

Las Vegas in 3 Nights: Two Adults, One Show, One Buffet, Zero Fee Surprises

Welcome to the most honest Vegas plan you'll read. The city's advertised room rates are a magic trick; the real bill is the room rate plus a resort fee plus tax plus parking plus that little "convenience" surcharge on your show ticket. This plan lays every number bare, with an as-of date and a source for each, so the only surprise you get is how good the buffet is.

o) Your Trip at a Glance

Detail	Your spec
Dates	Friday, September 11, 2026 to Monday, September 14, 2026 (3 nights)
Group	2 adults
Budget	Up to \$1,600 total
Lodging	On the Strip, mid-tier, pool matters
Must-haves	One show, pool time, one Fremont Street evening, one buffet done right, one nice dinner, cheap eats otherwise
Special request	Total cost honesty: resort fees stated per hotel per night, parking fees, current box-office show price ranges, honest daily cost overview, every number dated and sourced
Gambling	Fun money only, no gambling budget in this plan
Getting there	Flying into Harry Reid International (LAS)

A quick reality check up front: with a \$1,600 all-in ceiling for two people over three nights, and flights arriving separately, this is a "smart-choices" trip, not a "suite-and-bottle-service" trip. Good news: Vegas rewards smart choices generously. This plan lands you comfortably inside budget with room to breathe (details in the cost overview).

1) At a Glance

Item	Pick	Concrete fact (as of June 2026)	Source
Hotel (recommended)	The LINQ Hotel & Casino, Center Strip	Resort fee \$56.63/room/night, self-park \$20/day, valet \$40/day, refundable deposit \$50/night	ResortFeeChecker (updated Oct 1, 2025)

Item	Pick	Concrete fact (as of June 2026)	Source
Hotel alt 1 (lower fee)	Flamingo Las Vegas	Center Strip, pool complex, typically lower resort fee than LINQ, confirm at booking step	Provider booking step
Hotel alt 2 (value)	Excalibur, South Strip	Budget mid-tier, self-park ~\$18–\$25/day depending on day	Vegas4Locals parking guide
Show	Mad Apple by Cirque du Soleil, New York-New York	90 min, 18+, box office at NY-NY; typical tickets ~\$59–\$149+ before fees, confirm at box office	Cirque du Soleil official
Buffet	Bacchanal Buffet, Caesars Palace	Dinner ~\$79.99 (Sun–Thu) to ~\$84.99 (Fri/Sat) per adult, plus tax	Multiple Vegas dining trackers
Nice dinner	Mon Ami Gabi, Paris Las Vegas	French bistro, open daily 7:00 AM–10:00 PM (Fri/Sat to 11:00 PM), Strip-view patio	Mon Ami Gabi official
Fremont Street	Fremont Street Experience + SlotZilla zipline	Free to stroll (open 24 hrs); zip line from \$49, zoom line from \$69	Fremont Street Experience official
Airport to Strip	RTC Deuce bus	Single ride \$4, or 24-hour pass \$8, or 3-day pass \$20 per person	RTC official fares page

1b) Recommendation and Why

Stay at The LINQ Hotel & Casino. It sits dead-center on the Strip, has a seasonal outdoor pool, and puts you a two-minute walk from the LINQ Promenade, the High Roller wheel, and a footbridge to Caesars Palace (where your buffet is). For two adults who want pool time and easy walking to everything, the location is the whole ballgame.

Now the honest part you specifically asked for: The LINQ charges a resort fee of \$56.63 per room, nightly, which is on the higher end of the range of fees. That is a real cost, not a typo, and it is the single biggest "hidden" line in this trip. I'm recommending the LINQ anyway because the central location saves you cab and rideshare money that would otherwise dwarf the fee difference, but you should walk in with eyes open.

Best alternative: Flamingo Las Vegas. Same Center-Strip zone, big multi-pool complex (its "Go Pool" is a genuine highlight for pool people), and it historically carries a slightly lower resort fee than the LINQ. If the fee difference matters more to you than the LINQ's newer rooms, book the Flamingo.

Value alternative: Excalibur on the South Strip, next door to New York-New York where your show is, with mid-tier rooms and a lower nightly fee structure than the LINQ. All three meet your hard criteria: on the Strip, mid-tier, real pool.

