

Dining on a dime

Las Vegas restaurants feature menus to fit every budget

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Vegas.com

One of the best ways to celebrate a night in Las Vegas is to have an extravagant, over-the-top meal. It's not an everyday thing, but for a birthday, anniversary or just to celebrate life, Vegas has a restaurant to fit every occasion.

The problem is a lot of the restaurants on the Las Vegas Strip can be pricey. So, where do you go to get the best bang for your buck?

We've put together an informative guide to some of Las Vegas' best dining deals. Set in \$20, \$40, \$60 and \$80 increments, this guide will show you how, when and where to eat on a budget, no matter what the budget may be.

As a bonus, our gastronomic offerings are complete without using fast food options or large chains (You know, the ones in every town with the bright colors and the mediocre food).

There are a lot of restaurants in town that now make great cuisine more accessible with prix-fixe menus, happy hour menus, and great specials, if your timing is right.

"I think it's great. It gives a lot more people more of opportunity to go to places and eat in places that they never got to before," says Billy Richardson, owner of LBS, A Burger Joint at Red Rock Casino Resort and Spa.

There are many dining deals awaiting your consumption in Vegas, so let us take you on four culinary journeys covering four different days, without breaking the bank.

Watching the wallet (Dining on \$10 a day)

It's a bit of a stretch, but we can make it work.

Breakfast: Start off with a hearty breakfast at the J.W. Marriott. Sign up for a (free) player's card and for just \$1.99, choose from six options, including eggs with breakfast meat and toast, French toast or pancakes, served daily, 5 a.m. – 8 a.m.

Lunch: Head over to the Golden Gate and sign up for a (free) player's card. Even if you don't play, the card is your pass to the cheapest shrimp cocktail special in town, at just 99 cents. (Even without the card, it's always an affordable \$1.99.) Served daily, 11 a.m. – 2 a.m., tender bay shrimp smothered in cocktail sauce and a lemon wedge is a great midday snack for hungry downtown gamblers.

Cocktail: need a little late afternoon pick me up? Head over to RA Sushi at the Fashion Show mall

(Monday – Saturday, 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.) for a glass of hot sake (\$1) during happy hour. Then, hit the stores for a little shopping.

Dinner: When you're tired of trying on clothes, an exciting happy hour (Monday – Friday, 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.) awaits at the Fashion Show's Café Ba-Ba-Reeba with tapas (each \$3) and half-off Sangria (\$3 during happy hour). Grab yourself a mix and match of two of these tapas dishes, and you'll have enough for a meal. We recommend dates wrapped in bacon or skewered chicken and chorizo sausage.

Total spent: \$10

Frugal but not flavorless (Dining on \$20 a day)

It's a busy day ahead and you need a hearty breakfast.

Breakfast: Grab a croissant at Bouchon bakery. The little kiosk in the Venetian features freshly baked flaky croissants (\$3) perfect for an early morning rise.

Lunch: After exploring the city, you've worked up an appetite. Bougainvillea Café at Terrible's Casino has the answer. The Chinese lunch special of the day (\$6.99) comes with egg drop soup, steamed rice and a fortune cookie, available daily, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Dinner: You can't come to Vegas without trying one of the best (and oldest) deals in town. Mr. Lucky's special (\$7.77) is available 24/7 at the Hard Rock Hotel and includes steak, three grilled shrimp, a choice of potato or broccoli and a salad. It's not on the menu, so ask your server.

Nightcap: Maybe you go see a movie or stop in to do some shopping at Town Square. Check out Kabuki (Sunday – Thursday, 8 p.m. – close) and refresh yourself with a glass of sake or a select draft beer. For less than \$2, you will stay within your budget.

Total spent: \$19.76

Deal or no deal? (Dining on \$40 a day)

These deals are offered regularly and are worth every penny.

Brunch: It's Sunday and you've woken up a bit late. Brunch at Garduños in the Palms is a fun-filled fiesta, complete with live mariachi band. For \$14.99, it's one of the most reasonable prices in town. Dishes are served buffet style with bites like chicken enchiladas, sirloin ranchero, and tres leches for dessert.

Dinner: When you're hungry, try dinner at Hachi at Red Rock Casino Resort and Spa. Their fabulous



Photo courtesy of Hash House a-Go-Go

The mammoth blueberry pecan flapjack at Hash House a-Go-Go is big enough to share.

"38 under \$8" menu ensures that you can have lots of flavorful samplings of modern Japanese food. Try to pair two or three of these dishes, and you have a meal. The Japanese curry beef spring roll (\$5), chicken Kushiyaki (\$5), and eel roll (\$6) are a great combo.

Dessert: A visit to Vegas wouldn't be complete without a Frrozen Hot Chocolate (\$8.50) at Serendipity 3 inside Caesars Palace. It's chocolaty goodness and enough to share—if absolutely necessary.

Total spent: \$39.49

Intelligent Indulgence (Dining on \$80 a day)

Dining on a larger budget doesn't mean you should shell out cash for mediocre cuisine. Instead, have all the bold, satiating cuisine you deserve.

Breakfast: Hash House a-Go-Go's blueberry pecan flapjack (\$6.95) is outrageously large, but it's certainly big enough to share, measuring about 14 inches across. For a \$2.50 sharing fee, you can split it, but if you decide to get a side, say two eggs (\$2.75), the sharing charge will be waived. So, for about \$9.70, two people can have a gourmet breakfast for \$4.85 each.

After breakfast, walk off the calories while shopping at the Forum Shoppes at Caesars.

Lunch: When you're ready for a break, settle into a table at Spago and enjoy their prix-fixe lunch menu (\$29) served seven days a week from 11:30

a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The menu includes dishes like a pan roasted halibut and chocolate soufflé.

Cocktails: Served seven days a week, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m., try Dos Caminos' happy hour at the Palazzo, where dishes like a mini chorizo Fundido (\$6), can be paired with a Dos Equis (\$4) to wash it down.

Dinner: Wynn and Encore resorts are known for their excellence, but also some steep prices when it comes to cuisine. That's why the Taste of Wynn menu is great. Available at some of the hotels' finest restaurants, these prix-fixe menus are usually comprised of three to five-course meals. This way, you can have a taste of elegance and you'll still be able to catch a showing of "Le Rêve." Try the Wazuzu prix fixe menu (\$29) served nightly from 5 p.m. Starter options include miso soup or a papaya salad. For the main course, try the crunch roll with panko crusted shrimp cucumber and avocado. Dessert includes housemade sorbets or ice cream.

Total spent: \$72.85

These are some of the best dining deals and values in town. No matter what your budget is, you'll enjoy some amazing meals in Las Vegas – and that's priceless.

Prices, cuisine options and hours subject to change. Prices do not include tax or gratuity.