



ADAPTED TRAVEL

Vegas in the summer is pure delight: The Park MGM, magnificent pools and fine dining

By Alexandra Cohen

LAS VEGAS - When in search of a summer holiday last July, I could not think of a better choice than Las Vegas (<http://www.lasvegastourism.com>) where visitors are offered the perfect combination of relaxation and fun. I have visited Las Vegas before in the winter, but having never visited in the summer, I had not yet had the privilege of experiencing some of the amazing resort swimming pools that Vegas has to offer.

Vegas truly is the epitome of an epic tourist destination, with more than 42 million visitors and nearly 24 thousand conventions annually. Las Vegas has everything that a vacationer could possibly ask for: concerts, shows, sports, shopping, dining, nightlife, golf courses, spas, adventure activities, luxury accommodations, and more. It is a place for an adult trip but also a place for the entire family to enjoy themselves.

ACCESSIBILITY: Las Vegas has more accessible guest rooms than any other city in the United States. Hotels have rooms with roll-in showers, transfer showers, tubs with built-in seats, and tubs with portable seats. However, it is of course recommended that you talk to the reservation operator about your specific requirements beforehand. If you need additional details, ask for the hotel's ADA coordinator. For an overview of room availability, call the *Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Reservations Center: Voice/TTY - 1-800-884-2592*.

Most hotels have assistive listening devices for those who are hearing-impaired. Wheelchair seating is also available in

most restaurants, lounges, and showrooms. Call ahead for details.

All hotels have accessible slot machines, and many have sit-down table games. Many hotels also have accommodations for wheelchair users to play craps. Gaming personnel are well-trained in assisting vision- and hearing-impaired people to play table games. Most bingo rooms have Braille cards and large-print cards.

Not only that, but all taxi companies in Las Vegas have lift-equipped vans accommodating one wheelchair. Call from your room, use any dedicated taxi phone, or just ask the doorman at your hotel for an accessible taxi van.

Bring along your hometown dashboard parking permit from your personal vehicle if you plan to rent a vehicle in Las Vegas. Out-of-state permits are recognized. Temporary disabled parking permits are available through the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles. *Contact them in advance for an application at DMV Special Plates, 775-684-4750, in Carson City, or visit www.dmvnv.com.* A physician's statement will be required. Alternatively, valet parking is available at most hotels.

The Las Vegas Monorail offers service at seven stations between Sahara Avenue and Tropicana Avenue on the east side of the Las Vegas Strip. Additionally, visitors can take advantage of trams that connect various properties: Between the Mirage and Treasure Island; connecting Mandalay Bay, Luxor and Excalibur; and connecting Park MGM Las Vegas to Aria Resort, Crystals Shopping Center, and Bellagio Resort.

WHERE TO STAY: For this trip we spent our eight nights at the Park MGM (<https://www.parkmgm.com/en.html>), formerly known as the Monte Carlo Hotel.

A partnership between Sydel Group and MGM Resorts International, Park MGM was born from the collaborative vision of the New York-based lifestyle hotelier and one of the world's preeminent destination resort developers.



Eataly Las Vegas.

The hotel complex comprises two new distinct experiences: Park MGM, and a Las Vegas version of the renowned NoMad, a standalone 293-room hotel encompassing the tower's top four floors.

Park MGM's hotel design is inspired by nature, as seen both in the lobby and in the newly renovated casino. Although renovated, the casino still has some touches of the old Monte Carlo casino, including its beautiful chandeliers.

With its excellent central location on the Vegas Strip, Park MGM offers guests direct access to what is quickly becoming the city's premier entertainment district, featuring the T-Mobile Arena, The Park, and Park Theater, which mostly recently houses the Las Vegas residencies of both Lady Gaga and Janet Jackson. Merchandise for both concerts can be found on site at the hotel.

The Park MGM has 2,700 guestrooms and suites, intended to give off a residential feel. There are three distinctive guest suite types: Nighthawk, Nightingale and Skylark. The Peacock Hospitality Suite features 700 square feet of social and entertainment space with an adjoining guest room.

