



Las Vegas, March 2022

Description

In March of 2022 we stopped off for a couple nights in Las Vegas, staying in the Mandalay Bay resort and taking in many of the nearby attractions. There is never too little fun to be had in Las Vegas, but doing so without burning a hole in your wallet can be a challenge. Sadly, we still managed to blow away our budget, but that's Vegas.

• Highlights

- Mandalay Bay Hotel and Beach
- Ri Ra Irish Pub, Mandalay Bay
- Minus 5 Ice Bar, Mandalay Bay
- Piff the Magic Dragon show at Flamingo Hotel
- Kumi Restaurant, Mandalay Bay
- House of Blues, Mandalay Bay
- Pinball Museum
- Shark Reef Aquarium, Mandalay Bay
- 1923 Prohibition Bar, Mandalay Bay
- Ethel M. Chocolate Factory and Cactus Gardens

1. [Day 1: Mandalay Bay](#)
 1. [Ri Ra Irish Pub](#)
 2. [Minus 5 Ice Bar](#)
 3. [Piff the Magic Dragon show](#)
 4. [KUMI Restaurant](#)
2. [Day 2: Mandalay Bay](#)
 1. [House of Blues](#)
 2. [Pinball Museum](#)
 3. [Shark Reef Aquarium](#)
 4. [1923 Prohibition Bar](#)
3. [Day 3: Departure](#)
 1. [Ethel M. Chocolate Factory and Cactus Garden](#)

Day 1: Mandalay Bay







Iâ??ve stayed in several of the strip hotels (Luxor, Excaliber, etc), but traveling as a family the Mandalay is easily our go to favorite. There is enough for children to enjoy while still being sophisticated enough for adults to not wish they were somewhere else. Being the last major hotel on the strip itâ??s in easy walking distance from other strip hotels and casinos, while being comfortably away from

unwanted sleaze.

As you can see from the photo taken from our room, the beach and pool area is massive. There is a wave pool, a lazy river, and many smaller pools as well. We spent a couple relaxing hours in the resort pools and drifting in the lazy river.

The hotel also has some great restaurants and clubs, many of which I'll detail below.

Ri Ra Irish Pub

Since we had arrived in Vegas during St. Patrick's Day week, we decided to make this pub our lunch stop after arriving. The pub is located in the walkway between the Mandalay and Luxor.





After a bit of a tiring drive, the Irish beers at Ri Ra hit the spot. The interior of the bar includes actual paneling from Irish pubs in Ireland (I'm not really sure about the masks on the wall which seem out of place). The service and food were both great. I recommend ordering the Fish and Chips.

Minus 5 Ice Bar







Nearby Ri Ra in the corridor between the Mandalay and Luxor is the Minus 5 Ice Bar. Our kids are old enough now to be alone in the hotel playing video games, etc, so mom and dad can spend a little adult time together.

We had heard about this bar before arriving and made it a priority stop right after lunch. It's too cool to pass up.

You have to pay to get in but admission comes with a cocktail in an ice shot glass. The interior is entirely made of ice (seats, walls, bar, everything). They provide parkas and gloves so you can enjoy a few drinks and enjoy the colored lighting on the icy surfaces.

Piff the Magic Dragon show





We wanted to go to a magic show while we were in Vegas and after scouring the options available to us we chose this show which runs at the Flamingo hotel. We took a Lyft to the Flamingo since it's at the opposite end of the strip.

This show is both humorous and the magic is quite impressive as well. Our nine-year-old Evan was brought up on stage to play the part of an orphan boy and got to interact with Mr. Piffles the chihuahua during the act. I highly recommend this show.

While the show is great, the only minor negative is that even though you have individual tables the drink and food selections are rather lacking in the Flamingo ballroom.

KUMI Restaurant

By the time we had returned to the Mandalay for dinner we were pretty tired but we did enjoy the sushi and edamame and cocktails at KUMI. This is a rather pricey restaurant of course. But if the food and service are up to the standards then it's alright. I was too tired to take any photos but you can imagine sushi rolls and a plate of edamame.

Day 2: Mandalay Bay

After a long day we had another long day planned and headed right to the best breakfast spot nobody would ever think of: the House of Blues.

House of Blues



The House of Blues in Mandalay has live music in the evenings, but weâ??ve only ever been to it for breakfast in the mornings (twice now). The breakfast is a tad expensive but really good. I am sure we will be back again in the future for yet another HOB breakfast.

