

Overview of Nevada

For the millions passing through on their way to California, their image of Nevada is of long, empty roads and dusty desert towns, often little more than a gas station and 24-hour store with a few slot machines in the corner. For those not drawn by the desolation of the desert landscapes, it is fortunate that 'Lady Luck' descended on this state to give hundreds of thousands of people a great man-made reason for visiting. This is casino country, where the main income earner is gambling.

Carson, the sleepy state capital, has tree-lined streets and some handsome old buildings, and hosts the Nevada State Museum, which covers the geology and natural history of the Great Basin desert. Reno is a smaller and less glitzy version of Las Vegas. Packed with casinos and pawnshops, it provides easy access to Lake Tahoe, over the border in California.

Situated east of California, Nevada is split up into territories such as Cowboy Country, Pioneer Territory, and Pony Express Territory. These adventurous names aside, the majority of the state is a fairly desolate desert, sometimes beautiful, but also harsh and inhospitable. The better land is used for grazing hardy cattle, while the least forgiving is used by the military for weapons testing and other mysterious pastimes.

Nevada does have a few scenic attractions of great interest to visitors. Around Las Vegas, Lake Mead is popular with fishermen and water sports enthusiasts, while both the Red Rock Canyon and the Valley of Fire State Park have magnificent desert scenery, which has been used as the backdrop for many famous movies including Star Trek, The Next Generation. The sandstone has been eroded into wonderful shapes over millions of years and, at sunset, these great natural monuments turn every shade of red.

Key Facts

Language:

English is the most common language spoken but Spanish is often heard in the south-western states.

Passport/Visa:

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. Plugs are mainly the type with two flat pins, though three-pin plugs (two flat parallel pins and a rounded pin) are also widely used. European appliances without dual-voltage capabilities will require an adapter.

Travel to Nevada

Climate for Nevada

Nevada is the driest state in the US and is divided into semi-arid and arid climatic regions. The summers in Las Vegas get uncomfortably hot and the winters very cold, making the more mild spring and autumn months the best and most popular times to visit. In summer, between June and September, temperatures can climb up to extremes such as 125F (52C); in winter, from December to February, temperatures at night can drop as low as -50F (-46C). These, however, are the record temperature extremes, and averages are substantially milder in most of Nevada. The weather is fiercely dry most of the year, but thunderstorms are likely in the summer months.

Health Notes when travelling to United States of America

There are no specific health risks associated with travel within the USA. Medical facilities are excellent, but expensive. Only emergencies are treated without prior payment and treatment can be refused without evidence of insurance or proof of funds. Good medical insurance is essential. Visitors must be fully vaccinated with the primary series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to travel to the United States by plane if they are non-U.S. citizens.

Safety Notes when travelling to United States of America

Travel within the United States is generally trouble-free, though travellers should be aware that the US shares with the rest of the world, an increased threat from terrorist incidents. Security has been heightened, particularly at airports. Restrictions on hand luggage apply and travellers are advised to check on the latest situation with airlines in advance. Travellers should also be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities and should use common sense and take basic precautions. Hurricanes are common between June and November, putting the southern USA, including the Gulf Coast and the eastern US at risk. There is a risk of wildfires in many dry areas in the US, particularly on the West Coast from March to November.

Customs in United States of America

Laws vary from state to state, including speed limit, fines and punishment. The age at which alcohol may be legally bought and consumed is 21 years.

Duty Free in United States of America

Travellers to the United States who are returning residents of the country do not have to pay duty on articles purchased abroad to the value of \$800 provided their stay was longer than 48 hours and their duty-free allowance was not used in the 30-day period prior. For passengers arriving from Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, a duty-free allowance of \$1,600 is allowed. The following items are included in this: 50 cigarettes and 10 cigars and 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages or 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of perfume containing alcohol. Restrictions may apply to goods from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Angola, Liberia and Sudan. It is prohibited to import Cuban cigars from any country.

Travellers to the United States who are non-residents do not have to pay duty on the following items: 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes and gifts to the value of \$100 provided their stay in the USA is not less than 72 hours and that the allowance has not been used in the preceding six-month period.

Prohibited items for residents and non-residents include meat or meat products, poultry, narcotics, absinthe, plants, seeds, vegetables, fruits, soil, live insects and other living plants or animal pests. Fish is prohibited unless it carries disease-free certification. Wildlife and animals or their by-products carry restrictions. Dairy products and eggs from specified countries are not allowed. Firearms and ammunition are not allowed without the necessary license and permit.

Doing Business in United States of America

In such a large country, filled with so many diverse groups, business practices may differ according to each state, however rarely to any large degree. The East Coast is traditionally more formal than the West Coast, though in states such as California, dress code and conservative appearance are as common as they would be in New York. Punctuality is important throughout the country and it is considered rude to be late for a meeting. Gift-giving is uncommon as it may be construed as bribery. Appropriate titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) are used upon introduction and until otherwise stated. Americans favour politeness and greetings of 'Hello' and 'How are you?' are often expressed with sincerity. Business hours may vary in each state, but an 8am start and 5pm finish Monday to Friday is the most common with an hour over lunch.

