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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



# Lake Tahoe Campgrounds

## **Lake Tahoe, 7 Days**

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** After Labor Day, the summer crowds at Tahoe begin to thin out and most campgrounds are open and ready for fall visitors. The weather is still warm and the nights are cool and perfect for curling up in a sleeping bag. Here are a few campgrounds close to the lake, and a few within several miles of the Tahoe area.

**contact:**

tel: 530-525-7232  
fax: 530-525-6730  
cal-parks.ca.gov

**location:**

Lake Tahoe CA 96143

## 1 Emerald Bay State Park

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

If you like snorkeling or diving, visit the sunken barge on the Eastern part of the Bay.

**DESCRIPTION:** Emerald Bay State Park is a state park located around Emerald Bay, a National Natural Landmark, at Lake Tahoe, California. The park is home to Eagle Falls and Vikingsholm, a 38-room mansion that is one of the finest examples of Scandinavian architecture in the western hemisphere.[citation needed] The park contains the only island in Lake Tahoe, Fannette Island. The park is accessible by State Route 89 near the southwest shore of the lake. Emerald Bay is one of Lake Tahoe's most photographed and popular locations. In 1969, Emerald Bay was recognized as a National Natural Landmark by the federal Department of the Interior. In 1994, California State Parks included the surrounding water of the bay as a part of the park, making Emerald Bay one of the first underwater parks of its type in the state, protecting the various wrecks and other items on the bay's bottom. The park is located directly south of D.L. Bliss State Park. Summer temperatures at the park range from the low 40 °F (4 °C) at night to mid-70 °F (25 °C) during the day, and during the winter visitors will usually experience temperatures between 20 and 40 °F (-7 and 4 °C). During harsh winters, the bay freezes over. The bay is about 1.7 miles (2.7 km) in length, and about two-thirds of a mile (1 km) wide at its widest point. © Wikipedia



**contact:**

tel: (530) 525-7232  
<http://www.parks.ca.gov/>

**location:**

Tahoma CA 96142

## 2 Sugar Pine Point Campground

**DESCRIPTION:** Sitting at an elevation of 6,000 feet, Sugar Pine Point Campground is located on the north shore of the Lower Bear River Reservoir. Visitors would be able to participate in activities such as boating, fishing, swimming, and scenic viewing. There is a store within 5 miles of the site. Rainbow and brown trout are stocked annually by California Department of Fish and Game in Lower Bear River Reservoir. Rainbow trout are stocked in Upper Bear River Reservoir. Lake trout have also been caught. On site facilities: 10 units, primitive toilets and picnic tables.



Miguel Vieira/Flickr

**contact:**

tel: 209-295-4251  
fax: 209-295-5998

**location:**

26820 Silver Drive  
Pioneer CA 95666

**3 Caples Lake Campground**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Caples Lake can get very windy at its high elevation. Boaters should be prepared for high waves.

**DESCRIPTION:** Sitting at the high elevation of 8,200 feet, the Caples Lake Campground is located adjacent to Highway 88, near to Kirkwood. In addition to offering camping facilities, the site provides close access to activities such as boating, fishing, swimming and hiking. There is also a local grocery store within five miles. Brook, brown, rainbow, and lake trout have been caught in Caples Lake. Tui chub also present. Not presently stocked. Although fishing is allowed year round, the lake is not accessible in the winter. On site facilities: 35 camping units ( 1 double ), vault toilets and drinking water.



**contact:**

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**location:**

26820 Silver Drive  
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**4 Kirkwood Lake Campground**

**DESCRIPTION:** Sitting at an elevation of 7,600 feet, the Kirkwood Lake Campground provides close access to Kirkwood Lake. Visitors would be able to participate in activities such as boating, fishing, swimming and picnicking. Additionally the site allows beautiful views of the area from the scenic vista. On site facilities: 12 camping units, drinking water, vault toilets and picnic tables.



jbbois/Flickr

**contact:**

tel: 209-295-4251  
fax: 209-295-5998

**location:**

26820 Silver Drive  
Pioneer CA 95666

**5 Mokelumne River Campground**

**DESCRIPTION:** Sitting at an elevation of 3,200 feet, Mokelumne River Campground offers semi-primitive camping with opportunities for fishing and swimming in the nearby water holes and river. On site facilities: 8 camping units ( semi-primitive ), vault toilets and picnic tables.



