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Ufomind Places

The Utterly Obsessive, Quite Superfluous All-"U"-Can-Eat Guide to Las Vegas Buffets

As Featured on CNN and KING-TV

Reviewed by Glenn Campbell

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Note: I got married; my lifestyle changed, and I can no longer buffet every day. Although I try to visit each new buffet as it opens, I do not have time to revisit buffets that I have already experienced, so their status could have changed. Some of the prices, hours and opinions below may be out of date.

**You should use this guide with caution when visiting older buffets. Buffets not yet reviewed:
Mandalay Bay.**

How much can you eat?

Las Vegas, Nevada, 1996 -- As a Las Vegas resident living near the Strip, I keep no food at home but eat exclusively at all-you-can-eat casino buffets. These massive feeding operations are intended to draw gamblers into the casinos, but you don't need to gamble to take part in them. Because they are subsidized by gaming, they can be an excellent value. Even at the full price of \$8-\$10 for dinner, the crab legs, prime rib, cheesecake and other rich delicacies are worth far more than the price of admission. One drawback: Food loses its excitement when you eat the best every day, and you may no longer appreciate your own Mom's cooking.

About four years ago, I resolved to eat at every casino buffet in Las Vegas. It hasn't been easy, but I've done them all. Below are my favorites, based on my last visit to each. For hours and prices for the rest of them, check one of the many on-line listings, like [Las Vegas On-Line](#), or consult the free tourist magazines in town. ([What's On](#) is the best.) Typical hours are 7-10:30 for breakfast, 11-3 for lunch and 4-10 for dinner. (Dinner often extends to 11pm on Friday and Saturday.) All prices include all-you-can-drink beverages (non alcoholic).

To summarize my wisdom: With the exception of the Bellagio, the best buffets are not on the Strip; they are in the outskirts casinos that cater to locals. Unlike tourists, who are suckered by advertising, locals have a memory and won't return to a lousy buffet. Neighborhood casinos have to compete on quality, not just quantity, and the buffet is a key part of their marketing strategy. Visit the right one, and you will enjoy better food at lower prices and greater convenience than at any Strip megaresort. Other advice is [below](#).

Buffet Factoids. There are now about [65 casino buffets](#) in Las Vegas & Clark County. The largest buffet is at the Excalibur, with a capacity of about 1500. The average buffet seats about 500. The average gambler loses about \$580 on each visit to Las Vegas, which helps pay for these marvelous buffets.

Campbell's Top Ten (or so) Casino Buffets

Most buffets below were evaluated at lunch. Prices below do not include weekend brunch which is usually \$1-2 more than weekday lunch.

1. **Bellagio** -- Our unqualified No. 1 choice. The price is high -- about twice that of the other top buffets, but definitely worth it if you want a special experience. Offers a vast variety of exotic food where everything is done just right. This casino bills itself as the ritziest and snobbiest in town, and the buffet is their chance to prove it. Get this: Those little pats of butter wrapped in foil -- imported from France. All sorts of marinated meats and fish. This is probably the only buffet in town where desserts really matter. They appear to be made in-house, not trucked in as others do, and the quality shows. The price is very reasonable in worldly terms: about \$15 for lunch and \$20 for dinner. One drawback (or plus): No children under 18 are allowed in the casino or buffet unless they are staying with a guest. (This is the only major casino with that restriction.) I didn't write down the hours, but they were the usual.

What about the rest of the much publicized casino? The only thing I remember is that the slot machines are silent and the place smells very nice (odor manipulation). The rest is the usual empty lavishness you expect from these high-end places. Virtually nothing to do if you don't gamble, except walk through enroute to the buffet smelling the flowers. [Visited March 1999]

2. **Fiesta** -- *Festival Buffet*. - My former number one choice. The main drawback is its current popularity and relatively small size, which has brought some long, slow lines. Remodeled in early 1996 in response to local competition, this buffet features kiosks like the Rio's Carnival Buffet, but smaller and with much more interesting food. Rio is superficial, but this one is deep: Exceptional selection and quality, with everything done just right. Cuppuccino bar, barbecue, woodfired pizza, Chinese, custom stir fry, pasta, soups, big dessert selection etc., etc., etc. It is the only buffet with a true personality. Behind every item, I see a world class chef who understands the subtleties of his craft. The artist who created this masterpiece is Executive Chef David Tweddle, a thoroughly obsessed workaholic who lives to cook. Nice "Mexican village" ambiance. (The seating is a bit cramped and dim compared to Sunset Station, but the food makes up for it.) Watch for the special "theme nights", like seafood night and Hawaiian night. On Hawaiian night, they go through nine suckling pigs, and on a recent Cajun night promotion, many cases of frogs legs were dispatched. On Rancho Dr. at Lake Mead Blvd., in northwestern Las Vegas. (From the US-95 freeway west of I-15, take the Rancho exit and go north a couple of miles. Although relatively remote, Fiesta is only about ten minutes from anywhere once you are on the freeway.) [B 7-11 \$3.95; Sat/Sun Brunch \$8.55; L 11-4 \$6.45; D 4-10 \$8.95, Wed. D 3:30-10 \$10.95. Last time I visited: probably last week.]

