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# 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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Edition 5.1  
June 19, 1997 (minor revisions 2/15/98)

Also see our page on [Recommended Hotels](#).

## How much can you eat?

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: 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 [60 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.

My top-rated favorites are listed first. Selection of the top buffets is highly subjective, and the difference between them in quality is very slight. Other reviewers have quibbled with my ordering, but all seem to agree that these first eight are superior, and most of them also agree with my [Sucks](#) category as well.

1. **Fiesta** -- *Festival Buffet*. - **The best!** 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.]

The only drawbacks of the Fiesta are its growing popularity and relatively small size. 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.

2. **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.

The market for "locals" casinos like this one is generally regarded as overbuilt, and the danger with this one is that it will cannibalize its sisters in the Station Casinos chain. The management is apparently concerned about this: It has lowered the price at Palace Station and started a summer 6-for-5 promotion at Boulder Station.

3. **Boulder Station** -- *The Feast*. A deep and thoughtful buffet experience. 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. 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), whie 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 Fiesta as Number One, 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 "normal" food. 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.

Here's an [On-Line Coupon](#) good for a free buffet at Boulder Station. It apparently required you to sign up for their slot club - a quick and harmless procedure. (Slot clubs are useless for non-gamblers, except they do put you on the casino's mailing list which sometimes brings you more coupons.)

4. **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, insisting that

Fiesta, Boulder Station are better. 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 buffet *every day*, and thus put greater weight on a balanced diet and daily rotation of food items.

[Aerial photo of Texas Station](#)

5. **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.

6. **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 (as at the Frontier). 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.

7. **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.

8. **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. **Frontier** -- *Michelle's Village Cafe*. In the middle of the Strip. Excellent dinner buffet in the casino's restaurant, but the frequent long lines may make it impractical during peak periods. Also offers a good lunch buffet at a low price with shorter lines. Pleasant "village" decor. This is my favorite buffet choice on the Strip. (Mirage, Caesar's and Bally's are more extravagant but are also overpriced.) However, due to the traffic of the Strip and the risk of long lines, this and all other Strip buffets are probably not worth leaving the freeway for. Located at the mid-point of the Strip, north of Treasure Island and Spring Mountain Rd. [M-Sat L 11-2, \$4.95; D 4-10, \$7.95 M-Th, \$10.95 Fri, \$8.95 Sat; Sun D, 11am-10pm, \$8.95. (Last visit: 12/96)]

To enter the casino, you will also have to cross symbolic picket lines. The culinary worker's union has been picketing the hotel (without much enthusiasm) since 1991 -- the longest running strike in America. The strike, we suspect, has something to do with why the buffet is so good: Management may be trying to compensate.

9. **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. 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.]

### Prices recently lowered!

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.

10. **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.]
11. **San Remo** -- Small 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. **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), Primadonna (Stateline), Whiskey Petes (Stateline), 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 where 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), [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:** Boulder Station has a late night buffet on weekends, 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.
- **Coming:** [Bellagio](#) (sure to be over-hyped and over-priced), Sunset Station in Henderson (certain to be a fine buffet).
- **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 appealing. 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 decent 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.
- **Currently 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 **60** 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*.

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## 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 irreverant 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](#) and see products [below](#).

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### Available Books

From our Catalog

- \*[Las Vegas Compass Guide](#) by Deke Castleman - \$18.95
- \*[Literary Las Vegas](#) by Mike Tronnes - \$12.95
- \*[Nevada: True Tales from the Neon Wilderness](#) by Jim Sloan - \$12.95
- \*[Delorme Nevada Atlas](#) - \$16.95

### General Links

- [John Yeargin's Buffet Report 12/8/96+](#) - Largely concurs with our findings <gc 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) <gc 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) <auto-ml 7/23/97 #3>
- [Rio Buffet: Good, but some sleight of hand+](#) (16 lines) - Correspondence - By Jay Rubinstein <auto-ml/gc 8/27/97 9/5/97 #4>
- [Fiesta & Palace Station+](#) (17 lines) <auto-ml/gc 11/21/97 11/10/97 #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 <auto-ml/gc 11/21/97 11/29/97 #6>

+indicates documents stored on this server.

### Reader Comments

Regarding "Best Las Vegas Buffets" - Latest First

Fiesta is all it's cracked up to be

We ate at Fiesta (lunch buffet) this past weekend and it was as good as your review suggested. The variety was excellent, as we found the Mongolian grill, the New Orleans section, your standard meat and potatoes etc. The Caesar salad was well seasoned and everything was fresh. I even found potato pancakes, which were delicious. The beef ribs were a bit messy, but they sure tasted good. As good as the main courses were, the deserts were even better! The cakes were the ultimate in freshness and the desert cart featured cream puffs with whipped cream, cannolis and more. I would definitely eat at Fiesta again!