Tom Hilton/Flickr

**contact:**

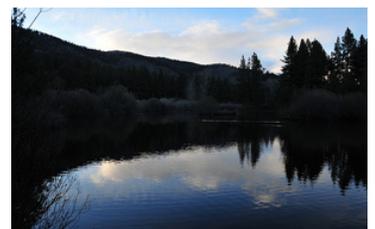
tel: 530-587-3558  
<http://www.campingguidenevada.com/cgnes/standardlisting.asp>

**location:**

Old Hwy 395  
Washoe Valley NV 89704

**6 Davis Creek Campground**

**DESCRIPTION:** Davies Creek Campground is located on a dirt road on the west side of Washoe Lake. This campground has a dozen or so sites and toilets on site. There is a pond a 1/4 mile away in Davis Creek Park. You can fish there in summer, or ice-skate when the pond freezes over in winter. Additionally in the park is a trailhead for the Ophir Creek Trail. This long and pretty strenuous hike gains approx. 4,000 feet to Mt. Rose Campground in the Tahoe Meadows area. From here you can connect to the Tahoe Rim Trail. Washoe Lake State Park is only 10 minutes away on the other side of Washoe Valley.



frompkin/Flickr

My List - continued...

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# Lake Tahoe Snapshot

## Local Info

Lake Tahoe is an original. The "Jewel of the Sierras" is the third deepest lake in the world at 1,645 feet, and its crystal blue water shines brightly in both winter and summer inviting visitors to relax and enjoy the beauty. The Lake Tahoe area was recently voted the best ski area in the United States by Orbitz. And the locals couldn't agree more.

Lake Tahoe straddles two states, Nevada and California. And each portion of the lake has a different vibe. Like the Native Americans who summered in the region and called it "big sky lake", we will come up from the Nevada side, drop into California and then back into Nevada.

### Nevada and Highway 50

For your first view of "The Lake", nothing is better than taking Highway 50 up from Carson City, the capital of Nevada. Even people who have lived here for years, still catch their breath when witnessing this blue beauty hovering among mountains and pine forests. The trip continues with a tour around the 72 miles of shoreline. Each place you go, you will not lose sight of the lake that Mark Twain called the "fairest picture the whole earth affords".

Traveling toward Stateline, and home to the gaming center of Tahoe you will drive passed the Logan Shoals Vista Point and through the tunnel at Cave Rock, which is sacred to the native tribes in the area. You will then pass by Zephyr Cove where you can camp, rent water and snow toys, eat at numerous restaurants or just enjoy one of the nicest beaches in the area. Zephyr Cove is also where you can catch a ride on the MS Dixie II, a full-size paddlewheeler (that Mark Twain would be proud of) or the Woodwind II, a catamaran that sails during the summer months. Stateline is home to Harrah's, Harvey's, Montbleau and the Horizon casino resorts. Here you can eat, game, relax in a spa, golf at the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course or enjoy the lake without having to leave the area.

### California and Highway 89 North

As you leave Stateline and head into California and South Lake Tahoe you will pass by Heavenly Village and Heavenly Ski Resort which has gondola with some

of the best views of the lake. Coming into South Lake Tahoe you will find numerous hotels, resorts, restaurants and other ways to enjoy Tahoe and the views.

South Lake Tahoe is known for the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Area and has several bike and pedestrian trails that run alongside the road. As you head out of SLT, onto Highway 89 North and into the Tahoe National Forest and Tahoe Basin, you drive through some of the more rugged and beautiful areas of the lake. Here you will find less restaurants, but beaches like Pope Beach and Baldwin Beach, camping or dining at Camp Richardson, the Mt. Tallac Trailhead and the Spring Creek Recreation Area. All this beauty leads up to Emerald Bay, at the southern tip of Tahoe. This deep green bay embraces the only island on the lake, Fannette Island. From here you can hike down to Vikingsholm Castle as well as get great views of both Emerald Bay and the nearby Cascade Lake. The Eagle Falls trailhead and access to the Desolation Wilderness is here as well. This area can be precarious during snowstorms and sometimes the road will be closed due to avalanches.

