

# How to Have the Best Time of Your Life in Las Vegas!

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## **Vegas Basics**

If you're planning a trip to Vegas in the near future there are a few basic things you should know. First things first, walking shoes are a must for any trip to Vegas. You will probably be spending a lot of time on your feet and will need shoes that can handle standing in lines and walking quite nicely.

Second, the weather in Vegas is fairly predictable. You are likely to experience rather cool nights, particularly during the months between October and April so bring some warm clothes. You should also be prepared for a lot of sunshine and pack copious amounts of sunscreen in order to protect your skin.

Remember that the times around holidays are often the busiest times in Vegas if you want to avoid the higher prices and larger crowds you should avoid booking during these times. And if those are the times you absolutely wish to stay and play in Vegas you should make plans and book well ahead of time to make sure you have your first choice in accommodations.

It is important to remember that Vegas is indeed a desert town and that you will need to drink plenty of water and moisturize more than you might be accustomed to. This is a much drier climate than many people experience in their day-to-day lives and the heat and dryness can sneak up on you for a double whammy if you aren't prepared.

If you're a golfer, you've found heaven and should come prepared. This means you should bring your best clubs along with you and be prepared to play a few rounds. You should probably also bring a nice set of dress clothes in order to catch some of the great shows that are always playing in Vegas.

While Vegas is famous for big spenders, it is quite possible to spend thriftily and have a nice vacation for two at around \$100 per day. At the other end of the spectrum, big spenders can drop thousands on one meal very easily. Pay attention to the places you are considering before you enter if you are on a limited budget.

If you're planning to stray far from your hotel or resort, it's a good idea if you plan to rent a car or drive your own. The distances here can be quite conceiving and you can easily loose track of time while enjoying yourself inside the many casinos.

Vegas is almost as famous for weddings as it is for Casinos. If you are hoping to get married Vegas style you have a lot of styles from which to choose and you are not by any means alone. More than 122,000 couples apply for marriage licenses in Vegas each year. The licensing fees for marriage in Vegas is around \$55 (this is the current rate, keep in mind that this rate is subject to change) and then there are the fees involved for the chapel you use, the services offered, etc. You can choose to go as informal and small or as bold and lavish as you can afford.

One of the most important things to remember about Vegas is like the new commercials claim, "What happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas". So let your hair down and have some fun during your time here and be sure to make plans for your return trip.

This can be a wonderful vacation experience for you whether you are planning marriage, a golf smorgasbord, a gambling festival, to see your favorite act, or just to spend time with the family hanging out around the pool. Your trip to Vegas is what you make of your trip to Vegas. I suggest you have as much fun as possible. Enjoy the sights, watch the shows, enjoy the many great buffets, and spend some time at the hotel spa relaxing and rejuvenating as you prepare to go back home and face the outside world yet again.

### **The Vegas Experience**

Vegas stands out like a jewel across the desert. The bright lights can be seen from great distances and act as a beacon bringing in droves of visitors in search of riches, romance, and a myriad of other goals year after year. If the lights weren't enough from a distance, once you've entered Vegas you will discover that the lights and sounds are even more pronounced up close and personal. Vegas is probably the ultimate experience in sound and light. If you're not hearing the chinking of slots or music from the Elvis impersonators you are hearing chapel bells from someone getting married along the strip.

Whether you are coming to Vegas for the casinos and hopes of finding fame and fortune, the fabulous shows and big name headliners, the wonderful food that is one of the biggest sins to be found in this city, golf, marriage and happily ever after, or the nightlife that has earned Vegas the title of 'Sin City'. You are well on your way to an experience you are unlikely to forget.

While Vegas has not always been thought of us an appropriate vacation destination for those with families, this city is really trying to mend its ways and foster a more family-friendly reputation. They are even developing resorts and hotels with kids and family entertainment in mind. From theme park like atmospheres to everything in between the Vegas hotels of today are marketing to a much younger audience.

If you haven't checked out some of the newer hotel and resort experiences in Vegas, perhaps now is the ideal time in which to do so. There are so many fun ways to enjoy your time in Vegas that the problem isn't choosing which casino to visit or which hotel you want to stay in, it's deciding which attractions you must see and which attractions you can actually live without.

In order to attract visitors hotels and resorts are going to further and further extremes and levels of competition. Some of these hotels have even gone to the extent of bringing thrill rides into the mix in an effort to attract new guests and thrill seekers. If it isn't rides that are being offered it's the biggest shows and brightest stars to perform for your pleasure. With the tight competition among casinos for your business it's hard to imagine just how much money these hotels and casinos are bringing in each and every year but you can rest

assured they wouldn't be constantly building, upgrading, and offering more and more features and services if it wasn't a highly profitable endeavor for them.

The fierce competition among hotels and casinos is good news to some extent for you as a potential guest. The tightness of the competition keeps the prices relatively affordable and allows you to pick and choose which hotel you want according to the services and amenities they offer rather than by the prices of the rooms. In fact, if you find another hotel that you aren't as interested in for less money, try bartering with the hotel you prefer. It is very possible to get a lower price by going back and forth between two or three competing hotels.

Saving money is a great idea in Vegas, the more money you save on hotel accommodations, the more money you'll have to spend on the entertainment of choice. Also consider some of the 'perks' offered by hotels when considering the price of the rooms. Some of the perks will include complimentary breakfast buffets or lunch and dinner buffets. Compare the price of buying breakfast to the price difference in the room before you make your ultimate decision. Some of them offer show tickets or discounts such as buy one get one free offers for attractions that may have been on your itinerary at any rate. It's always good to shop for the best bargain and Vegas is one of those cities where it can't really hurt to ask for a better deal.

### **Vegas for the Eternal Planner**

Are you a gambler? Seriously, do you take your chances on everything or are you a careful planner? Do you through caution to the wind with solid faith that everything will work out in the wind or do you try to control every aspect of the environment around you. I've noticed that in this world there are those that seem born to gamble, to take chances and take risks and those that agonize over the slightest and smallest of decisions often second guessing themselves into oblivion and back again before ultimately deciding to do that which they truly wish to do.

There are people who are far too capricious with lady luck and those who harbor no illusions about her fickle nature. Whichever type of person you are, there is a game for you to play in Vegas. Yes, even those who don't gamble and aren't willing to risk a single penny can find something fun and fabulous to do and enjoy during their stay in this great city.

Vegas is beginning to transform itself from "Sin City" to a more respectable place to have and bring children. There will always be the shows that this city is so famous for but they are often tempered with afternoon magic shows, clowns, and music reviews that honor performers from innocent (and not so innocent) days gone by. Where else on earth could you see Elvis Presley walking next to Marilyn Monroe and Diana Ross? Where else on earth can you see a clown walking around almost (if not) 24 hours out of each and every day? There are so many strange and wonderful things to see and do in this city that even if you've never set foot inside a casino and still have no intentions of doing so, there are still many, many things you can find to keep you entertained and happy.

In addition to the many shows, the shopping in Vegas is almost as good as it is in Milan, New York, and Paris. There are thrill rides that are decidedly not for the faint of heart and great shows and experiences to keep all members of the family happy and entertained for days to come. There are museums, state parks, and the beautiful backdrop of desert scenery. There are weddings on every corner and new beginnings at every turn. This is a city of infinite possibilities that go far beyond the doors of any casino.

If you're not sure what you'd like to do in Vegas, my first suggestion is that you find a spa that will let you hide out from the world for your entire first day. Allow yourself to be pampered and primped and treated completely and utterly like the prince or princess you are deep down inside. Once you've begun to really relax and are ready to think about the many options that abound. Consider your budget and choose your activities according to your spending abilities. There are actually enough free activities in Vegas to keep you busy for at least 3 days if not 4 or more (depending on your interests and how many of the paid adventures you'd like to participate in).

Beyond that, the problem for many lies in deciding how much money to spend where and how much money you are willing to leave up to fate, lady luck, and the mad, mad whims of man.

### **How to Really Break Even in Vegas**

If you're thinking about a Vegas Vacation you are probably thinking about casinos. Most people who have ever gambled harbor no fantasies of striking it rich when going and playing in casinos. Most of us know the ultimate goal is to go in, play a while, have some fun, get some comps, and go home with about what you walked in with.