This buffet is probably one to avoid on weekends, and arriving at odd hours can be prudent at other times as well. It can fill up quickly, and lines are very slow once they form. If you find a substantial line here, try Texas Station across the street, which handles crowds better. (However, that one, too, can often be unapproachable on weekends.)

As with other kiosk buffets, you should avoid the made-to-order stir-fry station. Takes too long.

3. **Sunset Station** -- *Feast Around the World*. My heart fluttered with anticipation as I approached this new facility (opened June 1997). [Station Casinos](#), which caters to locals with its outskirts establishments, always puts on a good show. I was not disappointed. This is an excellent "kiosk" buffet. The setting is stunning, and the food is good and varied. (The whole casino is a trip, with Spanish architecture taken to extreme. The Gaudi Bar looks like something out of the movie *Alien*.) The buffet fits the bill for what Vegas buffets are supposed to be these days: lots of kiosks with a different cuisine at each, with a very appealing appearance. It is surprising, then, that I did not see much food that really excited me. Maybe I am just a jaded buffet cynic (Doing it every day can make you that way.) but the food seemed to lack inspiration. I would still prefer to go to Boulder Station for an everyday meal and to Fiesta for special occasions. Still, we place this one at #2 for now because it is so new and exciting! Located in Henderson on the US-95 freeway at Sunset Road. You can't miss it as you are driving to Arizona. Prices & hours: coming. About the same as Boulder Station, but you can't sneak into lunch at the breakfast price.
4. **Boulder Station** -- *The Feast*. An interesting "everyday" buffet that I ate at about 2-3 times a week for a couple of years. Not as flashy as the Fiesta or Rio, but excellent quality, variety and rotation. This is where I would eat every day given my preference, because it has a good variety of "normal" food and is easy to get in and out of. Rotisserie chicken, taco bar, soup bar, pizza, as well as a wide variety of entrees. Also occasionally appearing in the food lines are green things called "vegetables," which are seriously lacking in the Las Vegas diet. Sure, you can get meat, meat and more meat, but this buffet offers fare that is more like what you would have at home - and probably better. All the cooking is good, and the price is right (especially when you come at 10:45 to get lunch at the breakfast price.). The deserts, however, leave something to be desired. Also offers a late-night buffet on weekends (midnight to 6am, early Sat and early Sun, \$3.99), which is not worth staying up for. Located on the US-95 freeway (east of I-15) at the Boulder Hwy. exit. [B 7-11 \$4.49; L 11-2:30 \$5.95; D 4-10 \$7.95. Last visited: probably last week.]

Although I rate others higher for special occasions, Boulder Station is the one I prefer on a regular basis. I rate Boulder Station more highly than other reviewers do because it is the only one I could eat at every single day. The lines are usually shorter and the rotation is better. It offers more vegetables and other healthy food, not just rich stuff. With pleasant, well-lit decor, this place feels like home. Although other casinos are stunning, this is the place I would rather read my newspaper.

As at most other buffets, Lines can be a problem on weekends, especially on Sunday, Feb. to June. On weekdays, I arrive at 10:45am. I pay the breakfast price (\$4.59 with tax), stay for lunch at 11am and rarely encounter a line.

Warning: Don't confuse Boulder Station with Sam's Town, also on Boulder Highway. The Sam's Town buffet should be avoided.

5. **Texas Station** -- *Market Street Buffet*. Follows the Texas theme with deep pit barbecue and many varieties of chili. If you are into Tex-Mex, this is the place. Stiff competition with Fiesta next door keeps this buffet excellent, but Fiesta is still better. Rancho Dr. at Lake Mead Blvd. [B 7-11 \$3.95; L 11-3:30 \$6.45; D 4-10 \$8.95, Wed. \$12.95. Last visited: 1/97.]

