

Sports and Activities

Contributed by Administrator
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Las Vegas is not exactly renowned for its healthy lifestyle, but if you start to feel the need for exercise, opportunities do exist. For visitors, the highest profile activity these days is golf . The city currently boasts around forty golf courses, and is adding more at a ferocious rate. Most casinos do at least have a swimming pool , with the larger ones on the Strip offering full-service spas and tennis facilities as well. "Locals" casinos, on the other hand, usually out in more residential neighborhoods, specialize in offering popular year-round indoor pursuits such as bowling and ice-skating .

As for spectator sports , despite the best efforts of Mayor Goodman - who's on record as saying that "until you have major league sports, you'll always be thought of as a minor-league town" - Las Vegas lacks high-profile professional teams. Although tourists flock from all over the nation to watch events like the Super Bowl on large-screen TVs - and of course, bet on them - the only sport to regularly draw sizable crowds for live action is championship boxing .
SPAS

Most of the major Strip casinos offer their own luxurious spa facilities, open as a rule to guests and non-guests alike, but occasionally restricted to guests only on weekends. Typical rates start at around \$25 per day, with a vast range of more expensive treatments available. The best is widely recognized to be the Canyon Ranch Spa at the Venetian (daily 5.30am-10pm; tel 414-3600). Among its closest rivals are:

Aladdin ; daily 8am-7pm; tel 785-5772.

Bellagio ; daily 6am-8pm; tel 693-8080.

Caesars Palace ; daily 6am-8pm; tel 731-7110.

Mandalay Bay ; daily 5am-10pm; tel 632-7777.

Grand ; daily 6am-8pm; tel 891-3077.

The Monte Carlo ; daily 6am-9pm; tel 730-7590.

Paris ; daily 6am-7pm; tel 946-4366.

INDOOR SPORTS

BOWLING

Castaways 2800 Fremont St tel 385-9153. Daily 24hr.

At 106 lanes, the Castaways boasts the largest bowling alley in the US, and plays host to the Showboat Invitational Bowling Tournament, the oldest pro event in the country, each Jan.

Gold Coast 4000 W Flamingo Rd tel 367-4700. Daily 24hr.

During the week, the usual low rates at the superbly equipped 72-lane Brunswick bowling center drop even lower between midnight and 8am. On Sat nights, however, it's taken over by a giant "bowling disco party."

Orleans 4500 W Tropicana Ave tel 365-7111. Daily 24hr.

Adult rates at the Orleans ' 70-lane upstairs bowling arcade are \$2.50 per game.

Sam's Town 5111 Boulder Hwy tel 454-8022. Daily 24hr.

This bright 56-lane downstairs bowling center plays host on Fri and Sat nights (from midnight until 4am) to "extreme bowling"; basically, it becomes a nightclub, with music, lights, dry ice, and, of course, bowling. For the rest of the week, rates drop between midnight and 8am.

Santa Fe Hotel & Casino 4949 N Rancho Drive tel 658-4995. Daily 24hr.

The Santa Fe 's sixty-lane bowling alley, back-to-back with the ice arena, features Bowlervision, an electronic device that tracks the path of your ball.

GYMS AND HEALTH CLUBS

Las Vegas Athletic Club 2655 S Maryland Parkway tel 734-5822, . Daily 24hr.

The city's largest health-club chain, with four different valley locations (not all 24hr) that feature indoor and outdoor pools, exercise equipment and classes, saunas and spas, and other sports facilities. Membership \$10 per day, \$25 per week.

Las Vegas Sporting House 3025 Industrial Rd tel 733-8999. Daily 24 hrs.

In addition to a full gymnasium and fitness center with all the latest equipment, the Sporting House offers tennis, squash, and handball courts plus an outdoor pool. Membership costs around \$15 per day or \$50 per week, but check to see if your hotel has special privileges.

ICE-SKATING

Santa Fe Ice Arena Santa Fe Hotel & Casino , 4949 N Rancho Drive tel 658-4993. Hours vary.

Las Vegas's only casino ice rink charges \$5 admission, with skate rental for \$1.50, and offers a varied schedule of pick-up hockey games, figure skating, and so on.

OUTDOOR SPORTS

BUNGEE JUMPING

A.J. Hackett Bungy Circus Circus , 810 Circus Circus Drive tel 385-4321. Hours vary.

Should you feel the urge to plummet approximately 200 feet toward but not into a swimming pool, attached to a rubberized rope, look no further. It's \$49 for your first jump, \$25 each for the second and third, and nothing at all for the fourth.

GOLF

Angel Park Golf Club 3145 Las Vegas Blvd S tel 733-4290, .

Beautifully set in Summerlin, at the western edge of the valley, the public facility features two Arnold Palmer-designed full-size courses, plus a twelve-hole par 3 course and an eighteen-hole putting course, both of which are floodlit at night. Green fees start at \$65.

