

LAKE TAHOE DRIVING TOUR



With 72 miles of shoreline, Lake Tahoe is an enormous lake, so your drive can last anywhere from 2 hours to the better part of the day depending on your route and how much you get out of your car. We recommend a clockwise route so you are in the lane closest to the lake. Starting from Black Bear Inn, turn left onto Ski Run and left onto Lake Tahoe Blvd. Continue to the “Y” where Hwy 50 and Hwy 89 meet, and turn right onto Hwy 89.

Just past **Camp Richardson**, the first stop is the **Tallac Historic Site** ①, a cluster of 100-year-old mansions that provide a fascinating glimpse into Tahoe’s past. Pull in where you see the sign for the **Stream Profile Chamber**. Throughout the summer the **Valhalla Boathouse** showcases music events. For easy hiking, there’s a nice, flat dirt path through the trees leading to the beach and a separate asphalt walking path that starts at the Nature Center and goes through the meadow to the Stream Profile Chamber at Taylor Creek.

From here the highway winds north until you reach a stretch where **Cascade Lake** is on the left and **Emerald Bay** ② on the right. Do not attempt to stop here. Emerald Bay Lookout (just around the curve) is a spectacular picture-taking spot. This Bay is home to the only island in Lake Tahoe. A second parking lot is further down on the left side of the road. From there, it’s a short, steep .25-mile hike to a footbridge above **Eagle Falls**. Then it’s about a mile farther up to **Eagle Lake**. The third parking lot is on the right side and includes the trailhead to **Vikingsholm**, a Scandinavian-style mansion built in 1929 by Lora Knight. Vikingsholm is located at the apex of Emerald Bay, down a 1-mile trail, and tours are available in warmer months.

Continuing north 2 more miles is **D. L. Bliss State Park** ③, with miles of moderate hiking trails, including one along the shoreline that leads all the way back to Emerald Bay. This is one of the best parks for lake-view hiking.

Sugar Pine State Park, another 7 miles, is Tahoe’s largest park and home to the historic **Ehrman Mansion**.

Continuing north, **Sunnyside** ④ is a great place to stop for a nice lunch on Tahoe’s largest lakeside deck. A little further on, on your left is tiny Girasole, your first chance for shopping since leaving the South Shore. Just a bit further, check out the enormous trout at **Fanny Bridge** which overlooks the dam for the lake’s only outlet: the **Truckee River**. (Interestingly, the water that exits the lake never makes it to the ocean; it flows through the towns of

Truckee and Reno, continues to Pyramid Lake and eventually empties into the Nevada desert.) Now that you’ve crossed the bridge you are in **Tahoe City**, a beautiful little town with shops, restaurants and a lakefront park. Don’t miss The Boatworks. It’s a little hard to spot from the road, but it houses several nice shops.

To visit **Alpine Meadows, Squaw Valley** ⑤ and **Truckee**, continue north on Hwy 89. Squaw’s cable car will drop you off near the top of the mountain where you will find hiking trails and a restaurant.

Truckee is a charming little railroad town with an interesting history. To visit **Donner Memorial State Park** ⑥ and **Emigrant Museum**, continue north on Hwy 89, go under Interstate 80, turn left at the light onto Donner Pass Road and go about 1 mile. A monument to the brave western pioneers stands atop a 22-foot base to indicate the depth of the snow the Donner Party faced during the brutal winter of 1846-47. To visit old downtown Truckee, backtrack east on Donner Road and you’ll come right to it. The one block area is comprised of 150-year-old buildings that have been refurbished and now are home to shops, galleries and restaurants.

Leave Truckee on Hwy 267. It will wind southward and drop you off in Kings Beach. Turn left on Hwy 28 to continue your driving trip around the lake. As you cross the state line into Nevada you will see the old casinos from the 1950s including the **Cal-Neva Resort**, once owned by Frank Sinatra.

Your journey next takes you through **Incline Village**. Take a right on Lakeshore Blvd to view the most elegant estates. You will also pass Lone Eagle Grill, a wonderful place for a lake-side drink or meal.

The east shore of the lake is largely undeveloped and very scenic. Drive about 4 miles south of Incline Village to **Sand Harbor** ⑦, one of the lake’s best-loved beaches, and home to the very popular Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival every summer.

Hwy 28 ends at Hwy 50; turn right onto 50. You will pass **Logan Shoals** ⑧ scenic overlook, one of many spots to take in a view of spectacular Lake Tahoe. Further along is an outcropping called **Cave Rock** where the highway passes through 75 feet of solid stone, notable as one of only two tunnels in the entire state. Soon you’ll find yourself in **Stateline**, Nevada, home to the high rise casinos of the 1970s, and just across the Stateline traffic light you are back at your original starting point in **South Lake Tahoe**.

LAKE TAHOE DRIVING TOUR