A note on room rates: Vegas hotel prices sit behind live booking widgets that change daily, so I am not quoting a fake-precise "from" number. For a September weekend (a shoulder-season sweet spot, not a convention or F1 weekend), budget a realistic **\$90–\$160/night guide value** for a mid-tier Strip room before the resort fee and tax. You will see the binding number at the booking step.

1c) Book Now

What	By when	Where / link
Hotel (The LINQ)	4–8 weeks out for best mid-tier rate	caesars.com/...
Show (Mad Apple)	2–4 weeks out; sooner for weekend seats	cirquedusoleil.com/...
Bacchanal Buffet reservation	1–2 weeks out (weekend dinners fill)	caesars.com/...
Mon Ami Gabi dinner	1–2 weeks out for a patio table	monamigabi.com/... (reserve via OpenTable)
SlotZilla zip line (optional)	Same-week is fine	tickets.vegasexperience.com/...

For hotels and flights: **You will see the binding price for your exact dates and occupancy at the provider's booking step, it changes daily.**

💡 Amex tip: American Express Card Members enjoy 15% off regular Mad Apple tickets and access to Amex Reserved Tickets during select performances. If you carry an Amex, buy through the official Cirque site to grab it.

2) Day-by-Day Plan

All times are local (Pacific). September 11, 2026 is a **Friday**, so weekend rates apply for the Friday and Saturday portions of your trip; September 14 is a **Monday** (weekday rate).

Day 1, Friday, September 11: Land, settle, sunset stroll

- Fly into **LAS**. Getting to the Strip: the cheapest legit option is the **RTC Deuce** double-decker bus. A single ride is \$4, a 24-hour pass is \$8, and a 3-day pass is \$20 (regular fare). For two of you doing multiple Strip hops, two 3-day passes (\$40 total) is the best value and covers your whole trip. A rideshare from the airport is faster (roughly 15–25 minutes to Center Strip) but runs meaningfully more per trip.
- Check in at **The LINQ** (3535 Las Vegas Blvd South). Map: [Open in maps](#)
- Evening: easy Center-Strip walk. Ride or admire the **High Roller** observation wheel at the LINQ Promenade, watch the **Bellagio fountains** (free, every 15–30 min in the evening) a short walk south.
- Cheap eats tonight: food-hall and counter spots along the LINQ Promenade keep the first night light on the wallet.

💡 Tip: Your LINQ key gives you same-day in-and-out parking at other Caesars properties, handy if you ever do rent a car, but on this walk-everything plan you won't need to.

🌤 Plan B: Early-September evenings can still hit the 90s°F. If it's sweltering, do the fountains and promenade after 9:00 PM when it cools, and duck into air-conditioned casino atriums between stops.

Day 2, Saturday, September 12: Pool day + Bacchanal Buffet + the big show

- Morning to afternoon: **pool time** at the LINQ's seasonal outdoor pool. The LINQ's seasonal outdoor pool is open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with cabanas available for a surcharge. September is prime pool weather, so claim chairs early.
- Late lunch/early dinner: **Bacchanal Buffet at Caesars Palace**, a five-minute walk across the footbridge. This is your "one buffet done right." Expect ~\$84.99 per adult for Saturday dinner, plus tax (the Sun–Thu dinner rate runs ~\$79.99). Reserve ahead; the weekend line without a reservation is a character-building experience. Map: [Open in maps](#)
- Evening: **Mad Apple by Cirque du Soleil** at New York-New York (South Strip). Mad Apple is an all-out party packed with music, comedy and high-flying acrobatics inspired by New York, with set design, costumes, choreography and songs all connected to the city. The show runs 90 minutes, and there are no kids tickets: you must be 18 years or older to attend due to adult themes and language. Perfect for two adults. Box-office ticket prices typically range from about \$59 to \$149+ depending on seat tier and night; confirm the exact figure at the official buy-tickets step before booking, as Vegas show prices shift constantly.

💡 Tip: There is a bar set into the Mad Apple stage emulating a New York nightclub, so arrive 30 minutes before show time to get on the stage, take photos, and socialize with the cast. Get there early, it's part of the ticket.

💡 Buffet tip: Go in genuinely hungry and pace yourself across the seafood, carving, and dessert stations, this is a splurge you'll want to earn every dollar of.