Many who gamble on a regular basis do not only bring in a certain amount of money and do not mix gambling money with money that is earmarked for other things. There are a few things that those who are new to the world of gambling can do in order to avoid spending more than you intended. Anyone who has spent much time in a casino will tell you that it is easy to get your money mixed up and end up spending every dime you walked in with thinking you had more money hidden elsewhere.

That being said there is a profound difference in a casual gambler and someone that is willing and expecting to come in and make a hefty investment in the casino. These investments sometimes pay off big time for those who can afford to lose the money. They also can end up costing them big time and taking a while to recover. I recommend starting light.

Hopefully these tips will help you go home with a little money in your pocket.

- 1) Set a spending limit for each day and night of your stay. This sounds simple enough but it you'd be surprised at how difficult this bargain you've made with yourself can be to keep.
- 2) Bring only that amount of money into the casino with you and bring it in cash.

- 3) Lock all other ATM, Debit, and credit cards in your room safe along with any traveler's checks and other cash that you have. This prevents the temptation to get one more twenty or fifty until they are all gone. This sounds like a little bit of overkill and people often think they have plenty of self control but there is something about a casino, I swear you sometimes lose every bit of common sense you had when you walk in the door. This prevents you from getting in over your head and taking desperate measures.
- 4) Set a time limit for your casino fun and when that time limit is up for the evening/day get up from the table and leave the casino whether you are on the hottest winning streak of your life or not. Winning streak ultimately ends at some point it is better to leave on a high note and have a little extra money to play with the next night (or better yet to take home with you). Leaving at a set time prevents you from getting over tired and making poor decisions based on the altered state of being sleep deprived.
- 5) Win and lose graciously. It will earn you a lot more respect from staff and the other players and you may find them wishing you luck because of your graciousness. In Vegas you can never have too much luck but woe to those whose luck has run out.

Believe it or not, these five things can save you more money and win you more friends than almost anything other than a super hot winning streak.

### **Good Family Fun in Vegas**

If you are looking for some fun things to do in Las Vegas with or without the family, this should keep you busy for the better part of your travels. Keep in mind that Vegas is a city about lights and action most of the attractions will have on or other if not both of these elements. Enjoy the bright lights of this big city and have as much fun as you can possibly muster during your stay.

The High Roller at the Stratosphere Hotel is a roller coaster, which at 909 feet above ground is the world's highest (keep in mind that competition is fierce among coaster makers and that is subject to change). This roller coaster consists of more than 800 feet of track and offers some sharply banking turns at around 32 miles an hour for your coaster fun and enjoyment. The cost for one trip on this coaster is \$5 and passes may be purchased for the day (height restrictions apply).

The Nevada Zoological and Botanical Park is another great way to spend the day. While this is by no means the world's largest zoo it is a nice place to take your kids and visit the wildlife (well some wildlife that isn't located on the strip at any rate) of Las Vegas. Some of the animals you might see include chimpanzees (usually a hit with the little ones), emus, ostriches, wallabies, and flamingos. You can also choose to take a full or half day eco tour of the desert. These tours give you the opportunity to learn to view the desert a little bit differently and are a great educational experience disguised as fun for your children.

What would a stay at the Venetian Hotel and Casino be without a gondola ride? You do not however have to stay at the Venetian in order to experience this pleasure, nor do you have to venture a transatlantic flight. For an authentic gondola experience you only need

to travel as far as the Venetian Hotel and Casino. You will float under bridges as your gondolier serenades you with the sounds of Venice. You can choose an outdoor gondola ride when the weather permits. The outdoor rides are only marginally less expensive and are still quite nice (they might even be preferable on a chilly desert night). Children 12 and under are very inexpensive passengers and if you are traveling with your partner you can opt for a romantic 2 passenger gondola for an added fee. Reservations must be made in person and can only be made the same day beginning at 9 a.m. for the indoor gondola ride and 10 a.m. for the outdoor ride.

If you're old enough to remember the commercials that asked if it was live or it was Memorex then you will understand that reference when it comes to Madame Tussauds Las Vegas. Where else can you play a round of golf with Tiger, sail the seas with Captain Jack Sparrow, marry George Clooney, become a playboy bunny, and sing along side The King? You will see some of Hollywood's brightest stars both living and living memories at Madame Tussauds have fun meeting your favorites. This is a must see stop on your trip to Vegas and will have the entire family rolling with laughter, be sure to bring the camera along for this one.

Vegas might have been a little slow to see the light, but this city is really working to make this a fun place to be for the entire family and it is slowly building a nice selection of activities that don't directly involve gambling or the casinos. The casinos, recognizing good business sense when they see it have been the pioneers of many of these family oriented activities in hopes of encouraging more guests to come back to the city. Be sure to check out all the wonderfully fun things there are to do with the family during your Vegas stay.

### **Fabulous Vegas Freebies**

Anyone that knows me knows that I'm a huge fan of freebies and living frugally. What self respecting Vegas visitor would ever pay full price if they didn't have to or leave this great city of chance without getting something for nothing. One of the best services I can provide my fellow man is the ability to share these fabulous free finds with anyone that is interested in what I have to offer.

This is better than a 'tell all' book on who did it and why isn't it? The Bellagio Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers a delight to the eyes of the beholder. It is a true delight to all the senses to see the sights and inhale the fragrance of these gardens that display seasonal highlights in plants, flowers, and produce. Each season offers new delights to the senses and there is no admission fee to view these beautiful floral arrangements. This is a great place for a photo op to help you remember your time in Las Vegas.

Have you ever seen water dance? If not, then while you're visiting the Botanical Gardens at the Bellagio, you'll want to stick around long enough to witness the fountains of Bellagio. These shows consist of more than 1000 fountains that are literally dancing in choreographed unison with light to the music (you may be surprised or quite possibly

impressed by the extent and variety of the music play list for this particular show). This is also free to witness and occurs every half hour or so after 3:00 PM throughout the week and after noon on the weekends.

If you're looking for more great fun that is free for the entire family to enjoy, head on over to Circus Circus for Circus Acts-this show is free to watch and provides the audience with the thrills and chills of the big top day after day. You can watch different acts as they perform throughout the day at the half hour mark between the hours of 11 AM and Midnight.

Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall offers a stunning display of water and laser lights daily at 2:00, 6:00, 8:00, and 10:00. This show is called "Sunset Stampede" and takes place in a 9-story atrium that hosts a natural habitat of live trees, greenery, waterfalls, and trails.

Another great free attraction in Vegas is the Masquerade Show in the Sky. The show is free to watch, if you choose to participate by riding one of the floats, the cost is \$12.95 (that is subject to change). This experience is very reminiscent of Carnivale in Brazil. The floats are literally suspended from the ceiling for the sake of this show which is considered one of the best free shows that Vegas has to offer.

Perhaps one of the most interesting freebies is the Silverton Hotel and Casino's Aquarium. This attraction is completely free to the public and a fascinating thrill to children big and small (even mom's find this one fascinating). Enjoy watching both salt water and freshwater fish in their natural habitats and enjoy the ambiance of your surroundings.

The Sirens of Ti is a great sexy pirates tale that shows at Treasure Island TI daily as the weather allows. This is one great show that the kids, especially little boys that think pirates are the bomb and big boys that enjoy watching ships sink and sirens do what sirens do, will all agree to enjoy together.

Free entertainment is often the best entertainment that can be found. There are so many things to do and see that cost literal fortunes. It is nice to know that there are so many thrilling adventures available for little or no cost to explore while visiting Las Vegas. If you spend wisely, you will discover that you can enjoy the better part of most days filled with activity without breaking your wallet or becoming close personal friends with any creditors.

### **More Fantastic Vegas Freebies**

If you're looking for some great free things to do in Vegas, there are some amazing treats for you and the family awaiting. Many casinos in an effort to bring in more and more business are offering elaborate shows free for the family in an effort to bring more warm bodies into their casinos and out of their competitors. This is a win win situation for

tourists and locals alike who are seeking entertainment that will leave a little money in their pockets to spend at the casinos (which is exactly what the casinos were hoping for).

One of the great shows that is available free to families is the Fall of Atlantis Show at Caesar's Palace. This particular show is a laser, water, and light show that features wonderful animatronics action. Also notice that the show's platform is actually a salt-water aquarium. You can see divers feed the fish each day at 1:15 and 5:15 while another staff member is on hand to answer any questions you may have and explain a little about the facility. You can actually take a tour of the facility at 3:15 each day. Enjoy watching the gods as they entertain you rather than us entertaining them.

