



SUMMIT RESTAURANT AND BAR

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Established - 2001

Soda Springs, CA

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Donner Summit Lodge Open Every Day

Hours: Sat/Sun 8 A.M. - 8:30 P.M. MWThF Noon-8:30 P.M. Tues. 4-8:30 P.M. The bar is open until the crowd is gone.



Donner Summit Lodge, A Short History

Ever since the Dutch Flat Wagon Rd. was built in the early 1860's to service the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, there have been hostelries along the route over Donner Pass.

The first auto to cross Donner Pass crossed in 1903. The first successful motorized "transcontinentalist" crossed the country using Donner Pass, also in 1903, on a motor bicycle. With the arrival of the automobile, lodges began to spring up to service automobiles and provide relief for the "autoists".

By 1913 the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway, was in operation and auto traffic increased considerably. Small lodges and service stations were built along the route and early automobiles would have gone right past what is now Donner Summit Lodge. Once the highway was open in winter the lodges offered accommodations for snow sport enthusiasts.

Donner Summit Lodge was built in 1938 to take advantage of the growth of traffic over the, by then, year-round Highway 40. The lodge was expanded twice from the picture above, first just after World War II and then in the 1970's. Additions were made to both ends of the original lodge. The sign on the lodge above says, "Donner Summit Lodge Fine Food Ski Dormitories Cabins.."

picture above from the Norm Saylor Collection

It Wasn't Always Easy To Get To Donner Summit

Today we hop in our cars, set the temperature and cruise controls, and don't even give a thought to driving long distances. We can reach Donner Summit in just an hour and a half from Sacramento and double that from San Francisco. Our vehicles are reliable and fast. The multi-lane Interstate allows us to zip past slower drivers.

It was not always so. It took six weeks in 1867 for a donkey engine to arrive at Donner Summit from Gold Run. It had been a locomotive and was so scary that oncoming mules had to be blindfolded so they would not bolt. That's an aside though, for another menu.

Emigrant wagons coming up Donner Pass had to be disassembled to get them over the rock ledges. The trials those original emigrants went through must have made them wish they'd never heard of California. Then they discovered Roller Pass. Emigrants didn't have to take their wagons apart but they did have to attach a dozen oxen to bring each wagon, one by one, up the very steep slope.

The crossing of Donner Summit was the hardest part of the emigrants' trip across the country. As they approached the Sierra they looked with "terror at the awful site [sic]." (Wm. Tustin, 1846). The Sierra looked like an "apparently impassable barrier" (Edwin Bryant, 1846 whose mule went somersaulting down the mountain*), "as steep as the roof of a house" (Joseph Hackney 1849). The Sierra "looked terrible" (David Hudson 1845). The mountains were "some immense wall built directly across our path" (Elisha Perkins 1849).

The railroad made it easier but traveling by train over Donner Summit meant going through 40 miles of snowsheds which kept heavy snowfall and avalanches from wiping the track and trains off the mountainsides. Going through sheds, though, meant that some of the most beautiful scenery in the world was hidden from view. In addition to the dark, train cars filled with smoke making the trip over the Summit less than pleasant.

Once there were roads one would think things got easier but as the pictures on following pages show, that was not always the case. At least drivers did not have to take apart their cars.

*the mule survived none the worse for wear.



painting by Harold Von Schmidt

Summit Restaurant does catering too.

Call 426-3904

Breakfast

EGGS

Good Morning Summit Special:

two eggs any style, bacon or sausage, potatoes and toast 9.00

Choose from the following - omelets all are accompanied with potatoes & toast

Bacon, Swiss & Tomato 12.00

Chili & Cheese 11.00

Mushroom, Sausage & Cheese 11.00

Salmon, Cream Cheese & Scallions topped with Parmesan Cheese
& drizzled hollandaise 14.00

Spinach, Avocado & Pepper Jack Cheese 12.00

Joe's Special: (a San Francisco Tradition comes to the Summit)

Scrambled eggs / ground beef / garlic / spinach / mushrooms /
peppers & onions 12.00

Corned Beef & Eggs: two eggs, any style / served on top of fresh roasted
corn beef / bell peppers & potatoes 11.00