Status and age are not necessarily indicative of seniority, nor do they carry much weight in themselves. Those doing business in the States should be mindful of this fact; foreigners should never make assumptions about someone's position or rank. Best practice is to be respectful to all parties. That said, the US upholds a hierarchal business structure, in which 'the boss' is the ultimate decision-maker. Senior leaders have the power of the last word, and can go against the grain just as easily as they can follow popular opinion. Foreigners should concentrate on winning over this individual, even if the greater group seems unsupportive. Americans value a direct style of communication. In this fast-paced, consumer culture 'time is money', and small-talk is viewed as unnecessary and wasteful. It's best for foreigners to get to the point quickly, speak about issues in a frank and open manner, and to avoid taking offence if someone questions or challenges them outright.

Communication in United States of America

The international country dialling code for the United States is +1. Mobile networks cover most of the country, especially all urban areas, and WiFi is widely available.

Tipping in United States of America

A 15 percent tip is expected by taxi drivers, bartenders, hairdressers and waiters, but travellers shouldn't tip in fast-food or self-service restaurants. In expensive restaurants or for large parties, the tip should be 20 percent of the bill. It is normal to tip staff such as valets and porters in hotels; this is discretionary, although a minimum of \$5 is expected. Most services are customarily tipped if the service is good.

Passport/Visa Note

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program.

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP.

As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Airports in Nevada

Las Vegas Airport (LAS)

Harry Reid International Airport

www.mccarran.com

Location: McCarran airport is located five miles (8km) south of the Las Vegas Strip.

Time: GMT -8 (GMT -7 from March to November).

Contacts: Tel: +1 702 261 5211.

Transfer between terminals: Terminals 1 and 3 are connected by free shuttle buses.

Getting to the city: There are regular buses going to and from the airport, downtown Las Vegas and The Strip, dropping off at most hotels; buses 108 and 109 connect to the Downtown Transportation Center and the South Strip Transfer Terminal. Shuttle services are available on the west side of the baggage claim area of Terminal 1, outside exits 7 to 13.

Car rental: Car hire companies represented at the airport include Avis, Budget, Dollar, National, Enterprise, Advantage, Thrifty, Payless, Rent-a-Car, Alamo, and Hertz. Rental agencies provide free transportation between their parking lots and the terminal buildings.

Airport Taxis: There are taxis available outside Arrivals at Harry Reid International Airport, on the east side of baggage claim outside door exits 1 to 4. The meter starts at \$2 when departing the airport.

Facilities: Harry Reid International Airport has a number of shops, bars and restaurants, and of course lots of slot machines. There are ATMs, a full-service bank, and currency exchange facilities in Arrivals and Departures. There is also a children's play area, shoe-shiners and information booths.

Parking: Short-term parking at Harry Reid International Airport starts at \$2 per hour for the first three hours, then increases to \$3 per hour up to a daily limit of \$36. Long-term parking is \$3 for the first hour and \$1 per hour thereafter up to \$16 per day. A free shuttle bus links the remote car park with the terminals.

Reno-Tahoe International Airport (RNO)

Reno-Tahoe International Airport

www.renoairport.com

Location: Reno The airport is just five miles (8km) south of downtown Reno.

Time: GMT -8 (GMT -7 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: +1 (775) 328 6400

Getting to the city: The RTC Ride runs between the airport and downtown Reno. The pick-up zone is at the north end near the baggage claim area. Route 19 operates to and from the airport on weekdays. Taxis are also available from the same area and the ride into town takes just ten minutes.

Car rental: On-site car rental operators include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz, National, Payless and Thrifty.

Airport Taxis: Airport taxis can be found just outside the baggage claim area. The trip into town takes 10 minutes.

Facilities: Facilities at Reno-Tahoe International Airport include ATMs, mail-drop boxes, luggage trolleys, gaming machines, a pet relief area, souvenir shops, newsstands, as well as a range of restaurants and snack bars.

Parking: Short-term parking is charged at \$1 for the first 30 minutes, \$2 for the first hour and \$1 per hour thereafter, up to \$24 per day. Long-term rates are similar, but the daily rate is \$14. Parking is located opposite the terminal.

Las Vegas

Situated in the middle of the vast Mojave Desert, America's Playground was created entirely to entertain and has been described as the world's largest theme park. This psychedelic city of indulgence welcomes around 40 million people each year to its lavish hotels and casinos. Visitors today are amazed that only 80 years ago this thriving metropolis was a backwater whose only guests were railway passengers on the long journey between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City.

This changed in March 1931 when the State of Nevada legalised gambling; one month later the city issued six licenses. Then in 1946, Mafia don Ben 'Bugsy' Siegel opened the sensationally lavish Flamingo Hilton on Highway 91. Las Vegas Boulevard was born and the city would never be the same.

Soon, stars like Elvis, Liberace, and Sinatra were making the pilgrimage to what was fast becoming America's premier entertainment centre. In the early days, the Mafia dominated the gambling industry but in the 1960s their influence waned and soon all the large hotels and casinos were controlled by big business.

Walking down 'The Strip' is truly an experience where visitors can see the skylines of New York and Paris, discover the canals of Venice and the Pyramids of Egypt, and see many spectacular shows. Despite these excesses, the room rates and restaurant bills are said to be some of the lowest in the Western world - all subsidised by gamblers intent on a free holiday.

Although the principal draw card is still gambling, Las Vegas is now marketed as a family destination with no shortage of theme parks, shopping malls, and golf courses. However, the vast majority of visitors come to gamble or party and the incredible displays are mostly designed to lure passers-by into the casinos.

