

I Do Not Want to Go to Las Vegas Ever Again!

Shôn Ellerton, January 12, 2026

Been to Las Vegas many times in the past, but after our last trip, no more!



I vow that I'll never go back to Las Vegas unless someone offers me a guaranteed luxury suite with a kitchenette on or near the top floor of one of the better hotels with an awesome pool complex like The Venetian or Mandalay Bay for an ultra-low price along with free parking.

I'm mainly referring to The Strip, the most popular part of Las Vegas. Apart from Downtown, the rest of Las Vegas is endless and bleak suburbia.

I'm done with it!

Much of the Las Vegas Strip that I once knew has degraded to a place that I no longer like being in. I've been to Las Vegas on numerous occasions ever since I was a child while going on long road trips from Colorado to California, and later in life on various occasions with family and friends alike.

More recently, I took my wife and son to the United States. It turned out to be a big road trip encompassing most of the entire west of the country. The highlights were the national parks, visiting little country towns, and catching up with family and relatives. However, my son wanted to go to Disneyland in California and my wife wanted to see Las Vegas. I wasn't so thrilled at either prospect as I've been to both on numerous occasions as a child. Moreover, I've grown far more intolerant of crowds in general and, most assuredly, Disneyland and Las Vegas are places that are chock full of people with far too much noise for my liking. But it was understandable that they both wanted to experience it, at least, once in their lives.

My son *did* have a blast in Disneyland while I merely coped with it. My wife didn't like it that much.

Then we stayed in Las Vegas for two nights and *none* of us liked the experience.

I'll tell you why.

Filthy and Dirty

It's filthy, for a start.

We stayed at The Strat Hotel, which I recall vividly, to be one of the filthiest places I've stayed. We had to ask to be moved to a better room, which it turned out, to be not much of a significant improvement. The smell was rancid, the carpets worn out, the toilet seat had chips taken out of it, and they put us right over a noisy bank of air-conditioning units positioned on a lower rooftop beneath us a few floors down.

Walking through the Strat casino was horrid. Smoking gamblers idly sitting at one-arm bandits, fruit machines, or pokies, depending on where you come from while the lingering stench of old cigarette smoke pervades off every inch of worn-out carpet.

Perhaps we chose a bad hotel!

Outside wasn't much better.

It was a hot night, which isn't uncommon in Vegas, and my wife and I walked down the Strip towards Caesar's Palace. It just felt dirty and horrible. Litter on the pavements, people tossing their rubbish on the street because they're too lazy to find a bin, sticky wads of gum, and patches of vomit. There were syringes in the gutter and the smell was that typical trash-can fermented smell one often encounters in third world countries.

We went into a few hotels, each being not particularly nice and clean inside. The same rancid smell in the casino and, of course, those horrible infested carpets hiding a myriad of germs and other nasty things not easily visible to the naked eye.

They choose those ornate and messy carpet patterns to hide what's in them!

There were a couple of rather nice hotels, one being the Fontainebleau, and the other, I can't remember. They seemed brand new and I've never seen them before. Perhaps it's cheaper to let the hotel slowly dilapidate and then knock it down to be replaced than to keep them nicely maintained and up to its initial cleanliness.

Mistakenly, we went to the iconic Caesar's Palace Hotel, which turned out to be a big disappointment. It's not how I remembered it all. It was chaotic, with fruit machines haphazardly this place and that, no nice places to eat, and the once grand shopping area seemed to be almost half-closed. It's as if the hotel had gone well past its prime.

Accordingly, we were spared going to some of the older hotels on the strip like Excalibur, Luxor, and Circus Circus. I've been to all of them at some point or another, although not to stay the night. Going back more than ten years ago, I remember the Excalibur taking a big dive in terms of quality and cleanliness. It was also incredibly naff and cringeworthy with its fake and plastic Arthurian theme. Unless they made some drastic changes, I can't imagine what it would be like now.

Again, ten years ago, Luxor, the pyramid hotel with the bright spotlight, looked old and tired inside, and MGM Grand just looked like an ordinary massive hotel with nothing particularly special about apart from it being the biggest hotel.

