



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



DrPleishner

# Ten Free Things To Do In Las Vegas

## Las Vegas, Henderson, 1 Day

### Table of contents:

- Guide Description 2
- Itinerary Overview 3
- Daily Itineraries 4
- Las Vegas Snapshot 12

# Guide Description












**AUTHOR NOTE:** Some of Las Vegas' best-known attractions are free, like the Bellagio's fountains, the Mirage's volcano, and the TI's pirate/siren show. At the Venetian, stroll through Old World Venice and have fun figuring out which "statues" are alive. Downtown, enjoy the Neon Museum's Old Vegas signs while waiting for the Fremont Street Experience's light show. Inside Planet Hollywood's Miracle Mile Shops, experience an indoor rain storm. Mystic Falls has both a wolf and a bear—but if you'd like to see real animals, stop at the MGM Grand's Lion Habitat. For free chocolate, take the tour at Ethel M's Chocolate Factory.

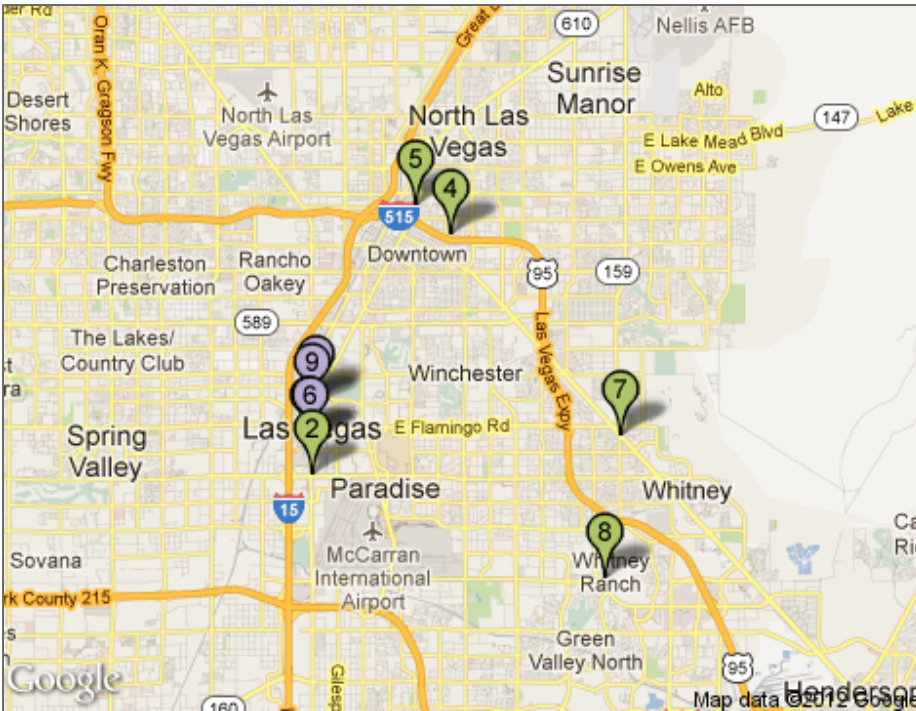
# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Las Vegas, Henderson

	<b>The Venetian</b> Venice In Las Vegas
	<b>MGM Grand Lion Habitat</b> Lions on the Vegas Strip
	<b>Fountains at Bellagio</b> The Bellagio's famous dancing waters
	<b>Fremont Street Experience</b> Downtown Las Vegas' incredible light show
	<b>Neon Museum &amp; Boneyard</b> Vintage Old Vegas neon signs
	<b>Planet Hollywood Resort &amp; Casino</b> Movie-themed hotel on the site of the old Aladdin
	<b>Mystic Falls Park</b> Animatronics and a laser light show at Sam's Town
	<b>Ethel M Chocolates</b>
	<b>The Mirage</b> The iconic Vegas resort, complete with erupting volcano

# Day 1 - Las Vegas, Henderson



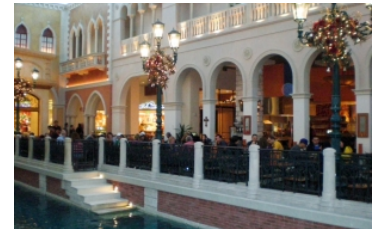
## QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: 888/2-VENICE (283-6423)  
fax: 702/414-4805  
<http://www.venetian.com>