-- Doug Antelman ([antelman@cts.com](mailto:antelman@cts.com)) 5/11/98 (#56)

### SAM'S TOWN BUFFET

I strongly DISAGREE with your comments. SAM'S TOWN BUFFET has been our very favorite for many years (and besides, they now have Senior rates). Food is always done to perfection! We go to their buffet at least 5 times in a 4 day stay!

-- Pat 5/6/98 (#55)

### New Reserve Buffet Makes All Others Look Like Dog Food

The Safari Buffet at the new Reserve Casino (at Lake Mead Rd and #515 in Henderson) could well be the next No. 1 buffet in Las Vegas. It has seven kiosks including the unique Seafood kiosk which serves several different fresh fish and other seafood. On some nights there are king crab legs in the paella. On our recent trip to Las Vegas, we ate there six times in one week and we still have not tried all the kiosks. Half price coupons in the LVRJ also make this buffet one of the best deals in town. Paul Chow - Toronto

-- Paul Chow 4/28/98 (#54)

### Fiesta

Fiesta food is good but the place is too noisy. The cook at the Mongolian BBQ is constantly banging on the stove as loud as can be. the ceiling is so low that noise is a constant pain.

-- Bill Lane 4/13/98 (#53)

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(Any opinions expressed below are those of the reviewer.)

[Las Vegas Compass Guide](#) by Deke Castleman - There are no lack of fluffy, superficial tourist guides for this mass-market city. This guide is different: It is more of a history book than than a Baedeker. Las Vegas resident Deke Castleman, who also wrote the [Nevada Handbook](#), finds plenty of history to talk about. Okay, so it doesn't extend to the Middle Ages, but the mobsters, hookers and gamblers of the past century are interesting enough. This is also a fine picture book, full of glittery color photos of Vegas's always-temporary attractions. (Published in 1996, the guide is only slightly out of date.) There are sections in the back on the usual tourist nonsense - hotels, restaurants, shopping, etc. - but this info is bound to be ... ([More](#)) -- #lvguide \$18.95. To order call 702-227-1818 or [Add to On-Line Shopping Cart](#).



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[Literary Las Vegas](#) by Mike Tronnes - This is a sampler of the best writing about the world's most "fabulous" (i.e. absurd) city. "Las Vegas has always been a magnet for great writers, drawn to the city for the inspiration of its symbols and characters, and for what it says about us and our society. It doesn't matter if a writer views the town as a cesspool for the crass or a pleasure palace for the masses, this neon outpost and its denizens provide plenty to spark the imagination." ([More](#)) -- #lvlit \$12.95. To order call 702-227-1818 or [Add to On-Line Shopping Cart](#).



[Fiction](#) | [Las Vegas](#)

[Nevada: True Tales from the Neon Wilderness](#) by Jim Sloan - A collection of stories by a veteran Nevada reporter about gamblers, brothel owners, slot machine cheats and other slippery characters of this distorted state. Nevada attracts extreme personalities, many of them seeking instant wealth. Gas station owner Melvin Dummar bet on a bequest from Howard Hughes - and lost. Brothel owner Joe Conforte thought he could buy the law - and lost. Bomber John Birges tried to extort millions from the casinos - and lost. These Nevada characters sought something for nothing, and got nothing in the end. Fine writing illuminates the dark side of the neon paradise. ([More](#)) -- #neon \$12.95. To order call 702-227-1818 or [Add to On-Line Shopping Cart](#).



[Nevada](#)

[Delorme Nevada Atlas](#) - This is the one of the latest and best designed atlases in the impressive Delorme series -- long in coming but well worth the wait. Topographic map coverage of the entire state, accompanied by an extensive gazetteer. For the first time, a GPS grid is overlaid on every page, allowing easy reading of latitude/longitude coordinates. The atlas also provides comprehensive local information, including lists of every conceivable attraction and natural landmark. The index of place names is extensive, offering not just the populated places, but all the springs and ghost towns as well. Contains all the geographic data you'll need for a visit to Nevada or for general reference at home. ([More](#)) -- #denv \$16.95. To order call 702-227-1818 or [Add to On-Line Shopping Cart](#).



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PO Box 81166, Las Vegas, NV 89180 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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Created: 5/15/96 gc

Last Modified: 4/9/97 gc.e