Texas Station is rated by many connoisseurs as the best in Vegas. I respectfully disagree. The difference may rest on one's opinion of the value of barbeque in general. Unlike some "fly by night" reviewers from other cities, I used to buffet *every day*, and thus put greater weight on a balanced diet and daily rotation of food items.

[Aerial photo of Texas Station](#)

6. **Main Street Station** -- *Garden Court Buffet*. The only exception to our "avoid Downtown" rule, this newly reopened casino about two blocks from Fremont Street offers easy access from the freeway, convenient free parking (with validation) and a fine buffet in stunning surroundings. The airy Victorian architecture makes this Las Vegas's must tasteful buffet venue. Wide variety of food with excellent quality. This is only buffet I know with homemade guacamole in the taco bar -- a favorite of mine. Located on Main St. one block north of Fremont St. (beside the Plaza Hotel at the top of Fremont Street). Although the buffet is downtown, access is easy from from I-15, take the US-95 freeway south (east/"Phoenix" direction from I-15) to the first exit, Casino Center Dr., turn right at lights and right again into the uncovered parking lot. (4 hours free parking with easy validation at a time-stamp at the casino cage. To escape to the freeway again, go under the train tracks on Ogden Rd. between Main Street Station and the Plaza Hotel; continue straight to freeway entrance at Charleston Blvd.) [B 7-10:30 \$4.95; L 11-3 \$6.95; D 4-10 (4-11 Sat.) \$8.95, Fri. seafood D 4-11 \$12.95. Last visited 2/96]

The newly renovated Main Street Station is a classy joint. For example, this is probably the only buffet in Las Vegas where gentlemen can pee on the Berlin Wall. You'll find a portion of it behind the urinals in the men's room just outside the buffet entrance. I have no idea whether a similar installation exists in the women's room (and I have declined to inquire).

4 hours free parking makes this a good starting point for a visit to Fremont Street before or after your buffet. Four hours is more than enough for both the buffet and a stroll around downtown. Once sinking fast, Fremont Street is now covered by a giant roof and resembles a shopping mall. Come after dark and you'll see the spectacularly forgettable light show, every hour on the hour.

7. **Stratosphere** -- Since the lowering its prices, this buffet has risen in our rankings. Wide selection and good quality. The newly opened casino is close to bankruptcy. This shouldn't discourage the all-you-can-eater, though, as casino misfortune often translates into buffet improvement. At least the lines are short, and the selection and quality are quite respectable. On the Strip at Sahara (in the casino at the base of the Tower). [B 7-11 \$4.99; L 11-2 \$6.49, Sat. L 7-4 \$6.49; D 4-10 \$7.99, Fri.-Sat. 4-11. Last Visited: 1/97.]

After lunch, a visit to [the Stratosphere observation tower](#), the tallest in the U.S., is highly recommended. Runs about \$6 per person. In my opinion, the view is best during the day when there is much more to see than just the usual neon.

8. **Rio** -- *Village Seafood Buffet* - This new buffet is separate from Rio's other world class facility, the Carnival Buffet. The seafood buffet is located at the other end of the casino in the new Masquerade Village, an indoor New Orleans style theme attraction. It's all seafood, all the time, in stunning variety and very, very fresh. I am told there are salt water tanks in the basement where they keep some of the entrees flown in from the ocean, to be dispatched only on the day of consumption. It certainly tastes superb. The relatively high price can also hurt the budget, but it is worth it. I have never tasted better steamed clams or sauteed swordfish. Be careful what you eat, however, because it might be calimari. The only seafood I did not see represented was lobster, but maybe I wasn't looking hard enough. Other buffets offer weekly "seafood nights", some of which I haven't yet sampled, but I can't imagine that any come close to this one, where they do it every day and really seem to know their fish. There's also prime rib, New York steak, salad bars and an impressive dessert selection. The only drawback, apart from the appalling price, is the richness of the food and the lack of rotation. Since almost everything is seafood, it is hard to get a balanced diet, and you couldn't eat here every day. Once in a lifetime is probably enough. **Since I have never yet seen a line here, this may be an excellent choice for weekends, when the lines at other buffets may be impossible.** L 11-2:30, \$16.95?; D 4-10 \$18.95; Weekend brunch 9-2:30 \$18.95?. (Probably the only difference between lunch and dinner is the price.) (Opened 2/7/97. Last visited: 2/97.)