**location:**  
3355 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

## 1 The Venetian

**DESCRIPTION:** One of the most elaborate hotel spectacles in town, The Venetian falls squarely between an outright adult Disneyland experience and the luxury resort experience currently dominating the Vegas landscape. The big draw here is the rooms, all suites, and all successful examples of that same luxury resort mindset, though the commitment to theme in the Grand Canal Shoppes is certainly appealing. The hotel's exterior, which re-creates most of the top landmarks of Venice (the Campanile, a portion of St. Mark's Square, part of the Doge's Palace, a canal or two), ranks right up there with New York-New York as a must-see, and since you can wander freely through the "sights," it even has a slight edge over New York-New York. This may be the only hotel in Vegas where it seems inviting to wander around outside in the front. As stern as we get about re-creations not being a substitute for the real thing, we have to admit that the attention to detail here is impressive indeed. Stone is aged for that weathered look, statues and tiles are exact copies of their Italian counterparts, security guards wear Venetian police uniforms -- all that's missing is the smell from the canals, but we are happy to let that one slide. Inside, it's more of the same, particularly in the lobby area and the entrance to the extraordinary shops, as ceilings are covered with hand-painted re-creations of Venetian art. With plenty of marble, soaring ceilings, and impressive pillars and archways, it's less kitschy than Caesars but more theme park than Bellagio. The lobby says classy hotel, if "classy hotel on steroids." The lobby, casino, and shops can all be accessed from outside through individual entrances, which helps avoid



wcities

that irritating circuitous maneuvering required by most other locations. This is all the more appreciated because the casino seems to have a most confusing layout, with poor signage; perhaps it's just our problem with spatial navigation, but we consistently got lost on the way to the guest elevators. A room makeover has pared down the previously over-the-top fussy decor, which is a good thing, but then again, apart from the size it's not as dreamily romantic on the eye. Now the suites have the same sleek new look as The Palazzo, though the beds lack The Palazzo's fluffy comforters. The towels are nicer here. You still can't see the bathroom TV from the tub. The marbled bathrooms rocketed virtually to the top of our list of favorites, in a tie for second place with those at Bellagio. (Mandalay Bay's THEhotel are the best.) Devices for the hearing-impaired (ranging from door-knock lights to vibrating alarm clocks and telecaption decoders) are available upon request. Despite the niceties, there is a certain amount of price gouging at this hotel that unpleasantly reminds one of the real Venice. There is a charge for that in-room faxing and printing, and the minibar is automated so that if you so much as rearrange items inside, you are charged for it. And all this is even before the **Venezia Tower**, with over 1,000 more rooms, with the same large and lush footprint and style as the originals. The tower has its own check-in and gestalt -- somehow, it comes off even more lush than the original hotel, which is pretty frilly to start. It's like a Four Seasons on human growth hormones, with over-the-top opulence. The gas lamp-lit lobby hallway slays us, as do the flatscreen TVs in the bathrooms. Rooms here cost about \$35 more a night (in theory -- in practice, anything goes with hotel pricing in Vegas) and we would spend it. The trend toward casino hotels adding additions that are away from a casino -- "Nope, no slot machines here. We are just a luxury hotel. Really!" -- is a disingenuous stance that is actually entirely genius. There are many who prefer their Vegas at arm's length, whose finest compliment for a hotel is, "It doesn't seem like it's in Vegas." These people are willing to spend extra to stay in a grown-up atmosphere, and certainly are more inclined to want a comfortable room -- and nothing says "comfortable room" like "plasma TV in the bathroom." Many celebrity chefs and high-profile restaurants are in residence at The Venetian. Eateries include **Bouchon** (by Thomas Keller, perhaps America's top chef), **Delmonico Steakhouse**, **Canaletto**, **Valentino**, **Mario Batali's B&B Ristorante** and **Pinot Brasserie**. Nightlife options include the **Blue Man Group** and a special production of the long-running **Phantom of the Opera**. And, of course, there is an elegant but confusingly laid-out casino. The Venetian has five pools and whirlpools, but its pool area is disappointingly sterile and bland. Pools are neoclassical (think rectangles with the corners lopped off), and the fourth-floor location probably means that more dense foliage is not going to be forthcoming. The Venezia Tower has a courtyard pool area that is amusing, but the water space is tiny. The **Canyon Ranch SpaClub** is run by a branch of arguably the finest getaway spa in America. This is an unbelievably lavish facility, certainly the finest hotel spa in town. From the Bed Head and Bumble & Bumble products on sale in the shop to the nutritionists, physical therapists, and acupuncturists on the staff to the vibrating massage chairs that you rest in during pedicures -- geez, what more could you want? Well, we want