We stayed in a beautiful King bedroom and could not have been happier with the accommodations. Immediately upon entering the room, we noticed the residential feel, complete with a lovely and comfortable window seat overlooking the swimming pool complex. The fresh bathroom offered a spacious walk-in shower. There are bedside outlets for phones and computers, blackout shades, a

laptop-sized electronic in-room safe, a hair dryer, a television with cable and movie service, high speed Wi-Fi, and both self-check-in and mobile check out. We would gladly return to this hotel for another stay. Filled with natural light and punctuated by nature-inspired décor and art, Park MGM's lobby is a nod to urban gardens and parks, including the adjacent Park neighborhood, bringing the outdoors inside. A dramatic arboreal sculpture by Brazilian woodworker Henrique Oliveira is the focal point of the lobby. The remarkable tree sculpture extends from above with its roots stretching across the ceiling. Throughout the lobby, guests are invited to explore intriguing works by the likes of David Hockney, Shahram Karimi and Shoja Azari, and many others.

Park MGM's rooms evoke the essence of a private apartment with a mix of thoughtful touches, antique-inspired pieces, "found" objects and original artwork by artists and photographers from around the world commissioned for each room by France's *be pôles* studio.

Park MGM gladly offers dog friendly rooms as well, complete with doggie butler services.

Wheelchair accessible rooms have grab rails, a roll-in shower with a bench and wide entry for wheelchairs and scooters.

All MGM properties have a selection of fully compliant ADA guestrooms.

POOL EXPERIENCE: The pools at Park MGM offer a highly relaxing escape from the hustle and bustle of the Vegas Strip. There are three pools—the South, East, and North Pools—as well as 12 cabanas, lounge areas, multiple bars, and a spa. Poolside food and beverages can be delivered directly to your seat as you take in the sun.

A nice feature of all three pools is the Baja shelf seating with submerged wet decks, which allows visitors to sunbathe while still managing to stay cool. The East Pool is converted into a 21 plus experience



The Park MGM lobby.

TRAVEL

on weekends. Those seeking an elevated experience can reserve cushioned chaises or daybeds by the pool.

Three bars offer refreshing poolside cocktails, with Vista Bar serving as the main pool bar, featuring a tropics-inspired beverage program and dedicated seating with a view overlooking the pool. Light bites include dishes ranging from a Watermelon & Arugula Salad to Fajita Chicken Nachos.

Twelve private cabanas serve up VIP treatment with deluxe amenities, including a 55-inch LED television; a misting system for when the heat becomes too much to bear; a personal safe; and ample seating with plush cushions, lounges and umbrellas. Cabana guests can enjoy a variety of beverages, including large-format bottle service and fresh, summery food. The pool area is wheelchair accessible.

DINING OUT AT THE PARK MGM:

The Park MGM boasts a wide selection of restaurants for any Las Vegas palette.

The dining highlight of Park MGM is without a doubt Eataly Las Vegas, a 40,000-square-foot culinary destination found at Park MGM's main entrance. Eataly is a vibrant space that transports you to the streets of Italy, featuring unique food counters, bars, and cafes, all helmed by Executive Chef Nicole Brisson. A fascinating aspect of the Eataly experience is referred to as Cucina del Mercato, which translates to "Kitchen of the Market." Meat, fish, cheese, as well as other delicacies, can be purchased as is and cooked at home, or can be cooked in front of your eyes at each individual restaurant. Six different fresh counters are available for visitors. The facility is wheelchair accessible.

BRUNCH AT PRIMROSE: On our first day in Las Vegas, we had the pleasure of enjoying a delicious brunch at Primrose, found in the lobby of the Park MGM, with the option of outdoor seating with a view of the hotel's pool complex (<https://www.mgmresorts.com/en/restaurants/park-mgm/primrose.html>).



Best Friend.

The talented culinary team uses fresh seafood and vegetables to highlight menu items. With a distinctively residential feel, the restaurant includes a series of cushioned seats, each with different patterns. While Primrose offers dinner selections as well, we were quite impressed with their brunch offerings, including classics like three eggs any style but also featuring an eggs benedict topped with blue crab. Those interested in a boozy brunch can add on an all-you-can-drink option of mimosas (\$29) or rosé (\$35). Primrose was undoubtedly the perfect way to begin our day before relaxing at the pool next door. Access to and seating at standard tables are suited for wheelchairs.

