



Summer Has Arrived At The Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe

By Dana Rebmann

I'm a big fan of Lake Tahoe, but I don't get there for a visit as often as I should. I don't live very far – just a few hours drive. So what's my excuse? Truth be told, I don't like to be cold. I like to ski, but the thought of snow makes me cold before I ever set foot in the stuff and technically even have a chance to get cold. Some might say I'm a wimp, I prefer beach girl. Little did I realize I could get my sunshine fix in Tahoe during the summer.

For the most part, California and Nevada share bragging rights to Lake Tahoe. Two thirds is in California and one third in the state of Nevada. In the winter, the snow covered mountains make Lake Tahoe a sought after snow play destination. But in the summer, when the snow melts, it leaves behind the best of both worlds; mountains meet coast in a perfect getaway kind of way. A 72 mile scenic shoreline offers endless opportunities to get wet. There are mountains to climb, whether on foot, bike or a combination of the two. Put away the snow gear, we're talking picnic basket and sunscreen weather.

Winter and summer in Tahoe do have

one striking similarity. Location is key. Being in a central location makes doing it all not only possible, but enjoyable and even relaxing. The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe is situated mid-mountain in the Northstar California Ski Resort. During winter, this luxury resort features ski-in, ski-out access, in summer think hike and bike-in and hike and bike-out. Being active is easy here. Ski lifts turn into bike lifts come summer, offering riders and hikers access to miles of paths. Bikers looking to improve their skills can walk through the backyard to the Northstar Bike Academy and sign up for Bike 101. No gear required, your lesson comes with body armor, full face helmet and a half day bike rental. But if you've got your own bike and equipment, bring it along. The hotel is happy to store it in the evening and have it ready to go in the morning. Hikers not wanting to go it on their own can take advantage of the complimentary guided hikes offered on weekend mornings.

I should warn you, even with the best intentions, you may find it hard to leave The

Ritz-Carlton. This resort has a relaxing effect and something as simple sounding as hanging out in the backyard can give even the best summer adventure a run for its money.

I suspect the year-round heated pool was designed by someone who understands the joy that can come from an afternoon nap. It's not extravagant, with waterfalls and slides, but there is no need. Its mountainside setting helps make it quiet but yet still fun. There's a toy box loaded with pool goodies for kids and kids at heart. Two hot tubs, cabanas and a kids' pool offer a change of pace from the main pool. There's also an adults-only pool if that's more your speed. The main pool area shares the Ritz-Carlton's backyard with a bocce ball court, cornhole boards, giant-sized Jenga and an assortment of other lawn games.

Take a break from the sun and head inside for the "Behind the Scenes" Kitchen Tour. You get to see it all; the walk-ins,

monstrous batches of onion soup, the cotton candy machine (who knew?) and a custom-made smoker the Backyard Bar & BBQ was built around. The tour starts in the headlining restaurant Manzanita and wanders the numerous kitchens throughout the resort. Samples and stories, like things a pastry chef will do to keep his 30 year-old yeast starter going while he's on vacation, come with this not-to-be missed adventure.



The Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe has 170 guest rooms and suites with an impressive selection of amenities, top of my list being the gas fireplace in every room. Even in summer time, Tahoe gets chilly after the sun sets. Rooms are spacious, allowing a spot for two comfy chairs in front of the flames. Guest rooms also have floor-to-ceiling windows, so you can take in the view and enjoy fresh mountain air.

Eat dessert first. You're on vacation. If you doubt my advice, head to the outdoor fire pit at 5 o'clock when nightly Marshmology sessions begin. S'mores will never be the same after surrounding a toasted house made marshmallow with three choices of chocolate and graham crackers. Marshmallow flavors like caramel, mint and raspberry change nightly, leaving you no choice but to indulge every night of your sweet summer stay.

Dana's stay was hosted by The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe, but as always Dana's thoughts and opinions are her own.



