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# Travel Guide Las Vegas

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## Quick view

### Legendary City in the desert

Immortalised in the Johnny Depp film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Hunter S Thompson's portrayal of the city is a nightmarish hunt for the American dream. In *The Hangover*, Hollywood offers the clichéd centre of excess, complete with drunken marriages and AWOL grooms. But today's Vegas is something a little different from the image of tackiness and debauchery that it embodied for decades, with a wave of

gourmet restaurants, luxury shops and more sophisticated hotels sweeping through the fabled Strip. The gleaming neon Sin City in the middle of Nevada desert will always be the archetypal symbol of decadence, pivoting around 24-hour casinos and strip joints. It's just that now there's a glut of elegant ways to blow your cash here, too.



## USA

### General Information

#### Country overview

From its vast plains, snow-covered mountains, deep forests and strange rock formations, to soaring skyscrapers and a thunderous cultural scene, the USA is a collage of extremes. Nothing can prepare you for your first glimpse of Manhattan's unforgettable skyline, your first ride in a yellow cab, the ubiquitous hamburger joints, yawning expanses of prairie, the sweet strains of New Orleans jazz, or the neon-lit excesses of Las Vegas.

Marvel at the thunderous spectacle of Niagara Falls in northern New York, or seek an antidote to urban chaos amidst the flat farmland of the Midwest. Then there are the black hills of South Dakota, the dramatic mountain and ocean landscape of California's Pacific Coast Highway and the world-famous Grand Canyon.

#### Geography

Covering a large part of the North American continent, the USA shares borders with Canada to the north and Mexico to the south. The country has coasts on the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. The State of Alaska, in the northwest corner of the US, is not part of the continental US; it is separated from the rest of the USA by Canada. Similarly, Hawaii is not part of the "lower 48" states; it lies in the central Pacific Ocean.

The country's dependent territories are offshore and have distinct geographies of their own; the majority are islands.

The third-largest country in the world (after the Russian Federation and Canada), the USA has an enormous diversity of geographical features, including mountains, plains, and coastal zones. Though there are many cities that are densely populated with more manmade features than natural ones, there are also vast rural areas that are far more sparsely populated. The climate ranges from subtropical to arctic, with a corresponding breadth of flora and fauna.

#### General knowledge

##### Key facts

Population: 319 millions (estimate 2018)

Capital: Washington, DC.

**Language**

English, with significant Spanish-speaking minorities.

**Currency**

US Dollar (USD; symbol \$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of \$100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1, though the \$2 bill is rare and is not in high circulation. Coins are in denominations of \$1, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 cents.

**Electricity**

120 volts AC, 60Hz. Plugs have two flat pins with or without a third round grounding pin.

**Public holidays**

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

**Note**

States can recognize other days as state holidays that are not federal holidays.

**2020**

New Year's Day: 1 January 2020  
Martin Luther King Day: 20 January 2020  
President's Day: 17 February 2020  
Memorial Day: 25 May 2020  
Independence Day: 3 and 4 July 2020  
Labor Day: 7 September 2020  
Columbus Day: 12 October 2020  
Veterans Day: 11 November 2020  
Thanksgiving Day: 26 November 2020  
Christmas: 25 December 2020

**2021**

New Year's Day: 1 January 2021  
Martin Luther King Day: 18 January 2021  
President's Day: 15 February 2021  
Memorial Day: 31 May 2021  
Independence Day: 4 and 5 July 2021  
Labor Day: 6 September 2021  
Columbus Day: 11 October 2021  
Veterans Day: 11 November 2021  
Thanksgiving Day: 25 November 2021  
Christmas: 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.

**Travel etiquette**  
**How to fit in****Social Conventions**

Americans are renowned for their openness and friendliness to visitors. The wide variety of national origins and the USA's relatively short history has resulted in numerous cultural and traditional customs living alongside each other. In large cities, people of the same ethnic background often live within defined communities.

Shaking hands is the usual form of greeting in formal situations and in business meetings. As long as the fundamental rules of courtesy are observed, there need be no fear of offending anyone of any background.

Gifts are appreciated if one is invited to a private home.

As a rule, dress is casual. High-end restaurants, hotels and clubs may require more formal attire.

Smoking is increasingly unpopular in the US; it is essential to ask permission before lighting up. Smoking is not allowed on city transport and restricted or forbidden in public buildings in most states. There will be a posted notice where no smoking is requested. An increasing number of states (including California and New York) have banned smoking altogether in bars, restaurants and many public places.



