

Tempting Lake Tahoe

Beautiful water, exciting adventures and stellar views make this two-state gem a must-visit destination

BY SARAH SEKULA

My first trip to Lake Tahoe was in grade school. I was mesmerized by the two-story cabin we stayed in and the crawdads my friend had placed in a bucket of water by the front door. Of course, the lake itself is firmly imprinted in my memory. It was summertime and we paddled around in an inflatable boat, made sandcastles on shore and hiked to a meadow where there was still enough snow for a game of snowball baseball.

“We are a mecca for the outdoor enthusiast,” says 34-year-old Jessica Howitt, who is co-owner of stand-up paddleboard rental company **SUP Tahoe** and **Pine Nut Cycle Cafe**, and has lived in the region locals simply call Tahoe almost her entire life.

Your biggest problem when visiting Tahoe — which straddles the California-Nevada border — might be that there is too much to do.

First things first, though. Check into the **Edgewood Tahoe Resort**, a five-star retreat on the shores of Lake Tahoe. Prep your muscles for adventure with a deep-tissue massage at the spa and pampering at the RAH Beauty Bar. Spend time at a morning yoga session and end the day noshing on s'mores (with gourmet marshmallows, of course) by the fire. Fuel up at one of three on-site restaurants for seasonal fare and creative cocktails.

When you are ready to venture out, explore the lake first. As North America's largest alpine lake, it's the star of the show. Get to know the stunning body of water with **Clearly Tahoe**, a

company that takes guests on shoreline tours via clear-bottom kayaks. Its explorer excursion departs from South Lake Tahoe and includes kayaking and a boat cruise.

“Lake Tahoe is one of the most extraordinary places I've ever seen,” says 20-year Tahoe resident Abram Teter, a wood carver and crystal hunter who finds amethyst and smoky quartz in the Tahoe mountains. “There are massive pines, open granite faces and

sweeping panoramic views, all with the most pristine blue lake in the background.”

You can get an amazing aerial view on a 2.4-mile ride on the gondola at **Heavenly Ski Resort**, which is so expansive that its property extends into California and Nevada.

Explore the perimeter of the lake with an e-bike rental from Pine Nut Cycle Cafe. Here, you can grab a cold brew or fresh juice and hit the trails. “Tahoe is an epicenter for biking,” Howitt says. “From paved bike paths that wind through the forest

along the south shore's best beaches to some of the best mountain biking trails in North America.”

Tahoe East Shore Trail is paved, has convenient parking and gives you the opportunity to stop at several beaches. The next morning (when conditions are typically glassy), spend more time paddleboarding on the lake. The **Lake Tahoe Water Trail** has 72 miles of clearly marked water routes along the shoreline.

SOUTH SIDE DELIGHTS

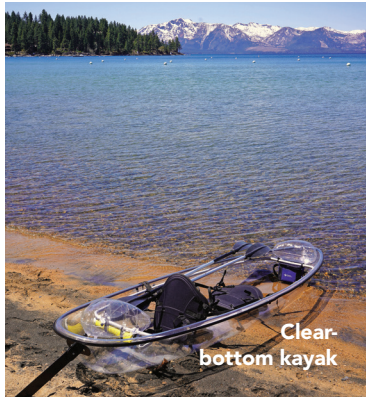
There are two different vibes in Tahoe. “South Lake Tahoe is a bit more lively with >



Heavenly Ski Resort gondola



Kayaking

Edgewood
Tahoe ResortClear-
bottom kayak

E-bikes

more night life and restaurants; the north is a bit more quiet,” Howitt says. “The south shore offers more sandy beaches than any other side of the lake. Also, **Baldwin Beach** is on a meadow and offers vast views of **Mount Tallac** and other mountains.” It also is a great launch point for those who choose to paddle to **Emerald Bay State Park**. It takes one to two hours to get to the **Tea House**, the remains of a miniature castle on **Fannette Island**. “I prefer the south shore because it seems more mellow and laid back, although ironically it has the casinos,” says Teter. “North Lake has more of an old-school saloon vibe.”

Explore all sides by driving the 72-mile road that hugs the shoreline. Allow for at least three hours to drive around the lake, so you can leisurely stop and snap photos.

Next, make your way toward the west shore, where Howitt says you'll get summer camp vibes thanks to rustic cabins, markets and buoy fields with boats.

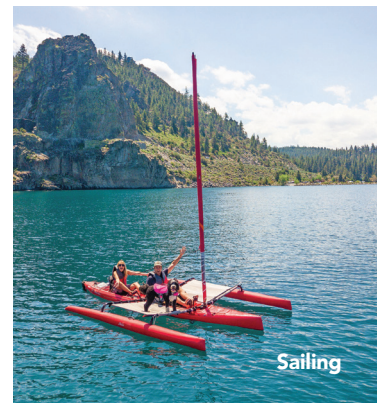
NORTH SIDE EXCITES

Settle down in North Lake Tahoe for a few nights and check into an **East West Hospitality** vacation rental in the **Old Greenwood** community, which is scenic and secluded with 600 acres of pine trees and hills. The luxe cabins, townhomes and villas have upgraded kitchens, spacious bedrooms, gas fireplaces and washers and dryers. This area is also close to the gondola, shopping and **The Pavilion**, which includes pools, hot tubs, gym, spa, bar/grille, tennis courts and access to the Jack Nicklaus-designed **Old Greenwood Golf Course**.

Next make your way to **Tahoe City** where “you will drive over the dam that feeds the Truckee River, a great place for slow rafting through a beautiful meadow,” Howitt says. “Making your way around you will get to the east shore, perhaps the most iconic and photographed portion of the lake.”

On the way back to the south shore, you'll see **Cave Rock**. Worthy of a pit stop, it typically takes 15 minutes to hike with a steep scramble at the top. The photogenic rock structure dates back 3 million years and is considered sacred to the Washoe Tribe.

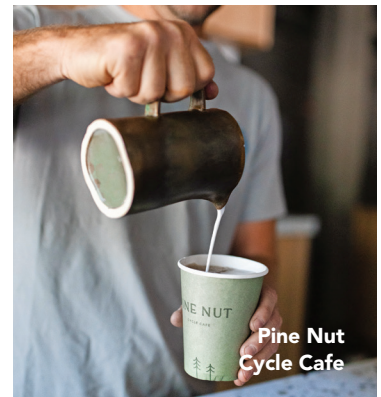
There is no shortage of places to end your day with a picturesque sunset, including **Emerald Bay State Park**, **Sand Harbor** in **Lake Tahoe State Park**, **Baldwin Beach** and **Pope Beach**. ■

Stand-up
paddleboarding

Sailing



Hiking

Pine Nut
Cycle Cafe