



Destination Guide: Las Vegas



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AAA Destination Guide: Las Vegas includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Hundreds of years ago they came for water at a desert oasis. But green felt tables rumbling with ruby red dice have replaced bucolic meadows that gave the town its name. The thirst of today's Las Vegas visitor is for gambling, intoxicating glitter, sexy entertainment, dining and shopping. It's all here in this fantasyland escape where fun, all kinds of it, is the name of the game.



In Glitter Gulch and on the Strip of casino-encrusted megaresorts bursting with four- and five-diamond restaurants, the night is always aglow. Experience this spectacle of illumination in a walk past dancing fountains; a culmination of music, lights and water. Only in Las Vegas can you see the Statue of Liberty, the Sphinx, the Eiffel Tower, pirate ships and Venetian canals all on one street. Continual events mean that you won't have to veer very far for entertainment, and in many

cases it's free. During the day, attractions abound and you need only look to the themed hotels; each more opulent or extravagant than the next. Want a quickie wedding and with Elvis officiating? No problem. You can do it all in "Sin City." So dine alfresco, catch a show, go antiquing or make a date with Lady Luck. Whatever your predilections, the town assures you: "What happens here stays here." Viva Las Vegas!

Essentials

Get the best view of the city skyline from the Stratosphere Tower, at 1,149 feet, it's the tallest freestanding tower in the United States. Visit the Bellagio, where dancing fountains, a conservatory with seasonal flowers and plants and Dale Chihuly glass appeals to a visitor's sense of sight, smell or touch.

Walk under the spectacular canopy of 2 million lights and LED screen suspended 90 feet above a four-block section of Fremont Street that pump eye-popping imagery to heart-pounding music at the Fremont Street Experience. This must-see show runs nightly on the hour from dusk to midnight.

Enjoy alfresco dining at Mon Ami Gabi in the Paris Las Vegas hotel, a great place to people-watch and from which to view the Bellagio's dancing fountains and spectacular light presentation. Continue your visit at the hotel by savoring a delicious dessert at Lenotre in Le Boulevard. The facility has a luscious assortment of fresh-baked French pastries, cookies, handmade chocolates and wonderful coffees that can be enjoyed in a café-style atmosphere.

Catch a show or two and relive the golden days of the entertainment biz when glamorous showgirls ruled the Strip. "The Folies Bergere" at the Tropicana and "Jubilee!" at Bally's Las Vegas feature the traditional, sexy productions for which Vegas became famous. On the opposite spectrum, "La Reve" at the Wynn Las Vegas is a new concept in and approach to experiencing a show. The aquatic production comprises a more personal and intimate encounter for the audience; no seat is more than 40 feet from the action. Cirque du Soleil's "O" at the Bellagio and "Mystere" at



Treasure Island - TI exhibit the innovation of its creators and talent of its dancers that have made this distinguished troupe universally famous. Blue Man Group is another crowd-pleasing show. Walk the 4-mile Strip at night and see the city in a whole new "light."

Browse the densely-packed Red Rooster Antique Mall, one of the largest antique co-ops in the city and housed in a former 25,000-square-foot bottling plant, for interesting vintage Las Vegas memorabilia.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Explore a megaresort to see an opulent city within a city and don't forget to visit a casino; you have to wager at least once on your Vegas vacation, don't you? Place a bet at a roulette table or dump some tokens down a slot machine. But with the city's casinos taking in up to \$10 billion a year, don't plan on beating the house.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Stratosphere Tower

2000 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89104
Phone: (702) 380-7777

2. Bellagio

3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 693-7111

3. Mon Ami Gabi

3655 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 944-4224

4. Paris Las Vegas

3655 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 946-7000

5. Bally's Las Vegas

3645 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 967-4111

6. Wynn Las Vegas

3131 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 770-7000

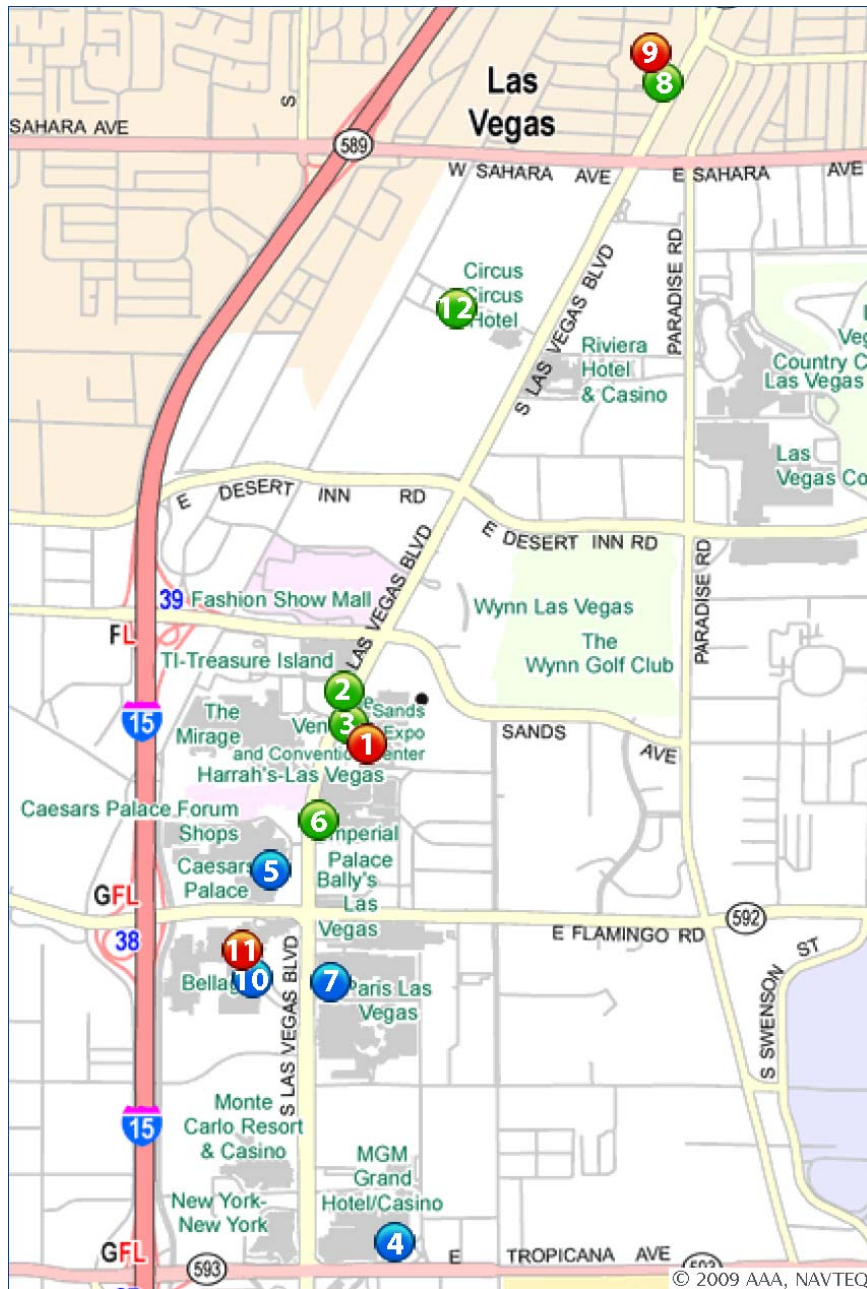
7. Treasure Island - TI

3300 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 894-7444

Las Vegas in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Las Vegas.

Las Vegas in 3 Days – Day 1 Map




Day 1: Morning

Nibble on chocolate croissants, French toast made with custard and apples, and baguettes topped with smoked salmon and chive cream cheese at Bouchon at the Venetian. The award-winning restaurant emulates the intimate bistros of Lyon, France, inside a hotel inspired by the old-world charm of Venice, Italy.

Day 1 Details - *Get additional information on AAA.com; AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds*

 - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Bouchon at the Venetian </p> <p>3355 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 414-6200</p> | <p>7. Paris Las Vegas</p> <p>3655 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 946-7000</p> |
| <p>2. The Venetian</p> <p>3355 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 414-1000</p> <p></p> | <p>8. Stratosphere Tower</p> <p>2000 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89104
Phone: (702) 380-7777</p> |
| <p>3. Madame Tussauds Las Vegas</p> <p>3377 Las Vegas Blvd S, Suite 2001
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 862-7800</p> | <p>9. Roxy's Diner </p> <p>2000 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89104
Phone: (702) 380-7777</p> |
| <p>4. MGM Grand Hotel/Casino</p> <p>3799 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 891-7777</p> | <p>10. Bellagio </p> <p>3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 693-7111</p> |
| <p>5. Caesars Palace</p> <p>3570 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (877) 427-7243</p> | <p>11. Le Cirque </p> <p>3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 693-8100</p> |
| <p>6. The Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace</p> <p>3535 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 794-3174</p> | <p>12. Adventuredome</p> <p>2880 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 794-3939</p> |

While you're at [The Venetian](#), hit the slots in a 112,000-square-foot casino ornamented by mosaic floors and hand-painted fresco ceilings; marvel at impressive re-creations of the Doge's Palace and the Ca' d'Oro (Palace of Gold). For a change of pace, schmooze with "celebrities" at [Madame Tussaud's Interactive Wax Museum](#). A gondola ride along the Grand Canal is a must; unwind as your singing gondolier propels the curvy vessel beneath bridges and flower-lined balconies.

Afternoon

Get an overview of the Strip via the Las Vegas Monorail. A one-way trip takes about 15 minutes. The 4-mile route stretches north from the [MGM Grand Hotel/Casino](#) to the Sahara Hotel & Casino. Travel to lavish [Caesars Palace](#), drool over [The Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace](#) and say "*Bonjour!*" to [Paris Las Vegas](#).

Disembark at Sahara Station to reach [Stratosphere Tower](#); its observation decks offer stunning panoramas of Las Vegas. Daunting outdoor thrill rides on the 1,149-foot-tall structure also afford breathtaking views—if you're brave enough to keep your eyes open! Before heading to the casino floor for a free poker lesson, cool down with a mocha milk shake at [Roxys Diner](#). Crooning waiters dole out burgers, chili cheese fries and an array of blue-plate specials in this 1950s-inspired restaurant.

Evening

Escape to the fanciful milieu brought to life at the [Bellagio](#), where choreographed fountains and seasonally changing botanical tapestries are as mesmerizing as a hand of 21 at the blackjack table.

Join the circus for the night by juggling in one of Cirque du Soleil's whimsical productions and dinner at [Le Cirque](#), one of the Bellagio's many upscale restaurants. Gawk at the acrobats, clowns and contortionists of "O" after relishing such grown-up delights as caviar, escargot and foie gras under a vibrant silk-tented ceiling. In the fun, carnival atmosphere of Circus Circus Hotel, Casino & Theme Park, more jesters and death-defying aerialists await along with hair-raising rides. Blast toward the glass ceiling of the [Adventuredome](#) aboard The Sling

Shot, then order a Pink Elephant at the all-inclusive complex's Horse-A-Round Bar, a steadfast Sin City watering hole.

