

THE ORIGINAL LAS VEGAS

NEW MEXICO — EST. 1835

Official Visitors Guide

Save this guide to your phone for local history, outdoor adventure, year-round events, and everyday visitor info.

Welcome to the Meadow City

Las Vegas, New Mexico was founded in 1835 as Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Las Vegas — Our Lady of Sorrows of the Meadows — when thirty-four colonists laid out the town's original Plaza. Decades before Nevada's namesake existed, this Plaza was already the heart of a community built on faith, family, and the crossroads of the Santa Fe Trail. With more than 900 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, Las Vegas holds one of the highest concentrations of historic architecture of any town in the country — a legacy still visible on nearly every block.

theoriginallasvegas.com

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Historical Landmarks & Culture

Stroll through history along the historic Santa Fe Trail route that runs through the heart of town, where Victorian-era storefronts sit beside adobe buildings dating to the 1800s.

The Historic Plaza & Bridge Street

Laid out in 1835 by the town's original 34 colonists, the Plaza remains the heart of Old Town. Bridge Street, once a working section of the Santa Fe Trail, is lined with well-preserved historic storefronts — and the area's frontier-era reputation lives on in local legend: Billy the Kid, Doc Holliday, Jesse James, and Wyatt Earp are all said to have passed through town in its rougher early days.

The Plaza Hotel — Built 1882

Known locally as the “Belle of the Southwest,” the Plaza Hotel has anchored the town square for generations and still operates as a hotel and event venue today.

Montezuma Castle & Hot Springs

A few miles northwest of downtown sits Montezuma Castle, a grand 1886 Queen Anne–style building constructed by the Santa Fe Railway as a luxury resort around a natural hot springs once visited by Theodore Roosevelt and other prominent guests of the era. The building now serves as the campus of United World College. Just below it, the free, natural Montezuma Hot Springs remain open to the public year-round — several rock-and-concrete soaking pools fed by geothermal water along the Gallinas River. There are no facilities on site, so bring water and plan to visit respectfully; swimwear is required.

Carnegie Library

New Mexico's only remaining operational library of its original Carnegie-era architectural style, beautifully restored and open to visitors.

City Museums

The City of Las Vegas Museum & Rough Rider Memorial Collection covers local and regional history, including the town's connection to Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders. The E. Romero Fire & Acequia Museum

focuses on the town's firefighting history and its centuries-old acequia irrigation system.

Plaza Drugs

Family-owned since opening in 1983 in the historic Romero Block on the Plaza, Plaza Drugs is the only independently owned community pharmacy remaining in Las Vegas. 178 Bridge Street.

Outdoor Adventure

Storrie Lake State Park

About four miles north of town, this 1,100-acre reservoir sits at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Built in 1916 and completed in 1921, the lake offers camping, fishing for stocked rainbow trout, bass, and pike, boating, and windsurfing — it's popular enough to host organized sailing races most summers. The park's visitor center displays historical photos of the Santa Fe Trail era.

Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge

About six miles southeast of town, this 8,672-acre refuge protects one of New Mexico's few large wetland areas. More than 270 bird species have been recorded here, and it's one of the top birding destinations in the state — sandhill cranes and dozens of bald eagles arrive each fall and winter, alongside a resident elk herd. An eight-mile auto tour loop and several short hiking trails, including an ADA-accessible route, are open to the public at no charge.

Gallinas River & Sabinoso Wilderness

The Gallinas River runs through town and out past Montezuma, offering fishing and scenic canyon views along the way. About 40 miles east, the Sabinoso Wilderness — one of the newest wilderness areas in the country, only opened to public access in recent years — offers rugged, undeveloped hiking through canyon and mesa terrain for visitors seeking a true backcountry experience.

New Mexico Highlands University

The university anchors the west side of town and welcomes visitors to its campus, athletic events, and public programs throughout the year.

Year-Round Community Events

Fiestas de Las Vegas — 4th of July Weekend

The town's largest annual celebration, running since 1888, fills the historic Plaza with live music, a parade, food, and fireworks over the July 4th holiday. For the full current-year schedule, visit theoriginallasvegas.com.

Fridays al Fresco

A free, family-friendly tradition held Friday evenings from May through September, with live local and regional bands, food, and outdoor dancing at the Plaza.

Kids Fishing Derby

Held each summer at Harris Pond, this free event for children ages 0–11 typically follows a stocking of the pond by New Mexico Game and Fish, with prizes, basic tackle provided for those without their own, and staff on hand to help beginners.

Fourth of July Fun Run

A 10K and 5K held each Fourth of July morning, starting from the Montezuma Skating Pond and County Fairgrounds respectively, with free registration.

Looking Ahead: Fall & Winter

Las Vegas keeps a full community calendar well beyond summer. Exact dates shift year to year — check theoriginallasvegas.com for the current season — but visitors can typically expect:

BooFest Trick-or-Treat

Late October • Bridge Street

Turkey Trot 5K & 10K

Thanksgiving week • Rodriguez Park

Christmas Tree Lighting

Late November • Plaza Park

Luces en el Río Light Display

Late November through early January • Gallinas River Walk

Santa in the Park

Early December • Carnegie Library Park

Electric Light Parade

Early December, evening

Christmas Craft Fair

Sundays in December • Abe Montoya Recreation Center

Regional Day Trips

Mora County Fiestas

Late July • Main Street, Mora, NM

Live music, food, crafts, and rodeo events roughly 25 miles from Las Vegas.

San Miguel / Mora County Fair

Early August • Las Vegas, NM

Rodeo, livestock shows, and live regional music acts.

116th Bean Day Celebration

Early September • Wagon Mound, NM

A long-running rodeo, parade, and community celebration in a small town north of Las Vegas.

Route 66 Celebration

Early September • San Miguel County

Car shows, guided tours, and live music tied to the historic Mother Road.

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta

October

The world's largest hot air balloon festival, roughly two hours southwest of Las Vegas, drawing over a million visitors annually. The City of Las Vegas has hosted its own booth here for years.

Useful Visitor Directory

Save these before you explore

Emergency & Safety

Emergencies	9-1-1
Police Dept. (non-emergency)	505-425-7504
Fire Dept. (non-emergency)	505-425-6321
New Mexico State Police	505-425-6771
San Miguel Sheriff's Office	505-425-7589

Visitor & Community Services

Visitor's Center & Chamber Maps, guides, business info	505-425-3707
City Administration	505-454-1401
Carnegie Library	505-426-3304
Meadow City Public Transit	505-454-8583
Municipal Airport	505-454-0881
Alta Vista Regional Hospital	505-426-3500
Animal Care Center	505-426-3289

Outdoor Sites

Storrie Lake State Park	505-425-7278
Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge	505-425-3581
Friends of Montezuma Hot Springs	505-490-6461

Tap any phone number to call directly from your device.

For interactive maps and live updates, visit lasvegasnm.gov

Explore More Online

This guide covers the highlights — for the full local business directory, an up-to-date events calendar, and ongoing community coverage from Meadow City Weekly Review, visit:

theoriginallasvegas.com

Directory

550+ local businesses

Events

What's happening & when

Blog

Local history & stories

Own a local business? Learn about featured directory listings at
theoriginallasvegas.com/advertise-with-us

The Original Las Vegas — Discover the Original.