The Cambridge Community Center offers a free movie and popcorn each Saturday at 1:00. Each week a different movie will be shown and children under 12 must bring an adult to keep them company. You can check out which movie will be playing by checking out the posting on Friday.

Another great Vegas freebie is daily performances of the Hawaiian Marketplace Island Performers. These performances take place throughout the day from 11:00 am until 10:30 pm and feature wonderful dances that will remind you of the island. See hula dancers, fire and knife dancers, musicians, lei makers, and animatronic birds. The performances are free and take place at the Hawaiian Marketplace.

For the Elvis fan in all of us you can see Pete Vallee perform as Big Elvis from Monday to Thursday with shows that take place at 3:00 and 5:00 pm at the Barbary Coast Casino. The admission for this show is free and he brings in quite a crowd with his vocal talent and heartfelt renditions of Elvis' ballads.

M & M World should need no introduction. It is a wonderful and yummy place to visit. More importantly it is a free place to visit. This museum is open Sunday through Thursday from 9 am until 11 pm and Friday and Saturday from 9 am until midnight. This really is a neat attraction to visit and is much more than initially meets the eye. Take a stroll, look around and make sure you see all there is to see or you just might miss something fantastic.

For another sweet freebie, you really must make plans to visit Ethel M's Chocolate Factory. The admission for this self-guided tour is free as is the first sample, but who can eat just one chocolate? Be sure not to leave this tour empty handed, as you'll be kicking yourself once you get back to the room and have a craving for something sinfully sweet. In addition to the chocolate factor is the Botanical Cactus Garden that is open from 8:30 until 7:00 daily. Another great thing to see on this particular tour is the Living Machine, which as waste-consuming ecologies that turns 32,000 gallons wastewater each day into water that is clean enough to use for irrigation purposes.

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of History, which is located on the University of Nevada Las Vegas Campus, is another place to go and learn while being entertained. Admission is Monday through Friday from 8:00 until 4:45 and on Saturday from 10:00 until 2:00.

Admission is free and the museum is closed on all state and federal holidays. This museum offers a great display of Western culture and the history of ancient Mexico.

No matter what your specific interests are there are plenty of wonderful things to see and do in Las Vegas that do not put a strain on the pocketbook at all.

### **Eating Cheap in Vegas**

A Las Vegas vacation for many people is an experience to enjoy 24/7 food, drink, and gambling. In fact that is the very reason that many people visit Vegas and it is also one of the main reasons that the city of Las Vegas and the gambling empires that have been built, crumbled, and been rebuilt again and again have had many of the rocky rides that offer more bumps, dips, twists, and turns than you will find on many of the roller coasters that also inhabit this great city.

Las Vegas has so much more than that to offer its visitors. Gone are the days when gambling was the sole income of casinos or that casinos were the only businesses in town. Vegas is dressing up a bit in recent years and working oh so slowly and diligently towards changing its image.

This city of bright lights and empty promises is quickly becoming a city that offers world-class entertainment and excitement to its residents and its visitors. Las Vegas has some of the best dining on the planet. Many of the wonderful dining experiences are associated with the casinos of the area but they would not be as successful as they are if there was not a reason to keep the tables full. Diners don't tend to dine if the food isn't good and for a restaurant a bad review will travel around the world three times before ten good reviews will make it once. This means that the world-class fine dining restaurants really must earn their stripes in order to bring in the business required in order to stay in business.

I personally tend to look for the dining bargains and that is what this particular article will focus on. There many great places to eat in Vegas that will not have you busting open your piggy bank. Now I am a steak and potato kind of man so I always try to look for a good steak bargain. I love Arizona Charlie's Boulder Sourdough Café. Here you can get a 14-ounce Porterhouse for \$7.99 this includes soup or salad, choice of potato or rice (5 pm-11 pm), veggies, and rolls. You can also get spaghetti and meatballs for \$6.49 and Chicken Penne Primavera or fried chicken for \$6.99. This is good food at its best at a price that easy on the budget.

This is just one of the many places a person or family can get a relatively good meal inexpensively. Not all great bargains involve steaks but there are many great food bargains to have. Be aware of coupons you may find around town offering two for one food purchases or dollars off of entree purchases. It may not seem like much or two but if you can manage to save \$2 per two people for 10 meals during your stay, that adds up pretty quickly to \$40 that could buy a little time on the slot machines or tickets to one of the many great shows.

Cheap dining by no means indicates a lack of quality. While it may not be as sophisticated as some offerings, you might find that a lot of the cheaper places to eat actually have far superior flavor to many of the more expensive dining experiences and it's just nice to get away from buffet food once in a while during your Vegas stay. You can only endure so many buffets before they all begin looking, and tasting just alike.

### **Vegas Shows are Big Draw for Tourists**

Other than gambling, one of the first things that many people think of when they think of Vegas are the many shows that are available to watch. Vegas rakes in a fortune each year off the shows that are offered each and every night. There are major headliners and limited appearances that make the shows the wonderful draws for tourists and locals alike to spend a night out on the town and the shows, dinner, and ultimately the casinos.

The goal in almost every effort put forth by the casino parent companies is to get more bodies in the casinos. The more warm bodies that are warming the seats the more money that is filling the coffers. The casinos like to bring in the money and they are willing to spend a little in order to make a lot. The acts that are highlights in this city are well established for the most part and enjoy their celebrity, their fame, and most often for the headliners, the fact that there is some sort of permanence to their existences and they are not required to travel and spend countless hours on the road away from their families and loved ones.

You will find the ultra famous rubbing elbows with those who are barely known and occasionally some impersonators. In Vegas and most of them are only too happy to be living the life they've chosen in this great city of lights. If you have the opportunity to check out one of the many shows in Vegas I believe you will find that these shows are amazingly well put together and quite entertaining. This isn't your small town little theatre or your community college stage. These shows are professionally done and in business to make money-and make money they do.

The shows bring in clients from all walks of life and financial backgrounds you will find the rich and famous sitting next to the middle class in the audience and all will be either laughing, crying, or cringing together. The shows are designed to elicit different responses from the audiences and to appeal to a wide cross section of the population.

If you are in the market for a Vegas show it is recommended that you book around the time or at the same time you book your hotel reservations in order to be sure you can get the tickets. Many of these shows sell out months in advance and for months at a time. The more popular the show the bigger price the tickets will demand and the bigger following the shows will have.

I also encourage you to take advantage of some of the free opportunities and events within the casinos where the shows you are planning to see occur in order to get an idea of the lay of the land before the time your show is scheduled to start. You should probably be early for the shows you wish to see and plan to stand in line a little while.

While shows are one of the biggest draws for people to visit Las Vegas and some people plan their entire trips just for the sake of catching one show, keep in mind that there are plenty more things to do in Vegas than simply watching a show or two. Take advantage of the many opportunities for entertainment that await you during your Vegas vacation.

### **Great Vegas Shows for the Family**

While Las Vegas is known for many of its shows and not all of them family friendly, it's great to know that there are still a few shows going on that offer a little something for nearly every member of the family. Even some of us grown up viewers aren't as interested in the shock value of many Vegas shows and prefer much tamer forms of entertainment when enjoying our downtime from work and responsibility.

If you never outgrew a love of magic or if you have children of your own that you are hoping to introduce to the wonderment that illusion can bring then Lance Burton, Master Magician has just the show for you to see. He performs at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas Tuesday through Saturday. After you've seen the show, be sure to enjoy the magic of the Monte Carlo.

If you loved the Rat Pack, there is no show in Vegas you'd rather see than the Tribute to Frank, Sammy, Joey, and Dean, which shows at the Greek Isles Casino on Saturdays through Thursdays. This is the way to see the Rat Pack back in action and remember the great music and entertainment of days gone by. While this is a family friendly show, children must be over the age of five in order to attend.

If you are a product of the 70's and remember ABBA and other musical experiences long gone by you'll have a true appreciation for the magic of this love story that is built around the music of ABBA, which is playing at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Las Vegas. You can see the show Sunday through Thursday at 7:30 and on Saturdays at 6:00 and 10:00 PM. This is another show that requires children be at least five years of age in order to attend.