Getting around in Las Vegas

Most visits to Las Vegas are confined to the Strip and downtown, so it is not necessary to hire a car, as both are easy to navigate by foot and there are several forms of transport that can be used. Local buses run the length of the Strip and into downtown and operate 24 hours a day with a flat fare including transfers. The old-fashioned Las Vegas Strip Trolley also runs the length of the Strip from 8.30am to midnight, and the Downtown Trolley circles between the Stratosphere and downtown at the same time. A state-of-the-art monorail runs above the streets, operating (depending on the day) from 7am to 3am between the Sahara Hotel and the MGM Grand. Taxis are plentiful and can be found lined up outside every hotel and casino and at taxi stands; Lyft and Uber are also available. Cars are the most practical way to explore outside Las Vegas, although there are bus tours offered to Hoover Dam.

Nightlife in Las Vegas

There's a reason they say 'what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas'. With bars, clubs, strip clubs, casinos, and world-class international shows running for years at a time, it's little wonder that Las Vegas has earned itself fame, and often infamy, as one of the world's party capitals.

The world-famous Strip can be bland and dingy-looking during the day, but the minute the sun sets this desert oasis springs to life. The real problem when heading out for a night on The Strip is choosing where to begin.

There are always headline comedy or music acts and large-scale Broadway productions on show, all of which can be seen at the main hotels throughout town. World-famous magicians like David Copperfield and Criss Angel, singers like Celine Dion, Bette Midler and Cher, and renowned acts like the Cirque du Soleil and Blue Man Group all call Las Vegas home.

Hotels in Las Vegas offering great entertainment include the Bellagio, the Venetian, Caesar's Palace, Mandalay Bay, Treasure Island, and the MGM Grand. Las Vegas casinos are also the best place to go for nightclubs and bars, with famous clubs throwing celebrity-hosted parties nearly every weekend.

Dining in Las Vegas

There was a time when Las Vegas' restaurants were known more for quantity than cuisine. This was due to the legendary casino buffets, which offered mountains of food for modest prices on the well-calculated assumption that diners would hit the tables or slots machines to work off their meal, and would stay longer in the casinos if lavishly well fed.

Today, however, Las Vegas has a large selection of world-class eateries, with Italian trattoria, classic French fine-dining and luxury steakhouses especially well represented. Some of the country's top chefs are now based in Las Vegas and exciting new restaurants open weekly. In addition, Vegas is home to several world-class sommeliers. Eating out has definitely become one of the many entertainment options in Vegas, with restaurants competing for attention and many novelty eateries.

All this increasing activity and greater competition means that Vegas offers decent value for money compared to other large cities. The net result is that the former capital of the 99-cent shrimp cocktail is now regarded as a global cuisine capital. When it comes to eating at least, the odds are really in your favour. Visitors shouldn't panic, though, as the enormous buffets are still available!

Pamplemousse — \$\$\$\$

French

Just 500 yards from 'The Strip', Pamplemousse provides a quiet dining oasis reminiscent of a cosy French country inn, with soft orchestral music in the background to accompany the gourmet fare. There is no menu. Instead, waiters knowledgeably recite the special of the day, which usually include the renowned Hobo Steak, Norwegian salmon, roast duckling, veal medallions, filet mignon, and spring lamb. The appetisers and desserts are just as mouth-watering, including the famous trademark Basket of Crudités. Reservations are essential. Open daily for dinner. Dress smart casual, no jackets required, but appreciated.

400 East Sahara Avenue
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.pamplemousserestaurant.com

Golden Steer Steakhouse — \$\$\$\$

American

The Steer, about a mile from 'The Strip', is the oldest steak house in Las Vegas. Being in business in the same spot since 1958, and still a favourite with thousands of loyal diners. Celebrities like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Elvis Presley frequented the Steer to enjoy the large and perfectly grilled traditional steaks, especially the Diamond Jim cut of prime rib. Fish, chicken, and some Italian dishes are on offer too, and a selection of interesting appetisers, particularly the seafood stuffed mushrooms. Lunch and dinner Monday to Friday, dinner Saturdays, and Sundays.

308 W. Sahara Avenue
Las Vegas, United States of America

goldensteersteakhouselasvegas.com

Marrakech — \$\$\$

Moroccan

Exotic and exciting dining is offered in a cosy Middle-Eastern tent where diners lounge on cushions on the floor, or on low couches, to enjoy a traditional Moroccan meal. Robed waiters explain the six-course fixed-price menus, while belly dancers dance around. The meals are accompanied by homemade Moroccan bread. Be sure to try the filet mignon, marinated and grilled in Moroccan spices. Algerian wines are available. Open for dinner nightly. Reservations required.

3900 Paradise Road
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.marrakechvegas.com

Mon Ami Gabi — \$\$\$

French

Mon Ami Gabi, emulating a Paris brasserie, claims a sidewalk space on the famous Las Vegas Strip with not only an outdoor section, but a glass conservatory and several indoor dining rooms as well. The cuisine on offer is mainly classic French steak frites and fruits de mêm with flavoursome sauces. Their braised pork shank, and the steak with blue cheese sauce, are sublime. Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

3655 S. Las Vegas Boulevard
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.monamigabi.com

Chicago Joe's — \$\$

Italian

Italian restaurants abound in Las Vegas, both on and off The Strip. But for really good home-cooked food and excellent value, the unimposing brick building housing Chicago Joe's, in the residential downtown area, is a sure bet. The pasta sauces are renowned among locals, all recipes handed down by the owner's family through generations. Try the pasta with eggplant (aubergine/brinjal) or white clam sauce, or perhaps the Lobster Joe. Open for lunch and dinner from Tuesday to Friday; Saturday dinner only.