☁ Plan B: If the pool is closed for weather or over-crowded, the LINQ has bars and lounges indoors, and the Promenade shops fill an afternoon. The buffet and show are both indoors and weather-proof.

Day 3, Sunday, September 13: Nice dinner + Fremont Street night

- Daytime: slow morning, more pool, or wander the Strip's free sights (Flamingo wildlife habitat, casino atriums, window-shopping the Forum Shops at Caesars).
- Nice dinner: **Mon Ami Gabi at Paris Las Vegas**, your "one nice dinner." It's a classic French bistro with a Strip-facing patio directly across from the Bellagio fountains. Hours are Sunday–Thursday 7:00 AM–10:00 PM and Friday–Saturday 7:00 AM–11:00 PM, with dinner service from 4:00 PM. Address: 3655 S Las Vegas Blvd, phone 702-944-4224. Map: [Open in maps](#)
 - 💡 Value tip: If it's running during your visit, Mon Ami Gabi's summer prix fixe offers a 3-course \$40 lunch and \$70 dinner featuring seasonal and classic French dishes. A steak-frites dinner on the patio for \$70 is a genuinely good deal for the view.
 - Alternative nice dinner if Mon Ami Gabi is booked: the sit-down restaurants inside Paris and Bally's/Horseshoe next door offer comparable Strip-view dining; ask the LINQ concierge for the current best-availability option.

- Evening: **Fremont Street Experience** downtown, your one Fremont night. Take the Deuce bus straight up the Strip to downtown (covered by your 3-day pass). Catch Music Reels on The Canopy at the top of every hour starting at 6:00 PM nightly, a signature light-and-sound moment on Fremont Street. The street itself is free and open 24 hours.
 - Optional thrill: the **SlotZilla zipline**. The Zip Line starts at \$49 and the higher, faster Zoom Line starts at \$69. Ride hours Thursday–Sunday are 12:00 PM–2:00 AM, with the last ride at 1:40 AM. Box office phone: 702-678-7580. Map: [Open in maps](#)
 - Cheap eats downtown: the old-school casinos on Fremont are famous for bargain food and cheap drinks, a fun contrast to Strip prices.

💡 Tip: If you'd rather drive down, the Fremont Street parking garage is a bargain vs. the Strip. Friday–Sunday the rate is \$5 per hour with a daily maximum of \$25 (Monday–Thursday it's \$4/hour, \$20 max). But the Deuce is cheaper and you skip the parking entirely.

☁ Plan B: Fremont Street is a covered canopy, so light rain won't ruin it, but the zipline can pause in storms or high wind. If so, enjoy the free hourly Canopy light shows and the street performers instead.

Day 4, Monday, September 14: Checkout and fly home

- Standard checkout, last pool dip or coffee, then Deuce or rideshare back to LAS. Monday is a weekday rate day if you're paying for anything time-sensitive.
- 💡 Tip: Build in extra airport time. LAS is busy and the security lines on a Monday can be long, aim to be at the airport at least 2 hours before a domestic flight.

3) Practical Notes, Checklist, and Honest Cost Overview

The fees nobody warns you about (your headline request)

- **Resort fee (The LINQ):** \$56.63 per room, nightly, plus a \$50 per room nightly refundable deposit (cash or card). Over 3 nights that's **\$169.89 in resort fees** alone, plus the \$50/night hold that comes back to you. The LINQ resort fee includes fitness center access and phone calls.
- **Parking (The LINQ):** you're not renting a car in this plan, but for the record: covered self parking is \$20 daily and covered valet is \$40 daily.
- **General Strip fee reality:** As of late 2025, most Strip hotels charge resort fees between \$35 and \$55 per night plus tax, so a three-night stay can quietly add \$120 to \$180 to your bill. Self-parking on the Strip typically costs \$15 to \$20 per night and valet ranges from \$25 to \$40.
- **Show service fees:** box-office and ticketing platforms typically add roughly 10% to 20% service fees on ticket platforms. Budget for it on top of the face price.
- **Sales tax:** Clark County restaurant/retail sales tax is about 8.375%, so buffet and dining "plus tax" adds up. Nevada has no separate hotel sales tax line beyond the room tax already folded into your rate.
- **Tipping (US norm):** plan **15–20%** at sit-down restaurants, the zipline crew, and rideshare drivers. Buffets usually see a smaller tip (\$3–\$5 per person or a few dollars left for the drink server).