While here, you must experience the impressive Mardi Gras show, which takes place several times a day above the casino floor. Five two-story floats filled with performers circulate on tracks on the ceiling, suspended above the gambling audience. It is one of those experiences you'll forget in 15 minutes, but it's an awesome (free) spectacle while it happens. The best place to view it is on the casino floor near the stage.

Another interesting attraction is a video wall showing excerpts of the nightly floor show by Danny Ganz, "The Man of Many Voices." Ganz impersonates the singing voices of every well-known pop star. The show itself cost big bucks, but it costs nothing to watch the preview, which seems to have all the best parts. The man is a human parrot, and his voice -- be it as Stevie Wonder or Barbara Striesand -- is virtually indistinguishable from the real thing.

Enjoy it all now, because I expect major cutbacks. Shortly after the opening and a major local marketing blitz, both the buffet and the rest of the new casino extension seemed surprisingly empty. The Mardi Gras show alone has a cast of nearly 70 with a similar number of supporting crew. I can't imagine enough people are dropping quarters in the slots below to justify all that. The buffet has been close to deserted on weekdays, with many waiters looking idle, and even at \$15-\$20 per person, it must be losing tons of money. Even weekends seem anemic, with most of the slot machines idle and the buffet only reaching about 80% capacity. Contrasting this with New York New York, which opened about the same time and is packed every day, I'd say the Rio is in trouble. I predict they will cut costs, which might mean gutting the overstaffed parade and closing this fine but superfluous buffet. In the meantime, enjoy the seafood and the free show. Time marches on in the buffet world, and you got to get it while you can.

9. **Rio** -- *Carnival World Buffet*. Stunning variety represents everything that is Vegas: gaudy, excessive, superficial. A virtual buffet "shopping mall" with kiosks for various cuisines: Chinese, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, American, etc. You'll be so impressed on first visit that you won't notice the generally unexceptional quality of the food. For a buffet regular such as myself, there is also the problem of "rotation" or lack thereof, meaning that the menu does not change much from day to day. The lines can also be long, since this is regarded as the "best" buffet by locals. If you go here once, you'll be impressed and will remember the experience fondly, but there is no need to go again. Located at the Flamingo exit of I-15. [B M-F 7-10:30 \$4.99; L M-F 11-3:30; Brunch Sat-Sun 7-3:30 \$8.99; D 3:30-10 \$8.99. Last visited: 2/97.]

Although Rio pioneered the "kiosk" concept, Fiesta now does it better.

Other Buffets that are usually well regarded by tourists include Bally's, Mirage and Caesar's Palace on the Strip, but their high prices and risk of long lines make them avoidable in my opinion. I rarely go to them because they are hard to get in and out of, and I don't see why I should pay more for less.

If In The Neighborhood...

8. **Palace Station** -- *The Feast*. Good food, good rotation, short lines, convenient location and frequently available 2-for-1 coupons make this the buffet I most often go to for a quick meal. Adjacent to I-15 at the Sahara exit. Lines are usually short except for the weekends in the high tourist season (Jan.-June). Remodeled buffet opened July 4, 1995. For the recorded menu, call 367-2428 (not too useful). [B 7-11 \$3.99; L 11-3 \$4.99; D 4-10 \$7.99; Fri/Sat/Sun D 4-10 \$9.99; Sat/Sun Brunch 7-3 \$6.99. Last visited: probably last week.]

I've eaten at Palace Station more than any other buffet - hundreds of times in my illustrious buffological career. I like the place for its calm ambiance, lack of lines and convenient location, but I have heard some grumbling from other reviewers and I admit that the quality of the food is not what it used to be (or perhaps I have become jaded by the exceptional offerings elsewhere). The variety is limited, and if you don't happen to like what is offered that day, you could be turned off. Although Palace Station is the place I go when I am in a rush, if I have more time to travel I go to Boulder Station, which has about 2-3 times the variety for a similar price.

9. **Silverado** (formerly Boomtown) -- A respectable choice, easy to get in and out of from I-15. Far better than the buffets at Jean & Stateline and about on a par with Palace Station. Features barbeque-type fare in a pleasant faux-Western setting. Good prices. The only drawback is an almost complete lack of daily rotation. (The same thing is served every day.) On I-15 at the Blue diamond exit (south of the city). Unlike other buffets, lunch does not begin here until 11:30. Filet Mignon some nights. The wait may be impossibly long on peak weekends. [B 7-11 \$?; L 11:30-3:30 \$?; D 4-10 \$?. Last visited.: 12/97.]

