Viator Insider’s Guide

Las Vegas

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS, TIPS, & THE BEST THINGS TO SEE AND DO
Las Vegas was once a scrappy, anything-goes gambling town in the middle of the desert. Today, the Strip is world-famous for its over-the-top indulgence and serious pursuit of fun - from big-name shows and five-star dining to after-hours nightclubbing and the world’s most lavish hotels.

While Las Vegas has a reputation for debauchery and excess, it’s just as easy to explore Las Vegas on a budget or with kids in tow. Las Vegas is more than the massive casinos and the lights of the Strip. It’s also a popular gateway for excursions to Southwest hot spots like the Grand Canyon and the Mojave Desert, some of America’s most beautiful desert scenery.

In this guide we’ll show you the very best of what makes Sin City so thrilling, both on and off the Strip – so you can travel like an insider in Las Vegas!

Meet the Insiders

The former editor of Vegas Magazine, Abby loves everything about Las Vegas, from off-roading and flying in a fighter jet to 20-course meals of the finest food.

Jenny is Viator’s Regional Director North America Sales. She enjoys trying out new experiences in Vegas and loves living in one of the most vibrant, energetic cities in the world.
Las Vegas shows are nothing short of spectacular, with some of the glitziest curtain calls in the business. Heavyweights like Rod Stewart bring the house down at the Colosseum, and world-famous magician David Copperfield and impersonator Terry Fator (of "America’s Got Talent" fame) perform up and down the Strip. Some of the most popular options are the ever-expanding collection of Cirque du Soleil shows, including the romantic “O,” the captivating tribute show “Michael Jackson ONE,” and the upbeat “The Beatles: Love.”

“KÀ was my first Cirque du Soleil show and won’t be my last! I was completely blown away by it.”
-David B.

Browse all the shows in Las Vegas
Detour

Best Day Trip: Explore the Grand Canyon From Above and Below

The Grand Canyon’s dramatically layered colorful rock cliffs and gorges make it one of the most awe-inspiring sites in the US – and the most popular day trip from Vegas. Each rim provides a different experience and unique ways to explore. Reach the more remote and higher North Rim by plane on a Deluxe Air and Ground day tour that includes a hearty western-style lunch or stay overnight on a nearby ranch for more time to explore. The deeper South Rim can be seen by bus, airplane or helicopter, while the East Rim is the site of a popular 26-mile scenic drive.

Insider’s Tip

The West Rim is the most popular section of the Grand Canyon. It’s the closest rim to Las Vegas and it’s home to the Hualapai Tribe’s famous Skywalk. Take a helicopter ride from Vegas for the best views from the air, and then soak up the grandeur of the Grand Canyon from the see-through glass bridge 4,000 feet above the gorge.

See all Grand Canyon tours from Las Vegas
Grand Canyon Adventures

By Air
Taking a helicopter tour of the west rim of the Grand Canyon is a rite of passage for anyone traveling in the Southwest – and the best tours take off from Vegas. Look for Champagne lunch options upon landing in the canyon, plus Jeep tours, BBQs, and scenic luxury coach rides. The trip is 45 minutes each way by ‘copter; the journey can also be made by small plane.

By Water
The Grand Canyon was carved over a period of six million years by the mighty Colorado River, so it feels pretty special to take it all in from the water. River tours include a helicopter ride down to the canyon floor to board either a pontoon boat or river float or take an exciting turn white-water rafting on the Colorado River. Before heading back to Vegas, tours include tons of activities ranging from a cowboy cookout at the Hualapai Ranch to a bus tour of Guano Point and Eagle Point.

By Mule
Nothing takes you back to the days of the Wild West faster than an old-fashioned mule ride around the south rim of the magnificent Grand Canyon. The mules are trained and extremely safe, and their slow pace really lets you soak in the enormous beauty and sweeping panoramic views on the three-hour ride along the canyon’s edge.
Grand Canyon Adventures

By Foot

Guided hiking tours are an amazing way to take in the vastness of the Grand Canyon. A four-hour hike is offered from the town of Tusayan, Arizona, and shorter hikes are available as add-ons to many of the air tours. For the truly outdoorsy, there’s also a three-day camping trip that leaves out of Vegas – after spending one night each in Bryce Canyon, Zion and Grand Canyon national parks, hikers finish their trip with a helicopter tour of the South Rim before heading back to Vegas.

Overnight and Multi-Day Options

Self-drive packages in the Grand Canyon let visitors drive themselves down to the West Rim, with plenty of time to stop off at the jaw-dropping Hoover Dam before spending the night at Hualapai Ranch and choosing the next day’s activities. An overnight trip to the South Rim includes dinner in the El Tovar restaurant and a three-hour morning mule ride after a good night’s sleep at a nearby lodge.

Grand Canyon Weddings

For a truly lasting memory, the Grand Canyon West Rim Helicopter Wedding experience flies you and your beloved from Vegas to the Grand Canyon, where you’ll descend to a stunning bluff overlooking the Colorado River. As you say your vows and toast with champagne, a photographer will capture the moments against one of the most stunning backdrops in the world.
Best Nightlife Experience: Soar Above the Strip

While Las Vegas certainly sizzles during the day, nothing beats the lights of Sin City come nightfall. In a town where everything is over the top, there’s no better way to take in the miles of neon than from 25,000 feet above the Strip on a Las Vegas helicopter tour. Share a champagne toast before boarding a luxury chopper for unforgettable views of the glitz and glamour below. Flights depart throughout the evening so it’s easy to plan this “wow factor” treat around other activities, such as dinner or dancing. Skip the lines to some of the city’s hottest clubs on a Rock Star nightclub tour or with an all access nightclub pass.