Mandalay Bay was and still is pretty nice, though, with its cool pool area and indoor aquariums.

As for many of the bedrooms in these hotels, it's not for the faint-of-heart to hear some of the stories that had taken place there. Imagine what night life took place here.

Just be armed with an ultraviolet lamp to reveal those spills and other substances!

It's Not Cheap Anymore

Las Vegas is now, for me, the ultimate rip-off city.

Everything you do, everything you order, every little thing you ask for, there's *always* some extra fee you have to pay.

Take, for example, the simple thing of doing laundry.

These hotels all used to have coin-operated laundry machines on multiple floors.

Not anymore. You have to use concierge service which costs an arm and a leg.

I'm sorry! I refuse to pay three bucks to get *one* item of underwear cleaned. And yes, they charge *per item of laundry!* Doing a bag of laundry can set you back the best part of sixty bucks.

I looked up where there could be a convenient laundrette on The Strip, but there weren't many at all, and for those we could find, they were also quite expensive. It seemed that the hotels were in cahoots with each other and the laundrettes were taking advantage of that to jack up their prices.

During the day, we ambled up to Hoover Dam, about an hour-and-a-half away. By the way, going to the Hoover Dam is worth seeing if you haven't done so before.

We took our laundry with us and on the way back, we stopped at a suburb called Paradise and did our laundry at a laundrette for a mere few dollars for the whole lot, including drying. Moreover, while waiting, we went into La Bonita, a Mexican supermarket, which had amazing fresh produce for a fraction of the price than outlets like Trader Joe's or one of those upper crust supermarkets that wealthier middle-class white suburban families gravitate to.

I never understood why the white upper middle-class lot don't take advantage of the myriad of amazing Asian, Indian and Latin American supermarkets that sell amazing produce for far less money. They're either snooty about them or, perhaps, daunted by the unknown.

Who knows.

Las Vegas hotels are infamous for its so-called *resort fees* which is some mandatory tax that they impose on their customers. So, you could have an amazing last-minute deal to stay at a hotel for, say, twenty bucks, only to be levied an extra fifty dollars for a resort fee.

Ridiculous.

As for parking, we were whacked with a thirty-dollar bill *each* day we had our car in the hotel's own car park, which, I will say, had plenty of space in it for all of its customers.

As I mentioned before, we stayed at The Strat Hotel which has the famous Strat Tower, the tallest structure in Las Vegas at 350 metres (or 1149 feet) in height

that looks kind of like a smaller version of the CN Tower in Toronto. It has a roller coaster on the top, which wasn't working because it hasn't been maintained, and a few other daredevil rides that thrill-seekers flock to. You would think residents that stay at the hotel would be given a free pass to the tower.

Nope. They were charged like any other walking in off the street.

And it's not something amazingly spectacular on top. Yes, there's a viewing platform and a couple of cafes and all that, but if you compare it with some of the offerings you'll find in East Asia, this is just old and tired.

We have to talk about food and drink next.

Where Did All the Free Food and Drink Go?

Now. I don't really gamble, but in the past, I'd happily fill up a cup full of tokens to play on the fruit machines. I'd slowly feed in coins but in small amounts while pretty women would come around plying me with free cocktails and, sometimes, finger food.

Those days are gone!

Also, whatever happened to the good, cheap all-you-can-eat buffets? There used to be all-you-can-eat prime rib, all-you-can-eat crabs legs, and all-you-can-eat *anything*.

They're gone, unless you spend top dollar to go to something like the Wynn Hotel which only operates these buffets at selected days and times during the week. Even so, the choice and quality they offer is well below that of an equivalent priced all-you-can-eat buffet in many cities in Asia, including relatively expensive Singapore.

Sure, there're some unique and fun restaurants in Las Vegas, but if you want good quality protein food. You know, food which isn't laden with cheap bread and sugary things to fill you up. You have to pay a lot of money for it.

That's why I would prefer to go to the suburbs, get myself some seafood, steak, veggies, and wine and go back to my luxury suite fitted with a kitchen to cook myself.

Eating out in America is now very expensive, especially when tips are mandated as part of the bill.