10. **The Reserve** -- In Henderson, this is the first decent buffet you encounter if driving from Arizona. A respectable buffet in the kiosk tradition. Good quality and selection, but Sunset Station at the next freeway exit is better.
11. **San Remo** -- Tiny buffet in the casino's restaurant offers limited selection but good quality and intimate atmosphere. On Tropicana Ave. just east of the Strip. [B 6:30-10 \$5.95; L 11-2 \$6.95; D 5-9 \$\$7.95. Last visited: Fall 96.]
12. **Luxor** -- This buffet has moved out of Manhattan and into an archeological dig in the basement of the pyramid. The interesting setting might make you forget the uninteresting food, which hasn't changed.
13. **Arizona Charlie's** -- *Wild West Buffet*. Good "functional" buffet, the best of the cheapies. If I am shopping in this area, I stop here for a quick in-and-out meal. Good prices (almost as cheap as Circus-Circus but much nicer), edible food and short lines, if any. A good choice on weekends when lines at other buffets may be too long. Far from the casino district: on Decatur just south of the US-95 freeway (from I-15, go west on US-95 and exit at Decatur; turn left on Decatur). [B 7-10:30 \$3.50; L 11-3:30 \$4.50; D 4-10 \$6.50, Mon. D \$7.95. Last visited: Summer 96.]
14. **Holiday Inn Boardwalk** -- *Surf Buffet*. So bad that it's good, like "Plan 9 From Outer Space." The decor is tacky to the max, including piped in surf sounds. This is Vegas as it was meant to be -- open 24 hours. As the only casino buffet that never closes, you might end up here at 2 am, and given the low price, you might find the experience amusing. This rest of the casino is equally bad (good), including a fake roller coast and regular appearances by Elvis. Surrounded by the even more surreal high-end casinos, this place bring you back to earth. (Located between Monte Carlo and Bellagio on the strip.)
15. **Harrah's Laughlin** (Laughlin, Nevada) -- *Fresh Market Buffet*. Laughlin now has a half-dozen buffets, most of which would fall into my "sucks" category if they weren't so cheap. Harrah's is an exception. It is a small buffet, about a dollar more than the rest but worth it. [B 7-11:30 \$5.49; L 11:30-2 \$5.49; D 4-10 \$6.49, Fri. D 4-11 \$6.49. Last visited: 1/97.]

Laughlin, a middle-of-nowhere strip of high-rise casinos along the Colorado River, caters largely to the geriatric set and has to be one of the duller places on earth, with hardly anything to do beside gambling. Lodging there is extremely cheap, however. Rates of \$20 a night *or less* are common, making this a reasonable place to stay while enroute to or from Las Vegas (about 100 road miles north).

Other Buffets

All other casino buffets are "average," which can seem good enough if you aren't aware of the competition. You'll find a bargain at almost any Vegas buffet if you arrive hungry. A compendium:

- **Sucks, don't go:** Circus-Circus, Continental (if any), Excalibur, Maxim, Aladdin, Riviera, Lady Luck, Fitzgeralds, Holiday Inn Boardwalk ("Surf Buffet").

Circus-Circus and Excalibur remind me of abattoirs, where the cattle are led along chutes to various feeding troughs in preparation for slaughter.

In fairness, though, naive visitors who know no other buffet might be satisfied with any of these, if only for the "All-U-Can-Eat" feature. When touring buffets with CNN, I was surprised to find how many satisfied customers there were at Excalibur.

- **Average food but way overpriced, don't go:** Las Vegas Hilton.
- **Average food but long lines, don't go:** MGM Grand