DINNER AT BEST FRIEND: Los Angeles culinary legend Roy Choi debuted his Koreatown-inspired restaurant, Best Friend, at the Park MGM. Having now experienced it myself, I can say that Best Friend is more than simply a tasty meal—it is a dining experience!

Entering Best Friend, you would not think it to be anything special. In fact, it appears more like a convenience store with a small bar at the back than a true restaurant. However, behind the vinyl red curtains near the cash lies the true restaurant, hidden from the prying eyes of those in the nearby hotel casino.

The drink menu includes offerings of wine and sake, as well as both classic cocktails and 80s-inspired drinks, including the Fuzzy Navel, which we very much enjoyed at the start of our meal. We also tasted what our waiter described as some of their most popular dishes, including the tasty kogi short-rib tacos, their mixed tempura appetizer, and the garlic jidori chicken BBQ, all of which was delicious. The menu, however, is diverse enough to satisfy any culinary preferences. The restaurant has wheelchair access.

SAKE ROK: One of the restaurants we really wanted to try on this trip was Sake Rok (<https://sakeroklv.com>), located at The Park complex directly across the street from Park MGM. Sake Rok combines Japan's vibrant pop culture and fashion scene with over-the-top theatrics. A host calls out to people as they eat, joking around, encouraging them to down their sake bombs, and occasionally belting out a tune.

The menu boasts a variety of playful Japanese favorites: we started off with some edamame before trying an appetizer order of beef satay, the volcano sushi roll, and an order of the miso-glazed sea bass. For dessert, we tasted a unique dessert called "honey toast." Other newer menu items



The primrose dining room.

include pork belly, shrimp risotto, and the ronin roll, which is a fried sushi roll.

Sake Rok now offers sushi rolling classes led by Executive Chef Sung Park, with packages starting at \$150 per person or \$250 per couple on Saturdays at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. Those enrolled in the class will be able to take home what they make. Sake Rok is wheelchair accessible.

For more information, or to see the full menu, visit the website at www.sakeroklv.com or call 702-706-3022.

SADELLE'S AT THE BELLAGIO: Inspired by the beautiful villages of Europe, the AAA Five Diamond Bellagio Resort & Casino (www.bellagio.com) overlooks a large lake, in which the iconic fountain shows take place daily and nightly at regular intervals.

The Bellagio recently welcomed Sadelle's, SoHo's popular vintage-style restaurant, to the resort's list of dining experiences. The location overlooks the Bellagio Conservatory, which features an ever-changing set of artistic displays.

"We are taking everything great about Sadelle's in New York and taking it to the next level in Las Vegas," said Major Food Group Managing Partner Jeff Zalaznick. "The incredible space, overlooking the Bellagio Conservatory, along with an elevated menu focused on quintessential classics, allow us to create a one-of-a-kind culinary experience from early morning through late night."

Throughout the day and night, impressive presentations of hand-rolled bagels, lox towers, chopped salads, sandwiches and other favorites can be ordered.

Mainstays from the original New York City location — such as the Spicy Fried Chicken with acacia honey and coleslaw — join new signature supper offerings created by the culinary team, including the Grilled Branzino with Meyer lemon and sesame spinach and a New York-style Ribeye with smooth-

ered onions. We very much enjoyed the tomato cream soup appetizer, as well as the tuna tartare, followed by the generously sized and flavorful garlic chicken.

The Sadelle's dining space also includes an elevated bar and lounge, with spacious cocktail tables to accommodate guests seeking appetizers, bar snacks, or drinks. The restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday through Sunday from 6 a.m. — midnight. To make reservations for 10 or more, call Sadelle's directly at 702-693-8401.

Wheelchairairtravel.org says this about the Bellagio: "The hotel's accessibility is spot-on and ADA compliant in nearly every way. Top-notch accessibility, luxury accommodations and a fantastic location all combine to make Bellagio one of my favorite places to stay in Las Vegas." It features 85 accessible rooms, and two of them even have their own Hoyer lifts. If you're just visiting for the day, you can rent wheelchairs and scooters at the front desk on a first-come, first-serve basis.