Las Vegas Felt Unfriendly, Superficial and Alien

Las Vegas has a weirdly unfriendly and alien vibe when it comes to the friendliness of people in general.

Walk down the many aisles of poker tables and you'll see why.

Check out the faces of the people gambling their money away. No pun intended, also look at the poker-faced croupiers serving the customers.

It's cold and grey.

You know that the house always wins and yet, you see these sad souls fritting away their money as if there's no tomorrow.

You know you're always being watched by the 'eye in the sky'.

Generally, we found the service in the Las Vegas hotels to be indifferent, superficial, and insincere.

Loneliness and Exploitation

But worst of all, Las Vegas felt horribly lonely.

Amidst all the noise, the attractions, the crowds of people in the street, and all the shows which take place in Vegas, there is a real feeling of utter loneliness coupled with exploitation.

I walked across many of the casino galleries throughout several hotels on the Strip always feeling that I've experienced some sort of déjà vu that I've been here before. Apart from the wall furnishings and the colour of the carpet, they are all nearly identical. The same sounds, the same machines, and the same overall feeling.

That feeling of depression, defeat, loneliness, and imprisonment. As if in some parallel hell-world of unbridled pandemonium.

It's hard to describe this feeling, but it's so depressing to see near-empty vast galleries of fruit machines, each with a veritable display of flashing lights to attract human prey to separate their money from their wallets. You see machines with pictures of beautiful ladies on them promising you that you'll get paradise. You see machines with pretty pictures of wild animals and tropicana to remind you of the beach paradise you might inherit. And more recently, I've come across

the same damned fruit machines sporting images of Native American Indians and majestic bison to remind you of the great American West and that its true spirit lies, somehow, in these fruit machines.

It's so damned sad.

And then you see the lonely lost souls sitting like vegetables in front of these machines feeding one token after another expecting that the next digital roll of the slots will align with the gods of plenty.

The look in their eyes is a tell-tale sign that their spirits have been broken. They seem to have no soul, much like a zombie or some robot-like servant answering to some unknown master. I walk near one of them feeding ten-dollar notes to a fruit machine. She presses the button subconsciously wasting not one second of her precious time between turns so that she can spend as much as she can until she dries up her funds.

It's utter exploitation and it feels all wrong.

I'm generally against any notion of banning things, but there's an element of reasoning, in my book, to ban fruit machines.

But, it's a free country and I wouldn't want to set a precedent of banning something simply because some people are abusing it or being addicted to it. However, if it has an effect on crime, like certain dangerously-addictive drugs, then there must be a legal ban imposed for the safety of others.

To Whom is Las Vegas Good For?

Finally, besides that of gambling, to whom is Las Vegas good for?

Well.

Las Vegas does have a lot to offer, but for a certain type of demographic.

Las Vegas can certainly be fun, but it's not for most types. Personally, I don't think Vegas is a great place for kids. Sure, they do have things for kids to do, but ultimately, they are only there so that the parents can trounce around doing largely adult activities like gambling and drinking late into the night. I felt quite uncomfortable having a kid around in Vegas.

If, and only if, you had an amazing suite which had all the conveniences, a kitchenette, a balcony overlooking Las Vegas, and an amazing organic-looking pool which adults and kids alike can enjoy, it's possible for families to enjoy the place.

But really, it's simply not designed for kids.

Adults go there to have a romantic getaway. Many pools have adult-only areas where you can dip in the pool with a nice cocktail in hand.

Single adults looking for fun and debauchery might find Las Vegas a fun place to hang around for a week or so. Being mobile with a backpack and not knowing which hotel you'll stay next can be an adventure. Hotels in Vegas often have last-minute really cheap night deals in which there are surplus rooms available for people wandering off the streets. It could be quite a fun adventure, but it is ad-hoc and unpredictable.

In all, I've had my share of Las Vegas.

Downtown Las Vegas is more interesting and I didn't discuss much about it in this piece. But it still conveys that feeling of unfriendliness, superficialness, and that sense of being lost as in the Strip.

In general, I found Las Vegas to be tired, overrated, expensive, and unfriendly, and I have no plans on ever visiting it again.