Day 2: Morning

Recuperate after your first night in "The City that Never Sleeps" at the [Bougainvillea Cafe](#) in Terrible's Hotel & Casino. The restaurant is open 24 hours a day, and breakfast is served anytime. Plus, their reasonably priced meals let you feast like a high roller—even if you've long since parted ways with Lady Luck. Their signature dish is a slow-cooked, tequila-marinated rotisserie chicken, but the extensive menu also includes burgers and sandwiches, both Chinese and Mexican cuisine, and seafood and steaks.

Relive Vegas' not-too-distant past, when there was more aglow than just the neon signs. Exhibits at the [Atomic Testing Museum](#) relate the story of the Nevada Test Site, a massive outdoor government laboratory 65 miles northwest of the city. In the 1950s nuclear testing produced mushroom clouds that were visible downtown, providing fascinating atmospheric spectacles for Glitter Gulch tourists.

Afternoon

Celebrate Oktoberfest year-round at [Hofbrauhaus Las Vegas](#), a replica of a world-famous Munich beer hall. After sampling such German classics as wurst (sausage), spätzle (tiny noodles or dumplings) and goulash (stew), step inside the temperature-controlled biergarten (beer garden) for a few mugs of imported Bavarian beer.

Las Vegas in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

**Day 2 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Bougainvillea Café

4100 S Paradise Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89169
Phone: (702) 733-7000

2. Atomic Testing Museum

755 E Flamingo Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 794-5161

3. Hofbrauhaus Las Vegas

4510 Paradise Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 853-2337

4. Mix

3950 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 632-7777

5. THEhotel at Mandalay Bay

3950 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 632-7777

6. Luxor Las Vegas

3900 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 262-44445.

Evening

Climb 64 floors in a glass elevator to Mix, a trendy restaurant and lounge atop THEhotel at Mandalay Bay. Reserve a window table for impressive nighttime vistas complimented by chic décor and contemporary American and French cuisine.

Savor decadent handmade chocolates at the Chocolate Swan or sample a light pinot noir at 55 Degrees Wine + Design; both establishments are in Mandalay Place. Featuring trendy boutiques and eateries, the shopping center is on the sky bridge connecting Mandalay Bay to the Strip's only pyramid-shaped megaresort, the Luxor Las Vegas.

Day 3: Morning

Sink into a plush banquette and a cheesy, veggie-loaded omelet at the Peppermill Inn on South Las Vegas Boulevard, then retire to its dim, mirror- and neon-trimmed Fireside Lounge. Gracious waitresses in sleek black dresses deliver fishbowl-size froufrou drinks, while Frank Sinatra's raspy voice caresses affectionate couples relaxing around a watery fire pit. Showcasing both a 24-hour coffee shop and a swanky cocktail scene, this local treasure preserves quintessential, old-school Vegas.

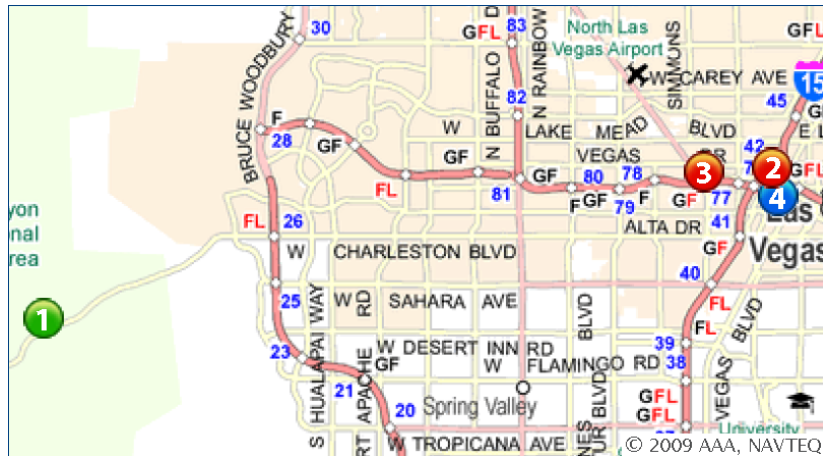
Escape the excess of the Strip and experience the placid beauty of the Mojave Desert. A one-way, 13-mile road leads through Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, where Utah banded geckos and desert bighorn sheep negotiate crimson sandstone bluffs extolled by hikers, mountain bikers and rock climbers.

Afternoon

After the exertion of hiking Red Rock Canyon, you'll likely want some grub and maybe a beer to go with it. Hang out at the laid-back Triple 7 Restaurant Brewery, downtown at 200 N. Main St. Regulars tout the pale ale, but there are plenty of different beers to sample, along with tasty pub fare—burgers, garlic fries, wild mushroom pizza, oysters topped with crab and artichoke dip. And this being Vegas, you can get a surprisingly good prime rib dinner for 8 bucks.

Shop for kitschy collectables and vintage duds at The Attic, 1018 S. Main St., a mammoth resale store once spotlighted in a Visa TV commercial. Just a few doors down at the Rainbow Feather Dyeing Co., rub elbows with Amazonian showgirls while browsing a multihued array of brash boas, plumed fans and fantastic headpieces.

Las Vegas in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

FYI – Provided as an information only service; has not yet been evaluated

1. Red Rock Canyon

1000 Scenic Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89117
Phone: (702) 515-5350

3. Big Mama's Rib Shack

2230 W Bonanza
Las Vegas, NV 89106
Phone: (702) 597-1616

2. Triple 7 Restaurant Brewery

200 N Main St
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Phone: (702) 387-1896

4. Golden Nugget Hotel

129 E Fremont St
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Phone: (702) 385-7111

Shimmy down the aisle with “The King.” Undoubtedly one of Vegas’ more untraditional traditions, getting hitched by an Elvis impersonator is said to have originated at a South Las Vegas Boulevard wedding venue often featured in movies and TV shows. For more than 50 years couples have tied the knot at the Graceland Wedding Chapel, including numerous musicians—from Billy Ray Cyrus to Jon Bon Jovi to Aaron Neville.

Evening

Be careful biting into the lip-smacking Southern eats doled out at Big Mama's Rib Shack; the restaurant's signature barbecue pork sandwich—simply called “The Killer”—is so spicy it might just bite back. Another staple menu item at this down-to-earth, family-owned eatery is the 16-ounce serving of gumbo, chock-full of meat and seafood.

Discover vintage Vegas at the Fremont Street Experience, where twinkling lights and neon signposts (such as Vegas Vic and his cowgirl sweetheart Sassy Sally) illuminate a seven-block pedestrian corridor. Closed to vehicular traffic and revitalized into a tourist attraction in the late 1990s, the city's first paved street (1925) is crowned by a digital video display system longer than five football fields. Take in one of the nightly light and sound shows, then roll on over to the craps tables inside the Golden Nugget Hotel. First opened in 1946, this stylishly refurbished landmark also boasts several contemporary lounges with posh atmospheres. Sip cocktails at the Dive Bar at The Tank, where looming sharks eye bikini-clad bathers from within a 200,000-gallon aquarium.

Restaurants

Not surprisingly, the Strip is the heart of the Las Vegas dining scene. Diego at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino is a colorful and festive cantina featuring talented Chef Christopher Palmeri. The cuisine takes its cue from the street stalls of urban Mexico and the region's flare for home-fire cooking. Diners enjoy such wonderful touches as a mobile salsa cart with six original varieties. Bold flavors are what you'll remember about the authentic dishes that come from south of the border. A signature dish is the *pollo al horno con mole*—wood-oven-roasted baby chicken with

Oaxacan red mole, spinach and crispy parsnips. Other delicious choices include braised beef brisket, garlic-lime skirt steak, poached chicken thigh meat, crispy duck and Yucatan-style pork. You won't have many opportunities to order slow-roasted goat or Mexican paella, so do it while you can. Don't forget to try a frozen margarita popsicle or tequila sorbet shooter. The restaurant is open only for dinner.



[Paris Las Vegas](#) resort hotel and casino features [Mon Ami Gabi](#). The patio at this stylish bistro fronts the Strip and is the ideal setting for alfresco dining. A misting system and awnings help keep the tables cool during warmer summer months. Chances are you'll be enjoying the food and the view with tourists

from around the world; dining inside makes for a romantic experience as well. (It can be difficult getting a table outside, even with a reservation.)

Wherever you dine, you'll enjoy the varieties of quiche, crepes, pommes frites, trout grenobloise or the cassoulet and shallot steak. There's a large and inviting wine-by-glass list to peruse, and although you'll be tempted, don't fill up first on the French bread with garlic butter. Try the parmesan-crusted fish. *Ooh la la!*

An award-winning restaurant and long a staple of the finest dining in New York City, [Le Cirque](#) pitched its elaborate swooping silk-dome tent at the [Bellagio](#) in Las Vegas. The ringmaster is Sirio Maccioni, and his attention to detail is what allows him to push the envelope. The result is an elegant, sophisticated experience that coupled with a view of the dancing fountains presented nightly, makes for a memorable event. Diners will have quite the difficult time choosing between such wonderful appetizer selections as black-tie scallops (tied with black truffles), foie gras sauté, brochette de langoustines and ravioli de truffe blanche. Entrees include roasted duck and a honey-spice fig glaze with roasted lobster in a port wine sauce, Dover sole grenobloise, canard rotie and poulet fermiere. And yes, to finish things off, a white chocolate cream layered with banana and wrapped in phyllo pastry, along with a milk chocolate dome and

crème brulee espresso. The doting but not encroaching service completes the evening.

[Picasso](#), so named because of the Pablo Picasso artworks gracing the restaurant, is located inside the [Bellagio](#). Should you tire of admiring the original paintings, there's a picturesque view of the hotel's magical water show just outside the window. There's an abundance of fresh flowers, and the entrance feels like an outdoor market. The service staff has the knack for making patrons feel comfortable, yet important. There are two menus from which to choose: a five-course degustation and a four-course prix fixe. Award-winning Chef Julian Serrano is known for his attention to detail, and you'll agree that he has a deft hand when he serves up such delectable choices as warm quail salad with sautéed artichokes and pine nuts; roasted pigeon, crust of honey, walnuts and almonds with wild rice risotto; and sautéed foie gras with dried organic sour cherries. A delicious dessert might be gratin of cinnamon with a crust of black walnuts and a topping of port-butter ice cream—yum!

The tastes of the French and Italian Riviera are captured by Alessandro Stratta at Alex. This award-winning master chef concentrates on using the finest ingredients for his seasonal prix fixe and tasting menus. The interior features a sweeping grand staircase leading to an elegant dining room filled with mahogany woods, lots of flowers, exquisite chandeliers and a Japanese garden. The lighting suggests a touch of romance, making it an ideal setting for celebrating special occasions; dinner jackets are required. Some of the early favorites from the menu are the oh-so-ethereal foie gras ravioli in truffle bouillon with duck confit salad, daurade Royal Provençal with chick-pea fritters and lobster-bell pepper jus, roasted monkfish, and Tuscan-style pork with stewed tomatoes. Choosing just one of the decadent desserts is impossible. The service is handled by a large staff that is always at the ready, but never intrusive.