820 South 4th Street
Las Vegas, United States of America

chicagojoesrestaurant.com

Gonzalez y Gonzalez — \$\$

Tex-Mex

With just about as much Mexican flair and spice that can be conjured up, Gonzalez y Gonzalez is the perfect place to knock back a few margaritas, dive into a plate of tacos, tamales, or quesadillas and enjoy the Mexican energy in the outdoor dining courtyard decked with lanterns and piñatas. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Bookings recommended.

New York-New York Hotel and Casino, 3790 Las Vegas Boulevard South
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.newyorknewyork.com

Wicked Spoon Buffet — \$\$

Buffet

Amid the sea of \$5 lobster that is buffet dining in Las Vegas, Wicked Spoon Buffet comes out tops. The restaurant serves a huge selection of dishes ranging from pizza and tacos to sushi and pad thai, all portioned out in attractive single-serving dishes rather than scooped from serving bowls. Make sure to save some room for dessert, which is highlighted by a fully-staffed gelato bar.

3708 Las Vegas Boulevard South
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

Roy's — \$\$\$

Seafood

It's well worth leaving the Strip for dinner at Roy's, considered the best seafood restaurant in Las Vegas. The menu is Hawaiian fusion, with mouth-watering options like Crunchy Golden Lobster Potstickers and Boursin Cheese-Stuffed Chicken. There are a few sushi choices, and Roy's even has special vegetarian and gluten-free menus.

620 East Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.roysrestaurant.com

Le Cirque — \$\$\$\$

French

Le Cirque, which is located in the luxurious Bellagio Hotel and winner of the prestigious AAA Five Diamond rating, is decked in vivid orange, reds and pinks with elaborate and colourful artworks, conjuring a unique and accurate feel of what it must be like to dine under a big top. Boasting a world-class wine list of more than 900 international selections highlighting wines from France's best wine regions, you can be sure the food is just as mouth-watering. Try the Coeur de Filet de Boeuf served with sautéed foie-gras, smoked serrano potato Croquette and sweet onion compote, while those with a sweet tooth will love the classic Tahitian vanilla bean crème brûlée. Open Tuesday to Sunday for dinner only. Bookings essential.

Bellagio, 3600 Las Vegas Boulevard South
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.bellagio.com

Mr Lucky's — \$ *American*

If there's one place in Vegas you're going to find a Rock 'n Roll themed restaurant, it'll be in the Hard Rock Hotel. Diners can enjoy a good, old-fashioned American hamburger while gazing at the restaurant's 50s and 60s rock memorabilia. A good place to grab a greasy bite to eat, like the Sirloin Burger, after a long night at the slots or tables. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, 4455 Paradise Road
Las Vegas, United States of America

www.hardrockhotel.com

Shopping in Las Vegas

Las Vegas is one of the shopping capitals of the world. There are around 20 mega malls, each uniquely themed and offering prices that retailers in other cities struggle to compete with.

Town Square Las Vegas's stores are mostly outside so shoppers can enjoy a pedestrian friendly village atmosphere while exploring a comprehensive range of stores. Town Square also offers an eclectic range of restaurants, a newly built day-spa, and a wonderful interactive children's park.

Caesars Palace is home to the hugely popular Forum Shops, with more than 700,000 square feet (220,000 sq/m) of retail space. The Fashion Show Mall at 3200 Las Vegas Boulevard is worth a visit for its incredible bargains. The recently revamped Boulevard Mall, offering more than 170 stores, is also a good option.

If travellers like their mall shopping with a healthy dose of kitsch, they shouldn't miss The Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian. This indoor shopping area is built as an authentic reproduction of Venice's Grand Canal, complete with gondolas and a replica of Piazza San Marco as the extravagant centrepiece.

The Strip is known for designer boutiques and haute couture, and all the big names are represented here. Away from The Strip and the opulent malls visitors can find more individual stores selling Las Vegas collectibles such as old gambling chips, esoteric books, and kooky clothing.

Two markets that are really worth visiting are Broadacres Swap Meet and the Fantastic Indoor Swap Meet. Sales tax is built into the price of goods. Because states set their own sales tax, the US government has no system for refunding shoppers as a non-US visitor.

Climate in Las Vegas

Located in the middle of the Mojave Desert, Las Vegas is hot and dry during summer with mild winters, and plenty of sunshine all year round. In the height of summer, during July and August, the mercury often soars above 100F (38C). Winters (December to February) are cooler and bring winds and cold nights, with daytime highs of around 60F (16C) and chilly nights averaging 40F (4C). What little rain there is usually falls in winter, between January and March. In summer there are sometimes late afternoon thunderstorms that move in from Mexico.

Sightseeing in Las Vegas

When travellers visit Las Vegas they quickly realise that the city itself is the biggest attraction. Many simply walk the Strip and bask in the fluorescent light, listen to the pinging slot machines, and absorb the incredible energy of this fascinating desert city.

A century ago there was nothing much here but, since then, Las Vegas has bloomed into one of the world's fastest growing cities. The key sites are naturally the extravagant casinos lining the Strip, all competing to attract passers-by with lavish displays and performances. Visitors should check out the MGM-themed Mirage, the Egyptian fantasy of the Luxor, and the opulence of the Bellagio.

