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PICTURE-POSTCARD BEAUTY: GOLFING AROUND LAKE TAHOE

By Randy O. Williams



Tahoe wide shot

Straddling the border of California and Nevada, Lake Tahoe is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and is widely considered one of the most beautiful places in the United States.

And what surrounds the largest alpine lake in North America (over 6,000 feet in elevation, it is 22 miles long, 12 miles wide, with a

surface area of 193 sq. miles) are some of the best high-country golf outings you can find. One of the best is Old Greenwood.

(<https://www.tahoemountainclub.com/golf/old-greenwood/>)

Part of the Tahoe Mountain Club, Old Greenwood features some amazing accommodations right on the Jack

Nicklaus-designed golf course. Sprinkled among the pines the cottages are spacious two and three-bedroom options with a fully equipped kitchen and while you're guest is enjoying a drink in the private hot tub watching the next foursome go down the fairway, you're manning the grill preparing lunch. And in between rounds you are within walking distance to swimming, pickleball,



Cottage Old Greenwood Tahoe

Part of the Tahoe Mountain Club, Old Greenwood features some amazing accommodations right on the Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course.

tennis, a gym, and access to exclusive dining experiences plus hiking trails.

Just about a three-wood and wedge from your private home is the trail you came for. And the experience of playing the Golden Bear's course will not disappoint.

What you'll experience on the par 72, 7,518-yard Signature course is navigating rolling hills, numerous bunkers, and large greens at the storied and challenging Old Greenwood.

And there are plenty of fine courses nearby to test your game including: Gray's Crossing, Martis Camp, Lahontan, Clear Creek as well as Edgewood (host of the annual American Century Celebrity Golf Championship).

Up at Incline Village you'll be able to access two popular courses - the Championship and the Mountain tracks. The latter is the highest elevation short course in Nevada. Combining brilliant scenery with demanding golf action, the Championship Course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and renovated by Kyle Phillips, is known for its tight fairways and tremendous views, but with a slope rating that tops 140 it is also one of the area's toughest tests.

Another tough test, Schaffer's Mill, a par 71 course that plays to over 7,000 yards, debuted in 2008 to immediate acclaim, being named the #1 New Private Club in California and

among the Top 10 New Clubs in the Country by Golfweek magazine. With the front nine designed by former US Open winner Johnny Miller and the back nine by John Harbottle III and set between historic Truckee and stunning Lake Tahoe, one of the reasons for its success is that it offers quite a varied experience.

The landscape is varied, offering a meadow nine accented with pine forests, lakes, and streams and a mountain nine with rocky outcroppings and challenging elevation changes (up to 400 feet, with magnificent 360° views of the Martis Valley, Lookout Mountain, and the Carson Range) as well as tight fairways and several water hazards. Small greens and strategically placed bunkers make shot placement essential for optimum scoring.

Kevin Mathis, the Director of Golf, offers advice on how to play the course.

"There's definitely places you don't want to hit it and places you don't want to miss, both on the fairways and greens. So, with the green speeds (usually between 12 and 12 1/2) and undulations, course management becomes really important," said Mathis, who added, "Like many courses, hitting it short is your



Man golfing

best bet. Most of our bunkers are mid to back of green and greens slope back to front, so leaving it a bit short is your best option, generally-speaking."

There's no shortage of other outdoor activities here either. So, in between rounds there plenty of include hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Of course, you can lie along the sandy south shore beach of the lake and soak in the sun. Most visitors (and locals) partake in one of the many water sports such as waterskiing sailing, fishing, powerboating, kayaking, parasailing, jetskiing, paddleboarding, wakeboarding and even scuba diving.



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Kevin Mathis, the Director of Golf

And of course in the winter, Lake Tahoe has world class skiing and one place that is home to both golf and skiing is Northstar California (<https://www.northstarcalifornia.com/explore-the-resort/activities-and-events/golf.aspx>)

golf.aspx)

With an array of conveniently located condos and hotel rooms to choose from you're never very far from ski lifts, snowboard action, snowshoeing and cross- country skiing and

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Skier at Heavenly Mountain

for the golfer, the first tee is just a two-minute drive down from the main village. The par 72 resort course blends in well with the rugged, wooded terrain of Tahoe. The front nine plays through a scenic, rolling valley while the back nine plays through the towering pines of the forest.

Speaking of forest, a must-play before Tahoe goes into Golf Hibernation is the Grizzly Ranch Golf Club. It both a beast and a gem.

Less than an hour's drive north of Truckee, the semi-private, par 72, 7,411-yard course is surrounded by over a million acres of national and state forest. The terrain is mountainous with dramatic elevation

changes and numerous valleys lined with trees. It has a slope of 140 and 74.9 rating. A tough challenge from designer Bob Kupp, yet it has five sets of tees to accommodate every level of player. In 2021 it was voted in Top Ten Public Golf Courses in California by Golf Digest.

Compared to most golf meccas in California like Monterey, the San Francisco Bay Area and Palm Springs, Lake Tahoe may have a comparatively short season, but it is a sweet one. **GP**

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Bridge Meadow