Legends in Concert at the Imperial Palace offers a great night of entertainment with impersonators to the stars of today and days long past. This is not a lip-synching show but actual singer and dancers impersonating the best. Sit back, watch, be amazed, and see if you can tell the difference. This show is friendly to children age 2 and over and is a show that is generally very well enjoyed by children of this age. You can watch at 7:30 and 10:00 PM Monday through Saturday.

Treasure Island is offering the wonderful show of Mystere by Cirque du Soleil. This show has delighted audiences around the world and is sure to please even the most difficult to impress in your group. Watch as colors explode right before your eyes. This act consists of 72 dancers, singers, and acrobats along with a somewhat misguided clown. Enjoy this show with the family for a wonderful night of entertainment. This show plays Friday-Tuesday with shows at 7:30 and 10:30.

Caesar's Palace presents Celine Dion to the delight of her fans everywhere. This show plays at 8:30 Tuesdays through Saturdays and is open to children and adults 5 years and older. This show is more than just an ordinary concert, it is a musical experience led by one of the best in the business. If you have the time, this is one show that absolutely should be on your itinerary.

It really doesn't matter what particular music tastes and preferences you have, there is probably a show somewhere in Vegas that will appeal to the music that you hold dear. If you have family with you on your Vegas excursion you owe it to the entire family to find a show that you can all enjoy together. If you have youngster in your group there are shows that you can very much enjoy together, the problem is that these shows will most likely be without loud music as there is a fear of damaging the ears of little ones with loud noises often involved in the musical venues.

### **Vegas for Animal Lovers**

Wildlife is something that big and little kids from all over the world find fascinating. Whether the wildlife is marine, mamma, reptilian, or bird in nature-even insects, kids find intriguing and love to explore. In Las Vegas there are many casinos that not only offer shows that center around animals but also offer shows where animals are the stars. This is one of the few cities in the world that will offer quite the variety of fun, adventure, activity, and fantasy to its visitors. It's a good idea to sit back and enjoy as much of that as floats your boat while you're here.

Some of the great animal offerings you can explore and enjoy while visiting Las Vegas include the Southern Nevada Zoological-Botanical Park. This zoo makes up in quality what it lacks in size. This is a relatively small zoo but offers some rare offerings that make this zoo very much worth visiting. Among the rarities at this particular zoo is one of the last families of Barbary apes in the U.S. In addition to these creatures, enjoy watching wallabies, flamingos, chimps, emus, and exotic reptiles.

Zoos aren't the only businesses in the business of housing animals. It seems that many museums are cashing in on this act as well. Even if some of the shows are offered free the casinos are definitely cashing in on the big rewards that hosting these animal acts offers. The Mirage is home to quite a selection of animals among the offerings here is a White Tiger Habitat at the Mirage. These magnificent creatures are extinct in the wild. Visitors to this free exhibit are fortunate to be able to view them in their snow-white surroundings (this allows them some degree of security and the ability to 'blend in' with their environment).

In addition to the White Tiger Habitat, the Mirage is also home to the Mirage Aquarium. This aquarium is home to more than 1000 animals (60 species) that ordinarily would call coral reefs their home. The coral reef within the aquarium is one hundred percent artificial and there is no actual coral reef in this aquarium at all.

The Mirage is also home to the Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat. I guess you could say that really do love their animals over there. The goal of this project is not only to provide a safe environment for dolphins but also to educate visitors on the important roll in the ecosystem that these wonderful animals have. The admission to the Secret Garden is \$15 for adults. For \$500 you can become a trainer for the day if you are over the age of 13. This is a wonderful experience for those that are willing to pay the price.

Mandalay Baby Shark Reef offers glimpses of some rare and not so rare marine life. There are free aquarium experiences around the city but none of them actually quite compare to the scope of the Shark Reef, which is one of the largest exhibits of its kind in North America. The Shark Bay is open daily from 10 am until 11 pm and adult tickets are \$15.95 while children's tickets are \$10.95 (4 and under may enter free). This is probably one of the best things to do and see in Las Vegas and well worth the price of admission.

This is only a small taste of the wonderful animal centered activities and events that take place in Vegas each and every day. Animal lovers beware, there is much to see and do here.

### **Vegas Magic for the Family**

One thing you may or may not have noticed about Vegas is that shows are more often than not, not made for family viewings. In fact, many of the most popular shows are decidedly not appropriate for children and younger audiences. Vegas has often become synonymous with sin or at the very least sex. While that is something that most definitely draws the box office dollars it is not something that makes watching shows in Vegas easy if you have children. Magic shows, however are usually a fairly safe bet from great entertainment and less adult oriented content.

One thing that is certain about children and shows though is that most children not only love magic, they also find it utterly and completely fascinating. David Copperfield is one of the most recognized names when it comes to magic and illusion. Your children will be delighted from the first act through the end of the show. This is one show that you won't have to worry about sending negative messages to your children nor will you have to worry about being bored for the sake of your children with this show either. His show may ultimately be the start of something magical in your own children, you never know. Check with the MGM Grand for show nights and times as this show plays two weeks every month but those weeks vary.

For a little more Xtreme Magic you should check out Dirk Arthur's show at Tropicana. This show has no age restrictions and the costs are \$29 for table seating and \$34 for booth seats this show has all kinds of wildlife from beautiful women, lavish dancers, Bengal tigers, a white tiger, and leopards. This show is a very exciting show that displays the art of illusion in a rather extreme form (kind of like extreme sports, this is extreme magic). Show times are 2 and 4 pm Saturday through Thursday.

For a little more magic, the Rick Thomas show at the Stardust Hotel has a little bit of magic for everyone. From the exquisitely choreographed moves and the help of a few showgirl type dancers he has created one of the best daytime shows in Vegas. Not only is Rick Thomas an excellent magician and illusionist he is also an extremely talented showman. And anything that can keep the rapt attention of little ones (in addition to their quiet) is a really good thing while on vacation. You can catch his show Thursday through Tuesday at 2 and 4 pm in the Wayne Newton Theatre of the Stardust Hotel.

While these shows are hardly inclusive of every magic act playing in Vegas these acts are very much the ones worth mentioning. If you haven't seen any of these guys perform you really have no idea what you've been missing. David Copperfield is truly the Master but he very well may have some serious competition along the horizon.

Magic is one of those things that the child in all of us never really manages to outgrow. We see it in brief moments when we hold our children for the first time, when we see their eyes light up on Christmas, when we feel the beauty and perfection of one perfect snowflake. Magic is all around us and so easily missed, there is nothing quite like visiting one of these shows to remind us not only of the magic we're missing each and every day as well as the wonder that we left behind somewhere in our own childhoods.

### **Side Splitting Vegas Shows**

If you're looking for a great laugh, a great drama, a great show, then Vegas is definitely the way to go. One of the great things about Vegas is all the other great things you get to do while waiting on show time. This is a great city for vacations and you rest rather secure in the knowledge that you can taste a little of the sin in Sin City without getting your hands smacked. At least you can always look. While the shows mentioned here will be rather tame when compared to some of the racier Vegas shows they are still quite edgy and great fun for everyone in the audience

The first show worth mentioning is one that is appealing on so many levels. The Sopranos last Supper is a musical comedy that offers a four course dinner. You'll laugh, you might cry, you'll have a little wine and crack some jokes. It's entertainment at its best with an intimate cast of 20 and a captive audience. Seriously if you're looking for a great Vegas experience this night of singing, dancing, and Italian food in an audience participation driven show is a great way to enjoy just that. Tickets for this splendid dinner and show start at \$95 and are a real bargain when you consider all you're getting for your money. The show lasts a little over two hours and your sides will probably be a little sore from all the laughing and dancing. Show time at Aladdin is 6 pm Thursday through Tuesday and Wednesdays are dark.

The Las Vegas Hilton is home to Menopause the Musical. If you're looking for an irreverent look at growing older as women in the world of today, then look no further. This show has won rave reviews all over the world as one of the most honest looks at life before, after, and surviving "the change". This is definitely a must see for every woman facing--ahem--29 in Las Vegas.

If you want a glimpse of dysfunctional America check out Tony N Tina's Wedding playing at Rio. This show plays nightly at 7 pm and it might be a good idea to warn you that you aren't merely watching the show with this one. You are the show! For the price of your entertaining the actors you'll get to have a nice meal, dance a few dances, drink champagne, toast the lovely couple and have a little cake. If you've ever been to a big Italian wedding you know just what to expect so sit back and bring your funny bone.