- **Above average food, nice surroundings, but way overpriced** (fine if you are on an expense account, but no bargains here): Bally's, Caesar's Palace, [Golden Nugget](#), [Mirage](#).
- **Interesting setting, fair prices but bland food** (You can't go wrong at any of these if you are in the neighborhood. The setting may be worth the visit, but you won't remember the food.): [Luxor](#), [Monte Carlo](#), [Stardust](#), [Flamingo Hilton](#)
- **Mediocre outskirts casinos** (bland, cafeteria style food, but cheap and convenient if you happen to be nearby and just need to eat): Nevada Landing (Jean), Gold Strike (Jean) Gold Strike (Hoover Dam -- oops, burned down), Primadonna (Stateline), Whiskey Petes (Stateline -- with a low kids rate, we sometimes feed the family here enroute to California), Skyline (Boulder Highway, lunch only?), Railroad Pass (on US-95 near Boulder City), Edgewater (Laughlin), Colorado Belle (Laughlin), Gold River (Laughlin).
- **Cheapest** (within the city limits): Arizona Charlie's (best of the cheap), Circus-Circus (no go!), Sahara, Holiday Inn Boardwalk.
- **Biggest**: Excalibur is the largest-capacity buffet, with seating for about 1500. (The average buffet is about 500 seats.)
- **Relatively short lines on weekends**: Rio's Seafood Village Buffet, Arizona Charlie's. At others, the lines can get so long on peak weekends it may not be worth the wait. At least try to come at off-peak times of the day. Arizona Charlie's keeps its low rates on weekends, so this is were I often go on Sunday.
- **Simply Average** (nothing memorable, avoid them if you can): [Imperial Palace](#), Gold Coast, Westward Ho, Fremont, [Joker's Wild](#), Showboat, Sam's Town, [Harrahs](#), [Tropicana](#), Vacation Village (Chinese -- if at all), Treasure Island, Orleans (12/96), MGM Grand (price recently reduced, but lines always too long), Sahara, Oasis (Mesquite), Player's Island (Mesquite), Buffalo Bill's (Stateline).
- **Above average but can't compete with better buffet nearby**: Sante Fe (go to Fiesta), Texas (go to Fiesta unless lines there are long), Golden Nugget (go to Main Street Station).
- **Meeting Rooms**: Palace Station offers a private room adjoining the buffet for 8-14 people. Regular buffet price plus 18% tip. Reservations suggested. Rio may also offer the same.
- **Late Night**: Boardwalk Casino's *Surf Buffet* is open 24 hours (see note above). Boulder Station may have a late night buffet on weekends (not confirmed lately), Fri & Sat, 11pm to 6am, for \$3.99 (usual breakfast fare, not worth staying up for, and the food gets tired by the end of the night).
- **Strip Casinos Without Buffets** (Appalling!): New York New York, Desert Inn.
- **Buffets on I-15 in California**: If you are on I-15 in California and feel an urgent need to buffet before you get to Vegas, exit at Roy Rogers Drive in Victorville. There you'll find two commercial buffets, not nearly as extravagant as casino buffets but still decent. One is the [Hometown Buffet](#) in the Home Base shopping plaza immediately facing the exit. The other is the China Palace chinese buffet in the shopping center behind the hometown buffet (Victorville Plaza). Both offer respectable fare, but Hometown is my choice for a more balanced meal. In any case, tank up in Victorville, because between there and Vegas (3 hours) is a buffet desert.
- **Buffets in Kingman, AZ**: The Cookery buffet, at a truck stop at the Andy Devine exit, is horrible and overpriced. The Golden Corral, at the Stockton Hill exit, offers a passable non-casino buffet. Best to hold out for Laughlin or Vegas.
- **Permanently Closed Due to Implosion of Hotel**: Sands, Hacienda (both buffets deserved it)
- **Awaiting Reevaluation**: Binion's Horseshoe (dinner only), Ramada Express (Laughlin), Flamingo Hilton Laughlin.

- **Total:** There are approximately **65** casino buffets in Clark County, based on [this alphabetical list](#).
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Review by Neighborhood

- **Best Buffet on I-15:** Rio.
 - **Best Buffet on Boulder Highway/US-95:** Boulder Station.
 - **Best Buffet downtown:** Main Street Station.
 - **Best Buffet on Mid-Strip:** Frontier.
 - **Best Buffet on South Strip:** San Remo (but nothing to crow about, and Luxor has more interesting setting).
 - **Best Buffet on Rancho** (northwest Vegas): Fiesta.
 - **Best Buffet at Jean or Stateline:** Buffalo Bill's (but hold out for Boomtown, Rio or Palace Station if you can).
 - **Best Buffet in Mesquite:** Player's Island (but still avoidable).
 - **Best Buffet in Laughlin:** Harrah's.
 - **Best Buffet in Reno** (that we've tried): [Eldorado](#)
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Buffet Rules

