

LAS VEGAS

ENCOUNTER

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Las Vegas Encounter

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Color-Coding & Maps

Color-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol).

All items are mapped on the pull-out map.

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SARAB ENSON

First awestruck by the neon lights of the Strip during a cross-country trek from Chicago to California, Sara had a serendipitous one-night stand with Sin City that soon became a torrid love affair. Now she travels down to the desert every chance she gets, and has racked up more hours gambling, carousing and wandering around Las Vegas than she'll ever admit to her grandmother. She and her entourage have spent many a lost weekend nightclub-hopping down the Strip, feasting at star chefs' tables and playing poker until the wee hours in downtown's Glitter Gulch. Sara is also an avid outdoor enthusiast. Her articles have featured on popular travel websites and in magazines and newspapers from coast to coast, including the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *Los Angeles Times* and *National Geographic Traveler*. Keep up with Sara's latest adventures on her blog, the Indie Traveler (<http://indietraveler.blogspot.com>), or Twitter (@indie_traveler).



SARA'ST HANKS

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Cover photograph Cowgirl neon sign, Las Vegas, Lee Foster/LPI. **Internal photographs** p3, p41, p75, p124, p141 Sara Enson; p40, p164 Citycenter Land, LLC; p18 LOOK Die Bildagentur der Fotografen GmbH/Alamy; p86 Nick Hanna/Alamy; p106 Kelly-Mooney Photography/Corbis; p63 Paul Vidler/Alamy; p22 Rouse Photography. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images and Jerry Alexander except p8, p93 Richard Cummins; p42, p177 John Elk III; p6 Lee Foster; p20 Jeff Greenberg; p14, p55, p60, p74, p96, p151, p155, p159, p172 Ray Laskowitz; p10 James Marshall; p19 Curtis Martin; p162 Carol Polich; p156 David Tomlinson. All images are copyright of the photographers unless otherwise indicated. Many of the images in this guide are available for licensing from **Lonely Planet Images**: www.lonelyplanetimages.com.



Enjoy a slice of the Big Apple at New York–New York (p53)

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THIS IS LAS VEGAS

A Bible-toting Elvis kisses a giddy couple who've just pledged eternity in the Chapel of Love. A blue-haired granny feeds nickels into a slot machine while chain-smoking and slugging gin-and-tonics. A porn star saunters by a nightclub's velvet rope. Blink, and you'll miss it. Sleep? Fuhgeddaboutit.

Vegas is the ultimate escape. A few frenzied sleepless nights here can be more intoxicating than a week-long bender elsewhere. Let the everyday rules of behavior slide a little, like a burlesque dancer's feather boa. Be as naughty as you wanna be, and make your most devilish fantasies come true. Sin City stands ready to give you an alibi: what happens here, stays here. Who can resist such seductive temptation?

The defining mood of Las Vegas is euphoria, from the 19th-century silver miners looking to strike the mother lode to the mobsters, movie stars, showgirls and crooners who lived it up here during the 'fabulous' 1950s heyday. Eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes helped the city clean up its act when he ushered in corporate ownership of casinos, and soon afterward middle America invaded the hoity-toity Strip in their polyester tracksuits with screaming rug rats in tow. As the 20th century raced toward its end, megaresorts on par with Macau and Monte Carlo began to spike the Strip's skyline. Every decade has made Las Vegas more of a boomtown than ever before.

This city demands a suspension of disbelief, so don't take it too seriously. In Sin City, fate is decided by the spin of a roulette wheel. It's a place where lucky schmucks are treated like royalty and the rich wager thousands on a single roll of the dice. But in the end, it doesn't matter if you play the penny slots or lay down a bankroll at the poker tables; it's a sure thing you'll still leave town believing you've just had the most frenzied, fast-paced and fantastical time of your life.

Top left Put all your cards on the table at Caesars Palace (p43) **Bottom left** Savor the spectacle of Las Vegas



TO *Fabulous*
DOWNTOWN
LAS VEGAS
NEVADA

LAS VEGAS LAYOUT

Sprawled immodestly along Las Vegas Blvd, the Strip is constantly re-inventing itself, becoming ever more spectacular – and more of a spectacle. Every casino hotel has its own attractions, with plenty of action besides gaming. The Strip runs south to Mandalay Bay and north to the Stratosphere. Its nerve center is the intersection with Flamingo Rd.

Downtown presides over the distant north end of the tourist corridor, with the canopied Fremont Street Experience streaking down the middle of Glitter Gulch. The city's historic quarter is preferred by serious gamblers, who find faux volcanoes beneath them; the smoky, low-ceilinged casinos have changed little over the years. East of Las Vegas Blvd, Fremont St is undergoing a renaissance of cool, with independent bars and nightclubs popping up.

The 18b Arts District, emerging around the intersection of Main St and Charleston Blvd, is ground zero for hipsters, artists and alt-cultural types. The desolate stretch of Las Vegas Blvd between downtown and the Strip is nicknamed the Naked City. These downtrodden blocks sport tattered cheap motels, tattoo parlors and drive-thru wedding chapels.

East of the Strip, the University of Nevada (UNLV) campus attracts youthful carpetbaggers along Maryland Parkway. Anchored by the Las Vegas Convention Center, Paradise Rd streams south past the Hard Rock casino hotel into the Fruit Loop, the epicenter of the LGBT community.

West of the Strip, the Palms and Rio casino hotels rule the roost; many of Sin City's strip clubs and sex shops are hidden in industrial backstreets and strip malls. Burgeoning suburbs include Henderson, southeast of McCarran International Airport, and moneyed Summerlin, northwest near Red Rock Canyon.

Disorientation is a constant risk, whether you're searching for your hotel room, stumbling drunkenly through a casino, or desperately trying to remember where you parked the car.

Left Las Vegas welcomes all those visiting, whether for a little business or a whole lot of pleasure