Most people come to Vegas to gamble and party or perhaps to get married in one of the famous chapels, but the city is also an entertainment hub, offering theme parks, incredible swimming pools, giant shopping malls, and much more, which will easily occupy the whole family.

Travellers would do well to catch some of the grand shows and popular performers; exploring the city on foot is best done at night, when the lights make their biggest impact and the temperature is cooler. During the day, visitors should make the most of the city buses, which run the length of the Strip.

Kids Attractions in Las Vegas

At first, Las Vegas may seem brash and sleazy, but this fun and fantasy-filled city is described as the world's largest theme park and massively appeals to kids. The city has been making an effort to attract families and it certainly has much to lure them with.

Set in the middle of the vast Mojave Desert, this vibrant holiday destination offers everything from wildlife viewing to theme parks to shopping malls. Naturally, there are many places in Vegas that are not suitable for children but there are family-friendly resorts springing up in and around the city.

Kids on holiday in Las Vegas will immediately be impressed by the recreated New York and Paris skylines, seen from the Strip, and revel in the adventurous notion of exploring the canals of Venice or the Egyptian pyramids.

In an attempt to lure gamblers to the casinos to squander all their cash, Las Vegas accommodation and restaurants are surprisingly affordable. The pursuit of pleasure by both parents and children alike is possible all year round; the summers in Las Vegas are extremely hot, but everything is air-conditioned.

Las Vegas Attractions

Venetian Hotel and Casino

No expense was spared building the Venetian Hotel, aimed to recreate the city of Venice in the Nevada Desert, and the result is fairly spectacular. Guests can travel around the hotel in a gondola (real canals run through the grounds) and a replica of St Mark's Square and the Basilica turns from night to day every three hours. Visitors have to look carefully to notice that the sky is actually a vast fresco. The only things missing are the pigeons and the backpackers. The casino itself is massive, featuring something like 2,500 slot machines and 125 gaming tables. For guests taking a break from the tables, there are four swimming pools, a fitness centre, and more than 60 restaurants. One of the main attractions is Madame Tussauds Las Vegas, a wax museum presenting some of the world's biggest icons including stars, politicians, record-breaking athletes, and legends.

Website: www.venetian.com

Bellagio Hotel and Casino

The Bellagio is one of Las Vegas's most opulent hotels and most popular casinos. With an Italian theme, the great bulk of the Bellagio sits in its own vast garden. It has more than 3,000 rooms and hundreds of slot machines and gaming tables. However, its best-known attraction is its amazing water show, a breath-taking union of water, music, and light. Between 3pm and midnight (from 12pm on weekends) the Bellagio's world-famous fountains 'dance' to opera, classical, or whimsical music with carefully choreographed movements. Beyond the Bellagio's gracious lobby lies the Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, a magnificent garden abounding in fragrance, texture, and colour. The hotel also has a fine arts gallery that hosts contemporary art exhibits.

Website: www.bellagio.com

The Mirage

Another MGM mega-casino, the showpiece at the Mirage is a volcano that shoots flames 100 feet (30m) into the night sky every 15 minutes (6pm to midnight), spewing smoke and transforming a tranquil waterfall into spectacular streams of molten lava. As visitors might expect of Las Vegas, it's all quite kitsch, but great entertainment. Siegfried and Roy's White Tigers used to be one of the Mirage's signature attractions, but the show was cancelled in 2003 after Roy Horn was attacked by one of the tigers during a show. At any given time, however, there are a number of outrageous attractions at the casino. A popular feature is the aquarium located behind the Front Desk. This 20,000-gallon saltwater aquarium is home to angelfish, puffer fish, tangs, sharks and other exotic sea creatures.

Website: www.mirage.com

Valley of Fire State Park

The Valley of Fire State Park is Nevada's oldest park, and is so named because of its red sandstone formations, which look like they're on fire when the sun reflects off them. The rocks were shaped over 150-million years ago, when dinosaurs roamed the area. Apart from the rugged beauty of the surrounding Mojave Desert, the main attractions in the park are the well preserved petroglyphs that adorn many of the red sandstone structures, left there by the ancient Pueblo people, also known as the Anasazi. This rock art dates variously from 300 BC to 1150 AD. Visitors should head to Atlatl Rock for some of the finest examples of ancient Indian rock art or petroglyphs, including a depiction of the atlatl, which was a notched stick used to propel spears, a predecessor to the bow and arrow. Other activities here include hiking, camping, and picnicking.

Website: parks.nv.gov/parks/valley-of-fire-state-park/

The Luxor

The Luxor Hotel, themed on ancient Egypt, is one of the most prominent sights on the Las Vegas Strip. It is a massive black-glass pyramid containing 36 floors of hotel rooms. Shining through it into the night sky is one of the world's most powerful light beams, which they claim can be seen by planes circling Los Angeles. The ground floor of the hotel is given over to a massive casino, which stands beneath a recreation of King Tut's Tomb. Other than gambling, entertainment at the hotel includes an IMAX theatre, gyms, swimming pools, and exhilarating shows by comedians, dancers and singers. The Luxor is a Vegas landmark and one of the most popular casinos and hotels in the city.

Website: www.luxor.com

MGM Grand

One of the most famous casinos in Las Vegas, the MGM Grand was the largest hotel in the world when it opened in 1993 with more than 5,000 rooms. The complex also houses about 20 restaurants, many shops and nightclubs, a convention centre, and a spa. The MGM Grand's most famous attraction was, for many years, the glass-sided lion habitat; however, the casino closed this in early 2012 as part of an extensive renovation. Today, the MGM Grand is home to the Cirque du Soleil and many other exciting entertainment options. An iconic Vegas landmark, the MGM has been thrilling and entertaining visitors for many years.

