

27 Things You Need To Know About Reno

Before You Move There

The Biggest Little City has a lot more than slots going for it.

1. The Truckee River Is For Playing And Drinking



Source: Flickr user Darron Birgenheier

You don't really need a metaphor to describe the Truckee River, since it is, quite literally, a water oasis in a desert. Truckee runs from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake, hitting Reno on the way and providing access to whitewater rafting, kayaking, fishing, and, most importantly, drinking water.

2. There Are Roughly 100 Festivals Going On At Any Given Time



Source: Reno River Festival via Facebook

You can be pretty sure there's some kind of cool festival going on right now in Reno. In addition to the aforementioned month-long Artown Festival, there's the Reno River Festival celebrating the gorgeous Truckee, bluegrass, jazz and blues festivals, a Pride festival, a Celtic festival, a Greek festival, and really, any other kind of festival you can probably imagine.

3. Reno Locals Know Living In A Touristy Town Means Silly Good Eats



Source: Facebook user Men Wielding Fire

Spend too much time in Reno, and you might end up getting a bit spoiled when it comes to great restaurant eats. There are way too many great spots to name, but the American grub and BBQ spot Man Wielding Fire, the locally legendary breakfast outpost Peg's Glorified Ham N Eggs, and the upscale Lulou's, are all favorites.

4. Here, “The Arch” Doesn’t Mean McDonald’s



Source: Flickr user Marlon E

Almost any time you see a quick television cutaway or an internet list dedicated to Reno, chances are you get a glimpse of the Reno Arch.

Everyone know what it looks like so here’s a little background: the sign was built in 1926, and has featured the town’s famous motto “The Biggest Little City in the World,” since 1929. The current arch is the third iteration, having gone up in 1987.

5. Reno Has The Country's Funkiest Car Collection



Source: National Automobile Museum via Facebook

The National Automobile Museum in Reno is considered one of the best museums of its kind in the world, featuring a collection of about 200 automobiles, including such oddities as a golden Delorean, a half-Jeep half-Ferrari Frankenstein known as a Jerrari, and historical automobiles dating back to the late 1800s.

6. Your Eyes Won't Be Able To Handle All The Art From Artown



Source: Flickr user Mr. Stabile

An awesome asset to the area's art scene, Artown is a local arts non-profit that hosts workshops and partners with local arts organizations throughout the year. Artown hosts a massive summer arts festival featuring roughly 500 events from 100 different presenters performed to a crowd of 300,000. That's a whole lot of art.

7. You'll Want To Bring Your Skis



Source: Flickr user Ken Lund

Very few places in the country can boast 300 days of sunshine a year, alongside some of the best skiing and snowboarding in the country. Reno is one of those places. Just South of Reno you'll find Mt. Rose, which features 8 lifts and more than 60 runs over 1,200 acres.

8. And Your Hiking Boots



Source: Flickr user Ray Bouknight

Lest you be worried about living in a desert that lacks tree scenery, just West of the Reno city limits you'll find Tahoe National Forest, nearly one million acres of prime, tree-laden real estate with some of the prettiest camping and hiking scenery imaginable.

9. Reno's Bowling Alley Is Bigger Than Yours



Source: National Bowling Stadium via Facebook

Every city has a bowling alley, but how many have their own National Bowling Stadium? You can count the number on one hand. With one finger.

This over 350,000 square foot, \$45 million bowling mega center features 78 lanes, holds over 1,000 spectators for professional bowling events, and, we imagine, throws one heck of a birthday party. Plus, “Kingpin” was filmed there.

10. Craft Brews Are Taking Over This Town



Source: Great Basin Brewing Co. via Facebook

Home to an ever-increasing roster of beer destinations and brewers, including the nationally recognized Great Basin Brewing Co., Silver Peak, and Brew Brothers, Reno has one of the best mid-sized city beer scenes in the country.

And CANFEST, held at the Peppermill Casino, celebrates the beautiful simplicity of a cold, canned beer.

11. All The Talk About Reno's Great Balloon Race Isn't Inflated



Source: Flickr user Ken Lund

Reno's massive "Great Balloon Race" has been going 30 years strong. The name's a slight misnomer, since the balloons aren't actually racing anywhere, but the huge three day event is the biggest of its kind in the country, featuring some 1,000 massive hot air balloons.

12. You Might Have Heard: Reno Has Some Casinos



Source: Flickr user Jim G

If there's one thing you know about Reno, it's probably that there are ample places to toss dice, hit the slots, and awkwardly stare people down at the poker table. And that is indeed the case: Downtown Reno is loaded with larger casinos like Harrah's, Circus Circus Reno and Silver Legacy, several other smaller casinos scattered about the area, and John Ascuaga's Nugget Resort & Casino located in nearby Sparks.

13. But You Can Totally Live In Reno Without Ever Touching A Slot Machine



Source: Flickr user Rick Cooper

All that gambling talk aside, it's absolutely possible to live a quaint, fulfilling existence without ever even entering a casino. In fact, that's how plenty of people in Reno live. The casinos are more or less packed into one area, and the rest of the city is full of nightlife, outdoor activities, culture, and family living that doesn't touch the gambling industry.

