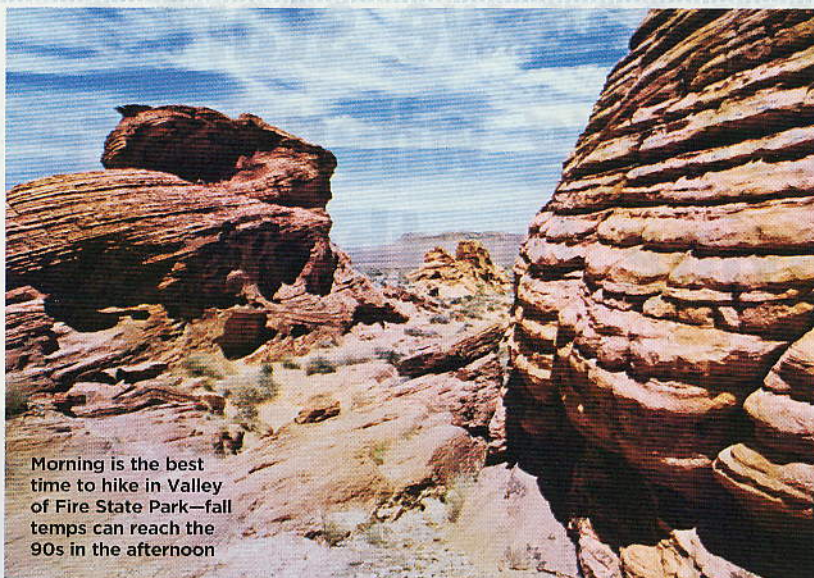


STRAY AWAY FROM THE STRIP

LAS VEGAS

Like chocolate and wine, Las Vegas is best savored in moderation. Too much of it and you'll end up regretting the whole experience. Better yet, bypass the lights, noise, and traffic and enjoy some amazing hiking and landscapes. Start by seeing the area the truly Western way: on horseback. The Mount Charleston Riding Stables, 35 minutes from the Strip, offer everything from one-hour beginner rides to five-hour tours along a steep ridge—complete with views of the Grand Canyon and Lake Mead (\$45 to \$329 per person; mountcharlestonridingstables.com). If you prefer to travel on your own two feet, head about an hour's drive north of Vegas and hike in Valley of Fire State Park in the Mojave Desert; if you're lucky you'll spot Native American petroglyphs in the red sandstone formations. With a clear head, you'll be able to hit the lights—and craps tables—back on the Strip and maybe even walk out a winner.

The place to stay At the Mount Charleston Lodge you won't walk into a dark, smoke-filled, slots-dinging lobby; instead you'll check in at a quaint log cabin and then be sent to one of



Morning is the best time to hike in Valley of Fire State Park—fall temps can reach the 90s in the afternoon

23 other cabins for your stay. Enjoy the pristine setting 7,717 feet above sea level in the middle of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest (rooms from \$145 per night; mtcharlestonlodge.com).

TOUR THE NEIGHBORHOODS

NEW YORK CITY

Your visit to the Big Apple can revolve around 42nd Street and the dozen or so blocks (and thousands of tourists) between the Empire State Building and Times Square—or you can explore the whole island and sample all the different cultures that make New York City so fantastic. But first, get a feel for the city by having a guide from NYC Run pick you up at your hotel and lead you (at your pace) through Central Park or SoHo, over the Brooklyn or Manhattan Bridge, or wherever you choose (\$60 per person for the first six miles; nycrun.com). To cover ground more quickly, strap on some in-line skates and a helmet and join the free weekly group outings that the Empire Skate Club organizes; you'll roll through the streets of Manhattan or into the outer boroughs (empireskate.org).

The New York City area is packed with dozens of ethnic enclaves, so once you have the lay of the land, start your world tour: Explore the markets and mazelike alleyways of Chinatown in search of bubble tea, a hipster drink of sweetened milk tea with tapioca pearls; then make your way to the Lower East

Side Tenement Museum, housed in a 144-year-old building. It gives a glimpse of what life must have been like for a newly arrived immigrant generations ago (tickets from \$13 to \$17; tenement.org). Hungry? Try kimchi or bulgogi, a beef dish, in Koreatown, or for an even wider assortment of cultures, take the 7 subway line (called the International Express) to the borough of Queens. There you'll find everything from Arabic to Maltese communities.

To rejuvenate your tired tootsies (one of the hazards of this walking-oriented city), stop in at the 30-minute Foot Fixers class at Erika Bloom's Pilates Plus studio, which helps you stretch, strengthen, and massage your feet (\$14; erikabloompilates.com). Then top off the pampering with a pedicure at the downtown spa Haven, where the Foot Renaissance treatment includes a honeysuckle-and-algae scrub, loofah exfoliation, shea-butter massage, and polish (\$70; havensobo.com).

The place to stay The Affinia Dumont is centrally located yet still quiet. The fitness concierge can set you up with maps of good walking routes, one of four free prepackaged fit kits—for yoga, strength training, walking or running, and overall wellness—or a personal-training session (rates from \$230; affinia.com).

DIMITY McDOWELL is a freelance writer in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Skating through Manhattan will definitely get your adrenaline pumping