[Carluccio's Tivoli Gardens](#) is one of the best-kept secrets in town. A great value with good-size portions makes it worth the 2- or 3-mile drive east from the Strip. Choose from such mouthwatering appetizers as mussels, shrimp scampi, calamari and clams. Some of the entrée specialties are

chicken Florentine, zuppa de clams, linguine with red or white clam sauce or seafood diablo. The breaded and baked veal Florentine is nestled between thick layers of mozzarella, meat ragu and spinach with ample Alfredo sauce. You can see the love on your plate in whatever you choose. You also can order a couple glasses of wine without doubling your bill, and the friendly staff makes you feel like one of the family.

Don't be fooled just because it's located in a hotel named Terrible's Hotel & Casino; the food and service are worth the trip to [Bougainvillea Cafe](#)—a popular choice with locals. Bring your appetite and be prepared for big portions from the 24-hour menu that features such favorites as the Tower of Onions—a huge onion appetizer smothered in homemade beer batter, deep-fried and sprinkled with parmesan. The tequila chicken is a whole chicken marinated in a tequila recipe and slow-roasted to mouthwatering perfection. Have a hankering for prime rib? Pound-for-pound this melt-in-your-mouth version is just about the best in town. Big steaks, slow-cooked rotisserie meats and a very popular Chinese menu with all your favorites also are available.

Farther north on Audrie Street just east of the Strip at [Battista's Hole in the Wall](#), diners may find themselves gaping at all the celebrity photos adorning the walls of this charming landmark restaurant that opened in 1970. Betty Grable, Johnny Weismuller, Clint Eastwood, Ed Sullivan and Robert Redford are just a few of the many that have dined here. Expect a family-fun atmosphere that features a roving accordion player and a menu where each dinner comes with soup or salad, garlic bread, side order of pasta, homemade cappuccino and all the house wine one can handle. Among the excellent pasta dishes are cheese ravioli, lasagna, cheese manicotti, meat canelloni, eggplant parmegiana and fettuccine. If those don't do it for you, then try the steak caruso, filet mignon, shrimp scampi, or three varieties of veal or chicken. If you can't have fun here, forget about it.

[Coffee Pub](#) is open only for breakfast and lunch and is the place to be if you want to rub elbows with celebrities, local politicians and movers and shakers (Elvis Presley's late manager, Colonel Tom Parker, used to

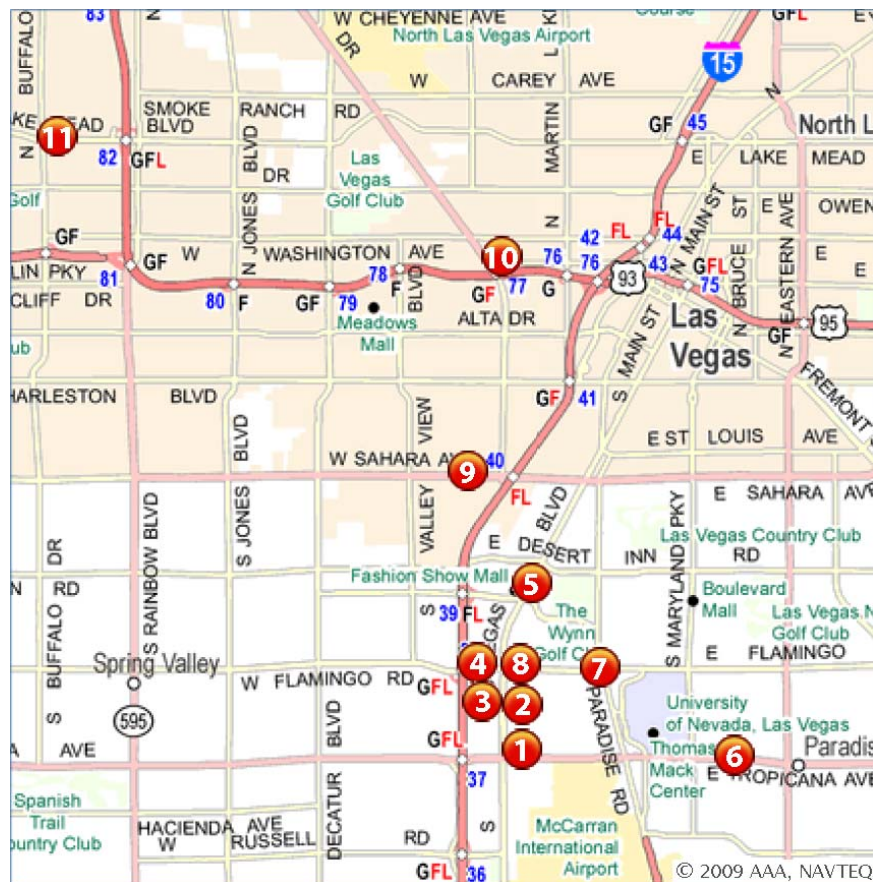
come in every Friday and order clam chowder). Consistently good food has been its key to success since opening in 1984. The California cuisine offers up favorites of plenty of salads, soups, quiches and sandwiches. Since breakfast is supposedly the most important meal of the day, you can't go wrong with the Big Wally omelet—it's stuffed chock-full with a blend of cream cheese, sundried tomatoes and scallions. Popular drinks include several smoothie selections, espressos, frappes and a frozen mocha java. If calories don't count, try the white chocolate cheesecake with Kenya coffee. The eatery is tucked away inside a strip mall and offers inside or patio dining.

[Big Mama's Rib Shack](#) has been a family-run business in Las Vegas since 1992. It brags, and rightfully so, of serving “down home” Southern food. “Big Mama” was born in a small Georgia town and she has been cooking up her favorite recipes for 75 years. NBA center Shaquille O'Neal is a frequent satisfied customer. All diners, famous or not, choose from a menu that includes soul food, Cajun and Creole dishes. The specialty of the house is barbecued ribs, slow-cooked to make them tender and juicy. Fried chicken also is offered and to quote the menu: “Honey, if the Colonel could have fried chicken like ‘Big Mama,’ he'd have been a General.” The best way to sample the menu is with the barbecue combo plate.

True to its name, [Grape Street Cafe](#) is a California-style bistro that prides itself on its selection of wines—the adjacent retail store is part of the operation. Over 75 wines are available by the glass, and several of the food choices are designed to complement the wines. A fruit and cheese board appetizer is one example. Designed to look like a wine cellar with exposed-brick walls and a concrete floor, the eatery also has patio dining. A favorite appetizer is baked brie (a pastry pouch filled with brie) but done with lower-fat phyllo dough, toasted hazelnuts, caramelized onions and apricot preserves. Choosing an entrée, from lamb chops to the many pasta, chicken and pizza selections, will be difficult. One popular choice is the penne a la vodka with chicken—the rosy sauce is flavored with Asiago cheese, and the whole is tossed with a generous amount of prosciutto, asparagus and flecks of basil. Make sure you leave room for

the crowd-pleasing dessert of pastry cream puffs filled with vanilla bean ice cream and topped with chocolate ganache, caramel and strawberry.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](http://TripTik.com)

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Diego </p> <p>3799 Las Vegas Blvd S
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 891-3200</p> | <p>7. Bougainvillea Cafe </p> <p>4100 S Paradise Rd
 Las Vegas, NV 89169
 Phone: (702) 733-7000</p> |
| <p>2. Mon Ami Gabi </p> <p>3655 Las Vegas Blvd S
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 944-4224</p> | <p>8. Battista's Hole In The Wall </p> <p>4041 Audrie St
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 732-1424</p> |
| <p>3. Le Cirque </p> <p>3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 693-8100</p> | <p>9. Coffee Pub </p> <p>2800 W Sahara Ave
 Las Vegas, NV 89102
 Phone: (702) 367-1913</p> |
| <p>4. Picasso </p> <p>3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 693-7111</p> | <p>10. Big Mama's Rib Shack </p> <p>2230 W Bonanza
 Las Vegas, NV 89106
 Phone: (702) 597-1616</p> |
| <p>5. Alex </p> <p>3131 Las Vegas Blvd S
 Las Vegas, NV 89109
 Phone: (702) 770-9966</p> | <p>11. Grape Street Cafe </p> <p>7501 W Lake Mead Blvd
 Las Vegas, NV 89128
 Phone: (702) 228-9463</p> |
| <p>6. Carluccio's Tivoli Gardens </p> <p>1775 E Tropicana Ave
 Las Vegas, NV 89119
 Phone: (702) 795-3236</p> | |

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

The addition of high-brow cultural attractions is a fairly recent event on the Las Vegas timeline. Most say it started with the 1998 opening of the \$1.8 billion [Bellagio](#) megaresort and the [Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art](#), where you can find top-notch exhibitions.

Hedonistic Vegas lives up to its promises: Skin, gambling, drinking, neon lights and more skin are what it’s all about. The themed casino megaresorts are cities within a city and attractions within an attraction. You can gamble, experience a raunchy show, buy a Ferrari, ride a rollercoaster, sate yourself in gourmet restaurants, glide across a canal in a gondola, view ornate fountains and breathtaking botanical gardens; the list goes on. Some of our favorites are the [Wynn Las Vegas](#), the [Bellagio](#) and [Paris Las Vegas](#)—all on the Strip.



If the megaresorts do not satisfy your craving for sensory overload and excitement, you may want to continue your quest along the Strip—federally designated as Nevada’s only All-American road. Farther north, the Fremont Street Experience turns up the wattage in downtown Las Vegas every night with spectacular computer-generated sound and light shows. The [Stratosphere Tower](#), the tallest freestanding tower in the United States, offers one of the best views of the city, especially at night when Las Vegas is dressed in sparkling brilliance.

Las Vegas gave up its attempt to position itself as a family-friendly destination, ceding that tourist segment to Las Vegas. But even though it might not market to children, a few attractions can keep tykes, toddlers and teenagers busy—and happy!—for a few hours or more. [Lied Discovery Children’s Museum](#) offers kids under 6 more than 100 interactive exhibits. Children get to do some role-playing as adults by choosing a job, earning a paycheck, depositing savings in a bank and buying groceries. Naturally, parents are welcome too. Encompassed within a 5-acre, purple-glass structure, the [Adventuredome](#) is said to be the country’s largest indoor theme park. Kids and teens love the motion simulators, thrill rides, miniature golf, virtual-reality games, arcade and rock climbing offered at this fun palace. Shark Reef at [Mandalay Bay](#) is not your typical aquarium; it’s a total sensory experience that takes you on a journey through an ancient temple that has been slowly claimed by the sea, ending up on the deck of a sunken ship in shark-infested waters.

