

# Travel



**LOW-COST airline**  
Ryanair is introducing a new route from Liverpool for summer 2020 – flying twice weekly to Zdar in Croatia from May. Flights are on sale in May and June from £21.99. To book, go to ryanair.com.



**£1,000**

**SPAIN & PORTUGAL** cruise (14nts, f/b, inside cabin) Southampton, £799, Feb 2, pocruises.com

**KOH SAMET** (7nts, b&b, 4\*) Heathrow, £919, Jan 12, kenwoodtravel.co.uk

**£750**

**DUBAI** (6nts, b&b, 4\*) Manchester, £744, Jan 28, loveholidays.com

**MED CRUISE** (7nts, f/b, inside cabin) Heathrow, £636, Feb 1, iglucruise.com

**£500**

**MALTA** (3nts, b&b, 3\*) Gatwick, £254, Feb 4, travelrepublic.co.uk

**TOULOUSE** (3nts, b&b, 4\*) Gatwick, £233, Jan 10, lastminute.com

## My PERFECT day

By SOPHIE CASTELAIN, founder of holiable.com, a travel platform for eco-friendly travellers.

### MORNING

I'd start the day with a local, organic breakfast in my favourite Amsterdam hotel, then head to the metro to catch the E-boat for a cruise on the Amstel river.

### NOON

I would treat myself to a plant-based lunch in one of Paris's eco-friendly eateries, then I'd head off on a walk in the city's hidden streets and along the Seine.

### EVENING

After an eco-safari, which focus on sustainable tourism, I'd have a drink watching the sun go down over the South African bush in Kruger National Park. Then I'd head back to my bush camp hut with the rangers and fall asleep to the sounds of the wildlife.



Tell us your perfect day, email: [travel@people.co.uk](mailto:travel@people.co.uk)

## YOUR £ ABROAD

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Australian dollar | 1.89   |
| Bulgarian lev     | 2.30   |
| Canadian dollar   | 1.72   |
| Croatian kuna     | 8.75   |
| Czech koruna      | 29.94  |
| Egyptian pound    | 20.92  |
| Euro              | 1.18   |
| Hungarian forint  | 388.96 |
| NZ dollar         | 1.97   |
| Polish zloty      | 5.01   |
| S African rand    | 18.57  |
| Swiss franc       | 1.28   |
| Thai baht         | 39.38  |
| Turkish lira      | 7.73   |
| UAE dirham        | 4.79   |
| US dollar         | 1.30   |

These rates are an indication only.

# ET drive home



## Alien day trip uncovering Area 51

by **Chris Granet**

### NELLIS Bombing and Gunnery Range. No trespassing. Photography prohibited.

I looked at the signpost in the middle of the high desert scrubland with slight concern.

It seemed innocuous enough, but I knew just beyond was the infamous Area 51, the top secret US Air Force base at the heart of UFO folklore.

It's where conspiracy theories say alien bodies were taken after crashing at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

Where UFOs have allegedly been spotted overhead. Where people claim to have been abducted nearby and experimented on by aliens.

Yikes. What was I doing there under the bleaching sun in so remote and inhospitable a landscape?

An alien road trip, that's what. Instead of opting for the Grand Canyon or the like when escaping the excesses of Las Vegas, I decided to do something different. Something otherworldly. So instead took Route 375, AKA the Extraterrestrial Highway.

Starting less than two hours north of town, it's easily done as daytrip.

For once, jetlag was a good thing and got me out on Interstate 15 just before dawn, the neon oasis of Vegas quickly fading as I drove into the last of the night.

Day broke as I turned on to the

single-lane Route 93 and the rocky desert became visible.

It was immense. The mountains low and gnarly. The road skinny, empty. It seemed like I was already being taken to an alien world but then a beam of light and heat suddenly struck my car. Engulfing, dazzling.

Was I being abducted?? Unfortunately not. It was just the sun rising above the mountains.

The ET Highway starts at the ghost town of Crystal Springs.

Near the junction is the ET Fresh Jerky shop, a rickety old place selling alien-themed dried meat and souvenirs. Wonderfully random.

I sounded oh-so English as I greeted the lady working there. She stared at me as if I were an alien myself – then came out to stare some

more as I took photos of the UFO mural nearby.

At the start of the ET Highway, there's a much photographed road sign. I took a photo.

Just a bit further was the Alien Research Centre, a big hangar with an even bigger metal alien out front. What it researched, I don't know, but it had a great gift shop.

From there on, the highway was like a movie. Arrowing through giant valleys of cacti and scrub. Snaking over mountain passes, drifting on to high plains.

As the sun got higher, the horizon started shimmering. Tiny ground squirrels scurried across the road. Desert ravens swirled in the monstrous blue sky above.

I stopped several times to take in the magnificence of it all, before arriving at the remote, ramshackle hamlet of Rachel. It's as close as you

can get to Area 51. It's also home to the fantastically cheesy Little A'Le'Inn, the mecca for UFO-enthusiasts that was in the Simon Pegg alien movie Paul.

Apart from a mini flying saucer and a little green man, the inn was underwhelming from the outside.

But on the inside, it was a treasure trove of alien-themed paraphernalia, with the ceiling decorated in hundreds of dollar bills signed by tourists from around the world.

I stopped to eat and happily chat to the eccentric staff and clientele.

I then went out to explore dusty Rachel, slowly driving around the surreal cluster of low-slung houses. All windows were shuttered. No sign of life, human or alien.

Passing the last house, I clocked the no trespassing sign.

I obeyed. The men in black are always watching, apparently.

There are 12 rooms at the inn, if you want to stay and take your chances with the night.

But I decided to head back to Vegas, to the nocturnal life that's even more unearthly.

**FACTFILE:** London Heathrow to Las Vegas from £338 return. See [virginatlantic.com](http://virginatlantic.com) Car Hire from £30 per day. See [alamo.co.uk](http://alamo.co.uk)

For more info on Nevada, visit [travelnevada.com](http://travelnevada.com)

## TRAVEL TIPS

- **EXPLORE** the surreal Valley of Fire State Park the day before, then stay the night in a desert cabin at Windmill Ridge, Alamo, not far from the ET Highway.
- **STOP** at the Black Mailbox, about halfway to Rachel. It's the only sign of (human) life for miles and where tourists leave messages for aliens.
- **ON** the way back, visit the stunning Red Rock Canyon, just outside Vegas, and watch the sandstone peaks blaze in the setting sun.



CLOSE ENCOUNTER: Chris starts the trail