### California and Highway 28

As you continue up Highway 89 to the West Shore, you will come across D.L. Bliss State Park, Meek's Bay and campground, Sugar Pine Point State Park, Tahoma, Homewood Mountain Ski Resort and the tiny but local favorite, Granlibakken ski resort. Most of the West Shore is privately owned and the piers inviting you to take a stroll over the water are gated. However, this area also has several bike-friendly trails that run from here to Tahoe City and up to Alpine Meadows Ski Resort. Tahoe City is "at the Y" of Highway 89 and 28. Highway 89 heads north towards Truckee on Interstate 80 and passes by Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley USA, home of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games, and Highway 28 heads back toward Nevada. Tahoe City is a laid back town near the outlet of the Truckee River and offers dining and bars, rafting, golfing and shopping.

### Back to Nevada

Beyond Tahoe City, Tahoe Vista and Carnelian Bay, the turnoff for Highway 267 also goes to Truckee over the Brockway Summit and passes by Northstar-at-Tahoe

ski resort. If you stay on 28 you will head back into Nevada through Kings Beach which offers hotels, restaurants and a public beach. Highway 431, or the Mount Rose Highway, passes by the local favorites of Tahoe Meadows, the Mount Rose Summit trail, Mount Rose Ski Tahoe resort and into the Galena area of South Reno, home to Jack Nicklaus's Montreaux Golf and Country Club.

The quiet, laid back town of Incline Village has some of the local favorites in food and drink. Ski Diamond Peak, play a round of golf at the Incline Village Golf Course or access the lake at the Lake Tahoe State Park from Hidden Beach or Sand Harbor. Sand Harbor is the prettiest beach on the lake and home to the annual Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. Farther along the road you will see a parking area for Secret Harbor, a clothing-optional beach about a mile hike from the road.

This is near the end of your circle of Tahoe. You can drive back down Highway 50 to Carson City which connects along Highway 395 to Reno and Sparks, or you can take the loop again! Lake Tahoe is big and full of out-of-the-way treats. It might be best to take the lake in sections. But after your first visit, you are bound to come back and join the locals in helping to "Keep Tahoe Blue."  
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## Fun Facts

1. Donner Pass and Donner Lake are named after the ill-fated Donner Party. This group of settlers attempted to cross the mountains in the winter of 1846-47. Most of them were trapped by the snow and several of them resorted to cannibalism to survive.
2. Strange Fact: Truckee, California often registers the lowest temperature in the nation, but not during the winter season. During the spring/summer seasons of 1991, 1993 and 1994, Truckee claimed the honor of coldest spot in the nation, excluding Alaska.
3. The deepest snowpack recorded at Tahoe was over 30 feet deep in 1890.
4. Interesting Fact: If Lake Tahoe was tipped over, the water would cover California to a depth of fourteen and a half inches.

## Lake Tahoe Snapshot continued

5. Weird Fact: Many drowning victims are never recovered from Lake Tahoe. The cold water at lower depths preserves the bodies and prevents the formation of gases that would otherwise float them to the surface.

6. Interesting Fact: As an "interstate navigable waterway," Lake Tahoe is protected by the U. S. Coast Guard and

is reputed to be the most desirable Coast Guard duty station in the world.

7. Tahoe has nine mountains with peaks over 10,000 feet including Mt. Rose, Jobs Peak and Freel Peak.

8. The Tahoe area averages more than 300 days of sun each year.

9. Tahoe has 18 alpine and cross country ski resorts and over 50 championship golf courses.

10. Random Fact: Virginia City is known as "The Liveliest Ghost Town in the West."

11. The floor of the Tahoe basin (the bottom the lake) is near the 4,580 foot elevation, lower than the surface of the Carson Valley to the east.

12. Fun Fact: Sixty three streams flow into Lake Tahoe.

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