

# Opinion: How to have a great time on the North Shore

By Andy Wirth

With more than \$100 million invested in ongoing capital improvements, destination travelers to Lake Tahoe ski resorts can look forward to new chairlifts, on-mountain improvements, base area renovations and a variety of guest amenities – there’s no better time to book a ski vacation in Lake Tahoe than now. Of course, if you want to make the most of your ski vacation, there’s a lot to take into consideration. Here are a few suggestions on what to think about when planning your next Lake Tahoe ski vacation.

- **Get out and explore.** Whether you decide to stay for two days or six, I highly recommend taking the time to explore our mountain communities beyond the ski resorts. While every ski resort is proud of the resort experience that we have to offer, we also feel that there is great value added to the vacation experience when guests take the time to explore the surrounding attractions. Whether making the short drive to Tahoe City for truly stunning views of Lake Tahoe, or paying a visit to historic Truckee for an amazing dinner and night on the town, you’ll find some incredible mountain towns that you’ll be glad you didn’t miss.



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- **Give yourself enough time.** While it’s easily possible for

some travelers to get up to North Lake Tahoe and back in a day, your experience will be infinitely better if you plan to stay the night – or a few nights. This way, you will be able to get the full experience and enjoy all of the amazing activities, restaurants and après ski scenes that the area has to offer. You might be tempted to try to fit it all in – morning fresh tracks, afternoon ice-skating, night skiing – but remember to fit in some time to relax and be spontaneous.

- **There's no perfect formula.** Some groups will want to ski or ride from dawn until dusk every day of their ski vacation – others, not so much. If you're going with a larger group, be sure that you are staying somewhere where everyone will be able to pursue their favorite activities. If everyone in your group wants to ski or ride every day and call it an early night, a more back-to-the basics resort might be the ticket. If people in your party want to split their time on the hill and fit in some shopping, dining and ice skating, look for a larger resort that offers a wider variety of amenities.

- **Maximize your budget.** Ski resorts now work the same way as airlines – if you plan and buy early, you're going to save money. If you show up to the ticket window last minute, you can't expect the best deal. Many resorts including Squaw and Alpine offer discounts if you book lift tickets online three or more days in advance. If you're going to ski more than five days in the season (be it overall or just in one week), be sure to consider resorts' season pass deals. The same goes for lodging rates. Book early and take advantage of the best rates. Mid-week rates are usually the best and think about visiting during non-holiday, off-peak periods. Spring can be a great time to visit. Lake Tahoe is known for superior spring conditions – the sun almost always is shining and the calendar is chock full of amazing spring events.

- **There's a vacation for every budget.** If you love living in the lap of luxury, consider some of Lake Tahoe's most luxurious properties, including The Resort at Squaw Creek or

the Ritz Carlton Lake Tahoe. If you'd rather save your money for lift tickets and a few nights out on the town (or maybe a snowcat or snowmobiling adventure) there are plenty of other lodging properties in the area to fit every budget. Condo-style units such as The Village at Squaw Valley offer plush accommodations with incredible access to the slopes, as well as full kitchens and living areas so you can save some money by not eating out every night. Smaller hotels in Tahoe City and Truckee also offer highly affordable lodging, leaving the rest of your budget for the fun stuff. For help with finding the best fit for lodging accommodation, whether it is ski-in/ski-out, in historic Truckee or on the shores of Lake Tahoe, check with Squaw Valley Lake Tahoe Reservations – they can work with you to tailor your vacation by helping you decide the best lodging and activities to build your ultimate vacation.

- **It's easy to learn.** There isn't a single mountain in the North Lake Tahoe lineup that doesn't have an exceptional learn-to-ski and ride program. My suggestion: Bring your previously non-skiing friends, family or spouse, and have them all join you for a great ski vacation. The learn-to-ski and ride programs are affordable and provide a great experience. There's no reason for one person in your group to feel like they have to stay home or post up in the lodge all day. You'd be surprised how easy and inexpensive your experience can be by taking advantage of a learn-to-ski and ride program. Introduce someone new to the sport you love and you'll be giving them the best gift of all.

- **The most important aspect of the trip?** Bring your favorite people. Whether it's your family, your girlfriend or your long-lost college friends, pack your car full of the people that make you the happiest and your trip to the mountains will be truly unforgettable.

Be a part of all the excitement that is taking place. The time is now, and North Lake Tahoe is the place. Start planning your

ski vacation now so you can experience of one of the best mountain resort destinations in the United States.

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