

## Off Roothing Off the Strip

What do you think of when you hear "Las Vegas"? Slot machines, casinos, showgirls, money, glitz, spectacular shows and some of the best buffets in the States, right? What very few people realize is that southern Nevada has some of the best outdoor activities in the south western United States. Lake Meade National Park not only offers a great tour of the Hoover Dam, but Lake Meade is a hot spot for boating, water skiing, jet skiing, fishing and even some scuba diving. The roads that wind around the lake are frequented by motorcyclists and bicyclists, runners and walkers. If you go far enough into Lake Meade National Park you run into the Valley of Fire, a park named for it's spectacular fiery red rocks and stunning landscape. On the west end of Las Vegas is Red Rock Canyon, more spectacular landscaping for horseback riding, hiking, camping, rock climbing, biking and motorcycling.

And let's not forget the trails for the ATV crowd. In Las Vegas there are two major areas where the locals go to ride. The first one is about a half hour outside of Las Vegas at the north end of the strip just past Nellis Air Force Base. There are two ways you can reach the Nellis Dunes. You can either follow Las Vegas Boulevard (aka The Las Vegas Strip) to the north and past the Las Vegas Speedway until you get to the end of it or you can take the I-15 to the Apex exit and turn right. You can't miss the Dunes on this lonely stretch of road. If you came off the I-15 the Dunes will be immediately on your left, in fact, you will be able to see them from the exit ramp. Every weekend there are trailers and RVs parked up on the Dunes. You can watch kids and adults riding the trails on ATV's and dirt bikes from the road.

If you follow the Boulevard south as far as it will go, you will find yourself paralleling the I-15 going towards California. This stretch of road will take you to the Jean Dry Lake Beds. The area here is also wide open desert with plenty of space for ATV trail riding and should take only twenty to thirty minutes from the Strip.

Venturing outside of Las Vegas you can find another ATV hotspot, the El Dorado Dry Lake Valley Area. Take US 95 or the Boulder Highway south towards Searchlight. Seven miles after the Railroad Pass Casino before you reach Searchlight you'll find the trails. And finally off of US 93 is the Logandale Trails System.

An inexperienced rider or first time visitor to Las Vegas might want to consider hiring a trail guide. Most of these trails are unmarked and difficult to follow if you aren't familiar with the area. A guide will also be able to help you over the rougher patches of trail. All ATV outfitters in Las Vegas offer training on

the ATV to make sure that you understand how to operate the vehicle. Off road vehicles in Nevada are usually don't require registration, license or titles to drive, but drivers under the age of 15 require adult supervision and everyone needs to wear a helmet. Headlights are also required to be on from dusk to dawn. Another safety precaution is having a brightly colored flag attached to your ATV while riding the trails so that other riders can see you. Do not ride your ATV on the roads or highways either; trailer your vehicle to the site and stick to the trails. Above all else, do not operate your ATV or any other motorized vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

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