



Discover **Las Vegas**

Experience the best
of Las Vegas

This edition written and researched by
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This is Las Vegas

It's three in the morning when you spot an Elvis look-alike sauntering by arm-in-arm with a glittering showgirl. A bride in a miniskirted white dress shrieks 'Blackjack!' as a stoic blue-haired granny feeds nickels into a slot machine while tossing back a gin and tonic. It's a surreal, Technicolor-tinged fantasy straight out of the movies – and there's only one place you could be.

Vegas, baby: it's the ultimate escape.

This is the only place you can spend the night partying in ancient Rome, wake up in Egypt and brunch under the Eiffel Tower, watch an erupting volcano at sunset and get married in a pink Cadillac at midnight. Double down with the high rollers, browse couture or tacky souvenirs, sip a neon 3ft-high margarita or a frozen vodka martini from a bar made of ice – it's all here for the taking.

Time is irrelevant in Sin City. There are no clocks inside casinos, just never-ending buffets, ever-flowing drinks and adrenaline-fueled gaming tables.

Almost any desire can be instantly gratified, because the luxe casino resorts stand ready to cater to your every whim 24/7. Emptying your wallet never felt so damn good.

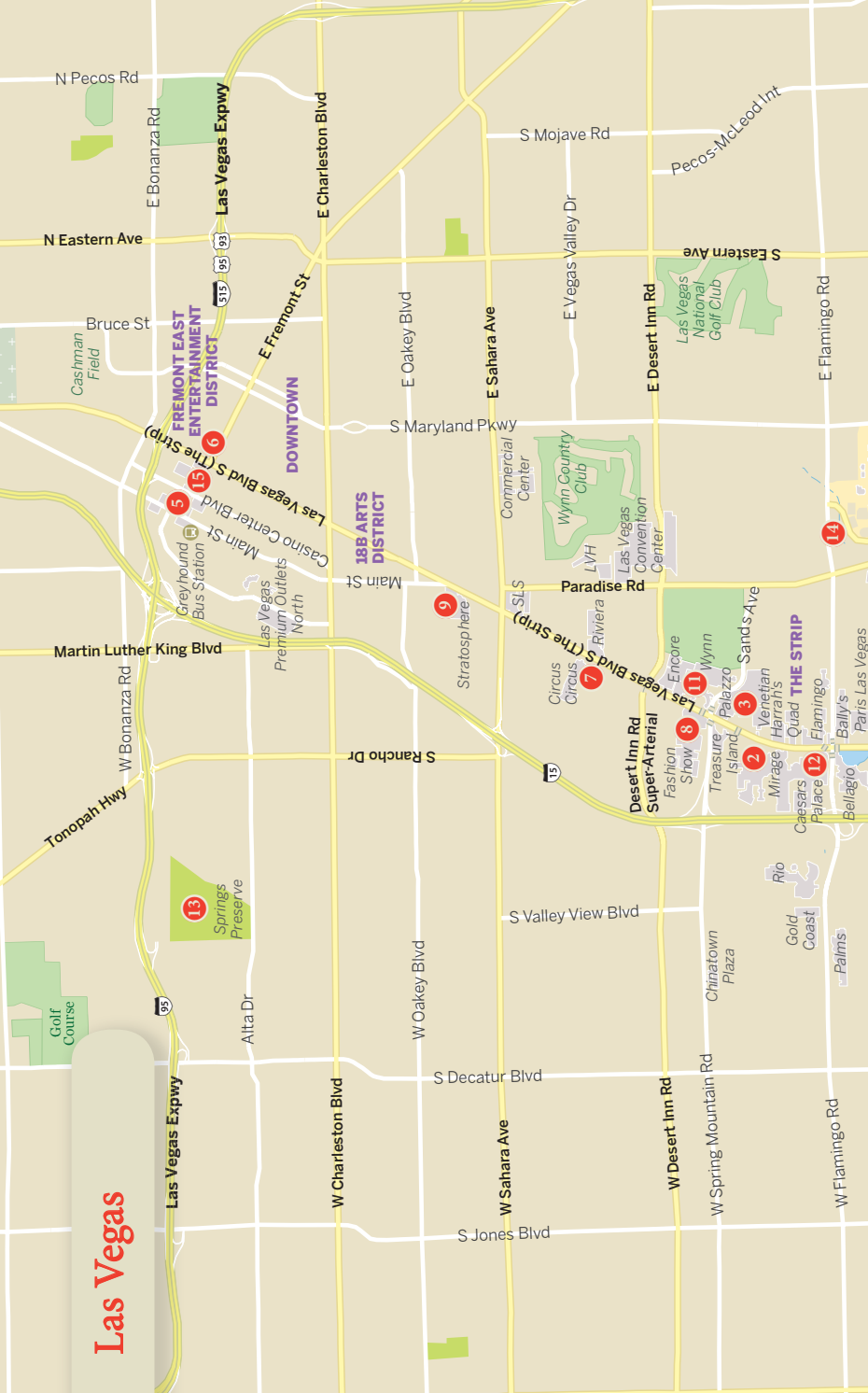
The landscape is a constantly shifting paradox, a volatile cocktail of dueling forces: sophistication and smut, risk and reward, boom and bust. And that's all part of its charm. Head downtown to explore Vegas' nostalgic beginnings and its cultural renaissance of indie shops and cocktail bars where local culture thrives, then detour off the Strip to find intriguing museums that investigate Vegas' gangster, atomic-fueled past.

