

examiner.com

Snowmageddon in Tahoe? Just keep the faith for a week or two



Photo by Ben Davidson/www.bendavidsonphoto.com



Ben Davidson
SF Active Travel Examiner

Related Photo:



February 21, 2014

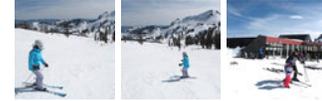
It's not quite Armageddon, or better yet "Snowmageddon", but it sure looks like it in the snow-deprived high Sierra mountains. I just returned from a quick winter break excursion to Northstar and Squaw Valley, where, despite the barren terrain leading up to the resorts, there's plenty of coverage on their runs for skiing and riding. But this is not the Tahoe that I've known and loved my entire life. There should be a thick blanket of snow coating the hills, meadows and peaks here this time of year. Clearly something seriously wrong with our West Coast winter climate,



Photo by Ben Davidson/www.bendavidsonphoto.com

and it's been that way for several seasons now.

View all
5 photos



The snow is, however, skiable and ranges from icy hard pack at the upper elevations to deep slush at the base areas. Find a zone that suits you and work it all day—you'll definitely have some fun and it's a great time for kids and adults to learn to ski.

Northstar

Northstar is featuring 19 lifts providing access to 72 trails, four terrain parks and 72 park features. Snowmaking is Northstar's *forte* and they're making snow on eight trails overnight.

Free mountain tours for intermediate and advanced skiers and snowboarders are offered Friday through Sunday at 10AM and 1PM. Get to know their mountain over the 1.5-to 2-hour tour. Tours meet at the the bottom of the Arrow Express chairlift at mid-mountain. There is signage directing you to the meeting point.

You can learn how to tele ski or hone your skills at Northstar California's weekly telemark instructional workshops. Telemark workshops cost \$82 for four hours of group instruction. Participants will need a downhill lift ticket or season pass to join the fun. Workshops will begin promptly at 10AM. at the Cross Country, Telemark & Snowshoe Center located at mid-mountain and will last until 3PM. with a one hour break for lunch. Telemark demo equipment is available for rent.

March 1 and 8, take in the beautiful Tahoe winter nights on snowshoes in a peaceful and serene mountain setting. All tours will begin at 5PM. and will depart from the Cross Country Ski, Telemark & Snowshoe Center. During the 2 to 2.5 hour tour your guides will lead you through some of their snowshoe trails. There will be two to three different routes ranging in difficulty and distance so you can chose the group you're most comfortable with. After conquering the terrain you'll returning to the Cross Country Ski, Telemark & Snowshoe Center for some live acoustic music, 'smores and hot chocolate around one of the base area's fire pits. After you've had time to relax the group will trek down the last 1/2 mile to the Village at Northstar where the tour will end. Dogs on leashes are welcome to join in the fun! The cost is \$49 per adult and \$34 per child ages 10 through 12. You are welcome to bring your own snowshoes, or there are snowshoes available for rent (\$17).

Squaw Valley

Get out early and enjoy two mountains with over 100 trails open and more than 35 park features and 6 jumps. And there's plenty of non-skiing activities at Squaw such as ice skating, aerial tram rides, snow tubing, dog sledding, snowshoeing and much more.

According to Squaw's weather **blog**, a storm system looks like it could push in toward the end of the month as a large area of low pressure approaches the West coast. This system could have much more moisture with it and potentially enough liquid for several feet of snow. So squint your eyes and pretend this is February not April, and be sure to slather on that sunscreen, drink plenty of water and dress in layers—you never know when a winter squall or mountain wind will appear out of nowhere, especially in this quirky, frustrating snow season.

