



2026

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Historic Railroad Trail

Nevada



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Just 30 miles from Las Vegas, near Boulder City, the gravel Historic Railroad Trail hugs the hills on the southern shoreline of vast Lake Mead. The 4.1-mile rail trail offers panoramic views of the manmade lake and snakes through five railroad tunnels on its way toward Hoover Dam. After the dam was completed in 1935, the railroad ceased operation, and in 1962 the tracks were removed; the trail opened in 1995.

About the Route

Access the trail's western endpoint at the Alan Bible Visitor Center in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (10 Lakeshore Rd, Boulder City), which also serves as a

trailhead for the River Mountains Loop Trail. From the shared trailhead, the River Mountains Loop Trail heads north around Lake Mead towards Boulder Beach and west towards Boulder City.

Heading east on the Historic Railroad Trail, trail users will experience 3.7 miles of desert terrain trail through the Hemenway Valley, where jackrabbits bound over washed-out gullies, bighorn sheep graze and the usual desert-dwelling snakes and lizards are at home. On the easy, wide path trail users will first pass through a high cut in the red, iron-rich volcanic rock. The cut was blasted out in 1930 for trains to pass through, carrying stone to the dam site.

As the trail curves toward the edge of Lake Mead, trail users will find themselves several hundred feet above the grey-blue water. While the descent isn't a sheer drop, take care as there is no guardrail. The lake views are spectacular all along the trail. Peaks of ancient volcanic mounds rise above the lake surface of this drowned valley like the humps of an aquatic beast. Far in the distance, the craggy, smoky blue South Virgin Mountains rise into the clouds.

Each of the five tunnels along the trail is 25 feet in diameter to accommodate the large equipment that passes through. In this unforgiving terrain, it's impressive to consider the sheer magnitude of force needed to blast the path. Pioneer trails from early dam construction parallel the trail intermittently.

Just before Tunnel 1, just down the ravine to the right, there are concrete plugs taken from Hoover Dam to install turbines. Trail users will come across the first and second tunnels in quick succession, and their dark interiors provide a cool respite from the desert sun. (The Lake Mead National Recreation Area discourages hikers on any of its trails in the summer months but fall and winter are prime touring seasons.)

Passing through Tunnel 2, notice that the ceiling and



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States: Nevada

Counties: Clark

Length: 4.1miles

Trail end points: Pacifica Way & Waters Edge
Dr (Boulder City) to Hoover Dam Visitor Center
(81 Hoover Dam Access Rd, Boulder City)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Horseback Riding, Mountain
Biking, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible

Parking & Trail Access

The Historic Railroad Trail runs between the River Mountains Loop Trail and Hoover Dam Access Rd., where parking is available.

Parking is also available at:

- 10 Lakeshore Rd. (Boulder City)

Please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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