Now that the kids have had their fun, are you ready to kick into lower gear and experience the area’s recreational side? Unsure if Vegas can deliver? Fret not adventure-seeking friends. The following three AAA GEM attractions will prove that even in Vegas and its environs, “recreation” is not a dirty word and scenic views are plentiful. In Blue Diamond, the 520-acre [Spring Mountain Ranch State Park](#) is a combination working ranch and retreat that offers picnicking opportunities and hiking trails. Recreational activities abound within [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#), where three of America’s four desert ecosystems meet. This fact ensures an area rich in both plant and animal life. Fishing, swimming, boating and skiing are popular activities. The [Hoover Dam](#) is a 726-foot-high engineering marvel and an experience not to be missed. An overlook atop the visitor center provides scenic views of the surrounding area. Here’s an interesting tidbit: Hoover Dam’s structural volume surpasses the largest pyramid in Egypt.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Bellagio

3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV
Phone: (702) 693-7111

2. Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art

3600 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 693-7871

3. Wynn Las Vegas

3131 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (877) 321-9966

4. Paris Las Vegas

3655 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 946-7000

5. Stratosphere Tower

2000 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89104
Phone: (702) 380-7777

6. Lied Discovery Children's Museum

833 Las Vegas Blvd N
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Phone: (702) 382-3445

7. Adventuredome

2880 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 794-3939

8. Mandalay Bay

3950 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 632-7777

9. Madame Tussauds Las Vegas

3377 Las Vegas Blvd S,
Suite 2001
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 862-7800

10. The Venetian

3355 Las Vegas Blvd S
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Phone: (702) 414-1000



If you're hankering for more outdoor fun, about 20 miles west of the city, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area provides several trails and spectacular rock formations. The latter are a geological result of the Keystone Thrust Fault. Stay the day or stay only a few hours. Only 30 minutes north of Las Vegas, Mount Charleston and the surrounding Toiyabe Forest is a popular destination for hiking, backpacking, picnicking and camping, while nearby Lee Canyon is a favorite spot for skiing. Within this alpine wilderness, temperatures rarely go above 80 degrees Fahrenheit even in summer, making for very comfortable



outdoor weather. Valley of Fire State Park, famous for its petroglyphs, is a 56,000-acre site comprising red sandstone formations created from great sand dunes during the Jurassic period. Sightseeing, hiking, rock hunting, camping and picnicking are only some of the activities that can be enjoyed within this park.

Attractions Map



Has anyone seen Elvis lately? If you're an Elvis fan, and even if you're not, gyrate over to the Elvis-a-Rama Museum and pay homage to the "king." This experience is kitsch at its best, but Elvis' enduring legacy is proof that he's an American icon.

For a touch of the unexpected and bizarre, stop in at the Double Down Saloon, or in the establishment's own twisted words, "the happiest place on earth." This brazen bar is the antithesis of what one has come to expect when visiting the city and not your typical tourist hangout. Psychedelic murals and in-your-face videos blast at you from all

Attractions Details - *Get additional information on AAA.com*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

11. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park

8000 Blue Diamond Rd
Blue Diamond, NV 89004
Phone: (702) 875-4141



14. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

1000 Scenic Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89117
Phone: (702) 515-5350

12. Lake Mead National Recreation Area

601 Nevada Way
Boulder City, NV 89005
Phone: (702) 293-8990



13. Hoover Dam

100 Nevada Hwy
Lake Mead National Recreation Area, NV 89005
Phone: (702) 494-2517



15. Valley of Fire State Park

Overton, NV 89040
Phone: (702) 397-2088



directions when garage and punk bands aren't performing. Not for children or the faint-hearted.

Shift gears and experience art at The Arts Factory within the Las Vegas Arts District (yes, Las Vegas has an arts district). Creative works from artists, architects, photographers and graphic designers all are represented within this downtown gallery.

More than 100 masterfully crafted, uncannily realistic wax figures of some of the world's most popular movie, television, music and sports celebrities, as well as legendary Vegas icons, are showcased at Madame Tussaud's Interactive Wax Museum at The Venetian.

Events

Before the blazing summer heat sends you scurrying to the comfort of an air-conditioned interior, head to nearby Henderson for the [Henderson Heritage Parade and Festival](#). The keynote event is a parade featuring marching bands, youth groups and local businesses, but the fun also includes live entertainment, craft and cooking demonstrations, food from around the world and a classic car show. It all takes place the third Saturday in April at the Henderson Events Plaza.

If you have a hankering for some music for your soul, the [Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz and Rhythm and Blues Festival](#) features jazz artists that will quiet that need. This event, held in Desert Breeze Park in late April, presents a multitude of first-rate musicians; an admission is charged.

If you're Italian—and even if you're not—you'll love the [San Gennaro Feast](#) in early May. The festival honors St. Gennaro, patron saint of Naples, and celebrates Italian culture with food, music and a carnival. The [Snow Mountain Pow Wow](#) is held at the Las Vegas Paiute Snow Mountain Indian Reservation over Memorial Day weekend. The 3-day event includes traditional Indian dances, a drum contest, and arts and crafts.

Las Vegas has been featured in numerous motion pictures—ranging in quality from “Leaving Las Vegas,” which captured a best-picture Oscar, to “The Las Vegas Hillbillies,” which did not. But quality is consistently outstanding at the annual CineVegas film festival in June at The Brenden Theatres in the Palms Casino Resort. In addition to featuring U.S. and world premiers, the festival annually bestows on an actor or a director its Marquee Award for creative excellence in and dedication to film art. Past recipients include Jack Nicholson and Dustin Hoffman.

The Las Vegas Motor Speedway plays host to three racing events: the [Las Vegas 400](#) in February, the [Sam's Town 300](#) in early March and the

[Craftsman Truck Series Las Vegas 350](#) in September. Gentlemen, start your engines!

If you think chivalry is dead, think again. At the [Age of Chivalry Renaissance Festival](#) romance and magic are very much alive. The October festival in Sunset Park includes 3 fun-filled days of jousting and sword-fighting demonstrations, strolling entertainers, re-enactments of ancient times and age-old crafting traditions. There's even a fire-breathing dragon.

The [Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospitals for Children Open](#) ensures that golfing enthusiasts are not left out of the special events picture. Top professional players compete for a purse worth millions. The 6-day competition takes place in October at the Tournament Players Club at Summerlin.

Come December, there might be more Texans in Las Vegas than there are in Amarillo. For 20 years now professional rodeo cowboys like Trevor Brazile, Joe Beaver and Rope Myers have bare-backed and steer-wrestled for major money at the [Wrangler National Finals Rodeo](#). Purses for All-Around Cowboy and most individual events are worth upwards of a quarter-million dollars. And that's no bull.

Runners from around the country gather to participate in the [Las Vegas Marathon](#) on the first Sunday in December. The race starts in front of the [Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino](#) on the Strip and goes through the Fremont Street Experience on a flat loop course within the city limits. Participants and spectators may arrive two days early for the expo and stay on a day after the race for the Post Marathon Concert.

Things to Do

Gambling

The rattle of the “bones,” then a sigh of disappointment or a cry of exultation—such are the sounds of Las Vegas, where gambling is by no means limited to the craps table. Slot machines, “21” or blackjack, keno, bingo, poker, baccarat and roulette all await the hopeful.



Gambling is easier than buying toothpaste, since casinos never close and most drugstores do. Many hotels strategically place their casinos near the registration desk; visitors are immediately greeted with the lure of fortune. Rows of slot machines stand like sentries in most establishments—restaurants, drugstores, supermarkets, even coin-operated laundries.

Visitors who resist the temptation to gamble are rare. If you decide to take a chance, obtain a book about gambling and bone up. Generally speaking, beginners never should approach any gaming table without some knowledge about the game to be played. Many casinos provide literature and some even give classes for novice patrons. Although the state regulates casinos and gambling, the odds ultimately favor the house.

In terms of betting and playing strategies, poker in all its varieties can be termed the most complex. Baccarat requires a high stake to be successful, though “mini-baccarat,” in which the dealer keeps the bank, provides cheaper play. The many ways of playing number combinations, the difficulty in understanding the payoffs and general unfamiliarity with the game have made craps the most challenging game of all. It also is a difficult game for dealers to learn. While not a game for the novice, craps is mesmerizing to watch. Casinos and separate betting parlors also have

sports books that allow patrons to wager on almost any horse race, boxing match or professional or collegiate game.

If you’re a first-timer or haven’t been to Vegas in ages, try getting your feet wet with slots or video poker machines. Keep in mind, however, that in recent years the casinos have moved almost entirely away from the old drop-the-coin-in-the-slot routine. Today’s slots are so-called “cashless machines.” You feed bills into the machine’s maw, and instead of the sweet clang-clang-clang sound of your jackpot coins dropping into the metal tray, the slot spits out a little paper ticket with your winnings printed on it. To “cash out,” you can either take the ticket to the cashier’s window (“the cage”) or use one of the casino’s ATM-style redemption kiosks.

The most recent trend, geared toward the Blackberry and Iphone generation, is handheld gaming devices, or “mobile gaming systems.” Front-load a machine with cash (or leave your credit card with the casino), and off you go to play hand-held video poker in your poolside chaise lounge. The system has taken a while to get off the ground, and only a few casinos offer the devices (the new M Resort is one), but it’s technology that Vegas is betting will be a big moneymaker in the near future.

Shopping

For decades, Sin City shopping meant shot glasses, ashtrays, snow globes, dice clocks, back scratchers and “I Lost My A** in Las Vegas” T-shirts. Fear not, tacky souvenir fans. You can still find toy slot machines and fuzzy dice just about any place in town. But over the past few decades the resorts wised up and realized that high-end designer shops could rake in any leftover cash not left behind at the high-stakes Pai Gao table. Today nearly every major hotel casino on the Strip has an upscale shopping arcade with tenants like Dior, Manolo Blahnik, Jimmy Choo and Ralph Lauren. Not only does Vegas re-create New York and Paris; the shopping opportunities now rival what you’ll find in the real cities.

With the global economy still in somewhat of a shambles, everyone's naturally hunting for deals. And to survive, swank Vegas shops are rolling out the bargains. You're not going to snag a \$400 Fendi handbag for forty bucks. But the sales are becoming more frequent, and lasting longer. At local factory outlet malls the discounts are always deep and the crowds thick.

If you've come to Vegas expecting to find unique independent shops and boutiques they're certainly out there, although not on the Strip. To reach the burgeoning downtown Arts District and points east and west of Las Vegas Boulevard you'll need to drive or hail a cab.

Finally, if you forgot to pack the sunblock or need snacks and drinks for the hotel room, avoid resort gift shops like the outrageously overpriced plague they are. Just a few blocks from the Strip, in any direction, you'll find plenty of grocery and convenience stores just like the ones back home.

Malls

The Fashion Show Mall, in the heart of the Strip, 3200 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is Las Vegas' flagship mall. An impressive set of anchors—Bloomingdale's Home, Dillard's, Macy's, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue—is accompanied by smaller stores and a fine selection of restaurants. In addition to the usual mall shops, Fashion Show has such upscale retailers as Betsey Johnson, Kate Spade and Louis Vuitton.