Website: www.mgmgrand.com

Mandalay Bay

The 44-storey Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino is among the largest on the Las Vegas Strip, with more than 3,000 hotel rooms and a 135,000 square foot (12,500 sq m) casino. The tropical-themed resort has a number of popular family attractions, including the Shark Reef saltwater aquarium and large-scale stage shows ranging from Broadway musicals to Cirque du Soleil productions. The most popular attraction at Mandalay Bay however, is Mandalay Beach, an 11-acre pool area featuring three heated pools, a wave pool, lazy river, and children's pool. Voted Best Pool of Las Vegas many times by Las Vegas Review Journal readers, Mandalay Beach has its own bar and restaurants.

Website: www.mandalaybay.com

Fremont Street Experience

The downtown area of Las Vegas is where it all began and the Fremont Street Experience aims to celebrate this heritage. The street is also known as 'Glitter Gulch' for the bright neon signs and thousands of flashing lights that line the streets. This is where visitors will find Vegas Vic and Sassy Sal, two of the nation's best-known neon icons. Some of the city's most famous vintage casinos are found here, including the Golden Nugget and the Gold Spike, as are most of its strip clubs and stage shows. Most entertainment is on or close by the Fremont Street Experience Mall. The Fremont Street Experience encompasses the iconic Vegas experience, giving people exactly what they expect when they think of the glitzy casino city.

Website: www.vegasexperience.com

The Grand Canyon

A mile deep, 277 miles (446km) long and up to 18 miles (29km) wide, the breath-taking grandeur of the Grand Canyon is so impressive that words simply cannot do it justice. One of the great natural wonders of the world, it was formed by the cutting action of the Colorado River over millions of years, the harder rock formations remaining as great cliffs, pinnacles and buttes, and the different layers of rock possessing colours that range from purple, fiery red and pastel pink to yellow, brown, grey and soft tones of blue.

Whether by foot or on horseback, from a plane or helicopter, aboard a raft down the mighty Colorado River or by merely gazing in awe from the rim, the canyon's seemingly infinite depths can be experienced in a variety of ways. The park receives hordes of visitors from around the world, who cannot fail to be transfixed by the sculpted rock shapes, the shifting colours that change with the light and a tiny glimpse of the Colorado River far below. The Grand Canyon National Park comprises two separate areas, the South Rim and the more remote North Rim. Separated by the 10-mile (16km) width of the canyon, it is a 215-mile (346km) drive from one visitor centre to the other and the South Rim, being the most accessible with more facilities, sees about 90 percent of the park visitors.

The North Rim is higher in elevation and wetter, with thicker surrounding forests; it is further to get to and is usually closed due to snow between mid-October and mid-May, but many people prefer the comparative peacefulness of its less crowded lookouts. At both rims there are several drives and walkways along the edge with numerous lookout points for views from different angles, as well as a few hikes down into the canyon where one can overnight at Phantom Ranch on the canyon floor.

Website: www.nps.gov/grca

Hoover Dam

Stretching 1,247 feet (380m) across the Colorado River, the Hoover Dam holds back the waters of Lake Mead and is a fine example of the engineering of its time. One of the world's most famous dams, the Hoover Dam was built during the Great Depression in the 1930s, and is one of many vast public works projects commissioned by the US government to get people back to work. The dam employed thousands of men from all over the country, and its hydroelectric power generator continues to supply Nevada and its neighbouring states with electricity. Engineering feats aside, the Lake Mead National Recreation Area is popular with water sports enthusiasts as well as those just after a bit of sun and relaxation.

Website: www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam

Red Rock Canyon

Red Rock Canyon is a dramatic valley 10 miles (16km) west of Las Vegas, and is a good excursion to escape the neon lights of the slot machines. Its defining feature is the steep Red Rock escarpment, which rises 3,000 feet (914m) on its western edge. Today, the dramatic landscape is peppered with cacti and Joshua trees, and is a good spot for walking, rock climbing, cycling, or simply a scenic drive. The Mojave Desert is not as barren as visitors might think; it teems with rare life and beauty, with waterfalls cascading into the canyons and, high above, red-tailed hawks searching for their next meal. For a taste of Nevada's natural beauty there is no better place to explore.

Website: www.redrockcanyonlv.org

Adventuredome

The glass-encased theme park of Adventuredome is the perfect attraction for thrill-seeking kids on holiday in Las Vegas. Its loop roller-coaster and other gut-wrenching rides are not to be missed. If this adrenalin rush is a bit too extreme, there are also shows by magicians and jugglers on offer, as well as plenty of treats such as ice-cream, popcorn, and candy. There are also rides and activities designed for younger kids who may not be old enough to ride the main attractions. The fact that the theme park is indoors is an extra bonus, protecting visitors from the sometimes inhospitable Nevada climate.

Website: www.adventuredome.com

Buffalo Bill's

The Buffalo Bill's amusement park is an excellent holiday attraction for children, offering everything from earth-plunging rides that defy gravity or end with a huge splash, to log rides on a fantasy lake. Kids will also love the Frog Hopper, bouncing around the park on the back of Buffalo Bill's life-like amphibian. Buffalo Bill's Resort and Casino is a great choice of travel base in Las Vegas for families travelling with children, as the resort caters equally to adults and kids, and is known for its high-energy live shows as well as its amusement park and gambling facilities. Youngsters will be kept happy and busy as adults explore the more grown-up attractions of the resort.