TAO: Having previously experienced the restaurant TAO in New York City, we were thrilled to get a reservation at their 40,000 square foot restaurant, located at the Venetian-Resort-Hotel Casino (www.taolasvegas.com). TAO opened in New York City in 2000 and has retained its status as a hot spot, attracting celebrities and sports figures alike. TAO Las Vegas, which debuted in 2005, is a multi-faceted and multi-story "Asian City," which houses a restaurant, banquet facilities, a lounge, a nightclub and a seasonal beach.

An extensive collection of Buddha statues watch over every corner of TAO, including a unique reclining Buddha, and TAO's signature 20-foot Buddha that "floats" peacefully above an infinity pool complete with Japanese koi fish.

Corporate Executive Chef Ralph Scamardella has developed a menu for the 400-seat restaurant, which incorporates culinary components from China, Japan



Sadelle's house salmon and salmon salad tower with signature bagels.



and Thailand. During our visit, we tasted several appetizer offerings, including the spicy tuna tartare on crispy rice, the king crab California sushi roll, and the lobster and shrimp spring roll paired with spicy pineapple sauce. Next, we had one of their signature dishes (and our personal favorite!), the Chilean sea bass satay with wok roasted asparagus and a miso glaze. TAO also offers an extensive menu of delicious specialty cocktails, including the TAO-tini, Lychee Martini, as well as sake flights specifically designed to complement TAO's menu. For dessert, try their elaborate and large fortune cookie, which includes decadent milk chocolate and white chocolate mousse.

For those craving a high energy, DJ-driven atmosphere, visit the 12,000 square-foot TAO Nightclub, which includes three full-service bars, two main rooms playing a variety of music genres, and state-of-the-art audio and lighting systems. For guests seeking ultra-VIP treatment, the nightclub offers eight private skyboxes. The nightclub also boasts a 40-foot outside terrace with awe-inspiring views of the famed Las Vegas Strip.

When the weather heats up, TAO Beach offers the hottest daytime experience in Las Vegas. Guests can secure a reservation to lounge poolside in one of 12 luxury cabanas that feature amenities such as air-conditioning, HD plasma screen televisions with gaming consoles, WiFi, and customized mini-bars.

TAO is located on the Grand Canal Shoppes level of The Venetian at 3377 Las Vegas Boulevard South. It is fully wheelchair accessible. In addition, TAO conveniently offers guests an exclusive valet located directly in front of The Venetian. For more information or reservations, call 702-388-8588.

According to CurbfreewithCorylee.com, The Venetian tops most wheelchair accessible Las Vegas hotels lists due to the hotel staff's commitment to keeping their disabled guests happy and comfortable. Guests can also look forward to luxury rooms with ample space, including roll-in showers.



The Aria Resort and Casino pool.



The beautiful interior of TAO.

For those who are wanting a real "Venice, Paris" experience, the hotel's second-floor shopping and fine-dining options are just as convenient as their rooms. Wheelchair users can even enjoy a gondola ride through the indoor canal! It's quite an experience.

EXPLORING THE POOLS: During our trip, we took the time to explore some of the other MGM properties in Las Vegas by spending some time at their pools.

The Aria Resort and Casino (<https://aria.mgmresorts.com/en.html>) opened in December 2009.

This is a stunning AAA Five Diamond resort on The Strip featuring spectacular amenities, high-end service, premium meeting and convention space, striking architecture and sustainable design. Combined with its unparalleled offerings including the first-of-its-kind public Fine Art Collection, The Aria sets the bar for a new generation of resort experiences. ARIA is located within CityCenter.

As for their pool complex, it features the only ellipse-shaped pools in Las Vegas. For added privacy and amenities, guests can reserve one of a fleet of cabanas where Wi-Fi, shaded dining tables, and food and drink service are available. Visitors can also order poolside beverages and meals via the Breeze Café and Pool Bar, which features a wide menu of dishes and drinks. Of the 4,000 rooms, more than 100 at this resort are wheelchair accessible. Everything here is very level and flat to get around in a wheelchair. There are no steps leading to the lobby.