Boulevard Mall, the city's oldest, is at 3528 S. Maryland Pkwy., a few blocks east of the Strip. Anchored by Dillard's, Macy's, JCPenney and Sears, the Boulevard has more than 140 shops ranging from Brookstone to Victoria's Secret. Meadows Mall, 4300 Meadows Ln., is a little farther off the beaten path. Macy's, JCPenney, Sears and more than 140 specialty shops provide ample opportunity to spend any money earned (or spared) at the casinos.

Rampart Commons, an open-air retail center at Charleston and Rampart boulevards in northwest Las Vegas, features Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, The Gap, Pottery Barn, Talbots and Williams-Sonoma. In nearby Henderson is Galleria at Sunset, 1300 W. Sunset Rd., which is anchored by Dillard's, JCPenney, Macy's and Dick's Sporting Goods. It has a skylit food court as well as more than 130 retailers, including Brookstone and Gap.

Outlets

Outlet shopping is another option. Las Vegas Outlet Center, 7400 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is an indoor mall a few miles past the south end of the Strip. It offers more than 150 outlets, including Coach, Gymboree Outlet, Hurley and Nike.

Shuttles travel from the Strip to Fashion Outlets of Las Vegas, 32100 Las Vegas Blvd. S. in Primm, on the California/Nevada line (about a half-hour drive from Vegas). It's home to Burberry, Hollister, Juicy Couture, Kate Spade and Lucky Brand Jeans, among many others.

Explore more than 150 shops at Las Vegas Premium Outlets, 875 S. Grand Central Pkwy. (west of downtown near the I-15 Charleston Boulevard exit). This open-air mall is hugely popular with locals and visitors alike, so if possible avoid going on weekend afternoons when the place is a madhouse and parking headaches abound. Shoppers can land deals at more than 150 outlet stores, including Dolce & Gabbana, Dooney & Bourke, Polo, Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger.

Specialty Districts

The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is an upscale complex with more than 150 specialty shops and restaurants in a setting designed to recall a winding street in Italy. Fronting the Strip, a three-level entryway building decked out with marbled pillars and statues and loaded with shops ushers you into this Roman-themed retail realm. In the Forum Shops proper a cloud-flecked, domed ceiling gradually changes from cerulean blue to deep twilight and back again, giving this

upscale collection of specialty stores and eateries its own version of night and day.

The mall's design resembles a fantasy re-creation of an ancient Roman streetscape, with storefronts clustered under portals and arches. A central piazza is dominated by the dramatic Fountain of the Gods, which has statues of Neptune, winged stallions and two spear-bearing warriors. Anchoring the mall's east wing is the Festival Fountain, where an animatronic statue of Bacchus (looking a bit inebriated) holds court with Apollo, Venus and other deities.

Among the tony names at the Forum are Calvin Klein, Christian Dior, Escada, Gianni Versace, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. There also are clothing, jewelry and specialty gift shops, art galleries and stores catering to kids. Atlantis, an enormous fountain, also features lifelike animatronic figures. It stands in the Roman Great Hall, an open space 85 feet high and 160 feet in diameter that also contains a 50,000-gallon aquarium filled with tropical fish. Retail outlets here include Emporio Armani, FAO Schwarz and Fendi. Also within Caesars Palace is Appian Way, a much smaller but no less exclusive arcade of shops and galleries that includes a branch of Cartier.

To reach the 31 stores at The Tower Shops, at the Stratosphere Casino Hotel & Tower, 2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S., guests pass through themed street scenes reminiscent of Hong Kong, Paris and New York. The Mandalay Place shopping area, on a sky bridge connecting Mandalay Bay and the Luxor, offers restaurants and a wine bar in addition to an assortment of shops. Fans of pop culture memorabilia will love browsing The Art of Music gallery, which deals in autographed movie posters, album covers and sports collectibles. The store has branches at Planet Hollywood and the Mirage as well.

Under a faux blue sky, more than 70 specialty stores and restaurants line a replica of a Venetian canal at the Grand Canal Shoppes of The Venetian (3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). Gondolas float past such (in)authentic Italian merchants as Banana Republic, Ann Taylor and

Kenneth Cole. Next door at the Venetian's sister hotel, the Palazzo (3325 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), The Shops at the Palazzo are home to Bottega Veneta, Chloe, Christian Louboutin and Vegas' first Barneys New York store. At the arcade's two-story waterfall fountain, the free Living Garden show features female performers who dance to classical music and are painted to look like statues. A daily performance schedule is posted throughout the mall.

Linking Wynn Las Vegas with Wynn Encore, the Wynn/Encore Esplanade is the go-to place if you've got the money for an \$800 pair of snakeskin pumps (Manolo Blahnik), a \$2,000 satin dress (Oscar de la Renta) or a \$300,000 Ferrari (Penske/Wynn Ferrari-Maserati). The rest of us will have to settle for window shopping while sipping a \$5 bottled water (from the Encore hotel gift shop). Other exclusive Esplanade boutiques are Alexander McQueen, Chanel and Wynn & Co. Watches.

The Bellagio (3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has a handful of ritzy shopping promenades. The largest is Via Bellagio, which is at the property's north entrance near the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road. If you enter Bellagio from either the Caesar's or Bally's pedestrian bridges, you'll cruise directly into an air-conditioned, marble-columned arcade marked by names like Prada, Armani, Tiffany and Fendi. Too rich for your blood? The Gallery Store, located next to the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art, has a beautiful selection of art books, prints and gift items at somewhat reasonable prices.

Across the street at Paris Las Vegas (3665 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), high-end fashion boutiques and fancy wine and cheese shops line Le Boulevard, a modest-sized shopping promenade that's easily navigable when compared to the maze next door at Planet Hollywood.

The Miracle Mile Shops at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino (3663 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) were formerly the Desert Passage shops—before the Aladdin became Planet Hollywood. This extensive shopping promenade (170 stores and 15 restaurants at last count) is named for the famed "Miracle Mile" stretch of L.A.'s Wilshire Blvd. As you stroll and stroll

and stroll past stores like Frederick's of Hollywood, French Connection, GAP, H&M, Sephora and Urban Outfitters, you'll wonder why they didn't pluralize the word "Mile." Some of the cool Middle Eastern theme elements from the Desert Passage days are still visible here and there, but mostly the Miracle makeover has resulted in a generic mall. It's a very nice one—complete with people movers, crystal chandeliers and a backlit sidewalk water feature, along with a laser show, indoor rainstorm and dancing water fountains (all shows are free and scheduled throughout the day). But in the end, it's still a mall.

The Crystals shopping and entertainment district was scheduled to open in late 2009 in CityCenter, between the Bellagio and Monte Carlo resorts. It features well-known luxury brand retailers, including Louis Vuitton, Marni, Rolex and Tiffany & Co., as well as a 20,000-square-foot Apple Store. The shops are situated under a crystalline canopy and designed to resemble a city scene. Sprinkled throughout the complex are sculptures, paintings and fine art installations that offer a shopping experience akin to a relaxed stroll through a museum.

You'll find more retail areas, all interchangeable, at Bally's Las Vegas, Excalibur, the MGM Grand, the Luxor, TI-Treasure Island, the Riviera, Monte Carlo and the Rio hotel's Masquerade Village. One of the more offbeat Strip shopping locales is Carnival Court at the entrance to Harrah's (3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). No Gucci or Chanel here—instead, shoppers browse an open-air bazaar of stalls hawking everything from tie-dyed T-shirts and sunglasses to summer dresses and affordable jewelry.

Downtown at the Fremont Street Experience, vendors set up carts in the middle of the pedestrian-only casino promenade. Novelty gifts, cheap souvenirs and T-shirts are the norm, but look closely and you may spot quality merch. If not, there are plenty of caricature artists, henna tattoo booths and street performers ready to divest you of a few bucks.

Just south of downtown, the Arts District is bounded by Commerce Street, Hoover Avenue, Las Vegas Boulevard and Colorado Avenue,

encompassing some 18 blocks. While the area—also known as "18B"—would never be mistaken for, say, SoHo, a healthy number of art galleries, antique dealers and one-of-a-kind boutiques are sprinkled among run-of-the-mill furniture stores, auto parts shops and bail bondsmen.

One way to explore the Arts District is to visit on First Fridays (held the first Friday of every month). The area is closed to vehicular traffic for an evening street festival with live music, street performers, art and craft booths and food vendors. Free parking is available at the Clark County Government Center, 500 S. Grand Central Pkwy., where a free trolley departs for a series of stops near shops and galleries that stay open late. Phone (702) 384-0092 for more information.

If you do the district on your own, check out these worthwhile destinations. A hot pink storefront announces Retro Vegas (1211 Main St.), an intriguing antiques boutique filled with kitschy furniture (think amoeba-shaped coffee tables and retro dinette sets), contemporary artwork and all sorts of vintage odds and ends. The mural-covered Funk House (1228 S. Casino Blvd.) is loaded with 1950s and '60s antiques, art glass, old advertising signs and folk art.

The Arts Factory (107 E. Charleston Blvd.) gathers two dozen galleries, studios and other artsy businesses under one roof. Keep in mind that not all the galleries are geared toward sales.

Vintage clothing hounds come from far and wide to rifle through the racks at The Attic (1018 S. Main St.), which bills itself as the largest vintage clothing store in the world. From bellbottoms to sparkly showgirl dresses, this is the ultimate in thrift store chic, but beware; prices are steep.

Specialty Stores

No Vegas visit is complete without a spin through the mother of all junk souvenir emporiums, Bonanza Gift & Souvenir Shops (2440 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). The Elvis aviator shades and fake sideburns you've been searching for? They're here. So is the classic green dealer's visor, the

highly sought-after dice clock and the miniature “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas” light-up sign for your mantle. Need a water-squirting slot machine or a rubber tomahawk? Welcome to a 40,000-square-foot paradise perpetually packed with fellow kitsch-lovers.

Roulette wheels. Craps tables. Slot machines. Dice. Chips. Cards. You could open your very own casino with the merchandise for sale at the Gamblers General Store (800 S. Main St.), which also carries a nice selection of books and gambling-themed souvenirs.

Ipods and digital downloads are all well and good, but for the rest of us who love album cover art, liner notes and the crackle 'n pop of vinyl (how primitive!), there's Record City (300 E. Sahara Ave.), a used record and CD treasure trove housed in a purple brick-and-mortar bunker near the north end of the Strip.

After 45 years in the same location on the scruffy fringes of downtown, Gambler's Bookshop moved a few miles east of the Strip in 2009 (1550 E. Tropicana Ave., #4). Although the old building will be missed, this independent shop is still going strong, providing serious players—from “whales” to über losers—with the widest selection of gambling books and videos on the planet (no, Amazon doesn't count). Best of all, owner Howard Schwartz is still around, regaling customers with tales of old Vegas.

Nightlife

“The City That Never Sleeps” lives up to its nickname in the velvet rope nightclubs and sleek ultra lounges that are now a fixture in nearly every hotel-casino on the Strip. For many Vegas visitors, the bumping and grinding of the club scene is best left to tabloid celebutantes who think they're all that. Yet insanely long lines outside hotspots like PURE and Tao mean there are still lots of folks who want to boogie with the beautiful people and are willing to pay a \$30 cover charge to do so.

