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Las vegas raiders uniforms joke

Skip to headerSkip to mainSkip to footerAnd you plan to take a pass at the glittering casinos on your next trip to Las Vegas, you'll have plenty of company. Prickly shows, luxury shopping and restaurants owned by famous chefs are just some of the attractions that displace casinos like the big attractions on the Strip. In 2016, 52% of Vegas visitors said vacations or pleasure were the primary goal of their trip, and only 4% named gambling, according to a survey by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. As games expand in other parts of the country, it's no longer new to play slot machines or blackjack, says David G. Schwartz, director of the Game Research Center at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas.At the same time, downtown Vegas is emerging as a destination for local art, offbeat attractions and diverse cuisine. In addition, Vegas is just a few hours' drive from several national parks and natural wonders, including Red Rock Canyon and the Grand Canyon. In other words, there are more - and probably more rewarding - ways to spend your money in Vegas than making bets at the dice table. Kiplinger sent some reporters to Las Vegas to see what's going on for visitors who have little or no interest in playing. We found that you can enjoy the Strip no matter your budget, escape to museums and restaurants in the revitalizing center and avoid the crowds, or explore the beauty of the surrounding desert. If you are determined to try your luck at the casinos, we offer some tips. As my reputation as a player and player is well known among my Kiplinger colleagues, my editors have assigned me to be a sort of Vegas sherpa for this story - someone who knows the way through town, even though I've never seen much reason to abandon the outdoor pool or the free drinks on the dice table. My partner in crime, Miriam Cross, who covers the travel beat, was the perfect foil because she was more interested in absorbing the sights than soaking in the hotel bathtub. (However, it helped that I used my casino subscription to book a free stay.) The Strip offers no shortage of sights, shows and sensations —with many ways to spend a small fortune. First, the restaurants: The namesake Joel Robuchon at the MGM Grand presents the French cuisine of the chef whose restaurants have more than 30 Michelin stars among them. The nine-course, 17-course tasting menu will give you \$445 per person and includes the likes of langoustine ravioli in foie gras and flan sauce made from sea urchin. (Our limited expenses account did not allow us to taste the food personally.) Elsewhere on the Strip, you'll find offers from world-renowned chefs like José Andrés, Tom Colicchio and David Chang.Feeling sporty? Take time to Creek. An 18-hole round of the course that is in 16th place on Golf magazine's list of the top 100 public courses will make you cut from pine forests to lush fairs in the middle of the desert (but will put you back if golf isn't your business, squander on shopping and a day at the spa. Start at Crystals, a 500,000-square-foot shopping and dining district at the Aria resort, where you can browse high-priced merchandise at Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Prada, plus Tom Ford, Stella McCartney and Larvin. The crystals on-site concierge (call 702-590-9230) can help you book personal shopping sessions and after-hours appointments. Across the street is Sahara Spa & Hammam at the Cosmopolitan hotel. The full Moroccan Travel experience in the spa's luxurious Turkish baths costs \$450 for a 130-minute scrub and cleansing with a full-length massage. Or you can rent the spa's penthouse suite, which comes with a living and entertainment area with a TV and a wet bar, private spa accommodations and butler service. Rates start at \$95 per hour, with a minimum of \$500 spent on spa or lounge services. But you don't have to spend like Ivanka Trump to make the Strip. Art aficionados will turn their eyes to Bernini's fake sculptures at Caesars Palace, but they're just a few doors away from exhibitions that wouldn't be out of place at the Guggenheim. James Turrell Akhob's breathtaking light installation is at the back of the Louis Vuitton store (free, but call 702-730-3150 for reservations at least a month in advance). Rotating exhibitions at the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art recently included Picasso paintings and the photography of Yousuf Karsh. The current exhibition, I Am the Greatest, which runs until September 30, was worth \$18 —at least it was for this avid sports fan. The collection documents Muhammad Ali's life through art, artifacts and rare film images. Spectacles and emotions. If you're looking for a show, start with the free font shows at the Bellagio and Mirage. Illuminated jets of water rocket into the sky at the Bellagio every half hour during the day and every 15 minutes at night, with music and choreography changing. A percussion soundtrack composed by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart accompanies the show at the Mirage, which features a variety of flamethrowers that sit in a fountain under a roaring volcano. The Las Vegas ballrooms have been the scene of world-class artists since the Rat Pack era, and the Strip still has a diverse schedule of shows - Britney Spears, Celine Dion, Donny and Marie Osmond, and of course Wayne Newton, with new artists blowing around town every month. Guests can watch one of the six Cirque du Soleil shows on the Strip, or enjoy the magic of Penn & Teller or Criss Angel. For tickets, go to Vegas.com/shows. If you're buying last-minute tickets, compare box office prices with those at one of the 10 Tix4Tonight booths that score Las Vegas Boulevard Vegas has plenty of options for thrill seekers, too. For example, you can his courage driving a high-performance car on a 1.2 mile and 10 lap track with Dream Racing at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. The basic basic package laps) in a Ferrari 430 GT will run \$550. Vegas Indoor Skydiving, located near Las Vegas Boulevard, allows skydiving to experience the thrill of freefall without, you know, jumping out of an airplane. Divers ram their flight suits and head over a giant wind tunnel. Tickets start at \$75. The most daring can try the SkyJump in the Stratosphere, a controlled free fall of 855 feet from the 108th floor of the hotel. Trips cost \$120. -- Ryan ErneyAs Kiplinger travel