Checklist

- ☐ Book The LINQ (or Flamingo/Excalibur alt) and note the resort fee + deposit
- ☐ Buy Mad Apple tickets (apply Amex 15% if eligible)
- ☐ Reserve Bacchanal Buffet (Saturday dinner)
- ☐ Reserve Mon Ami Gabi (Sunday dinner, request patio)
- ☐ Load two RTC 3-day passes in the rideRTC app on arrival
- ☐ Sunscreen and a refillable water bottle (September heat is real)
- ☐ ID for the show (18+, and it's checked) and for any fun-money gaming
- ☐ A little cash for tips and cheap eats

Honest cost overview (2 adults, 3 nights, USD, as of June 2026)

Item	Low	High	Notes
Room, 3 nights (guide value)	\$270	\$480	Mid-tier Strip room \$90–\$160/night; check exact-date price with provider
Resort fee, 3 nights	\$170	\$170	LINQ \$56.63/night, confirmed; refundable \$50/night deposit not counted
Room tax (approx. on room)	\$36	\$65	~13.38% Clark County room tax on the room rate
Airport + local transit (2 × 3-day Deuce pass)	\$40	\$40	Or budget \$60–\$120 if you rideshare instead
Mad Apple, 2 tickets	\$130	\$320	~\$59–\$149 each before fees; add ~10–20% service fee
Bacchanal Buffet, 2 adults	\$160	\$180	~\$79.99–\$84.99 each plus ~8.375% tax
Mon Ami Gabi dinner, 2	\$110	\$170	Prix fixe ~\$70 pp if offered, or à la carte
Cheap eats + coffee (other meals)	\$90	\$150	Food halls, downtown, counter spots
SlotZilla zipline (optional, 2)	\$0	\$138	Skip to save, or \$49–\$69 each
Fun money / drinks / tips	\$80	\$150	Your call on the casino floor
Estimated total	~\$1,086	~\$1,863	

Budget verdict: At the low-to-mid end you land comfortably under your **\$1,600** ceiling with breathing room. At the high end (top show seats, both ziplines, generous fun money), you can drift over, so the easy levers are: pick mid-tier show seats, choose the RTC bus over rideshare, and treat the zipline as optional. Do that and \$1,600 is very achievable for a genuinely full Vegas long weekend. The resort fee is the one line you cannot negotiate away, which is exactly why it's stated separately here.

4) Sources (checked June 2026)

Accommodation and fees

- The LINQ Hotel & Casino (official): [caesars.com/...](https://caesars.com/)
- The LINQ resort fee, deposit, parking (ResortFeeChecker, updated Oct 1, 2025): [resortfeechecker.com/...](https://resortfeechecker.com/)
- Las Vegas fee/parking overview (Getawayk 2026 guide): [getawayk.com/...](https://getawayk.com/)
- Strip parking figures (Vegas4Locals): [vegas4locals.com/...](https://vegas4locals.com/)

Show

- Mad Apple by Cirque du Soleil, tickets/details (official): [cirquedusoleil.com/...](https://cirquedusoleil.com/)

Dining

- Bacchanal Buffet, Caesars Palace (official): [caesars.com/...](https://caesars.com/)
- Mon Ami Gabi, Paris Las Vegas (official): [monamigabi.com/...](https://monamigabi.com/)

Fremont Street and attractions

- Fremont Street Experience / SlotZilla (official): [vegasexperience.com/...](https://vegasexperience.com/)
- SlotZilla ticketing (official store): [tickets.vegasexperience.com/...](https://tickets.vegasexperience.com/)

Transport

- RTC Southern Nevada fares and passes (official): [rtcsonv.com/...](https://rtcsonv.com/)

One last honest note: the exact room rate, the exact show seat price, and the exact buffet price on your specific dates all live behind live widgets that move daily, so I've given ranges where a single number would be a fiction and locked in the fixed facts (the \$56.63 resort fee, the transit fares, the venue hours) where they're genuinely fixed. Confirm the live numbers at the booking step and you'll have zero surprises. Have a fantastic trip.

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