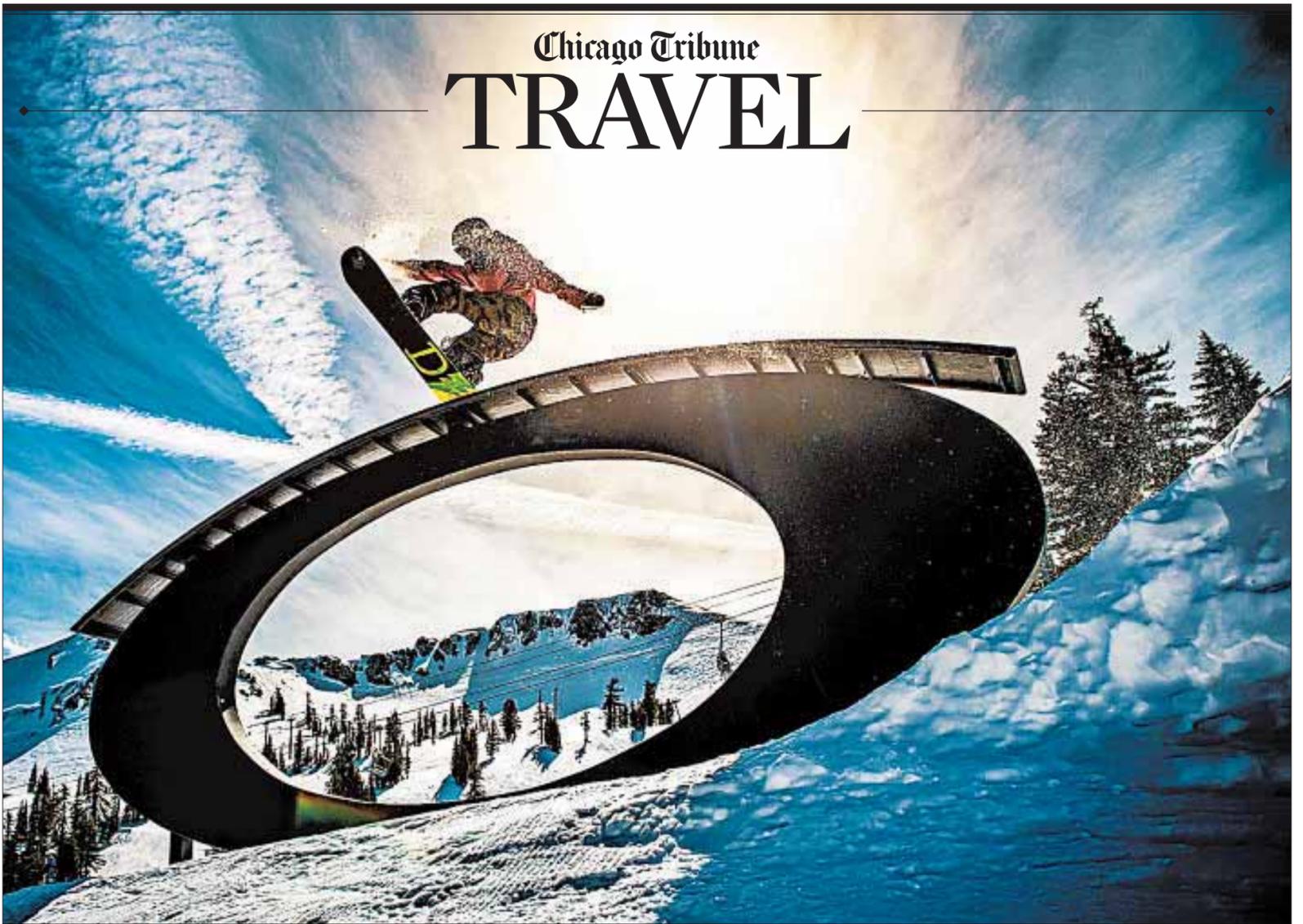


Where to ski within a (mostly) 3-hour drive

Page 7

In which state is Theodore Roosevelt National Park?
GeoQuiz answer, Page 3



MATT PALMER/SQUAW VALLEY ALPINE MEADOWS

A snowboarder catches some air at Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows. "Squaw Valley is one of the more difficult mountains in the region ... really in the world," said Olympian Julia Mancuso.

SKI ISSUE

THE PROS' SNOW IS AT LAKE TAHOE

Alpine area is a magnet for top athletes, lesser skiers alike

BY JAY GENTILE | Chicago Tribune

OLYMPIC VALLEY, Calif. — Lake Tahoe isn't just a ski destination. It's a way of life — one that attracts both powder-hungry tourists and professional athletes to this scenic area, anchored by an alpine lake straddling the California-Nevada state line.

"Your backyard is basically a giant playground," said Olympic gold medalist Julia Mancuso, who grew up in Squaw Valley (aka Olympic Valley), host of the 1960 Winter Games and home to what's arguably the best-known ski resort in Tahoe.

"Squaw Valley is one of the more difficult mountains in the region ... really in the world," said Mancuso, the country's most decorated female Olympic alpine skier. She used to pass the Olympic rings adorning the entrance of the ski area every day on her way to school. "I think that's why it really challenges athletes to be at the top of their sport, just because you have no other choice."

