

Lake Mead

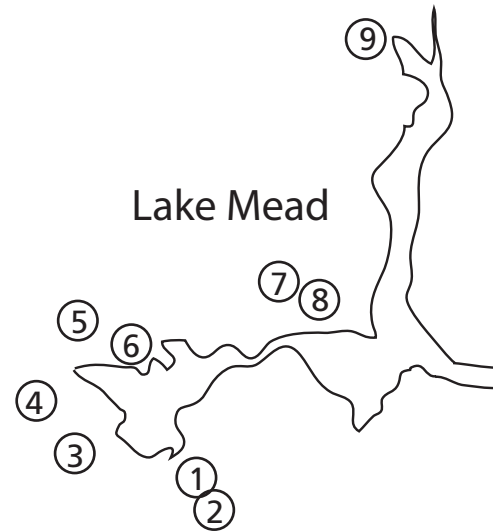
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
www.nps.gov/LAKE



Lake Mead Hikes



Most visitors come to Lake Mead National Recreation Area to play in the clear waters of Lake Mead and Lake Mohave, but only 13 percent of Lake Mead National Recreation Area's 1.5 million acres is water. The rest of the land is desert. Hiking in this unique landscape can take you through red sandstone and black volcanic soils, to spectacular vistas and along an historic railroad bed.



1. Historic Railroad Trail

1 mile (1.6 km) to 1st tunnel
2.2 miles (3.5 km) to 5th tunnel
11 foot elevation gain
Firm Aggregate Surface
Easy

The lower trailhead is located below the Lake Mead Visitor Center. The hike takes you along an old railroad bed left over from the building of Hoover Dam. The distance to the first tunnel is about 1 mile. Another 1.2 miles brings you to the fifth tunnel. There is minimal elevation change on this portion. You can walk, run, bicycle or even push a stroller on this flat easy trail. It is also wheelchair accessible. After the fifth tunnel, the trail narrows and becomes steeper. The additional distance to the Hoover Dam parking garage is 1.5 miles with an elevation change of 434 feet.

2. River Mountains Loop

16.2 miles (26.1 km) within
Lake Mead, one way
750 ft. elevation change
Firm Paved Surface
Moderate

The 34-mile loop surrounds the River Mountains connecting Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Hoover Dam, Henderson, Boulder City and the rest of the Las Vegas Valley. This hike can be accessed from two main trailheads in the park. The Historic Railroad Trailhead is located east of the Lake Mead Visitors Center on Lakeshore Road just off U.S. Highway 93. The alternate trailhead is located off Lake Mead Parkway just west of the entrance station.

3. Owl Canyon

2.2 miles (3.5 km) round trip
300 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Moderate

Turn toward the 33 Hole Overlook off Lakeshore Road. The trailhead is located at the first parking lot on the left. Dramatic winding canyons below the Lake Mead high-water line have been revealed as the water level has dropped. Owls may be seen in the area.

4. Bluffs

3.9 miles (6.2 km) round trip
145 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Moderate

The route is well-defined and leads along the bluffs overlooking Las Vegas Bay and the Las Vegas Wash. The trailhead starts next to site #72 in the Las Vegas Bay Campground. Excellent wildlife viewing, especially birds, can be expected.

5. Wetlands

1.5 miles (2.4 km) round trip
110 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Moderate

The route starts at mile 1.2 on the east side of Northshore Road after the bridge. Drive north across the bridge over the wash and turn into the gravel parking area on the right. The trail follows a dry wash down to the banks of the Las Vegas Wash. Be sure to bring your binoculars to view the bird life.

6. Callville Summit

2.7 miles (4.3 km) round trip
150 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Moderate

Turn right at mile 11.1 on Northshore Road (Callville Access Road) and drive 4 miles to the entrance of Callville Bay Campground. Route starts at the dump station. The climb will reward you with a spectacular view from the summit. To the south near Hoover Dam is a panoramic view of Fortification Hill, Boulder Basin, Hemenway Valley, Boulder City and the River Mountains. Looking east lies the Callville Bay developed area, Callville Mesa and the Black Mountains.

7. Northshore Summit

1.0 miles (1.6 km) round trip
200 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Moderate

Heading northeast on Northshore Road look for hiking and photography signs past mile marker 20. Park on the left (north) side of the road. The route climbs from the parking area to a nearby hilltop with a dramatic panoramic view of the Muddy Mountains, the red rocks of Bowl of Fire, Bitter Spring Valley and the Virgin Basin.

8. Redstone

1.1 miles (1.8 km) loop
80 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface
Easy

Located at mile 27 on Northshore Road at the Redstone Picnic Area. Wind your way through red sandstone hills and learn about the geology of the area. Look for interpretive signs.

9. St. Thomas

2.5 miles (4 km) round trip
85 ft. elevation change
Natural Earth Surface

Trailhead is located on the Northshore Road just past mile post 46. Turn on to Old St. Thomas Access Road. Walk among the foundations of a historic ghost town that was once submerged by the waters of Lake Mead.

Great Tips for a Fun and Safe Day

- Carry at least one gallon of water per person, and drink often.
- Wear sturdy, comfortable shoes.
- Use sunscreen liberally.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt.
- Never hike alone.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Set a nice, easy pace, take your time and enjoy the scenery.
- Please pack out all trash and food scraps.
- Remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints.
- Please do not walk on dark, crumbly soils. These are fragile cryptogamic soils that are made up of mosses, lichens and bacterias. They bind together to form a crust that prevents wind and water erosion and protects seeds that fall into the soil.