Probably the fastest- and definitely the cheapest – way to get around Vegas, the tram is perfect for both disabled and able-bodied travelers. The trams are completely free, so you can effortlessly move from one casino to the next without losing any of your spending money. There are lifts to access the tram stations, and a ride in the tram is designed to be comfortable and easy for travelers with disabilities. There are different tram lines, which each stop at various casinos and hotels, including the Aria. The other MGM pool that we had the plea-

sure of experiencing during our trip was the Mandalay Beach (<https://mandalaybay.mgmresorts.com/en/amenities/beach.html>), and we were truly blown away by what this property had to offer. The Mandalay Beach features an 11-acre tropical water environment, featuring more than 2,700 tons of sand, a signature 1.6-million-gallon wave pool, a lazy river, four swimming pools, a jogging track, as well as private gazeboes, cabanas and beach bungalows. The open-air Beach Bar & Grill serves up American cuisine, such as sandwiches, wraps, adult beverages, and other beach favorites. Over the summer, you can also take in a concert series held on its outdoor stages, which overlooks the wave pool.

Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino is set on 120 lush acres featuring the Beach, The Mandalay Bay Events Center, award-winning restaurants, exhilarating entertainment, unique shopping, Shark Reef Aquarium and the recently expanded two-million-square-foot Mandalay Bay Convention Center. The resort offers three distinct hotel expe-



The exterior of the beachside casino at Mandalay Bay.

riences: Mandalay Bay with 3,211 luxurious rooms and suites reflecting a modern tropical ambiance; Four Seasons Hotel, a AAA Five Diamond hotel offering 424 rooms and suites; and the luxury all-suite Delano Las Vegas.

The hotel has a wheelchair lift that can be used in all their pools except the wave pool. They have luxurious suites with accessible features and roll-in showers. All the hotel elevators are more than large enough for a wheelchair. The resort is quite large and as such, the Bell Desk offers motorized scooter rentals to allow you to get around more easily.

Accessibility made possible at a NYC's MoMA

By Fay Schipper

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City has given a lot of thought and attention to accessibility for all, making it enjoyable for a person with special needs to visit. This eight-floor museum (including two basement floors) located in the heart of midtown Manhattan is home to an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art – from Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* and Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* to cutting-edge photography, film, design and performance.

Even before stepping foot or rolling into the museum one gets a sense of feeling welcomed. Many of the NYC establishments do not yet offer the silver buttons that when pushed open doors or the sliding doors that automatically open when approached. MoMA is certainly a leader in making its museum and Education and Research Centre inviting to all.

Upon approaching the information/ticket counter, one notices an elegant black and silver five-by-four-inch sign with the logo of an ear. The sign instructs those with hearing devices to turn it to Telecoil T Mode, thus becoming an audio guide. Audio guides are available for free, or simply download the "MoMA, Museum of Modern Art" app. The museum has theatres and classrooms in the basement that are equipped with hearing loops. For elevator

access to the basement, ask for assistance at the information desk in the lobby area.

The museum offers several free services for people with special needs. Wheelchairs can be obtained in the coat check room. ASL interpreters are available for people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. Sculptures that are located on the second floor can be touched by people who are visually impaired, and if a blind person is visiting the museum alone, they can be guided around the museum by a volunteer. Those with low vision can receive documentation in large print. In order to receive any of these services, prior arrangements need to be made by calling the front desk during regular public hours at 718-784-2085. In addition, there are wheelchair accessible bathrooms located on floors 1, 2 and 3. It is no surprise that MoMA has won awards for its accessibility. In 2000, it won the Access Innovation in the Arts Award, presented by VSA Arts and MetLife Foundation, in recognition of its programs serving people with disabilities. In 2007, they received the Ruth Green Advocacy Award from the League for the Hard of Hearing.

An opportunity to visit a museum that welcomes you wholeheartedly and with compassion awaits you at the Museum of Modern Art (www.moma.org).