Eggs Benedict 12.00

Steak n Eggs 15.00

Breakfast Burrito: flour tortilla / scrambled eggs / cheese /
jalapenos / potatoes & refried beans with your choice of
ham / bacon or sausage 11.00

Breakfast Tacos: two corn tortillas filled with eggs / cheese /
tomatoes with your choice of veggies / bacon / sausage or
ham 10.00

Breakfast Sandwich: eggs / cheese and
your choice of ham / bacon or sausage 10.00

Machaca Con Huevos: carne asada / onions / jalapenos /
scrambled eggs served with refried beans & tortillas 11.00

Huevos Rancheros: flour tortilla / beans and eggs any style topped with jalapenos
/pico de gallo/guacamole/sour cream /cheese & our own ranchero sauce 11.00

Parties of 6 or more will have a gratuity of 18%

Take-out

After a full day outdoors save yourself the trouble
of cooking - We can prepare appetizers, platters,
pizzas, entrees, and full meals.

Just give us a call: 530-426-3904



Getting Over Donner Summit - Tough Work

"You can form no idea, nor can I give you any description of the evils which best us. From the time we left the [Donner] lake ...until we reached the top [Lake Mary] it was one continued jumping from one rocky cliff to another. We would have to roll over this big rock, then over that; then there was bridging a branch; then we had to lift our wagons by main force up to the top of a ledge of rocks... Three days... found ourselves six miles from the lake... you never saw a set of fellows more happy than when we reached the summit.

William Todd 1845

Snow Makes Crossing Donner Summit Difficult

Before the highway was plowed in 1932 merchants in Truckee and Lake Tahoe had one wish each Spring - let the snow melt QUICKLY!

Sometimes the snow did and sometimes it did not and when it did not the merchants did their best to hurry things along. Placer County used to send up snow shovelers annually to help out.. They could clear 1500 feet of snowdrifts in two days (1921) and the road could be open by early June. The newspapers faithfully reported on snow clearing presumably to encourage travelers.

For awhile there was a carnival of cars coming annually from Reno clearing the remaining snow as they went and there was a celebration when the first car got over the Summit.

Salt and ashes were spread on the road at times to hurry things along. Sometimes residents dug trenches in the snow to speed melting by letting the warm air get to more snow than just the top surface.

The Summit Hotel (burned in 1925) helped by spreading ash on the snow and putting up the County snow shovelers.

There were newspaper articles each Spring about hoped for opening dates, opening plans, and the yearly prominent citizens' committees set up to oversee clearing operations and openings.

Source: Sierra Sun archives

Snow Shoveling Bee

from the Truckee Republican, May 19, 1921

“The Auburn Chamber of Commerce, working with the Placer County Auto Trades Association, is planning to conduct a snow shoveling bee, which will take place on Sunday and Monday, May 22 and 23, and they hope to secure a large delegation of snow shovelers.

“Leaving Auburn on train 22 at 6:30 Saturday night, the party would arrive at the summit about four hours later. Accommodation would be provided at Summit Hotel, which has recently changed hands...The owners plan to make an all season resort of Summit Hotel... the region of the Summit is particularly well suited for sport the year around. An eminent Swedish traveler recently remarked that no place in Sweden equalled the Summit as a winter pleasure spot...”



Snow shoveling bee from an undetermined date. Photo from the Auburn Ski Club's Western Ski Sport Museum at Boreal (open during ski season).

The lower men would shovel snow to the men just above who would shovel snow to the men at the top. Eventually, the drifts would be cleared and people could travel.

OFF THE GRIDDLE

French Toast: fantastic multigrain bread dipped in our secret batter served with bacon or sausage 8.00

Summit Pancakes: two house made buttermilk pancakes served with your choice of bacon or sausage 9.00

Snow Park Special: we call it the works! Two piping hot pancakes / two eggs any style served with your choice of bacon or sausage 11.00

A LA CARTE

Biscuits & Gravy 7.00

Half Order 5.00

Two Eggs 3.00

Country Potatoes 4.00

Hot Oatmeal served with milk / brown sugar / nuts & cranberries 6.00

Bacon or Sausage 4.00

Toast 3.00

Bagel & Cream Cheese 4.00

MORNING BEVERAGE TREATS

Orange Juice / Cranberry Juice or Apple Juice 3.75

Milk 3.75

Coffee / Tea or decafe 2.25

Hot Chocolate 3.75

Mimosas 8.00

Champagne 7.00

Tequila Sunrise 8.00

Summit's Famous Bloody Mary 8.00

All Bloody Marys are made with our own secret recipe...