Pinball Museum











The Pinball Museum is a short walk south of the Mandalay Bay hotel at the end of the strip near the airport. You can't miss the sign outside (second photo). What is great about the museum isn't just the ability to see hundreds of historical pinball machines dating back to the 1930s, but that the work and you can play them. It's free to get in but be sure to play your way to a nice donation to keep the museum going strong.

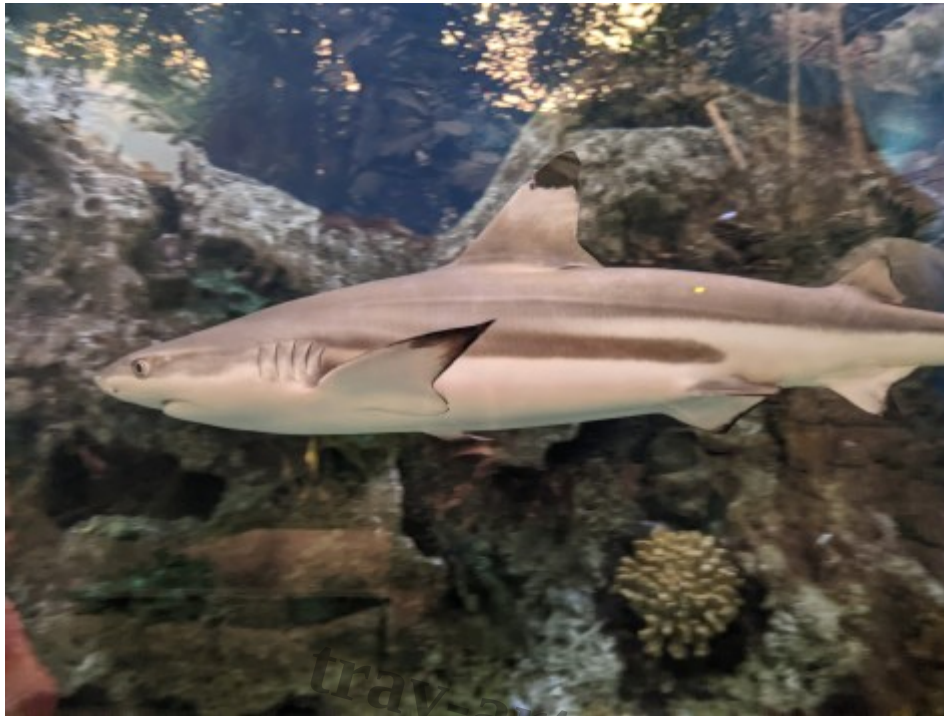
Shark Reef Aquarium





trav-art.com





This aquarium is part of the Mandalay Resort and it's really quite good with numerous large tanks of diverse fish, rays, sharks, etc. The interior atmosphere is unique and allows you to pass underneath and amid the sea life. In places it could use more signage, but there were several staff around ready to answer any questions, like that of our nine-year-old who wanted to know whether the piranha wanted to eat us.

1923 Prohibition Bar



After dinner our last night, we wanted to stop at another of the places we had read about and missed during our last visit to Mandalay a few years before, the 1923 Prohibition Bar. When we went last time the bar was hidden as a speakeasy should be, behind a 20s era car. This time the bar had been moved to a more noticeable location, not very well concealed behind a fake bookcase.

Anyway, Shell and I are fans of 20s era life and couldn't pass up the chance to go now. The atmosphere was quiet and cool, as a speakeasy should be. The waitress chatted with us and brought us some good cocktails. A few of the patrons were too lazy to make sure the bookcase door shut behind them when they left and we had to close it. Nobody wants to be seen in a speakeasy.

Day 3: Departure

Ethel M. Chocolate Factory and Cactus Garden

Our our way back home we stopped at this chocolate factory on the outskirts of Las Vegas. Itâ??s a world away from the craziness of the strip and shows that there is another side of the city (and some nature too).











The chocolate factory is a short self-guided tour that follows the chocolate-making process through glass walls, from grinding to pouring to packaging. It ends in a gift shop area where you will inevitably spend \$50 on chocolate.

Outside is a nice cactus garden on the property with meandering trails that lead through the placarded foliage. We were lucky enough to see a woodpecker in the garden along with the diverse cacti and desert plants.

Date Created

May 2, 2022

Author

jsde