our own home gym to be as nice as the one here, with ample equipment, racks of big TVs, and a staff eager to help you with advice and bring you bottled water. The \$35-a-day fee is high, but it does include a full day's worth of classes, ranging from regular aerobics to yoga, Pilates, and dance. Did we mention the rock-climbing wall, which, because this is Vegas, costs extra? The **Grand Canal Shoppes** rank with the Caesars Palace shops as an absolute must-see. Like Caesars, the area is a mock Italian village with a blue, cloud-studded, painted sky overhead. But down the middle runs a canal, complete with singing gondoliers. (The 10-min. ride costs about \$15, which seems steep, but trust us, it's a lot more in the real Venice.) The entire thing finishes up at a small re-creation of St. Mark's Square, which features glass blowers, traveling musicians, flower sellers, and the like. Expect to run into famous Venetians such as a flirty Casanova and a travel-weary Marco Polo. It's ambitious and a big step up from animatronic figures. Oh, and the stores are also probably worth a look -- a decent mixture of high-end fashion and more affordable shops. **Facilities:** 18 restaurants; casino; showroom; wedding chapels; 6 outdoor pools; health club; spa; concierge; tour desk; car-rental desk; business center; extensive shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; executive-level rooms © Frommer's

**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

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



wcities

**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

### 3 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 were located here—thus, the well, which watered the golf course. The Dunes was imploded to make way for the Bellagio. © NileGuide

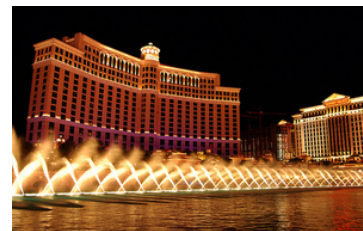


Photo courtesy of Kashyap Hosdurga

**contact:**

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

**location:**

Fremont Street  
Las Vegas NV 89101

**hours:**

Shows nightly

### 4 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-



wcities

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

**contact:**

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

**location:**

821 Las Vegas Boulevard  
Las Vegas NV 89101

## 5 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



Photo courtesy of Kyle McCluer

there is no charge to see those signs and no restrictions on photography.  
© NileGuide

**contact:**

tel: 877/333-9474  
fax: 702/785-5558  
<http://www.planethollywoodresort.com>

**location:**

3667 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

## 6 Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Look for walkways over the Strip to CityCenter and the Cosmopolitan Las Vegas

**DESCRIPTION:** We were sad when the once fairy-tale fantastic Aladdin was purchased by Planet Hollywood -- it was the end of yet another era. Sure, today's Aladdin wasn't the same building where Elvis married 'Scilla, but even so. But thanks to that same Planet Hollywood and its memorabilia gimmick, the rooms are currently the most distinctive in town. **Note:** At press time, the rooms were still undergoing makeovers, so you should be careful to request a remodeled unit. The reconstructed Strip entrance, heavy on the LED screens (it's supposed to evoke the visual mania of Times Square), certainly makes the interior easier to access than the last incarnation of Aladdin. Inside, those looking for the pop kitsch sensibility of the Planet Hollywood restaurants will be disappointed; it's actually kind of classy and design intensive. But you are going to come here for the rooms. Each has a movie or entertainment theme, such as Pulp Fiction, which might have John Travolta's suit in a glass case and a glass coffee table filled with more original memorabilia from the film. Although more than one room may share the same movie theme, no two rooms will have the same objects. The vibe of the room can vary radically depending on if the theme is Judy Garland in some charming musical or Wesley Snipes in Blade, so ask when booking. As gimmicks go, it's a catchy one, and a good use for all that junk the company's accumulated over the years. Beds have purple-velour padded headboards and the beds themselves are the Sheraton Four Comforts pillow-top thing, and mighty darn comfortable at that. Bathrooms are larger than standard but neither the largest on the Strip nor special enough to match the sleeping areas. **Note:** The parking lot is all the way on the other side of the Miracle Mile shopping area, thus requiring guests to drag their suitcases all the way through the mall and a good chunk of the hotel before getting to registration. It's a very, very long and unpleasant schlep. Do not self-park here if you have mobility issues of any kind. Instead, follow the signs for casino (as opposed to mall) valet parking, which is right outside the front desk. Restaurants include their massively popular 24-hour coffee shop Planet Daily, a Trader Vic's (just in time for the original to close forever), P.F. Chang's, Striphouse (a New York steakhouse with a bordello theme), and the Earl of Sandwich, from the very same noble family that lent its name to the food, which in fact is what the cafe is serving. And then there is the **Miracle Mile** shopping area, winding its way in a giant horseshoe shape around the property, another one to rival the capitalist ventures over at Caesars and The Venetian. This also has a new owner (separate from Planet Hollywood), and while we resent its makeover from the aesthetically delightful



