

Rachel, Nevada, is the last stop before reaching Area 51 base

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Image 1. The sign for the Little A'Le'Inn with a flying saucer hanging from a tow truck in Rachel, Nevada, near Area 51. Photo: Getty

Right away, you can tell this is no ordinary diner. For starters, there's a grim-faced little green man holding a sign saying "Welcome Earthlings."

You get the same feeling once you get inside the Little A'Le'Inn in Rachel, Nevada. Pictures of UFO sightings cover the walls and ceiling. So do masks of supposed aliens and military objects. If you're looking for alien central, surely this is it.

That's because this tiny town in central Nevada is closest to the U.S. Air Force base at Groom Lake —although it is known better by its other name: Area 51.

Alien Central

At the Little A'Le'Inn, you can order an Alien Burger and chat with the staff about their spooky sightings. You can also rent a room or camp out nearby. Then you can look over pictures claiming to show traces left by invisible visitors from outer space. There's also a 33-cent map you can buy that shows the best places to check out Area 51. Spring brings a rush of tourists. Among them on a

recent day were Reece D'Silva and Alexis Esparza. They are a couple from Las Vegas who took advantage of the sunny spring days to explore.

"We've lived here all of our lives and never made it up," D'Silva said. "We had some free time and the weather is perfect."

Adding To The Mystery

Area 51 has long simmered in the public consciousness. There have been movies about it, such as "Independence Day," as well as TV shows such as "The X-Files." The government does not discuss what really goes on at Area 51, and that has only added to the mystery. You can see it for yourself on a long, lonely drive through central Nevada on Route 375. It's called the Extraterrestrial Highway. "Extraterrestrial" is another name for "alien."

The drive has long been popular with tourists. Some people believe Area 51 is where the government stores crashed alien spaceships. The highway's getting new attention lately. In December, the U.S. government said it has a program that has spotted unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, for years. That does not mean the UFOs were space aliens. They are just unidentified, but some people believe aliens from other planets fly UFOs.

Visitors to the area report being buzzed by all manner of military planes and helicopters. Visiting the area near Area 51 is a weird experience. You reach it via a long drive down one of the straightest dirt roads ever made. The road then makes a few bends and drops into a small gully. Suddenly, large signs warn that you're approaching a U.S. Air Force base, but they don't say which one. The signs tell visitors not to take any photos of the cameras and other sensors in the area. Those cameras and sensors sit just across a line marked by razor wire. A paved road starts there as well.

No Photos Allowed

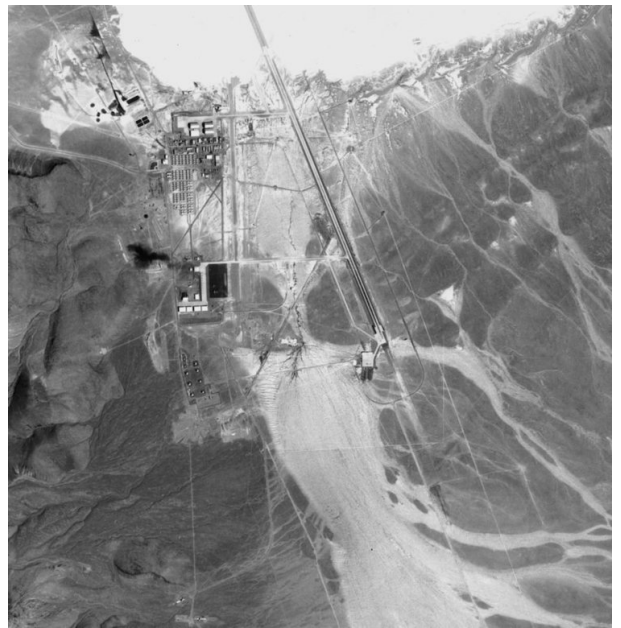
There's no obvious security. Up the hillside, you can see an unmarked white truck sitting above. It is probably staffed by security staff who don't like people taking photos. Visitors can't even approach the truck without crossing the base's fence line. Tourists are not welcome on the base.

D'Silva, who is in the U.S. Army, said he grew up hearing stories about Area 51. He persuaded his future wife to join him on an adventure before he had to move to another state. The two split an Alien Burger. Then they drove all the way to the Area 51 fence line to snap selfies.

"There's no aliens in there," D'Silva said confidently.

Esparza shot back: "You're awfully sure about that!"





Quiz

- 1 Select the sentence that shows the Air Force does not want tourists visiting Area 51.
- (A) Visiting the area near Area 51 is a weird experience.
 - (B) Those cameras and sensors sit just across a line marked by razor wire.
 - (C) Up the hillside, you can see an unmarked white truck sitting above.
 - (D) He persuaded his future wife to join him on an adventure before he had to move to another state.
- 2 Read the section "Alien Central." Which sentence from the section shows why D'Silva and Esparza decided to visit Area 51?
- (A) At the Little A'Le'Inn, you can order an Alien Burger and chat with the staff about their spooky sightings.
 - (B) Then you can look over pictures claiming to show traces left by invisible visitors from outer space.
 - (C) Spring brings a rush of tourists. Among them on a recent day were Reece D'Silva and Alexis Esparza.
 - (D) "We've lived here all of our lives and never made it up," D'Silva said. "We had some free time and the weather is perfect."
- 3 What effect did visiting Area 51 have on Reece D'Silva?
- (A) It caused him to get into a fight with his girlfriend.
 - (B) It made him confident that aliens were not behind the fences.
 - (C) It encouraged him to join the U.S. Army to be able to enter Area 51.
 - (D) It scared him into believing the government is hiding something.
- 4 According to the section "Adding To The Mystery," how do people get to Area 51?
- (A) They must join the U.S. Army or Air Force.
 - (B) They must drive through the Colorado mountains.
 - (C) They must drive down a long highway with few stops.
 - (D) They must convince a security guard to let them through the gates.