If you're itchin' to hit the clubs, here are a few tips on getting past the bouncers. Ladies, dress to kill. The higher the heel and the shorter the skirt, the better your chance of getting inside before 2 a.m. Gentlemen, no backwards baseball caps, baggy pants or sneaks; the standard nightclub uniform is a button-down shirt (usually expensive, and always one size too small) and either dress pants or a \$150 pair of jeans. Most clubs don't heat up until 11 p.m. or midnight. If you're not on “the list,” line up by 10 p.m.

Many clubs set aside tables for the extortionate practice known as “bottle service.” Reserving a table usually requires that you buy several bottles of booze at sky-high mark-ups. If your wallet's fat, this is the fast track into nearly every club. Phone ahead or talk to the doorman when you arrive.

The swank, velvet-lined interior, 90-foot outdoor waterfall and top-drawer DJs at Tryst (in the Wynn Las Vegas, 3131 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) draw an exclusive A-list crowd that doesn't sweat the stratospheric bar tabs; phone (702) 770-3375. Christian Audigier The Nightclub (in TI-Treasure Island, 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) is the French fashion designer's first foray into clubdom. Like his clothing designs, the decor is all roses and skulls set against deep shades of red. House, hip-hop and progressive beats keep the dance floor bumpin' until dawn; phone (702) 894-7580.

A multi-level megaclub with three dance floors, JET (in the Mirage, 3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has one of the tougher velvet ropes in town; (702) 792-7900. If you can't get in, try the hotel's smaller and less intimidating Beatles Revolution Lounge. The interior gives a shagadelic nod to '60s mod while DJs spin modern dance and Top 40 hits. If you'd rather hear Fab Four tunes, stick to the club's Abbey Road Bar, where one wonders what John Lennon would think of Vegas go-go dancers gyrating to a beat-heavy remix of “Revolution”; phone (702) 693-8300.

Celeb sightings abound at Tao (in the Venetian, 3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), an Asian temple-themed swankatorium with a solid restaurant, high-energy dance floors, VIP sky boxes and an outdoor terrace overlooking

the Strip; phone (702) 388-8588. Next door at the Palazzo, the boutique nightclub Lavo (3325 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) sports a Mediterranean motif and goes for a more intimate feel; phone (702) 791-1818.

One can only hope that Britney Spears' Dom Perignon-fueled antics at PURE (in Caesar's Palace, 3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) are a thing of the past, but this Strip superclub is still the spot to catch a glimpse of the Hilton sisters behaving scandalously, sophomorically or both, and spy other "stars" pretending their 15 minutes aren't up. Four dance floors, all with different types of music on the turntable, keep a trendy crowd bumpin'-and-grindin' all night. An outdoor terrace offers fresh air and outstanding views of the Strip. Good luck getting in; phone (702) 289-2002 for bottle service table reservations.

NYC circa 1977 meets the Mojave Desert at Studio 54 (in the MGM Grand Hotel, 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), a loose re-creation of the disco-era classic with club kids groovin' to today's jams under a spinning mirror ball. Compared to the Strip's more obnoxious "it" clubs, getting past the velvet rope here is a bit easier, though not much; phone (702) 891-7254.

If you want to avoid the hassles of the Strip, head for the trio of clubs (Moon, Rain and ghostbar) at the Palms (4321 W. Flamingo Rd.). Body English (in the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, 4455 Paradise Rd.) and Cherry Nightclub (in the Red Rock Casino, 11011 W. Charleston Blvd.) are two other off-Strip haunts.

For years, rock and pop bands scratched Vegas off their tour itinerary because the city lacked decent mid-size venues. Only big names could fill Sam Boyd Stadium and the Thomas & Mack Center. That has changed with the opening of more intimate live venues. There's a House of Blues at Mandalay Bay, 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; phone (702) 632-7600. Rocker dudes and chicks pack The Joint at the Hard Rock; phone (702) 693-5555. A newcomer is the Pearl Concert Theater at the Palms; phone (702) 944-3200.

If high-decibel hip-hop or screaming guitars aren't your thing, Vegas has several bars and lounges more suited to cocktails and conversation. Romance at the Top of the World, an elegant jazz lounge on the 107th floor of the Stratosphere (2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), mixes sophistication with lofty views of the glittering Strip, setting a seductive mood. An adult tower ticket is \$13.95; phone (702) 380-7705.

Mix Lounge (in THEhotel at Mandalay Bay, 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) isn't quite as lofty (it's on the 64th floor) but is just as chichi, and the Strip view is a knockout. If you prefer a quiet evening and want to avoid the \$20 to \$25 weekend cover charge, arrive before 10 p.m.; phone (702) 632-9500.

Napoleon's (in Paris Las Vegas, 3655 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) forgoes thumping dance beats and Jägermeister shots in favor of champagne toasts, live jazz and dueling piano performances; phone (702) 946-7000. Across the street the classy, cozy Caramel Bar & Lounge (in Bellagio, 3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) pours a mean martini; phone (702) 693-8300.

Ring-a-ding-ding. Old-school Vegas lives at the Fireside Lounge at the Peppermill (inside the Peppermill coffee shop, 2985 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), a dimly lit early '70s throwback decked out with velvety couches, pink neon, mirrored ceilings and a magic water-and-fire pit. Sexy servers in black gowns sit beside you, take your drink order and treat you like the big shot you're not. Some of the vintage cool has been spoiled by the addition of flat-screen TVs, but after downing a few of the fabulously fruity cocktails, trust us; you won't care. Phone (702) 735-4177.

If all this sounds too high-falutin', pull on the Tony Lamas and go to town at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill (in Harrah's, 3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.). The bartenders are kindly, the pours generous, and live country music kicks off every night at 9 p.m.; phone (702) 369-5000.

Margaritaville (in the Flamingo Hotel, 3555 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) is the Vegas outpost of Jimmy Buffett's wildly successful restaurant/bar chain. There's plenty of tequila on hand for thirsty Parrotheads. The

“Cheeseburger in Paradise” will set you back \$11; Buffett tunes and classic rock hits blast from the sound system. Phone (702) 733-3302.

For bettors looking to flee the sports book and catch the big game in a traditional bar setting, the massive ESPN Zone (in New York-New York, 3790 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) has high-def TVs galore, ice-cold brew, a video arcade and free wi-fi; phone (702) 933-3776.

Fremont Street nightlife revolves around the popular overhead light show, people watching in between shows, casino gambling and the comp drinks that come with it. If it's live music you're after, bands perform most nights on the outdoor stages next to the Golden Nugget and Binion's.

Spectator Sports

The biggest games in this town are played at green felt tables, not sports arenas. Yet despite more money being *bet* on sports in Las Vegas than is ever taken in at the turnstiles, the city nevertheless presents a fine selection of spectator sports. College basketball, especially, has a rich local tradition.

Auto Racing

Fans of automobile racing will find plenty of company at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 7000 Las Vegas Blvd. N., 17 miles northeast of Las Vegas off the I-15 Speedway Boulevard exit. The complex hosts NASCAR, Winston Cup and NHRA events; phone (800) 644-4444 for information.

Nearby, the Carroll Shelby Museum at 6755 Speedway Blvd. displays 35 years of performance cars, including Shelby Cobras. Tours of the manufacturing facility are available; phone (702) 942-7325.

Baseball

The Las Vegas 51s suit up for professional baseball at Cashman Field, 850 Las Vegas Blvd. N., from early April through the first week in September. These Class AAA, Pacific Coast League affiliates of the Toronto Blue Jays adopted an unusual team logo: a bald-headed space

alien. Their name refers to Area 51, the top secret U.S. Air Force base north of the city where some speculate that extraterrestrials visit. Phone (702) 386-7200 for ticket and schedule information.

The Runnin' Rebels of UNLV play at the on-campus Earl E. Wilson Baseball Stadium during the college season. Phone (702) 739-3267 for ticket and schedule information.

Basketball

The Rebels of UNLV hope to one day live down an outlaw image that's swirled like an Old West legend around the team for years—often overshadowing enormous success with a truly exciting style of basketball.

The basketball program came to national prominence under former coach Jerry “Tark the Shark” Tarkanian, who first took the Rebels to the NCAA Final Four in 1977 and led them to a national championship in 1990. Tarkanian built the program into a perennial powerhouse and an object of local idolatry. The Rebels play on the UNLV campus at the Thomas & Mack Center between November and February; phone (702) 739-3267.

Boxing

Vegas and professional boxing have had a close relationship for more than 40 years. Despite a rocky history—government scrutiny, a confusing mishmash of championship titles (IBF, WBA and WBC) and the scurrilous out-of-ring antics of a few of the sport's biggest names—heavyweight title fights have always captured the public interest. The absurdly high purses, flamboyant promoters, glamorous ringside spectators and attendant media hoopla all seem appropriate against a Las Vegas backdrop.

Some of the sport's most memorable bouts have taken place here: Muhammad Ali vs. Floyd Patterson, Ali vs. Leon Spinks, Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Marvin Hagler. In November 1997 Evander Holyfield—none the worse for wear after being bitten by Mike Tyson 4 months earlier—defeated Michael Moorer for the IBF crown at the Thomas & Mack Center. Most big fights now take place at the MGM Grand Garden Arena; phone (702) 891-7777 or (877) 880-0880 for event information. Caesars

Palace, the Hard Rock Hotel and Mandalay Bay are among many other venues that host fights.

Football

UNLV also supplies the city's big-time gridiron action, with the football Rebels scrapping in the Mountain West Conference against the likes of Air Force, BYU and Wyoming. The Rebels' home games are August through November at Sam Boyd Stadium east of campus; phone (702) 739-3267.

Rodeo

Every visitor to America's West should attend at least one quality rodeo to complete the regional experience. Winter visitors to Las Vegas can see one of the very best every December when the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo takes place over 10 days at the Thomas & Mack Center on the UNLV campus; phone (866) 388-3267 for ticket information.

Recreation

Las Vegas and its environs offer a royal flush of recreational pursuits that include golf, tennis, racquetball and swimming. The desert climate, despite scalding summer days, invites outdoor recreation all year.

Golf

Golf enthusiasts enjoy the excellent playing conditions of Las Vegas' desert climate. Numerous championship and less demanding golf courses are open to the public.

All of the following golf courses offer 18 holes: Angel Park Golf Club, (702) 254-4653 (two 18-hole courses), 10 miles west via Summerlin Parkway to 100 S. Rampart Blvd.; Craig Ranch, (702) 642-9700, 2.5 miles west off I-15 at 628 W. Craig Rd. (North Las Vegas); Desert Pines, (702) 388-4400, 2 miles east of I-15 off Eastern Avenue at 3415 E. Bonanza Rd.; Desert Rose Golf Course, (702) 431-4653, 6 miles east of I-15 off Sahara Avenue at 5483 Clubhouse Dr.; Highland Falls Golf

Course, (702) 254-7010, at 10201 Sun City Blvd.; and the Las Vegas Golf Club, (702) 646-3003, at 4300 Washington Ave.

