

THE MATURE SINGLE WOMAN'S GUIDE TO LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas may not be the first destination which springs to mind as ideal for the mature single female traveller but it should be. Over the course of the last ten years I have attended about fifteen trade shows and conventions in this city and have developed a quirky liking for the place. I love it for the tackiness, for the people watching, for the ease of arrival and departure and for its non threatening nature. Vegas is not full of young beautiful people, just regular relaxed folks on holiday. And do not think you have to be a gambler to enjoy Vegas, which someone once described to me as being “Disneyland for adults”. Do not think you have to stay at the designer hotels or dress up to the nines. Vegas is a people place and is a very welcoming mature peoples place. The city provides easy access to lovely hotel pools (far away from the gamblers), easy, reliable, clean transportation, two great outlet malls, unlimited observation of local characters, spectacular shows, street performers, day trips, tours and is not an expensive city to visit, especially if you choose the right time of year.

Vegas should be on every travellers 'to do' list, even if it is only once. In 2014 Vegas had just over 41 million visitors. Everyone who visits has an experience and flies home with a story. It is a city full of characters. You will return either saying 'never again' or eagerly planning the next trip. Vegas is very safe for the mature, female, single travellers just because there are so many mature single female holidaymakers already there – safety in numbers. It is also the destination for a multitude of conventions and trade shows, so unlike many other holiday destinations where the single traveller is an anomaly, in Vegas it is almost the norm as so many are in the City to attend a work related event. Every time I visit I make a point of taking in a show and usually find I am seated next door to another single person who is also in town for a show or convention.

For me there are four 'must do' activities: take The Deuce bus; walk The Strip; visit the outlet malls and; see Old Vegas. While this is the place for good walking shoes my advice upon arrival would be to take The Deuce bus, sit on the upper deck (at the very front if possible) and stare out at the hotels to establish the lay of the land. Once this arduous task has been undertaken you can determine which hotels to return to for further exploration on foot; - the Eiffel Tower at Paris, the Sphinx at Luxor, or the gondolas at The Venetian. There is a wealth of possibilities. Each hotel

has food courts, designer restaurants, coffee shops, gelato cafes and bars for taking a break and people watching. Be warned that upon exploration it is very easy to get lost within the hotel itself. The Deuce runs up and down The Strip and for \$8.00 offers an unlimited on/off passport for 24 hours. During the evening it is frequently quicker to walk between stops than to take this bus as the traffic can be bad and the loading/unloading time consuming. Walking The Strip is safe as so many tourists are doing the same. Men peddling cards for call girls and prostitutes come out around midday, stand at street corners and stay until the early hours. While this activity seems remarkably pointless and annoying it can easily be ignored. In my experience they rarely target woman. Tickets for shows can be bought from hotels or from a number of vendors (eg The Fashion Centre Mall). There are two shopping outlet centres, one at either end of The Strip and accessible by The Deuce. These are ideal if the temperatures get too hot and air conditioning required. Fremont Street is 'the old' Vegas and again can be reached by The Deuce.

Vegas puts everyone in a good mood, even those of us who travel primarily for work to 'sin city' can not help but feel the pulse and energy. It is sociable as everyone seems to be on holiday and having fun, but if you do get offended by seeing endless pictures of scantily clad women (and men) displaying the curvy body you never had even when you were their age, Vegas may be a step too far. One surprising thing in the 21st Century is smoking is permitted in the casinos and in some public areas of hotels. While the newer hotels have excellent ventilation for me it's one of the biggest drawbacks. I usually visit Vegas in early May and even at this time it can get *really* hot, carry water or buy it from the numerous ABC stores (which are also good for sushi and snacks if you decide after a day of exploring to return to your room, put on your pjs, watch a movie, drink wine and eat in bed). Vegas is in the desert - I do not know how anyone could enjoy the city in the forty degree heat of July and August, so when planning a trip think about the time you want to go. It is becoming a go-to place for bachelorette (and bachelor) parties, so it is easy to encounter groups of women dominating the sidewalks wearing similar clothes. Finally, when wandering stay in the well lit areas to avoid any possibilities of opportunistic crime, avoid the expensive jewelry, wear comfortable clothes and really comfortable shoes to appreciate it all. Choose Vegas if undecided which N American city you want to experience solo. Even if you never return everyone should visit at least once in their lives as it is a totally unique experience.