

## LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

For many years, gambling in the United States was legal only in the state of Nevada. Nevada is a western state that is east of California, south of Oregon and Idaho, west of Utah, and north of Arizona. It is a desert state where little rain falls during the year. It is a little more than 275 miles from the city of Los Angeles, which is where most of its visitors come from. Driving from Los Angeles is about four hours. Las Vegas, which means the Meadows in Spanish, was established by the Mexicans in the mid-1800s. Much of what is now the southwestern part of the United States was then part of the Mexican Empire. The city was a railroad town established in 1905, and the first legal casino appeared in 1931.

Las Vegas is now a gambling town, where people from all over the United States come to vacation. Its population is under 2,000,000, making it the 30th largest city in the country. Its original population in 1905 was only 5,000. Much of the city's growth is due to the gambling industry. Many states have since legalized gambling, including New Jersey, and California, but Las Vegas remains the No. 1 tourist city for gamblers in the U.S. Today some of its largest and most beautiful hotels include Bellagio, Flamingo, Caesars Palace, Treasure

Island, Mandalay Bay, and Wynn. These hotels are on Las Vegas Boulevard, which is commonly called "The Strip." With its nearly year-round sunshine, beautiful casinos, and variety of gaming options, Las Vegas remains the best location for gambling in the U.S.