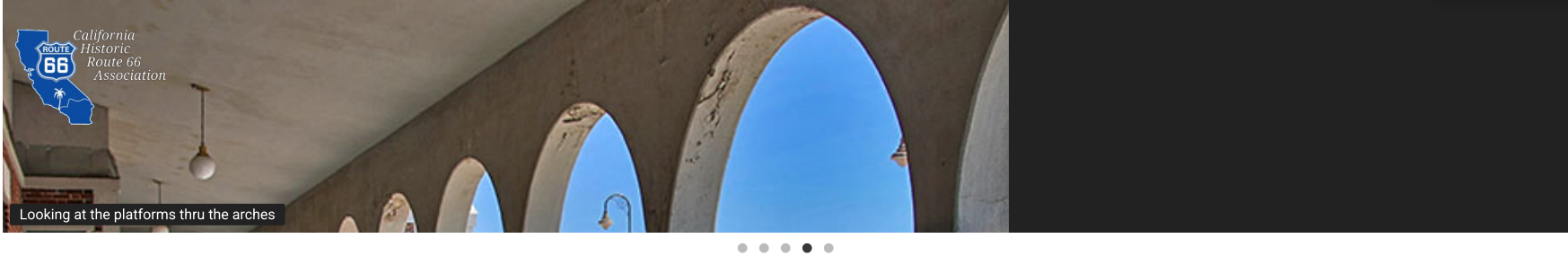




Harvey House Barstow

A stone's throw away from that popular historic road known as Route 66 and a little north of downtown Barstow lies one of the more historic gems that the Mojave Desert region has to offer – the Harvey House. Originally named Casa Del Desierto (meaning “House of the Desert”) when it first opened in 1911, this Harvey House was one of a network of restaurant-hotels built and operated by the Fred Harvey Company in conjunction with the Santa Fe Railroad. Casa Del Desierto was one of the crown jewels along the Santa Fe route.



Harvey Houses were built out of the necessity to feed railroad passengers on their long journeys across the USA. In the late 1800's, trains didn't have the ability to cook meals on board so the railroads built restaurants roughly 100 miles apart where passengers would disembark the trains to be fed and then continued their journey with a full stomach.

Fred Harvey began building his empire of restaurant-hotels after being awarded a contract by Santa Fe in 1878 and is credited with opening the first restaurant chain in the United States. Most of the Harvey Houses existed along Santa Fe's railroad network, mainly along its mainline between Chicago and California. Harvey's company was well-known for hiring young, single women from all over the country to work as waitresses and was the inspiration for the movie "The Harvey Girls" starring Judy Garland in 1946.

During the height of train travel popularity, roughly between the 1920's and 1940's, a passenger train stopped every 30 minutes at one of the eight platforms still visible in front of the Harvey House. Just like a modern airport hub, passengers riding trains coming from points east, mainly from Chicago, would have to change trains at the Harvey House to continue their journey to destinations such as San Diego, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Naturally, the same was true going the other direction.

Passengers entered the Harvey House through the main lobby and then chose to eat at one of the two dining rooms. The formal dining room, also known as the east-end ballroom, served breakfast, lunch and dinner. Back then, formal meant that men had to wear dinner jackets. If patrons did not have one, they could borrow one from a rack of jackets and then return it at the end of their meal. If you were not formally dressed, you could sit at a table but you wouldn't get any service.

The second dining room was known as the west-end dining room. It was less formal and there was no jacket required. It had an enclosed, semi-horseshoe shaped lunch counter that seated 50 people.

Both dining rooms were served by and connected to one kitchen located directly behind the lobby. This kitchen made its own ice cream and many other treats that couldn't be shipped in. It was a hive of activity as each dining room would typically serve about 150-200 people every 20 minutes.

Museums

Along with the Harvey House being a museum itself, there are two other museums located in the building.

On the north side of the building is the Route 66 Mother Road Museum. [Click here](#) to learn more about this museum for Route 66 travelers.

On the east side of the building is the Western American Railroad Museum. Inside the museum is a variety of railroading artifacts. Outside, you'll see the museum's outdoor exhibits next to the parking lot.

Hours

The Harvey House is open to the public Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm., and on Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please call to confirm.

The railroad and Route 66 museums are only open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The railroad museum is open 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Route 66 museum is open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.



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Mother Road Museum

Also located at the Harvey House is the Route 66 Mother Road Museum.

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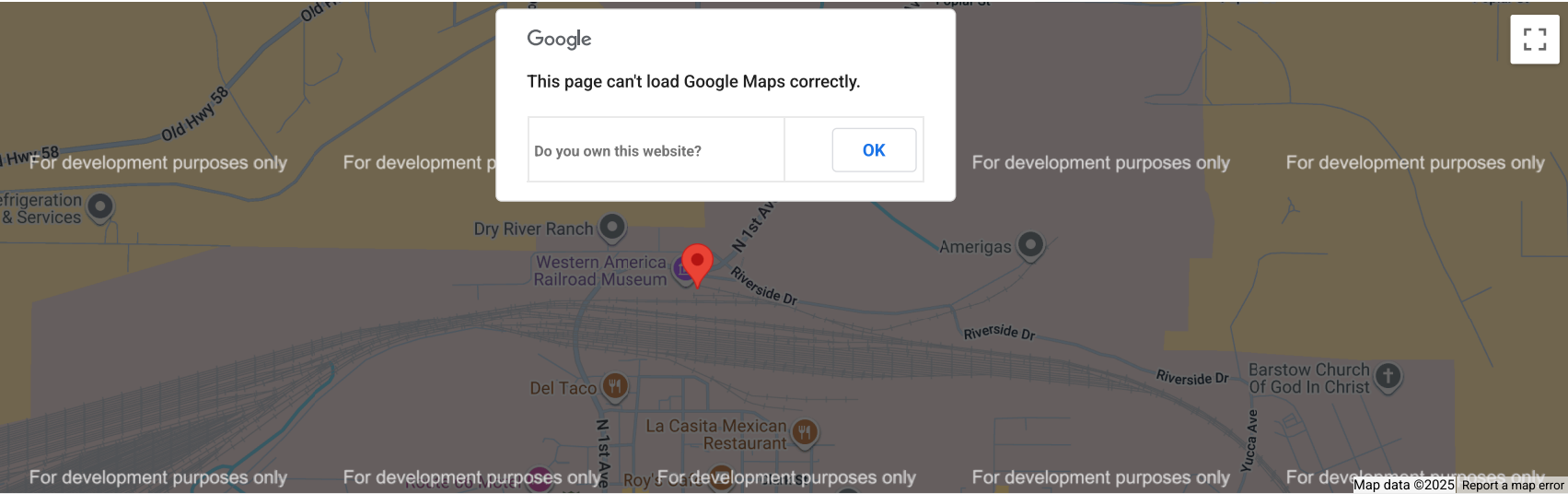
Getting There



To get to Barstow's Harvey House, take I-15 to the Barstow Road (Hwy 247) exit. Head north, down the hill, until Barstow Road ends into Main Street, which is Route 66. Turn left. You'll go through a few traffic lights as you pass through Barstow's old downtown. Turn right on First Avenue and head over the old steel bridge that crosses high above the many railroad tracks below you. You'll see the Harvey House on the right.

Whether you need a break from the drive to Las Vegas or are looking for a nifty day trip, we recommend a visit to the Harvey House. The best days to visit are Friday or Saturday as both museums and the Harvey House lobby are open on those days.

Map



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