writer and, in my own time, a budget conscious traveler. I can't understand why anyone would spend their vacation locked in a casino or shopping mall, dropping wads of money that could be spent instead of new sights and experiences. (Before Vegas, my only casino experience involved winning \$24 Australian slot machines in Melbourne and then calling it a night.) So after a few hours wandering through the maze of hotel lobbies on the Strip, I was bored. Just a few miles north of the Strip, downtown Vegas (as well as nearby neighborhoods) promises a more authentic and less crowded experience. For starters, there are a number of museums where you can learn about the strange and seeded history of Las Vegas. The Mafia Museum (\$19.95 in advance online) weaves the rise of the crowd in the U.S. with its presence in Las Vegas through interactive exhibits and delightfully horrific artifacts (including part of the Wall of the Valentine's Day Massacre, where seven gangsters were shot). Ryan joined a tour of the Neon Museum (\$19 a day, \$26 a night), where an enthusiastic guide took his group through the outdoor boneyard of vintage Vegas signs, explaining the rich stories of the places they had already hung. We didn't have time to visit the National Museum of Atomic Testing, which traces the history of nuclear testing in the Nevada Desert (\$22), the Las Vegas Museum of Natural History (\$10) or the Pinball Hall of Fame —not a museum itself, but a collection of restored pinball machines that you can play for only 25 cents each. The growing art scene in the center is visible in empty blocks and parking lots filled with colourful murals left over from previous Life Is Beautiful festivals. Now in its fifth year, the festival features musical acts, comedy, art and more. We arrived too late to see too much activity at the Art Factory, a collection of artist studios in the 18th Las Vegas Arts District. (The name refers to the 18 blocks that make up the neighborhood.) But as Jana's chatty employee explained, the area is jumping on the first Friday of a month, when food trucks line up and street performers entertain attendees who wander the galleries late into the night. (Previous Thursdays, known as Previews, are aimed at collectors and offer a more discreet to mingle with artists.) Fremont Street East (not to be confused with the kitschy Fremont Street Experience pedestrian shopping) and surrounding blocks are sprinkled sprinkled restaurants and bars, including Le Thai, where we try curries in the backyard patio (\$9.95 for a meal and drink over lunch). At Downtown Container Park, a collection of restaurants and boutiques housed in shipping containers, we eat delicious burgers and fries at Perch (tickets from \$13). The airy second-floor restaurant overlooks a performance stage and treehouse with a 33-foot-high slide sticking out of the side. No matter where you eat, leave room for the artistic desserts at Sweets Raku (\$12 each). We devoured a cup of white chocolate stuffed with pie crust and strawberry mousse, with a strawberry jam stuffed with ice cream on the side. Also on tap in Vegas: You can visit the home of online shoe retailer Zappos (\$10), which includes play time in the ball pit and test your problem-solving skills on a simulated customer service call. (Zappos performs several other tours, including one that focuses on city center hot spots.) Or you can amble between the remains of the city's first permanent, non-native settlement at Las Vegas' Old Mormon Fort (\$1), hidden among non-descriptive streets. In addition, there's springs preserve, a 180-acre space with miles of hiking, a desert turtle retreat, botanical gardens, archaeological sites and museums. Admission costs \$18.95.Departing from Las Vegas. The craggy peaks that touch the city suggest the dramatic landscapes that are beyond. We chose Red Rock Canyon, a half-hour drive from the Strip, for a morning getaway (\$7 per vehicle). You can take it easy, as we did, crossing the 13-mile panoramic loop through the conservation area, parking at lookouts to take in impending clusters of rock. Or you can stop to hike on one of the many trails or climb the sandstone outcrops. On the way back to Las Vegas, we stopped at Spring Mountain Ranch, a surprisingly lush property that was once owned (but never lived) by Howard Hughes (\$9). We skip the Bonnie Springs ranch, but kids can enjoy the re-created Old West town, complete with cowboys and saloon, as well as a zoo. If you want to delve into the natural wonders around Vegas, head to the Valley of Fire State Park (\$10 per vehicle), an hour away from the city, for ancient stone carvings and spectacular rock formations. Escape the intense summer heat by walking along Mount Charleston, which is consistently colder than the city, or splashing into Lake Mead, a large reservoir on the Colorado River where you can boat, swim, and fish, or explore the remnants of an ancient city that has reappeared as water levels in Lake Mead recede. Hoover Dam offers power plant tours and walkways within the dam. Death Valley and Zion National Park are less than three of Vegas. Getting to the Grand Canyon visitor center takes more than four hours by car, but helicopter and bus tours from Vegas can take you there and back in a day. --Miriam CrossLas Vegas doesn't have a slow season because conventions and events take place all year round. O O it is best in spring and autumn when the days are hot (but not bubbles) and the nights are cool but comfortable. If you're trying to reduce costs, keep these points in mind: airline tickets. Flights to Las Vegas are cheaper in January, when the median round-trip airfare is \$205, according to Kayak data. You can usually find the lowest price when booking two months off. Hotels. The lowest hotel rates come in November and December, with an average price of \$123 per night, according to Kayak. You can see rooms leaving for less than \$100 a night on travel booking sites, but resort fees can reach \$40 a night, says Christine Sarkis of SmarterTravel.com. Many off-the-way hotels offer free transportation to the Strip.We save money on our accommodations thanks to Ryan's Total Rewards membership, which covers casinos and resorts including Caesars Palace, Harrah's and Ling. Members at all status levels receive free or discounted stay offers at the hotel. Ryan found a room at the Rio All-Suites Hotel & Casino for himself and picked me up a fee of \$35.50 per night. 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