Those who aren't training for Olympic bling or a World Cup podium spot have no shortage of choices in Tahoe, whose north shore is accessible via a roughly 45-minute drive from Reno-Tahoe International Airport. With a dozen ski resorts carved into its rugged landscape at an elevation around 6,200 feet, North Lake Tahoe is home to one of the largest concentrations of ski resorts in North America.

Plenty of diverse, challenging terrain is here for those who want it. That, and the wide-open backcountry protected by strong environmental policies that limit development, help differentiate Tahoe from the pack, giving the place a wild feel that fuels the adventurous spirit amid the beaches, mountains and small towns that line its shores.

The snow here is something of local legend. Residents refer to last January

as "Januburied," thanks to three consecutive weeks of snowfall. North Lake Tahoe resorts recorded six of the 10 biggest snowfall totals in the U.S. last ski season, while Tahoe resorts also claimed seven of the largest single-day snow totals in the country. Squaw Valley stayed open until July 15, the latest closing date in its history, with some skiers even cruising down the mountain in bikinis. (Nude skiing is not out of the question here, so we are told.)

All of this attracts a bevy of pro skiers and athletes who live and train in the area, including Mancuso, World Cup downhill ski champion Travis Ganong, U.S. Ski Team member Lila Lapanja and Daron Rahlves, one of the most decorated U.S. downhillers in history.

"We're just dotted with athletes all over the lake," said Lapanja, who grew up at the base of Diamond Peak Ski Resort on the Nevada side of the lake. "You get this blend of nature, of color, of really good snow, of people who are pretty open. ... I really can't imagine living anywhere else."

Even after 22 years of calling this place home, the alpine ski racer, who's training for the 2018 Winter Games in South Korea, said she's still "blown away" every time she sees the massive lake, especially when gazing down on it from the top of the ski run at resorts like Diamond Peak.

"You have a really amazing view of the lake when you're skiing," Lapanja said. "It feels like you're skiing into this giant bowl of water."



SQUAW VALLEY ALPINE MEADOWS

The Village at Squaw Valley bustles at night with bars and restaurants.

For fellow Tahoe native Ganong, the work-life balance and laid-back vibe are a big part of the area's appeal.

"If it snows, I would cancel your meetings for the day," he said. "You can call in on a powder day and say, 'Hey, I'm gonna go ski for an hour or two, and your boss is gonna be like, 'All right, I'll meet you on the chair.'"

Ganong encourages visitors to get out and explore the backcountry too. "A lot of the marked trails on the trail map, that's just maybe 10 percent of the actual skiing here," he said. "The amazing skiing comes in the off-piste skiing in the bowls and the gulleys and the trees."

Rahlves, who calls the mountains "my church," moved to Tahoe from the Bay Area when he was 12.

"The mountains around here just kind of drag a lot of people out into 'em," he said.

Rahlves credited the combination of the weather ("It feels warm, even when it's wintertime") and the "free-spirited

people" with making Tahoe a magnet for pro athletes looking to hone their craft.

Non-Olympians will find lots of ways to stay occupied on and off the slopes. The lake is dotted with charming small towns, like mellow Kings Beach or the more European-style village of Tahoe City, that are ripe for exploration on a day when you might be nursing tired ski legs.

You can also try your hand at gambling before grabbing a steak dinner at old-school joints like former Sinatra hangout Crystal Bay Casino, or just relax with a drink at placid lakeshore spots like the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort in Incline Village, Nev.

In short, there's no wrong way to do Lake Tahoe. And that's its charm. "I don't think I've met one person that's ever visited that had something bad to say about Tahoe," Rahlves said. "They always want to come back."

Jay Gentile is a freelance writer.



GETTY

Scientists say climate change likely will lead to more air turbulence and bumpier flights in the coming years.

Buckle up for climate change, forecast warns

HealthDay

Airplane passengers around the world could be in for a bumpier ride because of climate change, new research suggests.

By midcentury, the likelihood of severe air turbulence along popular international flight routes will probably multiply, British scientists say.

"Air turbulence is increasing across the globe, in all seasons, and at multiple cruising altitudes," said study lead author Paul

Williams, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Reading. "This problem is only going to worsen as the climate continues to change."

Severe turbulence at the routine cruising altitude of 39,000 feet will become two to three times more common over the North Atlantic and Europe, the study predicted. North American flights could see more than a doubling of rough air pockets, while the skies over the North Pacific and Asia will become 90

percent and 60 percent bumpier, respectively, according to the study.

Air turbulence also is expected to intensify in the Southern Hemisphere.

Severe turbulence is strong enough to throw people and luggage around an aircraft cabin, the researchers noted.

The findings were published recently in *Geophysical Research Letters*.

"Our study highlights the need to develop improved turbulence forecasts, which could reduce the risk of

injuries to passengers and lower the cost of turbulence to airlines," Williams said in a news release.

For the study, researchers analyzed computer simulations of the future atmosphere. Due to predicted global temperature changes, they calculated that wind instability at high altitudes would start to intensify by midcentury, between 2050 and 2080.

Turbulence is thought to cost U.S. air carriers up to \$200 million annually, the research team noted.