

Lake Tahoe Truckee Ski Trip February 27th-March 5th 2019

What an amazing week of skiing, eating, and relaxing in mountains covered with a record snowfall - 300 inches in February! We arrived at Reno Airport, nine from Chicago and one from Atlanta, miraculously on time and all together. We were ready to begin our 30-minute drive to Truckee in our 4x4 SUVs, only to discover that I-80 was closed to Truckee due to possible avalanches. We quickly reworked our plans. And after dinner at Ruby River, a local Reno restaurant, we checked in across the street at the Peppermill, a huge casino-resort. Our rooms were ersatz marble Riviera and we walked through room after room of slot machines and restaurants - Lake Shore Ski and Gambling Club anyone?



I-80 opened at 3 am. So, after breakfast we left our high-flying casino lifestyle for the higher and very snow-covered mountains of Truckee, CA. The drivers of hundreds of trucks lined the sides of the road while they put on required tire chains for Donner Pass. In addition, the interstate and smaller roads were lined with 8-foot walls of snow. We reached The Hampton Inn, our charming home base, perfectly located among the ski resorts and centers we planned to visit.

The skiing was fantastic. Northstar, a Vail resort, only 5 miles from the hotel, provided Marty, Anne, and Kathryn some great downhill skiing and amazing views of the mountains in the area. We never made it to the Northstar X-Country area because there were so many other great options. Tahoe-Donner Cross Country Ski Center (only 9 miles away) offered an extensive network of trails, delicious food, and a great après ski lounge and fireplace. Although some trails were closed because of too much snow, there were plenty of others to explore. Dick and Wendy enjoyed snowshoeing the Doggy Dipper and Downward Dog Trails, where after 3pm skiers are able to ski with their dogs. Meanwhile Kathy skied the challenging trail to the "Top", hitching a ride back on a snowmobile with a very cute ski patrol guy, while Anne demoed a wide variety of skis. Larry generously providing personalized instruction as he guided us along his favorite trails!

Meanwhile, the Michiganders (Jim and Kathy and Barb and Norm) explored Tahoe X-Country, another excellent ski area located along the perimeter of Lake Tahoe. They returned on Sunday to Tahoe X-Country to watch the start of the Sunday's annual Great Race (30 km) from Tahoe to Truckee.

Finally, when the snows let up for a day at the higher elevations, we enjoyed Royal Gorge Cross Country Ski Resort near Donner Pass, with amazing views, great snow conditions, and an extensive trail system that included a portion of the Emigrant Trail, the famous route traveled by those heading west in the 1840s. Indeed, the Donner Party came through this area in the winter of 1846-7, having decided to take a short-cut through these mountains. With the snow volume we had witnessed, we can only imagine what they encountered without the advantages of paved roads, snowplows, "Kind" bars, and waterproof ski gear. At the Donner Museum we were able to update our knowledge of the Donner story as well as the building of the transcontinental railroad.





At the end of each day of skiing, we gathered together to eat in some delightful restaurants: a local brewpub, an authentic quirky Mexican dive, a classy restaurant with an amazing live band (with a tuba), a Japanese Pan-Asian restaurant, and finally a highly rated upscale Italian place. We were delighted that Marty's brother and sister-in-law from Southern California joined us for many of our dinners!

As we finished our final day skiing at Royal Gorge, many of us checked in for our Southwest Airline flights while on the trail. However, we all lost our great boarding spots because our flight was cancelled last minute. Yikes! But we all got rebooked and arrived home with only an hour or two of extra delays. What a wonderful week it was of great skiing, camaraderie, and fun. Thank you, Larry, for setting up such a wonderful trip, and as Trip Leaders, Richard and I could not have imagined a more fun and resilient group of companions!!