With so many wonderful selections for family fun, adult oriented, and sometimes just plain grown up fun it's often hard to pick and choose between so many wonderful shows and experiences and settle on one or two that you feel is absolutely the must see show or review that you won't regret not having taken the time to see during your stay in Vegas. Of course you could always go ahead and make the reservations for your next trip and make plans to see the shows you missed this time. The problem is that there are so very many shows and only a limited time that you will be around to see them-and for some a limited amount of money in order to fund the tickets. Pick and chose and be happy with the choice you made. Focus on the wonderful shows you saw and the great time you had and you'll find that you forget about the ones that got away over time.

### **The Sexy Side of Vegas Shows**

If you've never been to Vegas or experienced one of the many Vegas shows that are available to behold, let me be the first to tell you: they are not created equal. People will choose to see shows for many different reasons and there is no right or wrong reason to see any Vegas show unless you are simply determined to hate it from the beginning. Even then you might find yourself to be either mildly or wildly surprised.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the time to mention some of the wonderfully sexy shows that are prominent in Vegas at the moment. There are quite a few and will appeal to audiences on different levels and for different reasons, well some of them will at any rate while most of them offer universal appeal to certain members of the audience it is important to remember the statement I made earlier, not all shows are created equally and it doesn't really matter how beautifully endowed the members of the cast are if the show has no wit, humor, drama, or interesting points about it.

Les Foiles Bergere is one of the best examples of a classic Vegas style show or at least my interpretation of what a Vegas style show should be. This show literally sizzles with its sex appeal and is a great show to kick off your stay in Vegas. You'll be ready to roll the dice after seeing this show for sure. There are generally two shows offered. The 7:30 show is covered so that all ages can enjoy the show all others feature topless numbers and request that audience members be 16 and over. The show can be seen at 7:30 and 10:00 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Tuesday and Friday offer one show only at 8:30 and Sundays are dark. This is a can't miss show and a real hit for the Tropicana Las Vegas.

If you want to go even more darkly erotic, John Stagliano's Fashionistas is definitely the route you should take. This is a very erotic experience everything about this show simply sizzles. Not only is the choreography and costume design stellar, this show has some of the best music to be found in Vegas with songs by Evanescence, Madonna, Led Zeppelin, Lords of Acid, and Crystal Method.

La Femme, playing at the MGM Grand is a rather unique show, even for Vegas, in that it literally celebrates that artistry of the nude. The overall affect is a stunning visual display of light, color, sound, flesh, and dance. You must be 18 or older to attend this particular show and there is a dress code for the performances, which is business casual so come dressed appropriately. Shows are Wednesday through Monday at 8:00 and 10:30 pm. If you want to see the ultimate water cooler show, this one is definitely the show to see.

There are so many shows in Vegas that it would be virtually impossible to mention each and every one. These are each excellent examples of the sexiest shows that Vegas has to offer. Only you can decide what you are comfortable seeing and if you're curious try one of the shows that offers an optional covered showing rather than making yourself uncomfortable or putting yourself in the position to be uncomfortable. The main purpose of going to Vegas is to enjoy yourself. Do what makes you happy.

### **The Romance of Vegas**

A trip to Las Vegas is an experience of its own. No matter what time of year you visit there will be some manner of climate that will be new in some way, shape, form, or fashion to those who are visiting. There will be some star in the night sky that seems a little less bright when compared to the glam and glitz that defined Las Vegas and what has become known as "The Strip".

Your trip to Las Vegas will be no more or no less than you make it. The problem with gambling destinations such as this is that if you spend your entire allotment of funds in the first few hours you are in for a very long and quite boring and possibly hungry vacation. Self control is not what this particular city is famous for and yet it requires a great deal of self control in order to really win at the games that are most often played in this city.

From the bright and glittery nightlife full of dancing girls, flowing booze, and the eternal ringing of the slot machine, Las Vegas is a city that was quite literally built on broken dreams. If you do not realize this going in, the chances are rather great that you might learn the lesson the hard way. This is in no way whatsoever meant to discourage you from visiting or from taking the gamble in the casinos. That is after all the main attraction for a visit to this city. The warning is a friendly reminder that in all things moderation is not really all that terrible a thing. If you're going to risk at all, at least wait till you're getting ready to head out of town rather than doing it your first night in.

Las Vegas has a deeply interesting history to it, the kind of history that legends are made of. There have been Hollywood movies, a great deal of novels, hints, and innuendos and

even more plain out speculation on some of the central characters that have come and gone during the process of building this glittering desert icon. Beneath the lights and the glitter lies a heart that built this oasis from the desert sand.

If you get the chance during your visit find out all you can about the history of this city. I think it will make the trip that much more meaningful to you and might romanticize your time in the city a little bit too. Plus, for your guys, the girls love a good story and if you can woo them with grand stories of Vegas lore, then perhaps you will find a little luck of your own during your visit.

Through the years Las Vegas has had both vocal critics and outright devotees, they've legalized prostitution, kept gaming alive and well where others had failed to do so and stood against and corrupted more local and national government officials than anyone might ever care to admit. If one had all the facts about this city and it's oh so interesting history I would certainly love to read this tell all book.

Even more than the past, the presence of Las Vegas is raising many eyebrows across America in disdain while others look on with rapt attention. From the gambling and the dancing girls, the bright lights, the games, the gold, the glam, and the glitz there are people that love it with the equal intensity of those that hate it. I guess some things about Vegas will never change.

I would choose to visit Las Vegas over many American cities because its history isn't painted as lily white. This is one city that lives in sins and relishes that fact about itself. While some may call it 'Sin City' I prefer to think of it as a city that is unburdened by the sins of its past. When you think about it, those that are simply passing through commit most of the sins of Vegas.

### **Some Dreams are made of Vegas Bachelor Parties**

Men around America dream of having the quintessential Vegas bachelor party-there are few men who manage but many who share the common dream. The good news is that girls today are demanding equal rights as far as fantasies go and have decided that what is good for the goose is good as well for the gander. In other words more and more women are also deciding to hold their bachelorette parties in Las Vegas as well. This is really good news for Las Vegas as this process is bringing almost as much money and as many guests as the weddings have in the past. Not quite as much but it's a pretty good share of both and a great boon to the economy.

There are even services cropping up all over Las Vegas that provide services, decorations, planning, hosting, and the execution of these events for brides and grooms to be alike. Remember, "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" and this is the one last hoorah before you take that long walk down the aisle. The most important thing to remember is that most of these parties are all in good fun and really leave nothing to tell.

The most important aspect of bachelor or bachelorette parties for most is that one last night of getting together with old friends, making new acquaintances, and cutting ties with the single lives you are preparing to leave behind. Whether you are just getting together with friends for drinks or heading off to visit all the strip clubs along the strip for one last time it is safe to say that Vegas knows how to throw a bachelor party.

One of the most important things to remember about your bachelor or bachelorette party in Las Vegas is that you should probably book your room before you go out partying so that you are certain you have a place to stay when all is said and done. It's always a good idea not to stray too far from your room if you're going to be drinking and having fun but this is a once in a lifetime kind of event so it's forgivable as long as you aren't driving, if you have a little too much to drink. Just make sure that you are able to find your clothes, the ring, and a quick shower the next morning.

Some of the parties that are the most fun do not involve leaving the room or suite that you book. You can almost always find strippers that specialize in bachelor parties and will be willing to come to you rather than going from club to club to club. Unless of course you are hoping to experience a little more variety among girls than hiring one or two would provide.

When you think about it, Las Vegas really is the perfect city for a bachelor party. You are in close proximity to drinking, gambling, girls, sex, and lots of ribbing from the guys. If you really are a great best man or maid of honor you will have put a lot of thought into what will be done during the bachelor party. Of course, the idea is to send your best friend off into wedded bliss with one last night to remember. It doesn't have to include girls, who's kidding, of course it does. The thing to remember is that it's the best man's job to make sure there is no evidence of impropriety.