For reservations at most of Las Vegas's forty or so golf courses, call Golf Reservations of Nevada Inc tel 732-3119 or 1-800/627-4465, .

Bali Hai Golf Club 100 S Rampart Blvd tel 1-888/446-5358, .

Extraordinarily lavish water-themed course, not far southwest of Mandalay Bay , seen as an expanse of vivid green from planes coming in to land; the golf carts even have satellite global positioning systems, while Wolfgang Puck's Cili is the clubhouse restaurant. Standard green fee is \$260.

Las Vegas Golf Club 4300 W Washington Ave tel 646-3003.

Busy city-owned course that offers exceptionally cheap rates for locals. Non-residents can play eighteen holes for \$80 Mon-Thurs, \$90 Fri-Sun.

Las Vegas National Golf Club 1911 E Desert Inn Rd tel 796-0016.

Originally the Sahara Country Club, and home to the Las Vegas Invitational Tournament, this appealing course, a couple of miles east of the Strip, charges the general public \$85 Mon-Thurs, \$110 Fri-Sun.

HORSE RIDING

Cowboy Trail Rides tel 838-3001, .Hours Vary.

Ninety-minute riding expeditions in the Spring Mountains, in either the Red Rock Canyon area or higher up on Mount Charleston, for \$69.

RAFTING

Black Canyon Raft Tours 1297 Nevada Hwy, Boulder City tel 293-3776 or 1-800/696-7238. By reservation, Feb-Nov only. One-day rafting trips downriver from Hoover Dam as far as Willow Beach, for \$95 per person including hotel pickup.

SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING

Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort Hwy-156, Mount Charleston tel 385-2754, . Late Nov to early April only. Lifts operate Mon-Fri & Sun 9am-4pm, Sat 9am-4pm & 4.30-10pm.

Las Vegas's only ski slopes are almost fifty miles from the Strip. Three chair lifts lead to ten different slopes, graded from novice to advanced; lift passes cost \$28 per day, and equipment rental is available.

SKYDIVING

Skydive Las Vegas 1401 Airport Rd, Boulder City tel 759-3483 or 1-800/USKYDIV, . By reservation.

Leap from an airplane 12,500 feet over the Nevada desert, strapped to an instructor, then free-fall and parachute for a

total of well over five minutes, for \$175.

WATER SPORTS

Las Vegas Bay Marina Lake Shore Rd, Henderson tel 565-9111. Hours vary.

Among water craft available for rental at Las Vegas Bay Marina, at 25 miles out the closest point on Lake Mead to the city, are jetskis at \$50 per hour or \$150 for four hours, and speedboats at \$50 per hour or \$300 per day. Similar facilities are offered by Lake Mead Marina near Boulder City (tel 293-3484), and Callville Bay (tel 565-8958) and Echo Bay (tel 394-4000), on the north shore of the lake.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

BASEBALL

The Las Vegas 51s , a class AAA team affiliated to the San Diego Padres, have in recent years repeatedly triumphed in the Pacific Coast League. They recently changed their name from the Las Vegas Stars, in honor of Nevada's legendary Area 51, and play around seventy home games between April and Labor Day each year at Cashman Field, 850 Las Vegas Blvd N (tel 386-7200,). Admission prices start at \$4.

BOXING

In the last 25 years, Las Vegas has taken over from New York as the world capital of boxing . A heavyweight title fight brings so many high-rollers into town that the major casinos will pay almost any purse to the boxers concerned (upwards of \$20 million per in some cases), and they're still doing so despite fiascos like the infamous ear-biting bout between Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield.

The three principal players have long been Caesars Palace , which for big fights erects an arena in its back lot capable of holding up to 30,000 people; the MGM Grand , with its 15,000-seat Garden; and the Mirage. Mandalay Bay has ventured into hosting championship boxing as well, and some fights also take place at the University's Thomas & Mack Center, 4505 S Maryland Parkway (tel 895-3761). Ticket prices depend completely on demand; the cheapest seats for a welterweight fight can be as little as \$50, but for Mike Tyson they're more likely to range between \$500 and \$2500. It was just after a Mike Tyson fight at the MGM Grand that rap star Tupac Shakur was shot, on September 7, 1996. He died four days later.

In addition, the Orleans , 4500 W Tropicana Ave (tel 365-7570), stages Friday-night boxing roughly once a month in its Mardi Gras ballroom, featuring three men's bouts and one women's, with tickets priced at \$15 to \$40.

COLLEGE SPORTS

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, plays its home basketball games at the Thomas & Mack Center, 4505 S Maryland Parkway (tel 895-3295), from November to May, and home football games at Sam Boyd Silver Bowl Stadium, Boulder Hwy (tel 895-3900), between September and December.