**Taco Tuesday
Every Tuesday
4 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.**

*Children's Menu
Available on Request*

Lunch & Dinner

APPETIZERS

Mountain Nachos 9.00

Quesadilla 8.00

add chicken/ beef or pork 3.00

Sweet Potato Fries 8.00

Beer Fries 8.00

Onion Rings 9.00

Chili Fries 8.00

Wings: Hot n Spicy/ Honey Mustard/ Teriyaki 9.00

Calamari: lightly breaded served with dill aioli & cocktail sauce 13.00

Soup Cup 5.00 Bowl 7.00

All of our soups are created and prepared fresh here at The Summit...

Calling all Chili Lovers... Cup 6.00 Bowl 8.00

Ask about our award winning Chili!!

Salads:

House Salad sm 5.00 lg 7.00

Our customers call our house salad "a real" salad,
fresh greens and fresh veggies....

Soup and Salad Combo 9.00

*Add Chicken 3.00 or Shrimp 6.00 to any of our specialty salads...

Caesar 9.00 Salmon Caesar 14.00

Spicy Blue romaine lettuce/walnuts/spicy chicken/tossed in
blue cheese dressing 12.00 A must for all blue cheese lovers!

Maria's Salad cranberries/candied walnuts/blue cheese
tossed in raspberry vinaigrette 9.00

Spinach Salad feta/ mandarin oranges/ red onions/
candied walnuts tossed in a bacon vinaigrette 9.00

Wrap any salad with chicken

Ask for an entrée salad and make it a wrap/fries 12.00

Parties of 6 or more will have a gratuity of 18%

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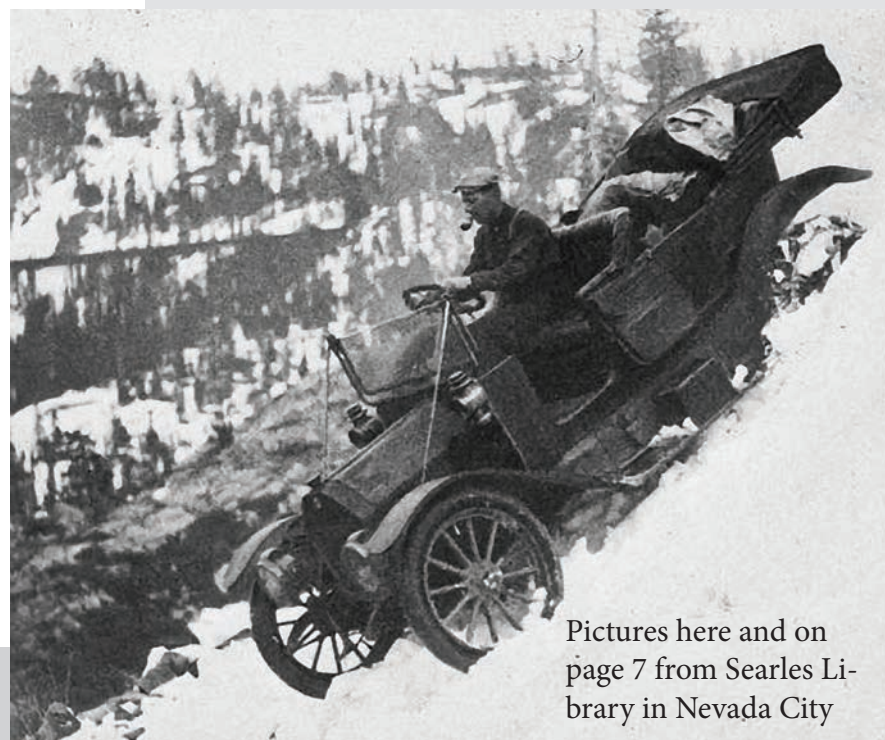
Tahoe Tavern Silver Cup, 1911

One of the ideas local commercial interests had to encourage travelers to come to cross Donner Summit early in the season was the Tahoe Tavern's Silver Cup. The Tahoe Tavern was a resort in Tahoe City where Granlibakken Rd. intersects with Highway 89. The silver cup was awarded to the first automobile to cross the Summit.