Website: www.primmvalleyresorts.com

Grand Canyon Helicopter and Ranch Adventure

Kids will revel in the exciting experience of flying through the Grand Canyon in a helicopter and landing at the Grand Canyon Western Ranch. Once at the ranch, children will be thoroughly enthralled by horse-drawn wagon rides and the cowboys putting on a show. The western-style meal served at the ranch also goes down a treat. This family-friendly excursion across the border to Arizona is a great break from the casinos and resorts of Las Vegas itself, giving visitors the chance to experience some of the natural splendour of the region and partake in the pioneer and cowboy culture so well-loved in the US.

Website: grandcanyonwesternranch.com

Treasure Island

No longer the family-friendly pirate hangout it once was, Treasure Island has revamped itself as an adult-oriented contemporary resort. Along with being home to a Cirque du Soleil show, Treasure Island offers a number of restaurants and nightclubs, such as the wild-west themed Gilley's Saloon, and Golden Circle Sportsbook and Bar. Guests can also look forward to a host of famous comedians and musicians, who regularly perform at the resort. Although not a family resort, Treasure Island is an exciting adult destination in Vegas and one of the city's enduring favourites.

Website: www.treasureisland.com

Dig This

Dig This is a wildly popular attraction in Las Vegas that allows visitors to operate enormous vehicles such as bulldozers and excavators under the supervision of trained instructors. While the price tag is high, the experience is unforgettable, as visitors team up with other participants to complete tasks. Visitors must be at least 14 to operate the machines. Dig This has been voted the number one Las Vegas attraction on tourist review sites such as Tripadvisor. People of all ages get super excited by the chance to experience the power of massive machinery.

Website: digthisvegas.com

Events in Las Vegas

City of Lights Jazz and R&B Festival

Saturday April 18, 2020 to Sunday April 19, 2020 (18 - 19 April 2020)

Where: Clark county Government Amphitheater.

The annual Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz and R&B Festival takes place at the Clark County Government Amphitheater, where festivalgoers can enjoy getting out into the Nevada heat to listen to some good old rhythm and blues.

Those looking for a good time should pack a camping chair, their sun hat, some snacks, and refreshments, and head on down to see live acts such as Will Downing, Euge Groove, Karen Briggs' Soulchestra, and Fattburger. Craft and food stalls are also available. For a full programme and more details, check out the official website listed below.

<http://www.yourjazz.com>

Rock n Roll Las Vegas Marathon Saturday November 14, 2020 to Sunday November 15, 2020 (14 - 15 November 2020)

Where: Start and finish at Mandalay Bay resort and Casino

The Rock 'n' Roll Las Vegas Marathon takes place along the Strip where runners can enjoy the sights and sounds of Sin City, and spectators get into the swing of things with live entertainment, including music, cheerleaders, and Vegas-inspired fanfare. Runners and spectators alike can expect a high-energy run and afterparty which channels the wild spirit of Vegas. The half marathon has a wave start, allowing runners plenty of elbow room to enjoy the run and the sideline entertainment along the way. For more details check out the official website listed below.

<http://www.runrocknroll.com/las-vegas>

National Finals Rodeo Thursday December 03, 2020 to Saturday December 12, 2020 (3 - 12 December 2020)

Where: Thomas & Mack Center

Referred to as the 'Superbowl of Rodeos', cowboys and cowgirls from across America and Canada prepare all year in the hope of being one of the top 15 to qualify for the NFR and to compete for prize money. Events include bull riding, calf roping, team roping, saddle bronco riding, bareback riding, steer wrestling, and barrel racing. There is no better place to experience the still resilient cowboy culture of the US. The competition includes food stalls and funfair attractions and should be fun for the whole family. Check out the official website listed below for more details.

<http://www.nfrexperience.com>

Burning Man Monday August 30, 2021 to Monday September 06, 2021 (30 August to 6 September)

Where: Black Rock Desert

The Festival of the Burning Man is one of the most unique festivals in the world. Drawing crowds of more than 20,000 each year from all over the world, the celebration is of art, creativity, and humanity. Unlike most other festivals in the world, this one has no commerce, no shops, no rock stars, no rollercoasters. It is simply a gathering, albeit a very large one. The Black Rock Desert, two or three hours north of Reno is the setting. The serenity of the area allows festival goers to feel uninhibited. The emphasis is on community and people helping one another. On the last day, the bonfire of the Burning Man takes place, setting the skies alight in fire while the community dances around. Due to the non-commercial nature of the festival, those attending are advised to bring everything they might need with them. Check the official website for details.

<http://www.burningman.com>

Reno

Priding itself on being 'the Biggest Little City in the World', giving visitors something to think about the next time they assume Las Vegas is the only place worth visiting in Nevada. Reno is like a more laid-back, scaled down version of Vegas, with plenty of casinos and a fun nightlife, but also a distinct character of its own.

Alongside the beautiful Sierra Nevada Mountains, Reno began as a toll bridge for gold rush migrants and prospectors and has since become a gateway for adventure-seeking travellers en route to the great outdoors. Key natural attractions nearby include Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe, two of America's most popular ski resorts.