## Health Health

**Main emergency number:** 911

### Food & Drink

Food in the US is safe to eat, and the conditions under which food is prepared and served are regulated by city, state, and federal health and hygiene agencies. In many jurisdictions, it is mandatory for restaurants to have a certificate of health or hygiene, as well as the current grade they have been assigned, posted visibly.

Although America is famous for its fast food and obesity rates, the local and fresh food movement is very popular in many areas, especially cities, making it easy to eat healthy. A variety of options also makes it easy for people with special dietary needs to find food that suits them, whether their needs are due to health reasons or to religious requirements.

Tap water is considered safe to drink in the US and is often offered in restaurants before bottled water. Bottled water is available throughout the country, however, both in restaurants and shops, for those who prefer not to drink tap water.

### Other Risks

The US is generally considered a safe destination for world visitors. Occasional outbreaks of disease, such as West Nile Virus (a mosquito-borne illness) and H1N1 have occurred in recent years, however. Frequent hand-washing and general practices of good hygiene are encouraged to protect oneself against all types of illness.

Another concern with regard to safety is the possibility of terrorist attacks such as the one that occurred on September 11, 2001. City, state, and federal agencies have stringent anti-terrorism practices in place, however, and direct threats are infrequent.



## Phone calls & Internet Phone calls & Internet

### Telephone/Mobile Telephone

**Dialing Code:** +1

### Telephone

Public telephones have become a rarity, but can still be found here and there. They take coins, telephone cards and credit cards. If you are planning to make regular use of public phones, it's best to purchase a prepaid calling card from one of the many U.S. providers.

### Mobile Telephone

Not all European cell phones work on the American network, since it requires a tri-band or quad-band device. Full network coverage is not always assured outside densely populated areas. Roaming charges are high here, so it is often cheaper to buy a SIM card from a U.S. provider. Low-cost prepaid SIM cards for making calls inside the country can be ordered online before you travel.

### Internet

Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using unencrypted public Wi-Fi networks, it is not advisable to enter passwords, credit card details or banking credentials. We recommend using VPN app or security software to check Wi-Fi hotspots.



## Top 10 sights Top 10 sights in Las Vegas

### Bellagio

In the heart of the Strip, the Bellagio's 1,200 fountains are choreographed to Elvis and Sinatra songs. The epic-in-scale hotel features a salon, spa, botanical gardens and more, and is one of Vegas's icons.

3600 Las Vegas Boulevard South      [www.bellagio.com](http://www.bellagio.com)  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 888 987 6667

### Hoover Dam

The desert city of Las Vegas was nothing before the Hoover Dam was constructed in the 1930s. An impressive feat of engineering, it lies in the astounding Black Canyon.

Hoover Dam      Opening times:  
Las Vegas      Daily 0900-1700  
USA  
Tel: 702 494 2517      [www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam)

### The Strip

Any trip to Vegas must start with a walk down the length of glittering Strip, where a miniature Eiffel Tower, fake New York and pyramids all jostle for your attention.

Las Vegas Boulevard South  
Las Vegas  
USA

### Cirque du Soleil

Billed as the greatest show on Earth, Cirque du Soleil has some of its most compelling work in Vegas, most recently *Michael Jackson: One*.

3950 Las Vegas Boulevard South      [www.cirquedusoleil.com](http://www.cirquedusoleil.com)  
NV 89119 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 877 632 7400

### Fremont Street Experience

Take a step back into the old classic Vegas with Fremont, a pedestrianised mall that once contained the city's first hotel and now has various attractions, including spectacular light shows.

425 Fremont Street      [www.vegasexperience.com](http://www.vegasexperience.com)  
NV 89101 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 877 834 2748

### Neon Museum

A fascinating sign collection telling the story of Vegas over the decades. With the city's constant thirst for novelty, this museum is almost all that remains of the neon past.

770 Las Vegas Boulevard North      [www.neonmuseum.org](http://www.neonmuseum.org)  
NV 89101 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 702 387 6366

### Lake Mead Cruise

An oasis in the desert beyond Vegas, Lake Mead came into existence when the Hoover Dam was first built in the Colorado River, and can be enjoyed by pleasant cruise.

Lake Mead      [www.nps.gov/lake](http://www.nps.gov/lake)  
Boulder City, Nevada  
USA

### Valley of Fire

Flying into Vegas on a clear day shows you a gorgeous fiery red landscape, calling to mind westerns. Get out and see one of the finest spots, the Valley of Fire, about an hour's drive from the city.