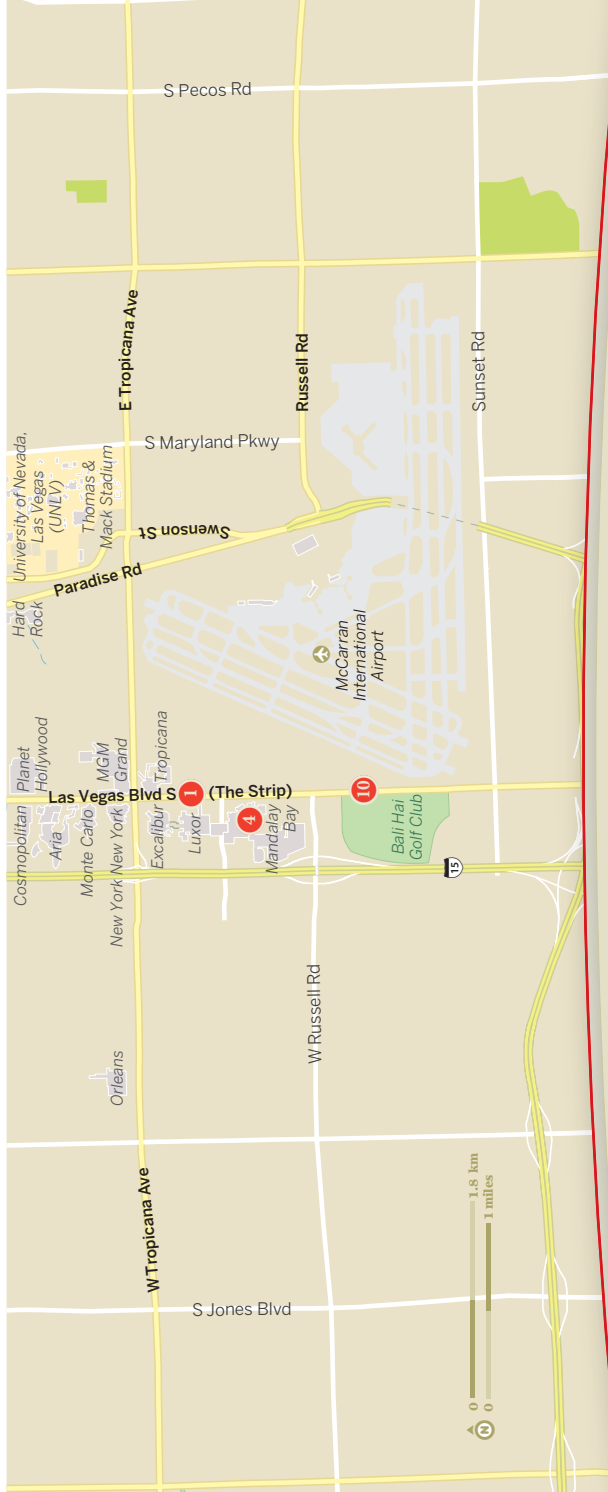
So, America's dirty little secret or dream factory? Vegas is both – and remains a bastion of hangover-inducing weekends for people from all walks of life. You can reinvent yourself a hundred times over, or hide out with your lover in a hotel room for days. It doesn't matter if you play the penny slots or drop a bankroll every night – you'll leave town convinced you've had the time of your life.

