



For senior Sin City sojourners who'd like to escape from the casinos for a day or two, there are some beautiful natural locations, all within a one-hour drive from downtown Las Vegas.

Lake Mead: Mother Nature didn't create this beautiful area, just 30 minutes from Las Vegas . The 112-mile long Lake Mead was man-made as a reservoir in the 1930s Hoover Dam project.

Today it provides water for more than 20 million Southern Nevada residents, changing what was formerly dry, barren desert. The wooded lake area supports agriculture, boating, fishing, camping and, of course, Las Vegas.

A visit to Lake Mead isn't complete without seeing Hoover Dam close up. A million tourists annually marvel at its enormous concrete structure rising over 1,200 feet from the lake. Book a tour of the hydro-electric stations at the base. hooverdamtourcompany.com/lakemead

Paiute Indian Reservation: Just five miles from Las Vegas, this tribe has flourished in Nevada, Utah and Southern California for thousands of years. It owns three golf courses near Las Vegas: Snow Mountain, Sun Mountain and Wolf.

For tourists looking for colorful native traditions, a good time to visit is the Snow Mountain Pow Wow every March. It's an opportunity to experience authentic foods, historic Native American clothing, art and music. And an extra pleasure when visitors are invited to join the tribal dancing. lvpaiutetribe.com

Mount Charleston: Just 35 miles from the city, when you arrive at this beautiful recreation area it's like visiting another land. Driving up from the arid 100+ degree Mojave Desert heat, you'll find yourself more than two miles high in ski territory. On top is the Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort.

Non-ski enthusiasts can hike and bike Mount Charleston. Along the tree-lined trails are juniper, aspen and ponderosa pine, as well as varieties of mountain flowers and native wildlife. For more ambitious naturists, there are campsites, picnic groves, rental cabins and RV parking. www.gomtcharleston.com

Red Rock Canyon: A 17-mile drive from Las Vegas, the nearly 200,000 acres of natural settings among brilliantly-colored rock formations attract more than a million tourists annually.

The Visitor Center offers info, exhibits, souvenirs and picnic area. There are also many restaurants close to the canyon. For visitors who want beautiful views, luxury accommodations and gambling, there's the Red Rock Casino-Resort. redrock.sclv.com

Bonnie Springs Ranch: For seniors who have family with them, this is a perfect 115-acre example of the Old West. It offers great ways to spend a day or more away from Las Vegas glitter.

Just a 30-minute drive from the city, Bonnie Springs offers many traditional ranch activities. They include horseback riding, swimming, hiking, biking, petting zoo, music, dining, dancing and many other fun things. bonniesprings.com

Note: From Las Vegas, there are many bus, helicopter and limo services available to take visitors directly from their hotels to all these locations and beyond. One is mustanghelicopter.com