29450 Valley of Fire Road      [www.parks.nv.gov/vf.htm](http://www.parks.nv.gov/vf.htm)  
NV 89040 Overton  
USA  
Tel: 702 397 2088

### Qua Spa at Caesar's Palace

It's worth visiting this spa just to see the staggering faux Roman baths, but there's also an incredible range of luxurious treatments on offer.

3570 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 866 782 0655

Opening times:  
Daily 0600-2000

[www.caesarspalace.com/things-to-do/qa.html](http://www.caesarspalace.com/things-to-do/qa.html)

## Contemporary Arts Center

This non-profit arts group in fascinating Downtown is at odds with most of Vegas's rampant consumerism.

1217 South Main Street  
NV 89104 Las Vegas  
USA  
Tel: 702 496 0569

Opening times:  
Thu-Fri 1400-1700  
Sat-Sun 1200-1800

[www.lasvegascac.org](http://www.lasvegascac.org)



## Shopping in Las Vegas

### Shopping in Las Vegas

#### Key Areas

The Strip is the epicentre of consumerism where you'll find Dior and Louis Vuitton rubbing shoulders with high-street chains. Head Downtown and down-to-earth for a rather different shopping experience.

#### Markets

There aren't exactly many markets in the traditional sense in Sin City. However, there's always the expansive and colourful Broad Acres flea market (2934 Las Vegas Boulevard North) with many a relic from nights that went too far. You might also visit Bonanza Mini Market, perhaps the world's biggest gift shop (2440 Las Vegas Boulevard South), though novelty souvenirs are more or less the order of the day here.

#### Shopping Centres

A kind of space-age shopping experience, Fashion Show Mall (3200 Las Vegas Boulevard South) is the biggest of the city's roster. But The Boulevard Mall (3528 South Maryland Parkway) is worth checking out for being the oldest.



## Restaurants

### Restaurants in Las Vegas

The days of all-you-can-eat buffets and greasy 24-hour diners aren't exactly over, but they're being increasingly crowded out by higher-end options. Today, some of the world's biggest gastronomic names are in Sin City, where it's now possible to dine in exquisite style.

#### miX by Alain Ducasse

Apart from fine food by one of the world's best chefs, this classy restaurant offers unbeatable views of the Strip from atop Mandalay Bay.

3950 S Las Vegas Blvd  
Las Vegas, NV  
USA

Price: Expensive

## Restaurant Guy Savoy

With the city's best wine cellar and excellent veal and oyster dishes, this restaurant deserves its two Michelin stars (one behind Savoy's Paris original).

Caesars Palace Dr  
Las Vegas, NV  
USA

Price: Expensive

## Joël Robuchon Restaurant

Named 'chef of the century' by the Gault Millau guide, Robuchon offers up his one and only restaurant in the USA. Be sure to try the legendary truffled langoustine.

3799 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

Price: Expensive

## Noodles

The best Asian food to be had in Vegas, this sleek restaurant in the Bellagio boasts a menu mixing Vietnamese, Chinese and Thai dishes.

3600 S Las Vegas Blvd  
Las Vegas, NV  
USA

Price: Moderate

## The Steakhouse

Circus Circus isn't the most glamorous of Vegas hotels, but its classic steakhouse is the best value in town with delicious, tender cuts.

2880 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

Price: Cheap



## Nightlife Nightlife in Las Vegas

What to say of Sin City's fabled nightlife? Apart from the countless strip joints and all-night casino bars, there are some incredibly glamorous clubs and more relaxed lounge-type options. There are also nightly shows by world-famous stars.

## XS

Renowned for Prince Harry's infamous night there, XS is perhaps the most opulent, gold-plated nightclub ever built.

3121 S Las Vegas Blvd  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

## The Peppermill's Fireside

A blast from the past, this bar is worth visiting for a glimpse of what Vegas was like in the 1970s – especially with its water-filled fire pit.

2985 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

## Tryst

A sexy, stylish nightclub in the Wynn, Tryst draws top DJs for its packed parties – it's best to reserve a table.

3131 South Las Vegas Boulevard  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

## Barley's Casino & Brewing Company

Craft beer in Vegas? Everything's possible here – head off-Strip and get served by master brewer Jef 'Bubba' Amas, who runs Vegas's oldest microbrewery.