1. Eat only one buffet a day. If you attempt more than one, you will explode.
2. Starve yourself the rest of the day to achieve maximum stomach capacity.
3. Eat lunch buffet instead of dinner. Prices are lower and lines are usually shorter, while the food is about the same.
4. Some buffets switch from breakfast to lunch at 11am without closing. Thus, if you arrive about 10:45, you can get in for the breakfast price (\$1-2 less) but still have lunch. (Doesn't work on weekends at buffets where only brunch is offered.) I use this trick often at Fiesta, Palace Station, Boulder Station and Luxor.
5. Otherwise, never go to breakfast buffets. They are pure cholesterol, offer limited selection and will kill your appetite for better buffets later in the day.
6. Try to arrive at buffets at off hours to avoid lines, especially during peak periods. The first or last hour of lunch or dinner are usually good times.
7. Lines are longest on weekends, especially Jan.-Jun. Sometimes the lines are so frustrating that one is tempted to avoid buffet altogether and do McDonalds. If you buffet on weekends, you must be wily and flexible: Try arriving at odd times or going to the suggested weekend buffets listed above. To add to the insult of long lines, many casino's offer only "brunches" instead of breakfast and lunch on weekends. This is merely an excuse to increase prices: Brunches include food items from both breakfast and lunch but fewer of each. Weekday buffeting is more pleasurable.
8. Consult free tourist magazines for latest buffet hours and prices -- and possible 2-for-1 coupons. Also look for state coupon books at Nevada Tourism offices at Jean, Mesquite and McCarran Airport. (Avoid the "Official

Tourist Bureaus" around town, which are private companies trying to sell you rooms or tours.)

9. Bring a newspaper to read or friends to talk to in case the line is long. (Reading or any other intellectual activity is rare in casinos, but they won't throw you out for it.)
10. Vegetarians or people on low-fat diets are going to find slim pickings at most buffets. Vegans are not *vegans*. Nonetheless, casual vegetarians can probably get by at the top ten buffets listed above.
11. Tipping: I usually leave a \$1 tip at the table if beverage service was adequate. (\$1 for 1-2 people. \$2 for 3-4 people.) A 10/2/96 article on buffet tipping in the Las Vegas Review-Journal recommends \$1/head. Personally, I regard tipping as a barbaric custom, but it is expected here and the waiters' income depends on it. Because I am a known buffet regular, I also want to keep on good terms with the staff.
12. Smuggling: You are not supposed to take any food out of a buffet. This buffet guide cannot condone smuggling, but if you do smuggle, please be discreet and *selective*. Certain foodstuffs smuggle well, like fruit, pastries and cold vegetables. Big slabs of beef, when carried upon the person, tend to ooze and create embarrassing stains. Some zip-lock bags and a small knapsack can be handy.

A sign at Palace Station reads, "All Food Must Be Consumed In The Feast." This is an impossible task, because there is a *lot* of food in The Feast, and no one can eat it all.

13. Know your limits. There is a subtle line between "enough" and "too much," and it may take some experience to recognize when that level has been reached. If you suddenly sense your interest in food vanish, *stop eating immediately*. The impulse to finish what is on your plate could be your demise.
14. Never gamble. Gambling defeats the principles of buffology, which is to get as much value as possible for your money and beat the casinos at their own game. The only way you'll win at a casino is not to gamble.
15. Don't get married in Vegas, for the same reasons that you shouldn't gamble: *You just can't win.*

Buffet Links

- [List of Buffets from the Las Vegas Entertainment Guide](#), including times, prices and info on each hotel (but no reviews). *Recommended for the facts.*
- [Table of Times and Prices](#) from *Where To in Las Vegas*
- Altavista search for "[Vegas Buffets](#)"
- The Rough Guide to Las Vegas list several [Buffet Recommendations](#).
- [Nevada Wheel](#), a series of irreverent columns in the Riverside (CA) *Press-Enterprise*, offers this buffet capsule: [1/13/95](#): "Hard to bottom out under the Circus Circus, unless you consider that the same folks have whipped up a buffet to avoid at Excalibur. But there is new hope at the state line, where the buffet at Whiskey Pete's is almost as awful. With a little neglect, Pete could sneak in under the wire."
- **Irrelevencies**
 - Buffet Lists, Weak: [KLAS list](#) | [Winners Publishing list](#) | [CityView list](#)
 - A page on Las Vegas, *New Mexico*, is [bad mouthing our buffets](#)
- **Buffet Nationwide!**
 - [Hometown Buffet](#) chain. *Top-notch alternative to Vegas, not quite as fancy but a credible effort.*
 - [Old Country Buffet](#) chain. 6 locations.
 - Buffets in [Eugene, OR](#) | [Napa Valley, CA](#) | [Salt Lake City](#) (including the respectable but poorly named Chuck-A-Rama chain) | [Denver](#)
 - Advice: [Eating Barbeque at Buffets](#)

In the buff, eh?