Make sure you're all having a great night, you're all safe and sound, and that your friend makes it to the chapel on time tomorrow and you might all survive the bachelor party experience. Las Vegas will always be the ideal place to go for brides and grooms alike as they face their upcoming vows and gather with friends as single men and women one last time. While there is something somewhat sad about the process there is also something wonderful about the upcoming future and bright possibilities that lie ahead.

### **Vegas Weddings for all Tastes**

Vegas is almost as famous for weddings as it is for some of its more questionable roots and activities. In fact there are wedding chapels on almost every corner and in almost every major casino on the strip and beyond. There are themed weddings, elegant weddings, simple weddings, alien weddings, and all kinds of weddings in between. Other than gambling, it seems that Vegas knows the most about weddings.

If you're planning a wedding, thinking about a wedding, or simply want to avoid a wedding and would like to run away and get married, might I suggest one of the many wedding chapels in Vegas? It takes all kinds of people to put together a fairy tale

wedding however it can be done in Vegas in a matter of minutes. There are even wedding chapels in Vegas that will rent you costumes in which to get married. There are also those that rent the dresses and tuxedos for the more traditionally minded among you.

There are all kinds of wedding packages that can be ordered from the plain Jane and simple Sue wedding packages that offer no frills and no fun to those with more bells and whistles than you can shake a stick at. Where I come from there are plenty of sticks to be shaken. From professional photography to full service spa packages before the wedding for the bride and the bridal party there are all kinds of luxurious wedding touches available to those that are willing to pay for the service offered.

Vegas is probably the only city in the world that has professionals dedicated to throwing bachelor and bachelorette parties for brides and grooms to be. It really does beat all you've ever seen and more than most have ever dreamed of. While many people had dreams of fairy tale weddings and mom and dad paying for it, there are just as many who have had romantic dreams of getting married in Vegas since the very first time they heard it mentioned in movies or on TV. There are those that want Elvis impersonators singing as they share vows and others that want him to officiate the services. With so many tastes and wedding wishes, Las Vegas has come through with shining colors as far as making dream weddings possible for all those who enter.

It would seem that in Vegas, no wedding request (as long as it is legal) is out of the question. From the simply elegant to the outrageously campy there are chapels of love for all persuasions from pink fuzzy carpet and candles to outrageous dungeon looking rooms and all kinds in between weddings have been performed for many different walks of life and to confirm commitments for all manner of people and relationships from many countries around the world. Vegas is one of the easiest cities in the world in which to get married and all kinds of people take advantage of that fact for a quickie wedding. The one rule is that all parties must be of legal age and must be consenting. Consent is quite recognizable on your wedding day in most cases.

If you're planning a Vegas wedding, you are not alone and I wish you the absolute best of luck as you begin your new lives in this infinitely fascinating city of many dreams.

### **See the World in Vegas**

Las Vegas today is offering many of the wonders of the world on a much smaller scale to its visitors. There is really nowhere else on earth you can go and see all the sights and witness the thrill of the experience that is Las Vegas. With so much to do and see it's a wonder that anyone ever gets sleep in this great town. Look below for some of the many places to go and sights to see in Vegas that will quite literally have the world at your feet.

Paris Hotel and Casino Las Vegas presents the Eiffel Tower Experience. Quite literally this is a replica of the famed Eiffel Tower of Paris built at 1/2 scale. You can ride to the top of the tower and enjoy a view of the city from 460 feet above ground while pinpointing other landmarks that you may wish to try next.

Rio Suite Hotel offers the Masquerade Village Show in the Sky. This show is designed to bring the thrill of Rio's Carnival to Las Vegas visitors. This is a great show to witness or in which to participate. Enjoy the sights, sounds, and revelry that are unmistakably Carnival. This show is free to watch and costs \$12.95 to participate.

Luxur Hotel and Casino takes you In Search of the Obelisk. This adventure takes you on archaeological digs searching for Pharaohs. This is a great adventure and takes you not halfway around the world. There are height restrictions for this ride so small children might not be best suited for this particular experience.

You can experience the thrills, chills, and spills of the Grand Prix at the Las Vegas Mini grand prix. This park is a fun day for the entire family and even features an Adult Grand Prix with Sprint Kart tracks that have high banks and a more authentic experience. This is a great way to have fun and invite a little friendly competition among family members.

If you'd like to experience Venice without traveling halfway around the world then you should really experience the Venetian Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. The highlight of your Vegas Venice experience should be one of the Gondola rides that you can take. You can book a private 2-person gondola for a romantic excursion while being serenaded by your gondolier.

While at the Venetian you can also check out the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, which will have some of the best offerings from around the world in order to enhance your experience. You should also take the time to enjoy the beautiful Venetian inspired architecture of the hotel and casino while you're visiting in order to prolong the experience.

The Mirage offers a volcano for guests to experience. While this isn't quite taking you around the world, most of us do not get to experience the sight of a volcano morphing from peaceful waterfalls into streams of molten lava. This is definitely a must see show in Vegas and is free to the public. You can see this show from dusk until midnight every 15 minutes.

If you want an experience that will take you even further away you should try the Star Trek Experience at The Las Vegas Hilton Hotel and Casino. This will not take you to another country per se, but it will definitely take you into another world. Enjoy this encounter with alien creatures and an introduction to the future. Then take a stroll through the museum, which is home to some wonderful memorabilia from the television show and the movies.

Just remember that you are on vacation to get away from it all. Isn't it truly neat that you can literally do that and so much more in this unique and intriguing city? You can travel to different countries, experience different cultures, and literally go out of this world without ever leaving the city limits of Las Vegas. Who could ask for more in a vacation experience?

## **Circus Circus - Family Fun Vegas Style**

Circus Circus Las Vegas boasts of being the most kid friendly hotel in Las Vegas. With its big top attitude and its indoor amusement park it very well may be. In addition to being the most kid friendly hotel on the Las Vegas strip Circus Circus Hotel is also the fifth largest hotel in the world. Of course this is at the moment and that is subject to change at any time.

The beauty of this particular hotel doesn't lie so much in its size or even the circus like atmosphere. The charm lies in the fact that it was something new and relatively untried along the Vegas strip. Rather than build to suit the gamblers they were hoping to attract, this particular hotel was wise enough to offer something new and untried by appealing to families with children rather than solely to gamblers.

The gamble seems to be paying off in a city that is known for both its hits and its misses. Other hotels and casinos are also working to cultivate the family friendly image that Circus Circus has basically proven. Not only did this hotel build The Adventuredome Theme Park they also decided to make accommodations even more family friendly by accommodating RVs at the Circusland RV Park. This offers a great place for families to stay that might not otherwise grace the theme park, hotel, or the casino.

Don't forget that there is a casino involved and that is the primary purpose of this gigantic hotel, resort, and theme park. The casino makes the expense of building it all very much worthwhile and brings in big business of its own each and every day. In grand Vegas style there is also the requisite onsite shopping and of course full service of wedding options in addition to a wedding chapel and banquet facilities in which to hold the reception of your dreams. The shopping at Circus Circus offers everything from ultra exclusive boutique shops and salons to stores such as Under \$10 and the trading Post, which offers fad jewelry and other kid friendly gifts.

This hotel has a somewhat unique concept that sets it apart from the many others along Vegas' strip. If you are traveling to Vegas with the family I very much recommend at least checking them out and comparing prices and packages with the other hotels and resorts in the area. Keep in mind that comps are like money in the bank particularly when they involve food or activities that you were planning to do even without the comps. So you may be able to negotiate a much better deal even if you're paying a couple more dollars a night by having free parking, complimentary meals, or tickets to events, shows, or attractions.

Now we're on to my favorite part of the discussion. Dining options. Circus Circus does not disappoint when it comes to offering variety to its guests. In addition to The Steakhouse, there is The Garden Grill, Mexitalia, Pink Pony, Circus Buffet, Pizzeria, Westside Deli, and Barista Café. The food offerings accommodate varying budgets and familial needs by offering some kid friendly dining choices to visitors and guests as well.

The good news however is that if these restaurants aren't appealing to you there is another hotel, casino, or restaurant next door that has different fare to offer.

If you are looking for a great place to stay in Las Vegas along with the family there are very few hotels that will offer the overall environment of fun and wonder that you will find at Circus Circus. In addition to the wonderful rooms, the great food, the casino, and The Adventuredome Theme Park you will find that the shows here are as kid friendly and entertaining for the entire family as the atmosphere in general. This is a great vacation destination anywhere. Considering the fact that it is in Las Vegas and it is very nearly the perfect vacation retreat for those with children.

