Panoramic views of Tahoe without a ton of exertion

By Kathryn Reed

Easy, fun, scenic. Scampering up Twin Peaks on snowshoes encompasses all of these elements.

It's one of those jaunts that is great on a day when you want a little exercise outdoors, but don't have a ton of time. Of course the snow conditions always play a role in how long an excursion will take.



Hiking Twin Peaks in South Lake Tahoe is worth the views. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But it's also one of those sojourns when on a warm day it's worth lingering a bit. The views are some of the best for so little effort. The top is an ideal lunch spot and place to sit with a book or just meditate a while, remembering why Lake Tahoe is so special.

Starting off from the Echo View Estates neighborhood off Sawmill Road in South Lake Tahoe, we follow the well-established trail.

Beneath us the snow is firm. It’s nice to have the claws on the shoes so we don’t slip. Although the route is not extremely steep, it is definitely uphill without any plateaus to change the pitch.

Crossing the terrain filled with conifers and boulders, we come to what is a fun 4-wheel drive road in the summer. Being a road, it’s wide enough to walk side-by-side.

Fully exposed, we welcome the sun on this chilly late afternoon January day. Turning around, the views of the Sierra unfold. The ridges look uninviting in some ways. Maybe it’s just me imagining how much more work they are to climb than this little hill that’s practically in my back yard.

In the summer we hit both peaks – it is called Twin Peaks, after all. On the other side is the tower with the warning light for aircraft. From there, is a view to Lake Tahoe Airport, Lake Tahoe Golf Course and Meyers. But it takes a bit of bushwhacking through the Manzanita in summer. That prospect sounds horrible on snowshoes; plus, not enough daylight exists to tempt it this day even if we wanted to.

Instead, we saunter up by the massive granite boulders to take in views of Lake Tahoe to our right. Angora Ridge with her barren trees from the 2007 fire by the same name is stark against the brilliant white snow. Mount Tallac hovers beyond.

It’s been awhile since I’ve been up here. I had forgotten the majestic views it offers. It won’t be long between this visit and my next one.

Getting there:

From the Y in South Lake Tahoe, continue on Lake Tahoe Boulevard. Turn left on Sawmill Road. Park immediately in the lot to the left.

Yes, I start off a neighborhood street, but I’m not going to

be responsible for cluttering up a residential neighborhood. And this way, you get even more exercise.

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