This document will be updated as new data becomes available. The buffet situation is always changing, so keep in touch!

This research was conducted over several years and at considerable personal expense. I have experienced the disappointment and dyspepsia so you don't have to. If you find this buffet data helpful, please visit our [bookstore](#).

[Web Search](#)

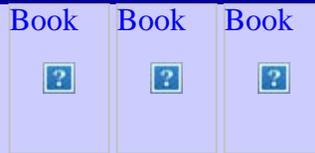
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General Links

- [John Yeargin's Buffet Report 12/8/96](#)+ - Largely concurs with our findings <1/13/97 [#1](#)>
- [New Wave of Brunches, Buffets Arrives](#) - Review of new Sahara buffet & several Sunday brunches. - Article - Published: 4/16/97 - Source: Las Vegas Review-Journal (Newspaper) <4/20/97 [#2](#)>
- [Campbell's CNN Buffet Debut, July 26, 1997](#)+ - Appears as buffet expert in "On the Menu" (23 lines) - Message - By Glenn Campbell - Published: 7/23/97 - Source: Area 51 (Mailing List) <7/23/97 [#3](#)>
- [Rio Buffet: Good, but some sleight of hand](#)+ (16 lines) - Correspondence - By Jay Rubinstein <8/27/97 [#4](#)>
- [Fiesta & Palace Station](#)+ (17 lines) <11/21/97 [#5](#)>
"Your reviews were right on except for the mention that the Fiesta is a rather tacky ambience including the tables, but I guess at those prices and those high qualities I can't quibble."
- [Flanagan's Buffet Expedition](#)+ - Review of several. (15 lines) - By Pat Flanagan <11/21/97 [#6](#)>
- [Chef Les Kincaid](#) - FOOD...WINE...GOLF. Las Vegas' Favorite Chef Recipes tips and much more <1/15/99 [#7](#)>

Books from our Catalog

Listed in Random Order



- [Las Vegas Compass Guide](#) by Deke Castleman - \$12
- [Literary Las Vegas](#) by Mike Tronnes (editor) - \$12.95
- [Nevada: True Tales from the Neon Wilderness](#) by Jim Sloan - \$12.95
- [Nevada Atlas and Gazetteer \(new trpb\)](#) - \$16.95

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Reader Comments

Regarding "Best Las Vegas Buffets" - Latest First

BeILOUSYo Buffet

\$20 rip off at the Bellagio buffet 8/99. I was disappointed at the lack of variety in the beef and poultry areas. The atmosphere was the worst, with hundreds of diners crowded into their rooms blaring loud Italian songs from dozens of speakers. I could barely hear the conversation at my table. I prefer simple, delicious foods in more subdued environments. My favorite buffet is at the Stratosphere, and at half the price.

-- CHEAPBASTARD 9/16/99 (#75)

Stratosphere Buffet

While on a brief trip to the States to see the Utah Jazz play, we stopped at the Stratosphere for a couple of days. The breakfast buffet was fair but the lunch buffet was amazing. Obviously we didn't do both on the same day. We can't wait to go back. One quick comment, go on the rides at the top of the tower at night, not day, but not after eating.

-- Umidude & Kaz 9/8/99 (#74)

LVHilton, MSS, Boulder Station, Bellagio

Breakfast at LVHilton buffet was good to excellent even though a little pricey. MSS excellent; probably my favorite of this group. Boulder Station good to excellent (excellent no sugar added desserts), however I was disappointed in the Friday night seafood buffet at Boulder Station. Bellagio lunch excellent but not my favorite. I'm not sure it was a good value at the price.

-- Gene (ugwf@hal-pc.org) 8/19/99 (#73)

Vegas Buffetology

I am currently working on my PhD in Buffetology with a minor in Snack Bar Sciences. Here are my Vegas buffet comments. Take them as you will... Frontier- breakfast- was best (for this price range) I have ever eaten as buffets go in Vegas. Quality not quantity is key here Stardust- dinner- was rolling downhill fast without a paddle. Fitzgerald's- dinner- (Filet Mignon buffet)was a split decision. The steak was excellent but the rest of the buffet sucked. The salad items double sucked Circus Circus- breakfast- Pastries and Desserts were excellent. You do however feel like a cow going to slaughter as they prod you in.

-- Buffet King 7/7/99 (#72)

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PO Box 30303, Las Vegas, NV 89173 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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