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DrPleishner

# Las Vegas Outdoors: Great Red Rock Canyon Hikes

## Las Vegas, 1 Day

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** West of Las Vegas, Red Rock Canyon offers hikers a multitude of trails. The Fire Ecology trail, off the Pine Creek trail, is an easy path to the creek. Continue on the Pine Creek trail, and you'll find the remnants of an old homestead. Willow Springs is another easy trail leading to riparian habitat. On the Ice Box Canyon and Calico Tanks trails, rock cairns help mark the way. The six-mile White Rock/La Madre Springs trail gives you a good view of the Keystone Thrust, some of Red Rock's oldest rock formations. Access the First Creek trail off State Route 159; no entrance fee is required. ~Pictured: Ice Box Canyon~

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Las Vegas



### Fire Ecology Trail

Easy double-looped trail



### Ice Box Canyon Trail

Moderate Red Rock Canyon hike to a seasonal waterfall



### Calico Tanks

Hike and rock scramble to a tinaja, a desert water source



### Willow Springs Loop Trail

See pictographs and an agave roasting pit on this easy trail



### First Creek Canyon Trail

Moderately strenuous 5-mile scenic trail



### White Rock / La Madre Springs Loop Trail

Moderately difficult 6-mile trail

# Day 1 - Las Vegas



## QUICK NOTE

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[www.nv.blm.gov/vegas/Default.htm](http://www.nv.blm.gov/vegas/Default.htm)

**location:**

HCR 33, Box 5500

Las Vegas NV 89123

## 1 Fire Ecology Trail

**DESCRIPTION:** Sitting within the Red Rock Canyon this easy double-looped trail is accessed via the Pine Creek Trail. Take the trail to the left heading toward the escarpment. Continue across a bridge and over a rise to enter the second loop. Next return across the same bridge and follow the trail back to the Pine Creek Trail.

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[http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org/hikes\\_trails.php](http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org/hikes_trails.php)

**location:**

HCR 33, Box 5500

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## 2 Ice Box Canyon Trail

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Very popular Red Rock trail with lots of bouldering after you drop into the wash.

**DESCRIPTION:** From the parking lot, the trail heads down across the wash and up the other side toward the canyon. The trail is well defined as it leads you up the side of the canyon for approximately 3/4 of a mile. It then drops into the bottom of the canyon. From this point the trail becomes a route over or around boulders as it continues upstream. The official trail ends at the large Ponderosa Pine Trees in the bottom of the canyon ( 2.5 miles round trip ). To reach the upper pooled filled by a seasonal waterfall, be prepared for some tricky wall scrambling, and a 3 mile round trip.



Photo courtesy of Terrisa Meeks

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**3 Calico Tanks**

**DESCRIPTION:** From Sandstone Quarry the trail heads north from its junction with the Turtlehead Peak Trail to just past the Agave roasting pit site in Red Rock Canyon. Beyond this site the trail veers up a side canyon to the right where it follows ascending rock terraces to a large natural water tank (Tinaja). Water may be present in the tanks after seasonal rains. This 2.5 mile round trip is moderately strenuous and involves sock scrambling and route finding skills.



Photo courtesy of Terrisa Meeks

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**4 Willow Springs Loop Trail**

**DESCRIPTION:** From the parking lot, follow the trail by the pit toilets south. This takes you past a pictograph site and Agave roasting pits, to the Lost Creek parking lot. There the trail heads uphill to a seasonal waterfall. Return by the same route. This popular trail may be crowded at times as it is used by many school groups. Please note: Carry water, at least one gallon per person per day in the summer. Wear appropriate footwear suitable for hiking and a hat. Watch the weather, mountain thunderstorms can cause flash flooding in the canyons and nearby washes.



Photo courtesy of Exothermic / Joel '11

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[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm\\_programs/blm\\_special\\_areas/red\\_rock\\_nca.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/red_rock_nca.html)

**location:**

State Route 159, past Red Rock Canyon entrance  
Las Vegas NV 89004

**5 First Creek Canyon Trail**

**DESCRIPTION:** This moderately strenuous trail leads to the mouth of the First Creek Canyon in Red Rock Canyon. Visitors to the trail need to follow the left side of the wash for a distance. Some rock scrambling is required thereafter. Seasonal waterfalls can be found in the canyon.



Photo courtesy of Terrisa Meeks

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**6 White Rock / La Madre Springs Loop Trail**

**DESCRIPTION:** This trail can be started at White Rock Springs or Willow Springs in Red Rock Canyon and can be done either direction. By starting at Willow Springs hikers can deal with the steep climb to White Rock near the beginning of the hike, rather than at the end. When you come to a fork with a sign reading "White Rock Springs 2.2 miles", take the uphill trail to the left. Follow it to White Rock upper parking lot, continuing east from the lot. When the trail forks, go left and follow the trail until it intersects an old dirt road. Follow that road downhill to where it



Photo courtesy of Chuck Abbe

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forks to the left, returning you to Willow Springs, or right to La Madre Spring.

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# 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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