Hotels.com

Casbah theme to a much more generic upscale mall, as a shopping and dining option, it's still tops. The hotel also has its own arena, the **Center for the Performing Arts**, which is attracting big names back to Vegas. Finally, there is the **Mandera spa**, maybe aesthetically our hands-down local favorite. The designers went to Morocco for ideas, and it shows in this Medina-flavored facility; just looking at it is pampering, and that's before one of their attentive staff puts you in a wrap and "dry float" (a womblike water bed-style cradle). **Facilities:** 19 restaurants; 7 bars/lounges; casino; performing-arts center; showroom; wedding chapel; 2 outdoor pools; health club; spa; 2 Jacuzzis; concierge; tour desk; car-rental desk; business center; extensive shopping arcade; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; laundry service; dry cleaning; executive-level rooms © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: +1 702 454 8020  
http://www.samstownlv.com

**location:**

5111 Boulder Highway  
Las Vegas NV 89122

**7 Mystic Falls Park**

**DESCRIPTION:** Imagine a park that is unaffected by the weather, climate-controlled, and features a laser show every two hours with music by the Indianapolis Philharmonic Orchestra. There are cooling waterfalls, birds, squirrels and even a bear and a wolf. Children and adults alike will enjoy this unique and fun experience. This all takes place in the atrium of Sam's Town Hotel. There are several restaurants, shops and a bar from which you can view the events. © wcities.com



**contact:**

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

**location:**

2 Cactus Garden Dr  
Henderson NV 89120

**hours:**

Daily 8:30am-7pm

**8 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,



Photo courtesy of Ethel M Chocolates

ecological fluid beds, constructed wetlands, reed beds, and a storage pond. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: 702/791-7111

fax: 702/791-7446

<http://www.mirage.com>

**location:**

3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S  
Las Vegas NV 89109

9 **The Mirage**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

One of the best things about the Mirage is its location, right in the heart of the Strip.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Mirage was a ground-breaking Las Vegas hotel casino when it was built. Its erupting volcano and extravagant landscaping were firsts for the Strip, and it set a standard for hotels as entertainment. Over twenty years later, the Mirage remains a AAA Four Diamond resort. With a prime location in the center of the Strip, updated rooms, and a large selection of onsite amenities, the iconic Mirage is still a popular Vegas hotel casino. Three types of standard guest room layouts are available. Several styles of suites, as well as luxury villas (complete with backyards), are available. Rooms have been updated with modern décor and amenities like LCD TVs, MP3 player docks, and cordless phones. The Mirage has several restaurants in all price ranges. Shows include LOVE, the Cirque du Soleil tribute to the Beatles, and the Terry Factor Show. Nightclubs, a pool "day club," and several bars and lounges are available for guests. Finding a place to eat, drink, or be entertained is never a problem at the Mirage. The volcano erupts every hour in the evenings. The Secret Garden and Dolphin Exhibit are family-friendly, although rather small. The Mirage is next to the Treasure Island and Caesars Palace, and across from the Venetian. A tram connects the Mirage to the TI. © NileGuide



# 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.

© NileGuide

© NileGuide