### **Excalibur Hotel and Casino - Brings Magic to Life**

If you are harboring thoughts of bringing the family for a Las Vegas vacation, then perhaps you should seriously consider a stay at Excalibur Hotel and Casino. This hotel will have you feeling as though you've stepped into the fairy tales of your childhood. From the moment you cross the threshold from the outside world to the charmed existence of life in the hotel you will find that you have truly been charmed and are leading a somewhat enchanted existence.

Not only is there the magnificent casino to enjoy, there is also the wonderful pool, links golf, the castle walk for your shopping pleasure, and the midway where you can play all kinds of fun and exciting arcade and carnival games. Perhaps one of the most memorable and impressive of offerings is the Tournament of Kings dinner show. This show is offered nightly at 6:00 and 8:30 and you will eat in the manner of those in medieval times, without utensils while watching the evil wizard Mordred as he invades the evening festivities. This show is quite enjoyable and relies heavily upon audience participation.

Dining in the hotel and casino can be quite the adventure without the assistance of horses and actors as there are several dining options including the Roundtable Buffet, The Steakhouse at Camelot, Regale Italian Eatery, Sherwood Forest Café, and how could we forget Sir Galahad's Pub and Prime Rib House?

If you're looking for the fairytale wedding of your dreams, then Excalibur has the package for you. You can even elect to rent medieval costumes in which to get married. There are many different packages available to fit various budgets and wedding needs. Wedding packages vary in price from around \$400 plus \$55 for the cost of the minister to around \$1575 plus the cost of the minister. These are all rather basic packages and do not include extras such as costume rentals, extra poses for the wedding photos, or video and candle services.

Before your big day make sure you make liberal use of the spa services available at Excalibur Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Of course this is a great idea even if you are just hoping to relax while on vacation. You remember relaxation right? That is what you did on occasion before you had children. You should definitely get the royal treatment that is available through the spa and enjoy every minute of your visit. Some of the spa

services offered at Excalibur include: facials, wraps, Aveda facials, and various massages. There are add on services that can be purchased and packages available. This is a great way to spend an hour or three before your big day or any day.

Once you've finished getting pampered at the spa, step on over to Kristina's Salon and get primped. You can enjoy everything from manicures to full service hair styling services. Whether you are preparing for your big day and saying "I do!" or simply for a romantic evening on the strip this is a great place to begin.

Excalibur also offers full service catering and convention services. Whether you are hosting a wedding reception or a company convention we have the facilities as well as the expertise to keep everything operating seamlessly behind the scenes so that all eyes will be on the things that are important. Projections and profits for the corporate conventions and the bride and groom for wedding receptions.

Excalibur Hotel Casino can meet almost any lodging and accommodation needs for those staying and playing in Las Vegas, more than that we can provide a great 'fairy tale' atmosphere for your family vacation or just your big trip in general. If you haven't given proper consideration to the idea of staying here during your visit, I highly encourage that you do-especially if you have a little princess in your party that you are trying to impress.

### **Las Vegas Hilton - Luxury at its Finest**

The Las Vegas Hilton is one of the more luxurious offerings on the Vegas Strip. This hotel has a lot to offer its guests by way of luxury and amenities including several packages that are amazingly generous by comparison to most other hotels along the strip. If you aren't seeing a package that is appealing to you, have your Travel Agent call and see if they might be able to negotiate a more suitable package for you.

In addition to world class accommodations and a fully functional casino the Las Vegas Hilton also has some of the best shows running along the strip. Current acts include the likes of Barry Manilow and Menopause the Musical. Future acts include big names such as Johnny Mathis and the Asian Fusion concert series.

Perhaps the most famous attraction at the Las Vegas Hilton however is the Star Trek Experience. The experience is completely out of this world and will have you flying through space in a completely immersive experience that even those who weren't serious fans of the show can appreciate. This is like nothing you've ever experienced before or are likely to enjoy again. There is also a museum that is home to many items from the television series as well as the movies. This is a great addition to your vacation experience even at the rather hefty price tag it commands (\$34.99 for adults and \$31.99 for children as of this writing and subject to change). If you're going to splurge on one thing during your stay at the Las Vegas Hilton I highly recommend that this be that one thing. There is also the Nemesis Package, which will allow for a reduced rate when purchasing tickets for the Star Trek Experience along with a two-night hotel stay.

Keep in mind if you're actually coming to Las Vegas for the gambling and not to go Trekking through the galaxy, the casino offers tournaments rather regularly and you should really check to be sure there isn't a tournament that interests you during your stay or around the times you are considering your stay.

It is fairly safe to say that while there are many fun things to do in Vegas these hotels and casinos would really appreciate your business in the casino seats rather than watching the shows, riding the rides, and playing the games.

The Las Vegas Hilton also has a full service spa and offers some attractive spa packages to its guests. You'd be doing your body a favor to check out the many packages that are available and combining them in order to get the maximum value for your spa dollar along with your spa visit.

There is all manner of shopping at the Las Vegas Hilton and you should be able to find nice gifts for others as well as a few nice gifts for yourself. If you don't find what you're looking for here you are close enough to other shopping opportunities, if you drag yourself away from the spa that is that it's no serious problem to go out and find those perfect gifts, trinkets, and tokens of your good time while visiting Las Vegas. Of course, you simply must visit the Barry Manilow store while you're here and have fun playing with all the nifty toys inside. You also never know when you'll find that perfect gift for friends and family and this store may be the ideal place to look.

If you're looking for a completely luxurious experience for you stay in Las Vegas there are few places that will suit you better than the Las Vegas Hilton. The good news is that you can arrange for your luxurious treatment to be had at a fraction of the price it would cost elsewhere if you pay careful attention to the specials that are available and book accordingly.

### **The Cultural Side of Vegas**

You wouldn't think Las Vegas would be the cultural treasure chest it really is, especially upon first glance when you can't really see beyond the many casinos and bright twinkling lights that it is most famous for. You don't expect to find the vast number of museums in Vegas that you will find in other tourist-oriented cities. You would think that the real estate in Vegas has been earmarked in most cases for more profitable ventures than museums. There are however, a number of museums in Las Vegas that are very well worth mentioning and exploring if you have the time during the light of day.

The first of these museums worth mentioning is one that is probably quite unique as far as museums go. It is the Atomic Testing Museum. The museum is located at 755 E. Flamingo Rd. Adults admission costs \$10 per person and children aged 7-17 command the price of \$7 the lessons and the history that can be learned by visiting this particular museum are priceless so this really seems like a small price to pay.

The Las Vegas Motor Speedway is the home to the Carroll Shelby Museum. Shelby had a distinguished career driving cars and breaking land speed records before moving on to do other things in his career as a result of health concerns. When this happened he turned his sites from racing and rested them on design. The fruit of his design labor was one of the fastest production line cars ever and arguably one of the most stunning cars ever made- The Shelby Cobra.

One of the other fabulous Museums that Las Vegas has to offer is the Lied Children's Discovery Museum. Children of all ages can find activities to enjoy at this particular museum. This museum has a lot to offer in educational experiences that are cleverly disguised as such fun. This is definitely worth a visit if you're in the area and the \$8 admission fee for adults and \$7 for children is not that steep when compare to similar institutions around the country.

The Las Vegas Natural History Museum is another great museum to enjoy during your time in Vegas. This museum is another that is a great destination for children, big and little alike. The Marine Life Gallery features a 3,000-gallon habitat to some of the ocean's most fascinating marine life. The price for this museum is very reasonable at \$7 for adults and \$3 for children aged 3-11. It gets even better if you go to the museum's website and print off a buy one adult admission get one free coupon. This museum presents a great way to spend the day with the family in Las Vegas.

Another great museum to visit for a lighter side to life is the Liberace Museum. This museum is a tribute to the man names "Mr. Showmanship" and displays some of his rather than flamboyant costumes along with some of his precious antiques, his custom car collection and his pianos. This is not so much of a learning experience as a celebration of a man that lived his life as dazzlingly as the jewelry he so enjoyed wearing.

