

Las Vegas & Nevada

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Why Go?

Ski boots, high heels, flip flops, golf cleats, cowboy boots: when you come to Nevada, none of these would look out of place. Mysterious and misunderstood, Nevada's a paradox, which makes packing tricky. Expect thrills aplenty, whether you're a nightclub aficionado, an adventure junkie, a kitsch connoisseur or a conspiracy theorist.

If you're in the mood for extremes, you're in the right place. Rural brothels and hole-in-the wall casinos sit side-by-side with Mormon churches and Basque cowboy culture. The Wild West lives on in old silver mining towns, while Vegas offers up its own brand of modern day lawlessness. Piercing blue lakes and snowy mountains in the Reno-Tahoe area seem a world away from the open vistas of Great Basin and the lonely curves of Highway 50, where fighter jets whiz overhead at the speed of light...or was that an alien ship?

Whether Nevada delights, excites, intrigues or confounds you (and possibly all at once!) you just can't say it's not interesting.

Best Places to Eat

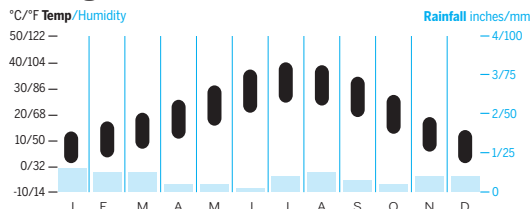
- » Wicked Spoon Buffet (p77)
- » DOCG Enoteca (p75)
- » L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon (p76)
- » Firefly (p78)
- » Old Granite Street Eatery (p100)

Best Places to Stay

- » Encore (p72)
- » Hard Rock (p74)
- » Golden Nugget (p74)
- » Peppermill (p100)
- » Tropicana (p72)

When to Go

Las Vegas



Apr–May

Southern parts of the state are balmy by day and pleasantly cool at night.

Dec

Las Vegas deals in excess, and they don't go more buck wild than at Christmas.

Jun–Aug

Yes, it's hot. Yet low season in Vegas means awesome hotel deals.

Vegas Planning

Planning a Vegas trip can be strangely counterintuitive, because Vegas refuses to play by the rules of most cities. First off: though parking is widely free, it's not time or cost-effective to rent a car unless you'll be doing a lot of day trips. Stick to taxis, walking and the good bus/monorail system while you're exploring the city. Dinner reservations are often necessary; note that many high-end restaurants, bars and nightclubs enforce a dress code.

DON'T MISS

Even if late nights, gambling and neon aren't your style, cut loose and cruise Las Vegas' infamous **Strip** for at least a day or two: chill out poolside at a 4-star resort, hit the clubs, and splurge on steak and martinis in Rat Pack style. While you're there, don't miss a **Cirque du Soleil** show.

In a state known for lovably bizarre small towns, the prize for the most unique is a toss-up between **Virginia City**, where the gold rush and the Wild West live on, or spirited **Elko**, with its Basque restaurants and cowboy poetry festival.

For unmatched outdoor bliss, **Lake Tahoe** offers fairytale ski slopes come winter and pristine summer beaches. If untamed wilderness strikes your fancy, you'll want to get lost in the vast **Great Basin National Park** or brave the eerily deserted **US Hwy 50**, nicknamed the 'Loneliest Road in America.'

Finally, the hottest place in Nevada is also home to one of the Southwest's most unique yearly events: the **Burning Man** festival, where iconoclasts, rebels, artists, soul-seekers and the irrepressibly curious celebrate and create in the shimmering heat of the Black Rock Desert.

TIME ZONE

Nevada is in the Pacific Time Zone.

Fast Facts

- » Nevada population: 2.7 million
- » Area: 109,800 sq miles
- » Sales tax: 6.85%
- » Las Vegas to Grand Canyon, AZ: 275 miles, 4½ hours

Resources

- » Nevada Commission on Tourism (☎800-638-2328; www.travelnevada.com)
- » Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (www.visitlasvegas.com)
- » VEGAS.com (www.vegas.com)
- » Cheapo Vegas (www.cheapovegas.com)

Tips for Drivers

- » Most drivers speed across Nevada on interstate highways I-80 or I-15.
- » It takes less than two hours to drive 125 miles from Primm, on the California state line, to Mesquite near the Utah border via I-15; the best overnight stop along this route is Las Vegas.
- » When driving across the state on I-80, Winnemucca and Elko are the most interesting places to pull off for a night's sleep.
- » Note that US Hwy 95 may be the quickest route between Las Vegas and Reno, but it's still a full day's drive without much to see or do along the way.
- » For road conditions, call ☎877-687-6237 or visit www.nvroads.com.