Book a Las Vegas helicopter tour

“Vegas by night is spectacular. All the lights and sights, the Stratosphere Tower, the Eiffel Tower, the Bellagio Fountains...it’s the stuff dreams are made of.”

- Tillie W.
Say ‘I do’

Best Way to Tie the Knot: Get Married by Elvis

Las Vegas has more than earned its status as the “wedding capital of the world.” Thanks to cheap and easy-to-obtain marriage licenses, Sin City has played host to some storied weddings, from Elvis and Priscilla Presley to Frank Sinatra and Mia Farrow – plus the more than 100,000 people who are married here each year. Whether you are tying the knot, eloping, or renewing your vows, this town has a wedding option for you.

The most Vegas-worthy: a ceremony at Graceland Wedding Chapel. One of the oldest wedding chapels, it’s also the home of the “original” Elvis impersonator wedding. Packages vary, with Elvis able to give the bride away or sing at the ceremony.

Insider’s Tip

Off the Strip, wedding packages are available at the Grand Canyon, in the Valley of Fire, or even in a helicopter above the city’s dazzling lights.
Go Big

The Best Only-in-Vegas Activities: Live Out Your Childhood Dreams

When it comes to adventure of any kind, the sky’s the limit in Las Vegas! Thanks to the razzle-dazzle of the Strip and contrasting wide-open lands right outside of town, you can do just about anything here, from hard-core off-roading in the desert to being a fabulous rock star for a day. Dream experiences include driving a racecar on the Speedway or even learning to fly a fighter plane, taking the controls for flips and rolls before playing with G-forces during aerobatic stunts. Or, go back to your childhood days of playing with trucks as you operate real heavy-duty equipment like bulldozers and excavators!

“I have been fortunate to travel the world and do many exhilarating things, but the race car driving experience is one of the best things I have ever done.”

- JZ
Best Way to Experience Old Vegas: Explore Downtown and Fremont Street

From the nighttime excitement of Fremont Street to the only-in-Vegas museums, there's always something to do in Downtown Las Vegas. Once the only paved road in Vegas and home to the first casino, Fremont Street Experience now bursts with light shows, live music, and foot traffic as a massive outdoor mall topped by a barrel vault canopy.

Fremont Street and the surrounding area is also home to classic hotels such as Golden Nugget, Four Queens, and The Plaza. Don't miss the Neon Museum or the Mob Museum, a trip down Vegas's mafia-ruled memory lane.

Insider's Tip
The best guides in town and an up-close look at famous signs like the nuclear-cloud-themed Stardust hotel sign make a trip to the Neon Boneyard an absolute must.
Las Vegas locals love to brag that they have the best of both worlds – five-star entertainment on the Strip and the Southwest’s most majestic canyons and parks just a short drive away. Don’t miss out on the area’s off-Strip appeal! Take a break from the gambling (it’ll be there when you get back, we promise) and head outdoors.

You don’t have to go far to explore Red Rock, the stunning canyons 30 minutes west of the Strip where Las Vegans go to unwind. Hiking trails of all levels wind through beautiful rock formations and show off the wide-open spaces of the Mojave Desert.

Other exciting day trips include visiting Death Valley or Hoover Dam and Lake Mead, exploring the great outdoors on a three-day camping adventure through Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce Canyon and Monument Valley, getting really down and dirty on a tour of the Valley of Fire via buggy or ATV, or off-roading over rugged terrain to the historic El Dorado Canyon.

The Best Adventures in Vegas Happen Off the Strip
Best Aquatic Adventure:
White-Water Rafting

Though it's located in a desert, Las Vegas is close to incredible waterways that offer adrenaline-fueled rafting opportunities. Take a trip white water rafting through the Grand Canyon to tackle Class III to Class VI rapids, or raft calmer waters through the Black Canyon, where it’s possible to simply float along, stop for a swim, admire the canyon’s beauty, and look for wildlife.

Best Adrenaline Experience:
Skydiving

Suit up for one of the biggest rushes in Las Vegas: jumping out of a plane 15,000 feet above ground! In this tandem skydiving thrill, you'll free fall for nearly a minute, reaching speeds of 120 mph, before the parachute deploys and you float gently back to earth. Too timid? Experience a simulated freefall with indoor skydiving.

Best Crazy Transport:
Baja Buggies

These little four-wheelers of fury take on the rough desert terrain at high speed. Not for the faint of heart, this rough and tumble ride is featured in Rolling Stone as Vegas’s Best Near-Death Experience! For something slightly less intense, check out the Valley of Fire buggy tour, or go with an ATV or Hummer ride through the desert.
Shows for the Whole Family

Vegas calls itself the Live Entertainment Capital of the World, and there’s something for everyone – including kids. The little ones will love magic shows by the (children-appropriate) comedians Mike Hammer, Jeff Civillico, and Nathan Burton, or the funny pet tricks in Popovich Comedy Pet Theater. Or take them to the Blue Man Group or Recycled Percussion, to give them imaginative ideas for playing music at home.

Free Family Attractions

The best part about bringing the kids to Vegas is that a lot of the family-friendly attractions are absolutely free! They’ll love the Bellagio’s water show, where dancing fountains perform regularly all day and evening, and candy stores like Sugar Factory, where bedazzled lollipops are popular, and M&M’s World, where kids can have their names printed on their favorite flavors.

Family Adventures

Young animal lovers will love the exotic species at Shark Reef and Siegfried and Roy’s Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat or the Lion Habitat Ranch. Take budding thrill-seekers to the roller-coaster at New York, New York or enjoy the view from The High Roller, the world’s largest observation wheel.
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