4500 East Sunset Road  
NV 89014 Henderson, Nevada  
USA

## TAO

As well as being a much-loved restaurant and 'beach' venue, TAO is one of Vegas's oldest clubs. Look out for the colossal Buddha – you can't exactly miss it.

3355 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA



## Calendar of events Calendar of events

### Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz and R&B Festival

Running for over 20 years, the annual City of Lights Jazz and R&B Festival is a weekend showcase of some of the country's leading jazz and R & B acts. Craft and food vendors add to the atmosphere.

**April 19 - 19, 2020**

Venue: Clark County Government Amphitheatre

### Fetish and Fantasy Halloween Ball

Dubbed one of five events to see before you die by Maxim magazine, the Fetish & Fantasy Halloween Ball is an unusual, wild and exciting event. Erotic stage performances, incredible lasers and lights, world-class DJs, a costume contest, vendors, a huge dance floor, a separate old school dance area, stilt walkers and monsters all add to the overall mood. This is a scary, naughty and fun Halloween celebration. Over 21s only.

**October 31, 2020**

Venue: Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas

## Best in the Desert

A 480km (300-mile) desert and mountain race from Las Vegas to Reno, over a three-day period, in the longest off-road car race in the country. If the idea of souped-up autos tearing through the desert sounds like your kind of thing, you'll be in luck.

**October 2020**

Venue: Off-road from Las Vegas to Reno

## Las Vegas Bikefest

With a reputation as one of the biggest and best bike events in the country, the Las Vegas Bikefest doesn't disappoint. From Harleys to Hondas, bike buffs are able to see all manner of wheeled machines on display at this fun event. Events include live music, a 'Miss & Mr Las Vegas BikeFest competition', the World's Strongest Biker competition, poker tournaments and live entertainment. There are also plenty of food and drink vendors in attendance and anyone wanting to pick up some goodies should head to the special Vendor Village to visit some of the many exhibitors.

**October 1 - 4, 2020**

Venue: Rally Central, Fremont Street

## Nevada Wild Fest

Southern Nevada's Music Festival and Fair is bringing in the biggest State Fair Carnival Experience to the Las Vegas valley, with over 35 large format carnival rides, daily celebrity meet & greets, a free festival music stage featuring KWNR's hottest country acts, the Iron Dog Dock Dogs East vs. West competition filmed as a one-hour television special for the Outdoor Channel, Blood Village's Haunted Maze, Vegas' best gourmet food trucks and food vendors, beer and wine gardens, the world's largest sling-shot, and the best specialty arts, crafts and retail vendors.

**October 2020**

Venue: Henderson Pavilion

## Fremont Street Experience New Year's Eve Party

Las Vegas' famous entertainment strip, the Fremont Street Experience, hosts its annual New Year's Eve bash to welcome in the New Year. The complex's 10 casinos, 10,000 slot machines, 60 restaurants and numerous bars join forces to lay on a celebration to remember. Attracting an estimated 300,000 visitors, this is one of the biggest New Year celebrations in the region and provides all the thrills and spills you'd expect from this famous desert oasis, including one of the largest fireworks displays in the state.

**31 December 2020**

Venue: Fremont Street



## Hotels Hotels in Las Vegas

Never staying the same for long, Las Vegas has gradually been reducing its tacky image in recent years, with the hotels growing ever larger, more extravagant – and, believe it or not, more sophisticated. Cheap options abound, but staying away from the Strip in a motel defeats the purpose of Vegas.

### **Mandarin Oriental**

Opened in 2009, the palatial Mandarin is an example of the shift towards more sophistication in the resort hotels.

3752 Las Vegas Boulevard South      Category: Expensive  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA

### **Caesar's Palace**

With six towers overlooking the Strip, Caesar's Palace is one of the most iconic hotels in Vegas with a history dating back to the 1960s.

3570 S Las Vegas Blvd      Category: Moderate  
Las Vegas, NV  
USA

### **Mandalay Bay**

Opened shortly before the Millennium, Mandalay features the Cirque du Soleil and some of the city's best restaurants, including Alain Ducasse.

The Shoppes at Mandalay Place, 3950      Category: Moderate  
S Las Vegas Blvd  
89119 Las Vegas, NV  
USA

### **Treasure Island**

Although originally planned as an extension to Mirage, Treasure Island is very much its own entity and one of the few family-friendly hotels in Las Vegas.

3300 Las Vegas Boulevard South      Category: Cheap  
NV 89109 Las Vegas  
USA