14. Reno Is Home To Nevada's Fanciest Art Museum



Source: Facebook user Nevada Museum of Art

With the Nevada Museum of Art, the biggest little city in America is home to the biggest big museum in Nevada. The nature and photography-focused museum features an amazing outdoor sculpture area that melds beautifully with the Sierra Nevada mountains in the background. Plus it's the only American Alliance of Museums accredited art museum in the state.

15. Reno Is A Secret College Town



Source: University of Reno via Facebook

If Reno wasn't already known as a gambling town, it might be known as a college town. The University of Nevada, Reno is the second biggest four-year school in the state after UNLV, with a student base of about 18,000. The college is known for its great business school and a journalism school that's pumped out a whopping six Pulitzer Prize winners. That's a lot of muckraking.

16. There's No Love Lost Between The Rebels And The Wolf Pack



Source: Flickr user Ken Lund

Speaking of UNR and UNLV, both schools play in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), so you better believe that when these teams meet, intrastate pride runs high.

In football, the UNLV Rebels and the Nevada Wolf Pack compete for the Fremont Cannon, awarded to the winner of the game each year since 1969.

17. Reno's Minor League Squads Are All Aces



Source: Flickr user Gary Lerude

Reno turns out big for the Wolf Pack, but beyond college, there's a big minor league sports scene. Most notably, the city hosts the appropriately-named Triple-A Reno Aces and the NBA Development League squad the Reno Bighorns.

18. Freight House District Is The Hottest New Entertainment Spot



Source: Freight House District in Reno, Nevada via Facebook

Speaking of the Aces, Aces Ballpark is without a doubt one of the best minor league parks in the land. In addition to a massive minor league stadium with a capacity just shy of 10,000, the ballpark is also home to the Freight House District, a stadium-side entertainment hub, for pre-game, post-game, and any time good times.

19. You're Gonna Wanna Hop On The Street Food Bandwagon



Source: Reno Street Food via Facebook

Has there been any better revolution in American history than the food truck revolution? (Well, *maybe* the actual American Revolution.) Reno Street Food, held every Friday from late May to early October, celebrates the rise of American street food with 20 of the area's best artisanal food trucks, live tunes, and craft beer. Or, pretty much the best three things in the world, all at once.

20. “Reno 911!” Is An Awesome Show And (Surprise!) A Total Work Of Fiction



Source: Reno 911 via Facebook

Outside of the notorious arch and slogan, in the 21st century the thing Reno is probably best known for is the Comedy Central show “Reno 911!” which ran from 2003 to 2009.

It wasn’t necessarily the PR Reno wanted, since it didn’t portray the city in the most glamorous light, but if you’re moving to the area, rest easy. The show was shot in Southern California, and Reno is a lot of things that the show is not, namely, very, very pretty.

21. Everyone And Johnny Cash Loves To Write Songs About Reno



Source: Giphy

Johnny Cash famously shot a man in Reno just to watch him die—seems a little cold, but we’ll give the Man in Black a one-time pass. Bruce Springsteen and Dottie West also have their own takes on the city, and the Grateful Dead name-check it at the beginning of “Friend of the Devil.” There’s just something about a frontier mining town turned gambling and entertainment hub that songwriters can’t resist.

22. Skip The 3D Movie And Watch The Sunset Instead



Source: Flickr user Andrew

Seriously, Reno might have the best sunsets in America. The city sits in a desert valley between the Sierra Nevadas, making dusk skies light up like a Christmas tree. Sunrises are great too, although much more difficult to be awake for.

23. Reno Might Be Known For Gambling, But It Was Built On Mining



Source: Flickr user Rick Cooper

Most people think of Reno as a gambling town, but it's worth noting that the city has much more humble, blue-collar beginnings. Gold and silver found in the area led to a good ol' fashioned mining rush during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The city boomed further as a halfway railroad stop between Salt Lake City and Sacramento. It only became a major gaming center when the state legalized gambling in 1931.

24. These Days “Heading to Reno” Doesn’t Always Mean “Getting A Divorce”



Source: Giphy

Mining, railroads, gambling and divorce are the four cornerstones that built Reno. Due to the states lax divorce laws during the earlier half of the 20th century, Reno became the divorce capital of the country.

Other states have since caught up, but the Denver punk rock band Reno Divorce pays tribute to Reno’s bygone industry.

25. Ghost Towns. Ghost Towns Everywhere



Source: TheConduqtor via Wikimedia Commons

The temporary, boom-and-bust nature of the mining biz created a lot of ghost towns around Reno. Virginia City, once home to 25,000, now has under one thousand residents. Other cities haven't even been that lucky, and today only exist as one or two broken down buildings.

26. Reno's The Biggest Little Theater City In America



Source: Bruka Theatre of the Sierra via Facebook

Reno isn't known nationwide for a booming theater scene, but there's a good chance that will be changing soon. With the innovative Good Luck Macbeth Theatre Co., the boundary-pushing blackbox Bruka Theatre, and Reno Little Theater, which has been in biz since 1935, Reno might just be the best little theater city in America.

27. That Building That Looks Like Part Of Epcot? It Hosts The Best Shows In Town



Source: Facebook user Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts

Up and running since 1967, Reno's Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts has become a local landmark, equally for looking like a distant relative of the Epcot ball and being the premiere performing arts center in town. The local architectural and cultural landmark hosts travelling Broadway shows and serves as the home base for the Reno Philharmonic.