Note that hot days will make the outdoor portions less than bearable. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Terrisa Meeks

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 733 3111  
fax: +1 702 733 3528  
<http://www.caesars.com/Flamingo/LasVegas/>

**location:**

3555 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
Las Vegas NV 89109

**9 Flamingo Hilton Wildlife Habitat**

**DESCRIPTION:** Located on a newly opened 15-acre park area behind the Flamingo Las Vegas, this animal habitat features some animals not normally found in the Nevada desert. Surrounded by waterfalls and breathtaking flora, you will find ponds filled with Catfish, Japanese Koi (giant goldfish), and turtles that swim freely. For bird-lovers, penguins, flamingos (naturally), swans and other rare birds make this park their home. Everyone in the family will have an enjoyable time especially the kids. Admission is free. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Loren Sztajer

# 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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