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Instant Guide to Las Vegas The Strip

4 hours on the go

Fodor's



Sure, you've heard that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. But when you're ready to jump off the bar and leave the slots, plenty of fun awaits you: fabulous spas, quirky museums, lavish pools, and gut-busting buffets. The more luxurious properties are on the South and Central Strip. Bellagio, Bally's, Caesars Palace, and the Flamingo converge at the heart of the Strip, the intersection of Flamingo Road and Las Vegas Boulevard. Wynn Las Vegas and smaller, older hotels are north of Treasure Island, on what's called North Strip. Our top picks will give you the best Strip experience.

GET HERE FAST

If you're exploring the Strip, it's best just to park your car (it's free at most casinos) and walk. If you think you'll be operating beyond the Strip during your stay, get a rental car.

DON'T MISS

■ **O:** More than \$70 million was spent on Cirque du Soleil's theater at Bellagio, and it's the liquid stage that takes over as the real star of the show. O remains one of the best-attended tickets on the Strip.

■ **Stratosphere Thrill Rides:** High above the Strip at the top of the Stratosphere Tower are three serious thrill rides—the Big Shot, the X Scream, and Insanity—all designed to make you wish for solid ground.

■ **Gamble at the Bellagio:** The casino proper is roomy, luxurious, and—amazingly—always packed. Under its hushed orange canopies you can easily spot high rollers betting \$5,000 a hand. In Club Privé, the high-roller's area, wagers climb even higher. But don't worry; there are games throughout the floor for the more typical budget.

■ **The Pools at the Hard Rock:** No pool in town has a more happening scene than this one. The Hard Rock has buckets of soft sand, and lest you miss the pulse of the music while you're swimming laps, there's even a high-quality underwater

sound system. Take note that the fast-paced fun tends to attract a younger crowd.

QUICK HITS

■ **Bonanza "World's Largest Gift Shop":** This may not be the world's largest, but it's the town's largest—and for that matter, the best—souvenir store. Dying for a pair of fuzzy pink dice or the coveted Elvis aviator sunglasses complete with black sideburns? They've got 'em in spades, along with tons more.

■ **The Roller Coaster:** There are two reasons to ride the Coney Island-style New York-New York roller coaster (aka Manhattan Express): first, it has a 144-foot dive and a 360-degree somersault; and second, it whisks you around the amazing replica of the New York City skyline.

■ **Fountains of Bellagio:** Bellagio's signature water ballet has more than 1,000 fountain nozzles, 4,500 lights, and 27 million gallons of water. Fountain jets shoot 250 feet in the air, tracing undulations you wouldn't have thought possible, in perfect time with the music. The best view is from the Eiffel Tower's observation deck, directly across the street.

SHOPPING BLITZ

■ **Annie Creamcheese:** Walking through this vintage boutique will have you feeling like you just emerged from a fashion time machine. Halston disco duds, Gucci



accessories from the '70s, Karl Lagerfeld designs (pre-Chanel), and Pucci originals all fill the racks.

■ **Grand Canal Shoppes:** This is one of the most unforgettable shopping

experiences on the Strip. Duck into shops like Burberry and Dior under blue skies alongside a Vegasified Venice Grand Canal. All the bridges and walkways lead you to St. Mark's Square.

IN-THE-KNOW

Sign up for the players club at whichever casino you plan to play at the most, and flash your card every time you gamble; you earn discount and gift points based on how much you risk, regardless of whether you win or lose.