Reno is also the starting point for travellers heading to the annual Burning Man festival and many 'burners' pass through on their way to the Black Rock Desert, site of this iconic event. Other passers-by may be heading to the eastern gates of the Yosemite National Park, which are located just under two hours' drive from Reno.

With Nevada's liberal gaming laws, Reno has had a good casino business for over 50 years, but due to the tough competition from Las Vegas growth, this has slowed down in recent years. However, the city still has a bustling nightlife overflowing with bright neon lights, bars, clubs, shows, slot machines, and plenty of debauchery, helped along by the large student population attending the University of Nevada.

Visitors can also take in the National Automobile Museum where John Wayne's 1953 Corvette number 51 can be seen, or visit the Nevada Museum of Art to view local works, while culture vultures can enjoy performances by the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra between the months of September and April.

Spring and autumn are the best times of year to visit, when the summer heat has not yet kicked in and the winter frost is still at bay, leaving the weather warm and mild.

Getting around in Reno

Getting around the small city of Reno is easy, whether it is on foot, by bicycle, by rental car, or using public transport. There are numerous fixed bus routes in the city, with most major casinos boasting bus stops, and it is possible to get around Reno solely by public transport. Car hire companies and taxi companies also service the city in droves; Lyft and Uber are available.

Climate in Reno

Reno features a steppe climate, with low rainfall year-round and light snowfall in winter. Most of the city's rain falls in winter and spring, but summer thunderstorms are possible. Like most of northwestern Nevada, Reno is a windy city. In summer, between June and August, temperatures range widely, averaging between 52F (11C) and 92F (33C). In winter, between December and February, temperatures are more predictable, averaging between 25F (-4C) and 51F (11C).

Airports in Reno

Reno-Tahoe International Airport (RNO)

Reno-Tahoe International Airport

<http://www.renoairport.com>

Location: Reno The airport is just five miles (8km) south of downtown Reno.

Time: GMT -8 (GMT -7 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: +1 (775) 328 6400

Getting to the city: The RTC Ride runs between the airport and downtown Reno. The pick-up zone is at the north end near the baggage claim area. Route 19 operates to and from the airport on weekdays. Taxis are also available from the same area and the ride into town takes just ten minutes.

Car rental: On-site car rental operators include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz, National, Payless and Thrifty.

Airport Taxis: Airport taxis can be found just outside the baggage claim area. The trip into town takes 10 minutes.

Facilities: Facilities at Reno-Tahoe International Airport include ATMs, mail-drop boxes, luggage trolleys, gaming machines, a pet relief area, souvenir shops, newsstands, as well as a range of restaurants and snack bars.

Parking: Short-term parking is charged at \$1 for the first 30 minutes, \$2 for the first hour and \$1 per hour thereafter, up to \$24 per day. Long-term rates are similar, but the daily rate is \$14. Parking is located opposite the terminal.

Currency

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Exchange rate for 1 USD - U.S. Dollar

0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.93 EUR Euro	0.80 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	152.99 JPY Japanese Yen	1.37 CAD Canadian Dollar	0.91 CHF Swiss Franc
1.52 AUD Australian Dollar	39.40 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	443.91 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	93,075.00 LBP Lebanese Pound	4.86 LYD Libyan Dinar	6.86 BOB Bolivian Boliviano
0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.00 OMR Omani Rial	0.00 QAR Qatari Rial	1.35 SGD Singapore Dollar	10.82 SEK Swedish Krona	0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar
0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	58.11 DOP Dominican Peso	0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna	16.95 MXN Mexican Peso	610.53 XOF West African CFA Franc	0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina
0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar	0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira	133.87 DZD Algerian Dinar	0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat	0.00 BWP Botswana Pula
3.72 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	938.44 CLP Chilean Peso	386.84 AMD Armenia Dram	23.29 CZK Czech Koruna	17.63 MDL Moldova Lei	139.89 ISK Icelandic Krona
12,582.40 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	3.72 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.71 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	38.15 UYU Uruguayan Peso	0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee
0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	10.88 NOK Norwegian Krone	4.03 PLN Polish Zloty	3.75 SAR Saudi Riyal	0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee	36.79 THB Thai Baht
3.66 AED U.A.E Dirham	5.09 BRL Brazilian Real	4.63 RON Romanian New Leu	7.81 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	610.53 XAF Central African CFA Franc	25,405.70 VND Vietnamese Dong
878.36 ARS Argentine Peso	0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	10.06 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar	1.00 PAB Panamanian Balboa
1.70 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	3,920.00 COP Colombian Peso	88.42 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	362.00 HUF Hungarian Forint	10.89 TJS Tajikistan Ruble	16,073.70 IDR Indonesian Rupiah
47.95 EGP Egyptian Pound	1,358.84 KRW South Korean Won	7,456.52 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	4.74 MYR Malaysian Ringgit	508.31 CRC Costa Rican Colón	1.67 NZD New Zealand Dollar
277.87 PKR Pakistani Rupee	91.39 RUB Russian Rouble	18.51 ZAR South African Rand	3.13 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar	1.82 BGN Bulgarian Lev
32.33 TRY Turkish Lira	57.28 PHP Philippine Peso	32.31 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	1,164.84 NGN Nigerian Naira	0.00 XPF CFP Franc	0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.00 BND Brunei Dollar	108.90 RSD Serbian Dinar	7.24 CNY Chinese Yuan	6.94 DKK Danish Krone
3.49 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	83.42 INR Indian Rupee				