Snow Mountain, Sun Mountain and Wolf are the three 18-hole courses at the Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort, (702) 658-1400, 23 miles northwest of the city via US 95 at 10325 Nu-Wav Kaiv Blvd. Others include the Legacy Golf Club, (702) 897-2200, 130 Par Excellence Dr. in Henderson; and the Los Prados Golf Course, (702) 645-5696, 2.5 miles west of US 95 via Lone Mountain Road and Los Prados Boulevard at 5150 Los Prados Cir.

Each of these courses includes a clubhouse, golf shop, equipment rental and some food service. They are not lighted for night play. Early starts are recommended during the summer months.

Horseback Riding

You can sit tall in the saddle if you giddyup to the outskirts of town. Bonnie Springs Old Nevada offers an Old West experience that includes rides through the beautiful Red Rock Canyon area west of Las Vegas; phone (702) 875-4191.

Jogging and Walking

Head out of the city to public land trails, drive a few blocks to a city park or to the university track, or just step outside your hotel door and pound the Strip. Serious runners will find the nearby mountain trails a tempting respite from summer's oven-like heat. Realize, however, that elevations above 3,000 feet present different challenges.

Try these urban areas: Bob Baskin Park, 2801 W. Oakey Blvd., is nestled in a quiet residential area, and the park's walking path is cushioned. Pueblo Park, at Buffalo Drive and Lake Mead Boulevard west of the Strip, has a delightfully undeveloped feeling, while Sunset Park, 2601 E. Sunset Rd., is bustling and urban.

About 20 miles west of the city, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area has more than a dozen trails of varying lengths from

which to choose—not to mention spectacular scenery. Pick up a free trail map at the visitor center.

Tennis

Tennis players seldom have difficulty finding an empty court, as there are many public courts scattered throughout the city. The following have at least two lighted courts: Darling Tennis Center, (702) 229-2100, at 7901 W. Washington Ave.; Paradise Park Recreation Center, (702) 455-7513, at 4770 S. Harrison Dr.; Sunrise Recreation Center, (702) 455-7600, at 2240 Linn Ln.; Sunset Park, (702) 260-9803, across from McCarran International Airport at 2601 E. Sunset Rd.; Winchester Park Center, (702) 455-7340, at 3130 S. McLeod Dr.; and Winterwood/Wengert Park, 2001 Winterwood Blvd. Phone Clark County Parks & Recreation at (702) 455-8200 for information about municipal facilities.

Many resort hotels and private clubs have tennis courts that visitors are allowed to use, but it is always a good idea to confirm the hotel's current visitor policy by phone. Hotels with tennis facilities include Bally's Las Vegas, (702) 739-4111, and the Flamingo Las Vegas, (702) 733-3111. The Frank and Vicki Fertitta Tennis Complex on the UNLV campus requires reservations and charges a fee, but it is considered the city's finest tennis facility; phone (702) 895-4489.

Water Sports

Many swimming pools are open daily Memorial Day through Labor Day. Contact the Las Vegas Parks and Recreation Department for information about pools and their schedules; phone (702) 229-6309.

The 1.5 million acres of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (see *place listing p.*), which is twice the size of Rhode Island, hold nearly limitless outdoor recreation opportunities—all just 35 miles east of the neon Strip. Lake Mead and Lake Mohave serve up great sport fishing for rainbow trout, striped bass, channel catfish, crappie and blue gill. Steady breezes and large expanses of open water lure board and boat sailors as well as powered watercraft. Annual passes are available by mail. Write

Lake Mead NRA Fee Office, 601 Nevada Hwy., Boulder City, NV 89005; phone (702) 293-8491.

Guided kayaking trips beginning at the base of the Hoover Dam down the Colorado River, with a stop at a hot springs, are offered by Evolution Expeditions. The company also offers kayaking lessons and full-moon paddling trips; phone (702) 259-5292.

Winter Sports

Less than an hour's drive northwest of Las Vegas is Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. Within the forest is Mount Charleston, which includes the Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort. The resort, which has a day lodge and three double chairlifts, is open Thanksgiving to Easter; chairlifts providing scenic views are open Friday through Sunday during the off season. Phone (702) 593-9500 for snow conditions, (702) 385-2754 for general information or (702) 645-2754 to make ski reservations.

Other Diversions

Vegas Indoor Skydiving, 200 Convention Center Dr., offers a 15-minute simulated sky-diving experience in a 21-foot vertical wind tunnel; phone (702) 731-4768 or (877) 545-8093.

Close to the Strip at 3060 S. Highland Dr., Las Vegas Table Tennis provides top-of-the-line tables, coaching and even a training robot for ping-pong devotees; phone (702) 360-5888.

Performing Arts

Popular images of Las Vegas lean more toward the spangled theatrics of razzle-dazzle showmanship than they do the rarified heights of serious theater. That does not mean, however, that the fine arts receive short shrift. Plays, concerts and dance performances are presented at several area locations. *Neon* magazine, the entertainment guide included with the Friday edition of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, carries listings of cultural events.

Dance

The Nevada Ballet Theatre presents ballets at Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall at the UNLV Performing Arts Center; phone (702) 895-2787.

Film

Repertory film series, musical performances and art exhibits are presented at the Winchester Cultural Center at 3130 S. McLeod Dr.; for schedule information phone (702) 455-7340.

Music

Concerts are presented periodically at Reed Whipple Cultural Center on Las Vegas Boulevard and at Charleston Heights Arts Center, on Brush Street west of Decatur Boulevard north of Charleston Boulevard.

Symphony, jazz and chamber music performances, including concerts by internationally recognized musicians, are presented at the UNLV Performing Arts Center's Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall just a few miles from the Strip. Phone (702) 895-2787 for schedule information.

The Las Vegas Philharmonic offers classical concerts September through May, and Pops Series concerts from October through June at the Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall; phone (702) 895-2787 for information.

Theater

The award-winning Department of Theatre of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas stages both contemporary plays and the classics throughout the year in the 600-seat Judy Bayley Theatre on Maryland Parkway or at the **Black Box Theatre**, on the first floor of Ham Fine Arts; phone (702) 895-2787.

The city's Rainbow Company children's theater stages productions at the Reed Whipple Cultural Center and the Charleston Heights Arts Center; phone (702) 229-6553.

Special Events

The events calendar in Las Vegas is as varied as entertainment on the Strip.

NASCAR Winston Cup and Busch Grand National Series bring racing fans to Las Vegas Motor speedway in early March. The Invitational Native American Arts Festival is held in late March or early April. Prize livestock are proudly exhibited during the 4-day Clark County Fair, also held in April. Jazz musicians from across the country perform during the last week in April for the City of Light Jazz Festival at Hills Park in Summerlin.

Relive the Old West in May during Helldorado Days, which features Western get-ups, parades and a championship rodeo. The event is held off Stewart Avenue between Las Vegas Boulevard and Mesquite Avenue. The World Series of Poker begins in May and continues through July. The city's Spanish heritage is celebrated in mid-September during the Mexican Independence Day event, a day of music and cultural enlightenment that also features the Las Vegas International Mariachi Festival.

In mid-October, more than 45 restaurants showcase their specialties at the annual Bite of Las Vegas. Also in October, golf enthusiasts flock to watch the Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospitals for Children Open.

The desert floor rumbles in early December when cowboys invade Las Vegas for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo and when thousands of runners from around the globe compete in the annual Las Vegas Marathon. The year wraps up with New Year's Eve on the Strip, a typically lively Vegas-style celebration with big-name entertainers.

Production Shows

There was a time when Las Vegas entertainment fell into two categories: the big room, presenting a star performer backed by an orchestra and preceded by a support act; and the lounge, province of lesser comics, singers and those on the way up (or down). But that's all changed. Venues in the casinos are still technically showrooms, but no one calls them that; these days the emphasis is on state-of-the-art extravaganzas and extended runs by show business superstars.

All good things must come to an end, of course, and every show eventually runs its course. Multitalented impressionist Danny Gans—one of the city's top entertainers and one whose Elvis impersonation stood out even in a town full of Elvis impersonators—died unexpectedly in 2009, ending a long run of sold-out performances. Two additional long-running crowd-pleasers—"An Evening at La Cage" at the Riviera and "Folies Bergere" at the Tropicana—also closed in 2009. A new production is always waiting in the wings, though, and in terms of both quantity and quality Vegas shows are second to none.

For show tickets at discounts of up to half off, try Tix4Tonight, a ticket discounter with five locations on the Strip (including Bill's Gamblin' Hall and the Fashion Show Mall) and one booth downtown at the Four Queens. Production shows release unsold seats for that night's performances to Tix4Tonight, which then sells those tickets to customers on a first-come first-serve basis. Discounts range from about 25 to 50 percent off. Tickets are typically released in the late afternoon; on weekends lines begin forming as early as noon. Phone (877) 849-4868 or (702) 212-4696 for general inquiries. Information on specific ticket availability can be obtained only at the ticket booths.

Following is a representative sampling of current production shows that are scheduled to run for the foreseeable future. For show times, ticket prices, reservations, venue policies and other information, contact the hotel box office.

"The Beatles LOVE" (The Mirage) combines the innovative performances of world-class Cirque du Soleil artists with the timeless songs of the Beatles. The band's lyrics are interpreted through a series of scenes involving aerial acts, extreme sports and urban dance. The production's original score was created by using the master tapes at Abbey Road Studios, creating some ingenious song mash-ups in the process (imagine a fusion of "What You're Doing" and "The Word" for starters). You'll experience the Fab Four in a whole new way in a custom-built theater that features in-the-round seating and high-definition video projections. Phone (702) 792-7777 or (800) 963-9634.

"Bette Midler: The Showgirl Must Go On" (The Colosseum, Caesars Palace): The Divine Miss M presides at this 4,000-seat theater modeled after Rome's ancient amphitheater. The indefatigable entertainer is accompanied by the Kiss My Brass horn section and 20 dancers. You'll be treated to songs from the extensive American music catalog, Top 40 hits like "The Rose" and "Wind Beneath My Wings," and stage patter spiced with Midler's distinctive brand of bawdy humor. Every seat at this show is within 120 feet of the stage. Phone (702) 866-1400 or (877) 723-8836.

"Blue Man Group: Live at The Venetian" (Blue Man Theater, The Venetian) is a wild and weird combination of performance art, highbrow humor and percussive music centered around three bald men in blue greasepaint. The trio silently creates a theater experience that is, despite the lack of dialogue, quite loud, thanks to their homemade instruments and a 16-piece band. Phone (800) 258-3626.

"Cher" (The Colosseum, Caesars Palace) proclaims that "after a nuclear war the only things left will be cockroaches and Cher." The pop chanteuse performs plenty of her hits—from "I Got You Babe" to "Song For the Lonely"—spanning a pretty amazing 45-year career. In addition to the music there's a crew of dancers and aerialists, not to mention a parade of eye-popping costumes. Throughout this 90-minute spectacle the innovative set constantly changes, with props emerging from the

floor, dropping down from the ceiling and sliding in from both sides. Nothing, however, upstages the diva herself; this is a real wallow in Cher worship. Phone (866) 510-2437.

