



WEATHER

Tahoe weather is unique, even among ski resort areas. Firstly there are tremendous amounts of snow in comparison to other parts of the country. As of this writing in Mid-February Kirkwood has already had almost 400 inches. We are famous for our 'high moisture' content snow. That means wet in many cases. Therefore make sure you have the right gear. In Warm snow you tend to get very wet. Have a helmet, goggles, waterproof jacket, pants gloves, and bring a change of clothes. Don't ruin your skiing day because you forgot to prepare. When it isn't dumping, we actually have lots of sunny warm days. But also it's warm compared to other ski areas like Utah, Colorado, or Canada Dress appropriately and always takes sunscreen. Bring things you can put on or take off and put in your pocket like a hat, neck gaiter, or balaclava. Have clothes that have vents and zippers. Use wicking base layers. Use a hydration system (like CamelBak) to replace fluids.



You can watch the weather channel, or better still if you are in the area watch a local weather/ski forecast.



SNOW LEVEL

I love fresh snow, but sometimes it can be rainy, sleety or snowing at the same time. Find out what the snow level is, i.e. the elevation where it is snowing. For example this past weekend it snowed at 7800 feet. It would have been a poor choice to go to a low elevation ski area where it would be raining. Places like Kirkwood, Mt. Rose, and Heavenly are at high elevations and would have snow on these days. Choose your resorts wisely.



CALTRANS Road Conditions

The California Department of Transportation has a toll free phone number for road conditions 1 800 Gas Road (427-7623). This can be a useful tool for more than the obvious reasons.

When it's snowing, frequently check the usually traversed routes into the Sierras like highways 88(Kirkwood), 50(South Lake, Heavenly, Sierra-at-Tahoe), 80(North Lake Tahoe ski areas Alpine, Squaw, Northstar Sugar Bowl), 4 (Bear Valley), 108 (Dodge Ridge), 89, 267(Northstar). Even when there is a storm there are variations in where the snow is falling and in what quantity. If you know the geography or have a map you can deduce where the storm is tracking by checking this number. There are typical chain control areas (e.g. Twin Bridges to Myers on 50). Note if the chain controls are at a lower elevation. Therefore you have an indirect predictor of where the pow will be at.

WIND

Be aware that wind can close lifts and make for poor visibility. This makes skiing miserable. Some resorts are notorious for this. The upper portion of Squaw

Valley closes on wind hold regularly. Fortunately they have a giant lower area. Northstar and Sierra-at-Tahoe tend to be wind protected, but have relatively low elevations.

WAX

Did you wax your base, did you even think about it. When there is powder it is rarely necessary, but with warmer snow, like in Tahoe, it will optimize your fun. Especially you snowboarders out there, do you like 'cross country snowboarding'? Wax your gear, you will slide better. That means you are less tired, and that is a Safety issue. Waxes come for different temperatures, figure out which is most appropriate. Sliding better means more performance and fun. If you know the area, figure out where the flat spots and traverses are. Pick up speed. My philosophy Ride more...walk less.

RESORTS

We have plenty from the internationally famous Squaw Valley USA to the more obscure local places like Homewood. Room does not permit a full description of each. Look for a later article on this. Many have lodging right on site like Northstar, Kirkwood, Heavenly, and Squaw. What kind of skier are you? If it steep and double blacks: Squaw, Alpine, Heavenly, Sugar Bowl and Kirkwood are great. Mellow cruisers Northstar. And others. Views of the lake Heavenly Homewood, and Diamond Peak.

PARKING This is getting to be a bigger issue, with many resorts now charging for premium parking (closer in). Get there early; you may park feet away from the person who pays \$10. Also some places have strategic places to park (e.g. F&G area at Northstar, Near Subway lift at Alpine, Stagecoach at Heavenly). These neat spots save you a lot of walking and make your vehicle more accessible.

{They were kind of a secret till I spilled the beans!}

Deals go to sliding on the cheap (slidingonthecheap.com) they have the most extensive listing. Look on your own because there are always deals they don't list. For example Diamond Peak will sell you a ticket for \$25 if you have a pass elsewhere, and they did that on the holiday weekends too. There are promotions for Tahoe education and various causes. Test driving cars can get you free lift tickets too. For a cheap quick get -a -way try Donner Ski Ranch where \$10 gets you a midweek ticket. Alpine Meadows and Sugar Bowl, both great resorts have \$39 tickets this year (03-04), about \$20 less than the average for these fine ski areas.

LODGING

You can spend a bundle on a place to stay, or be on a budget. There is also a large variation in midweek pricing vs. Weekend. It's not unusual to see a \$30 deal on a motel Sunday through Thursday only to see it jacked up to \$90 on a busy weekend. The casinos are well aware of the weekend demand and price accordingly. A few alternatives to high priced lodging are:

*Go to Reno or Carson City

*Find a cheap motel that will negotiate the price when the vacancy rate is high.



- *Join a **SKI CLUB**. Many clubs either own cabins or lease them. You can usually get a pretty good rate, but you may be sharing a room, a couch, or whatever.
- **Ski Leases* are another alternative. Generally a group of people get together and rent a house for the whole winter. The shared expense can make it a good deal if you ski frequently. Many allow guests for a nominal fee.
- * Own a timeshare? You may be able to trade or use one in Tahoe cheap.
- *use a Motorhome, you have free parking at the casinos.
- *Camping . Am I crazy? There is great Spring skiing in Tahoe when the weather is quite pleasant and Ok for camping. Tahoe is loaded with campgrounds that open when the snow melts away. Generally this is April or later. There are even some free places if you know where to look.



NIGHTIFE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Wow, Tahoe has got lots. There's the casinos with big name performers and shows. But check out some other local joints like the Naughty Dawg in Tahoe City, Tahoe Brewing in Crystal Bay, Bar of America and Pastime Club in Truckee. Did you know Paul McCartney did an impromptu performance at the Truckee Hotel in 2003. Nevada sell liquor 24 hours, think you can do that in Utah? Pick up a copy of North Tahoe Weekly, Best Bets, Lake Tahoe Action, or some other free publications for more details. There is a lot going on in Reno constantly as well.



HOT SPRINGS

Yes there are hot springs not far from skiing. I am amazed at how few people who frequent Tahoe know about or go to these. There is nothing better after a great day of riding. **David Walleys** (Davidwalleys.com) is in Genoa, Nevada, just down the Kingsbury Grade from Heavenly. This first class place was established in the 1860s, has many pools and spa treatments available. A day pass is \$20. They also have beautiful, but not inexpensive, lodging.



Grover Hot Springs (http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=508) is a California State Park located near Markleville, about 45 minutes from South Lake Tahoe. They are open year round, have camping, and for a very nominal \$4 you can hang in the hot mineral pool and admire the 10,000 foot peaks

Squaw Valley, while not a hot spring, has a large pool and hot tub at their High Camp. This usually opens in Mid-late March. If you are bored you can also ice skate or bungee jump!!



THE BEACH

Skiing and beaches!! ,Yup, once the weather gets warm in April and May you can do both. Lake Tahoe has many wonderful beaches. The water is chilly, but the view is nice. Get a Tahoe guide. A few that I like are Sand Harbor, Camp Richardson, Kings Beach, Bliss, Speedboat, and Incline Village. You'll have to find the nude ones on your own (my lips are sealed). Go out and look at the night sky too!...beautiful.

Well I hope I have given you some great ideas on how to enjoy a wonderful beautiful place like Lake Tahoe. **So what are you waiting for go out and ski!**