“
Emptying
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so damn
good
”



Las Vegas





- 1 Cruising the Strip (p39)
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- 3 Celebrity chefs
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Top Highlights



15 Las Vegas' Top Highlights



Cruising the Strip (p39)

Rolling into Vegas is a classic experience – play it right and you'll feel like you're moving through a movie set. If you're behind the wheel as a Sin City first-timer, arrive after dark. As you approach the city, pull over and admire the neon glow from afar. Then exit off the interstate and cruise the length of Las Vegas Blvd (aka the Strip), taking in the Luxor's glowing beacon, the soaring Eiffel Tower, the Bellagio's dancing fountains and the Mirage's exploding volcano.

1



1 Hoover Dam (p221)

Get an early start from Las Vegas to visit this landmark New Deal project on the Colorado River, completed by thousands of workers in 1936. A memorial nearby pays tribute to the many lives lost while construction was underway.

LAS VEGAS ➔ HOOVER DAM

 From the Strip, it's about a 45-minute drive. Take I-15 south to I-215 east. Continue to I-515/US 93 & 95, then follow US 93 east of Boulder City. Walk to the dam visitor center from the parking garage (\$10).

2 Visitor Center (p221)

Beginning inside the visitor center, guided tours give you a chance to ride an elevator more than 50 stories down to see the dam's gigantic power generators. It'll cost you to take the one-hour tour, but engineers and history buffs won't want to miss it.

VISITOR CENTER ➔ MIKE O'CALLAGHAN-PAT TILLMAN MEMORIAL BRIDGE

 Drive to the free parking lot designated for bridge access, then make the short but steep climb up to the bridge's pedestrian walkway.

3 Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge (p222)

Drink in stunning views of the Hoover Dam from this soaring bridge dedicated to Mike

O'Callaghan, a former Nevada mayor, and Pat Tillman, a US football star killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan in 2004. Hold on to the railing when it's windy – this isn't for anyone with a fear of heights.


MIKE O'CALLAGHAN-PAT TILLMAN MEMORIAL BRIDGE ➔ LAKE MEAD

 Backtrack around 4 miles west on US 93, turning right onto Lakeshore Rd, which enters Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

4 Lake Mead National Recreation Area (p223)

Hiking, birding and water sports such as swimming, fishing, boating, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding abound at this outdoor playground. It's most popular with locals who need to get away from it all, especially on weekends.

LAKE MEAD ➔ BOULDER CITY

 Get back on US 93 and head west into Boulder City. Turn left on Nevada Way and left again onto Arizona St.

5 Hoover Dam Museum & Boulder City (p222)

This small but interesting museum is located at the Boulder Dam Hotel, where Franklin D Roosevelt and Howard Hughes once slept. After viewing the interactive historical exhibits, stroll around downtown Boulder City, a refreshingly casino-free town that sprang up in the early 1930s to house workers building the dam.