“Criss Angel BELIEVE” (Criss Angel Theater, Luxor Las Vegas) stars the illusionist in a high-energy Cirque du Soleil collaboration combining music, dance, acrobatics and fantasy elements. This is a man who has previously appeared to levitate above the Luxor and caused a Lamborghini to disappear, so expect more head-scratching feats of prestidigitation. Phone (702) 262-4400 or (800) 557-7428.

“Disney’s The Lion King” (Mandalay Bay Theatre, Mandalay Bay) is adapted from the smash movie and brings the characters to life through a cast of more than 40 actors in intricate masks, headpieces and other costume parts. It also features hundreds of puppets representing animals, birds, insects and fish. During the ever-popular “Circle of Life” song performers circulate among the audience. Phone (877) 632-7400.

“Donny and Marie” (Flamingo Showroom, Flamingo Las Vegas) are a little bit country, a little bit rock ‘n roll and a long way from their wholesome Utah upbringing, hit 1970s variety show and (in Marie’s case especially) years spent on the front page of supermarket tabloids. The Flamingo had faith and signed the siblings to a long-term contract that is scheduled to expire in October 2010. Their show, packed with singing and dancing and spiced with a dash of old-fashioned Vegas cheese, has been a surprise success. Phone (702) 733-3333.

“Jersey Boys” (Palazzo Theater, The Palazzo) depicts the lives of Frankie Valli, Tommy DeVito, Nick Massi and Bob Gaudio—otherwise known as the Four Seasons—the harmonious musical union they created and the not-so-harmonious goings-on in the background. Many of the group’s hit songs, such as “Oh, What a Night,” “Sherry,” “Big Girls Don’t Cry” and “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You,” help tell their story. Phone (702) 414-9000 or (866) 641-7469.

“Jubilee!” (Jubilee Theater, Bally’s Las Vegas) is a typical Vegas spectacle—outsized props, stunning costumes (including enormous feathered headdresses worn by topless showgirls) and lavish set pieces loosely built around a tribute to Tinseltown (the show opened in 1981 at the old, Hollywood-themed MGM Grand Hotel). Highlights include a recreation of the sinking of the Titanic and the fiery destruction of a temple that climaxes a sultry interlude between Samson and Delilah. Phone (702) 967-4567 or (800) 237-7469.

“KÀ” (KÀ Theatre, MGM Grand) is storytelling at its best. The show combines martial arts, acrobatics, puppetry, multimedia and pyrotechnics to chronicle the adventurous but perilous journey of separated twins—a boy and a girl—to fulfill their destinies. Guests under 18 must be accompanied by an adult; under 5 are not permitted. Phone (702) 531-2000 or (866) 774-7117.

“Lance Burton: Master Magician” (Lance Burton Theatre, Monte Carlo) performs in a specifically designed theater that echoes the turn-of-the-20th-century opulence of the Monte Carlo itself. He specializes in the classic tricks of the magician’s trade—sleight of hand, levitation, escapes—and is backed up by dancers and beautiful showgirls. Phone (702) 730-7160 or (877) 386-8224.

“Legends in Concert” (Main Showroom, Harrah’s Las Vegas) has been wowing Vegas audiences since 1983, first at the Imperial Palace and now at its new home at Harrah’s. Celebrity impersonators offer remarkable imitations (singing, not lip-syncing) of such entertainers as the Blues Brothers, James Brown, Britney Spears, Dolly Parton, Liberace, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Rod Stewart and a host of others, backed by a live band in a full-stage production. The lineup changes every few months, although Elvis always makes an appearance. Legends in Concert shares the showroom with comedian Rita Rudner. Phone (702) 369-5111.

“Le Rêve” (Wynn Theater, Wynn Las Vegas) features aerialists, gymnasts and synchronized swimmers in a breathtaking show with bold

music, lighting and water effects. A circular theater around a pool gives guests a great view no matter where they're seated. *Le Rêve*, which means "the dream," maintains an otherworldly quality. Phone (702) 770-9966 or (888) 320-7110.

"Manilow" (Paris Las Vegas) brings Barry to the intimate Paris Theatre in 2010 and 2011, following a successful run at the Las Vegas Hilton. Expect to hear hits like "Copacabana," "Mandy" and "Can't Smile Without You" from the adult contemporary icon, although Manilow promises a couple of surprises for this engagement. The star will perform on selected Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, thrilling the faithful with underrated piano playing, chummy audience interaction and high-energy renditions of his chart-toppers. Phone (800) 745-3000.

"Mystère" (Mystère Theatre, TI-Treasure Island) still might be the most distinctive show in town. Although it takes place within a single ring, "Mystère" in no way resembles a traditional three-ring circus. For one thing, the audience becomes intimately involved with this show. The music and lighting effects are ethereally beautiful, and the international cast of acrobats, clowns, jugglers, trapeze artists, dancers and musicians are uniformly superb. Suitable for all ages, this is a must-see. Phone (702) 796-9999 or (800) 392-1999.

"O" ("O" Theatre, Bellagio) is Cirque du Soleil's first venture into aquatic theater. In what may be the troupe's most innovative show yet, an international cast of 81 performs in, on and above a 1.5-million-gallon tank of water. By combining circus art, drama, choreography, aerial acrobatics and synchronized swimming, the show pays tribute to the age-old magic of theater. International music performed by a 10-piece orchestra accompanies the 90-minute show. Phone (702) 796-9999 or (888) 488-7111.

"Penn & Teller" (Penn & Teller Theater, Rio Hotel) have been staging their bad-boys-of-magic act at the Rio since the early years of this century and show no sign of letting up anytime soon. If you enjoy optical illusions with a side of acerbic commentary and biting social commentary,

this is the show for you; the easily offended should steer very clear. Phone (702) 777-7776.

"Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular" (The Venetian) is a 95-minute musical featuring every song from the original Andrew Lloyd Webber "The Phantom of the Opera." Performances are held in a \$40 million theater designed to look like a 19th-century Parisian opera house. The show boasts a series of special effects that includes a re-creation of the crashing chandelier. Phone (702) 414-7469, (702) 414-9000 or (866) 641-7469.

"Tournament of Kings" (King Arthur's Arena, Excalibur) is a family-oriented dinner show echoing the hotel's medieval theme. There are jousting matches, sword fights, costumed knights and ladies, equestrian stunt riding and fireworks. Dinner is eaten with the fingers. In other words, this show is similar to other medieval-themed dinner attractions in cities around the country. Phone (702) 597-7600.

"V—The Ultimate Variety Show" (V Theater, Planet Hollywood) incorporates a broad range of entertaining talents, ranging from aerialists, acrobats and gymnasts who do amazing things with their bodies to magicians who do amazing things with their minds (and some sleight of hand). Also entertaining are masters of percussion, comedians, and a fun and fascinating juggler who slings one-liners almost as quickly as juggling pins. Phone (702) 932-1818.

"Zumanity" (Zumanity Theatre, New York-New York), known as "The Human Zoo," is Cirque du Soleil's creative approach to desire, love, passion and a celebration of the human body. Eclectic performers from around the world wrap delight, excitement and surprise into 90 minutes of acrobatics, dance and uninhibited costumes. Due to the mature nature of the show, those under 18 are not permitted. Phone (702) 740-6815.

Other Shows: The hotel showrooms that don't feature ongoing productions continue the Las Vegas tradition of presenting celebrity headliners, along with rock concerts and occasional sporting events.

Major venues include the Congo Room at the Sahara, the Hollywood Theatre at the MGM Grand, the Jubilee! Theater at Bally's Las Vegas, and the Planet Hollywood Showroom at Planet Hollywood.

A different kind of nightly show can be found at the Fremont Street Experience, which boasts a canopy of more than 12.5 million lights arching across a four-block expanse of downtown Las Vegas. This pedestrian gambling mall features animated sound and light shows—for 6 minutes each hour the glittering casino lights are turned off and visitors are treated to themed productions of computer-generated graphics and music.

Also lighting up Fremont Street are classic neon signs from the 1940s, '50s and '60s that have been restored and installed at various locations through the efforts of the Neon Museum, which is dedicated to preserving Las Vegas' high-wattage history. Placards provide a brief description of each sign.

Insider Info

Las Vegas Buffets

Gambling, big-name entertainers and over-the-top casinos have always lured visitors to Las Vegas. But for those with hearty appetites there is no bigger attraction than the buffets. They're a Vegas tradition, the gustatory pillars of a "City That Never Sleeps" and apparently can never get enough to eat. Mountains of shrimp. Piles of golden fried chicken. Monster prime rib. Row after row of sushi rolls. An avalanche of crab legs. Desserts in every color of the rainbow. Just one meal at a Vegas buffet has the potential to put new stretch marks on your stomach.

The father of the Vegas "all you can eat" affair was Herb McDonald, a casino publicist who reasoned that if you felt like you got a bargain meal, the more willing you'd be to part with money in the casino. The Strip's first buffet was the El Rancho Vegas hotel's Chuck Wagon. When it opened in 1946, dinner cost a dollar. Today there are more than 60 hotel buffets in

the greater Vegas area, from perfunctory spreads to the new breed of super buffet. That's a lot of bloated bellies.

There was a time when the low-priced buffet was the only game in town. Not today. Food quality has improved, the selection is wider, and of course prices have shot higher. You can still find dirt-cheap smorgasbords (mostly in the off-Strip casinos frequented by locals), but at the megaresorts dinner prices average around \$20 per adult and climb as high as \$35 for the gourmet chow at Wynn Las Vegas. Keep in mind that breakfast and lunch prices at all buffets are always a few dollars cheaper.

Penny pinchers looking to gorge themselves for under \$12 will need to head off-Strip. Palace Station, (702) 367-2411, and Gold Coast, (702) 367-7111, both have decent supper spreads, plus classic carving stations (prime rib and turkey) just like their pricier brethren.

In the \$12 to \$20 range quality gets better, and at this price tier you'll usually find all-you-can-eat shrimp. Downtown, the Golden Nugget, (702) 385-7111, sets out surprisingly tasty Southern fare (catfish, collard greens, bread pudding), some of it even worth smuggling out in your pockets. The Las Vegas Hilton Buffet, (702) 732-5111, offers a made-to-order pasta station and beats most of the mid-range offerings over on the Strip.

North of \$20 you find the good stuff. Spice Market Buffet at Planet Hollywood, (702) 785-5555, has nine food stations (including an excellent Middle Eastern counter) that dish up grub a cut above your typical steam table fare. Rio's Carnival World Buffet, (702) 777-7777, whips up a huge international feast that devotees swear is the best in town.

Bellagio, (702) 693-7111, Wynn Las Vegas, (702) 770-7000, and Bally's Sterling Brunch, (702) 967-7999, are the top of the line both in taste and price. These are lavish spreads with an array of quality meats, plenty of made-to-order stations and outrageous dessert selections.

Vegas buffets are hugely popular and don't accept reservations. For dinner, arrive before 6:30 or after 9:30 if you want to avoid long lines.

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