These museums represent fun and fabulous ways to spend the day with your family while vacationing in Las Vegas. The museums are certainly not the only family friendly activities you can enjoy together, they are quite often the most educational ways to spend the day. You have to admit however, that some of these museums are quite unique to the area and well worth the minimal costs of admission. Along the strip you can find the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, which is a collaborative work between the famed Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. The fact that they are working together on this project allows them to share artifacts and exhibits that are well known around the world. Enjoy the taste of culture amidst the glitz and glam and have fun while you learn new things each and every day during your stay in Vegas.

### **Indoor Fun to Beat the Desert Heat**

Vegas has become so famous for its casinos and its nightlife that we often forget that there is a thriving city full of people who call this city home. There are businessmen and women, doctors, lawyers, and average Joe citizens who live in this city and have little or

nothing to do with the casinos at all. There are entertainers and artists that live far beyond the world of the famous Strip that Vegas more often than not brings to mind.

Vegas is a city that has a cultural center, a religious community, families, and family activities. It is a city in the desert that sees more than its share of sunshine while being particularly vulnerable to rain. It's a city that is famous for its neon brightness while there are corners of this city that are far removed from that world that is almost as foreign to its citizens as it is to its visitors.

Don't overlook the cultural treasure trove that can be found in Vegas by limiting your experience to the Vegas Strip and the offerings of the many casinos. So there is much more to this wonderful city to see and do and enjoy.

If you are looking for some great ideas to enjoy during your stay, perhaps you will find some here or at least find inspiration for your own ideas. One thing to remember about Vegas is that you are in the desert and it is sunny most of year. Even if it isn't necessarily warm outside it's a good idea to avoid being outdoors whenever possible or to be sure you are liberally applying sunscreen and using other means to protect your skin from the ravages of a desert sun.

Here are some of things you can experience during your time in Vegas if you are willing to seek them out: King Tut's Tomb, the car collection at the Imperial Palace, Chaos at Circus Circus, Gameworks by Steven Spielberg, The Imax theatre at the Luxor, In Search of the Obelisk at the Luxor, Las Vegas Sportspark, Lied Discover Children's Museum, Madame Tussauds Las Vegas, Merlin's Magic Motion Machines, Pioneer Saloon, Pirates 4D, Star Trek the Experience, and the Sunset Stampede just to name a few. The best news of all however is that there are constantly more and more activities and adventures being added to the offerings. This means that there is never a shortage of things to see and do while visiting Las Vegas so there's never a valid reason not to come back.

This list is a short list of only indoor activities; you can find a much larger list of things to enjoy if you consider the many things that can be experienced outside under the desert sun. There are other attractions that will also keep you indoors as well. There are actually quite a few museums in Las Vegas; there is M&Ms World, The Lion Habitat at MGM and the White Tiger Habitat at the Mirage. There's also the canal at the Venetian, which is also home to "Streetmosphere," where live actors delight and entertain you with songs and other revelry.

You will find many rides and adventure parks indoors in Las Vegas as well. People find that the desert heat can be a real joy killer for a day out in the sun and indoor adventure parks fair much better while delivering entertainment that is far superior to many of its outdoor counterparts.

If you're looking for a great way to spend a day indoors, there's no shortage of wonderful things to do and see in Vegas so there's really no excuse. In addition to all the things I've mentioned above, Vegas is home to some of the most splendid shopping in America so be sure to pack your two best friends Visa and Master Card and bring them along for the

ride. Also keep in mind that there is plenty to do in the great big world outside these walls and consider the great fun you can have exploring the desert climate of Nevada.

### **The Natural Beauty Surrounding Vegas**

The first thing most people think of when thinking of Las Vegas is the strip. Bright blinking neon lights, loud music, and spotlights are more of what people envision in Vegas than wide open spaces, natural park like settings, nature watches, and the beauty of the desert at sunset. Of course that is if you can get a little ways out of Vegas otherwise you'll never notice the sun going down for all the bright lights.

Granted most of these beautiful places to visit are fair distances from Vegas but if you are this close to them it would be a shame to miss out on their beauty for the sake of a car ride. The first one I'd like to mention is Bryce Canyon National Park. It is actually in Utah and about 270 miles from Vegas. The fee to enter is \$20 per vehicle but the scenery is absolutely breathtaking. The views you will see are worth every mile and every penny. You should also be on the lookout for some of the wildlife particularly the Great Basin Rattlesnake, bald eagles, and golden eagles. There are beautiful flowers that often bloom in the spring and early summer months if you happen to be visiting at this time it's worth keeping an eye out.

The Grand Canyon is about 300 miles southeast of Vegas. This is another beauty that is well worth seeing if you have a day free or even really to make a priority of. There is a fee to bring your car into the park and you should check to see exactly what the current rate is before making the drive. For most people any fee is well worth experiencing this piece of American legend and lore. You can also opt to take one of many tours that will take you around the canyon and some that will take you to the bottom and back up again. If you are truly brave you should also consider one of the helicopter tours.

Floyd Lamb Park is open each day from 6 in the morning until 7 at night. This park is located about 20 miles from the strip in Vegas. It also has four fully stocked ponds, a barbecue area, and is home to some very interesting fossils and remains. The fossils and remains that have been identified here include the following: bison, mammoths, camels, giant sloths, and horse among other animals. This area became a state park in 1977 and visitors who have a fishing license for Nevada may fish in any of the park's ponds but there is a limit of three fish per person.

Lake Mead is another great area nearby in which to enjoy the great outdoors of the Nevada desert. Lake Mead is a man-made lake and the 16th largest of its kind in this hemisphere. This lake was created by the Colorado River and the Hoover Dam and is about 1.5 million acres (I don't know about you but that figure to me is actually staggering). This area is a very popular area for boating, swimming, and as wildlife observation area.

If you love the great outdoors there are plenty of places to get out there and enjoy nature in and around the Las Vegas area. You can do a lot more than view wildlife in any of

these parks and each one offers something special to those that visit. I would hope that you could enjoy them all, however I would recommend that you spend at least one day of your trip outdoors in nature somewhere.

### **Leaving Vegas Happy**

Winning in Vegas isn't about going home rich; it's about not going home broke. You've probably heard many horror stories about people losing it all their very first night in Vegas. The sad truth of the matter is that it happens quite often because it is so terribly easy to do. Casinos have many tricks (whether deliberately contrived or accidentally achieved) that help you make poor decisions as a result of slightly impaired judgment. The bells and whistles of casinos are fun for the first few hours, after that they tend to become dull and mind numbing. You'll even find that those who have been at the casino for a while will show slower and less enthusiastic responses to jackpots after a few hours. This is part of the process. We become numb and mindlessly feed our 1's, 5's, 10's, 20's, 50's, and 100's into the machines and losing count along the way.

Casinos are also kind enough to allow many people ups and downs along the way. They are quite smart in doing this. Many people find that they can get pretty far ahead early on and then are surprised to suddenly find themselves falling behind at an alarming rate. When they have you is at the moment you put yet another bill into the machine intending to get back the money you lost. Most of us manage to get back our original investment but decide that we want what we had won earlier and end right back at the bottom again starting the entire process over. Don't do that, I can tell you it hurts the next morning when you're kicking yourself for being stupid.

This of course brings me to my next point. Ever see a sunrise from the inside of a casino? Me either, but I've walked out into the blinding light of day before. It's very easy to lose track of time in a casino. It's dark in there and the only lights are quite often from the slot machines and blinking neon signs. There are no indicators for the passage of time and unless you are clock watching, which most of us are not when we're having fun, it is quite easy to lose many hours of time and find yourself suddenly very tired and making poor decisions and taking risks you'd normally not take rather than cashing out and going back to the room for the night. This is another one that generally hurts when you wake up.

In order to avoid things like this set a vibration alarm on your cell phone and have it buzz you when it's time to go. Only bring in a certain amount of cash into the casino and when that's gone it's gone. Don't go back to the room and get more money or make costly trips to the ATM. Those trips will suddenly add up and find you with no true idea of how much money you've spent or have left in your bank account.

You can quite easily win at the casino game on your trip to Vegas as long as you remember that you are playing at a casino and making a conscious decision not to be played by the casino. Common sense will help out some but avoiding traps is the difference in spending your 'mad money' at the casino and going home busted or spending your next few paychecks at the casino long after your vacation is over.

I hope this has helped you get a better understanding of all the fun things there are to do in Las Vegas. This is one of the many services we provide our valued clients at King's House of Travel.

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