In 1911 Arthur Foote, of Grass Valley, entered the race along with several friends. It would take nine days to go from Grass Valley to Tahoe City over Donner Summit which was still covered in snow. Hard snow can be driven on apparently fairly well. Foote won probably because he was better prepared than other drivers. Storms had washed out the bridge at Cisco Grove but Foote's block and tackle got him across (see above)t.

The block and tackle was also useful for pulling the automobile out of soft snow or crevices.

It took seven days to get from Emigrant Gap to Soda Springs, 23 miles. It was downhill from there to breakfast at Donner Lake and on to Lake Tahoe for the prize and champagne.



Pictures here and on page 7 from Searles Library in Nevada City

Pizza

Create your own 14" pizza by choosing any three toppings: pepperoni / italian sausage / ham / onions / bell peppers / olives / mushrooms / tomatoes / artichoke hearts / jalapenos or pineapple 17.00 For chicken add 3.00

14" Cheese Pizza 13.00

14" One Topping Pizza 15.00

14" Hawaiian Pizza w/ ham & pineapple 16.00

14" BBQ Chicken Pizza w/ red onions / bacon / tomatoes & chicken 20.00

14" Veggie Pizza w/ spinach / mushrooms / artichoke hearts / tomatoes & olives 17.00

Gluten-free crust available 1.75

PASTA

Spinach & Cheese Ravioli topped with our marinara sauce 13.00

Penne Pasta served with chicken/broccoli & Alfredo sauce 14.00

Fettuccini Pasta served with pesto/ artichoke hearts / zucchini & sun dried tomatoes 13.00

Classic Fetticini Alfredo 12.00

Add soup or salad for 4.00

The Summit's Famous Burgers

"voted best Burgers in Tahoe"

Teriyaki Chicken Burger with melted swiss cheese 13.00

Tuscan Chicken Burger Italian herb chicken balsamic vinegar and provolone 13.00

Chili Burger served open face with our award winning chili and the works 14.00

Western Burger topped with BBQ sauce, bacon, cheddar cheese & onion rings 14.00

Blue Cheese Burger topped with sautéed mushrooms & melted bleu cheese 14.00

California Burger topped with spinach, shredded carrots, avocado & cheese 14.00

Patty Melt grilled marble rye, sautéed onions, and swiss cheese 13.00

All burgers come with our house made fries! See below for customizing options...

Half-Pound Sirloin Burger, Chicken or Veggie Burger served with fries 12.00

Customizing is our specialty: choose from cheddar, pepper jack, swiss or provolone cheese, bacon, avocado, mushrooms, or caramelized onions all items range between 1.25 to 1.95 - go for it!

Customize your side as well: take away your fries and add sweet potato fries, beer fries, onion rings 3.00 or a salad 4.00.

Gluten-free bread available

Parties of 6 or more will have a gratuity of 18%



Royal Gorge

Salt Sprinkled on Summit Road

"...the Truckee Chamber of Commerce sent twelve men to Summit on April 1, together with 3000 pounds of black cinders and 1500 pounds of rock salt. The men spread the cinders and salt over the road from Summit Hotel to the head of Donner Lake, and also shoveled out a deep drift on the sharp bend just this side of the subway.

"...There is 12 to 15 feet of snow on the road from the Summit Hotel to the subway and from the latter point to the head of Donner lake the snow will average from 2 to 4 feet in depth.

"A stretch of new road on the Truckee side of the subway under the sheds, and over 1000 feet in length is covered with from 30 to 50 feet of snow. It is probable that little work will be done on the new stretch at this time but instead all efforts will be concentrated on the old road."

Truckee Republican April 7, 1921

Summit Restaurant Catering

We offer catering year-round for big or small events here or at any location in the Tahoe area.

426-3904

California Fresh Grilled Items & More.....

Grilled Salmon on a ciabatta roll/spinach/shredded carrots and a dill aioli 16.00

Fish n Chips 13.00

Pesto Melt on a ciabatta roll/ turkey/ pepper jack cheese & pesto sauce 13.00

Seasonal Veggie Delight: seasonal veggies/ avocado and your choice of cheese 11.00

French Dip created with our own brined roast beef 11.00

Steak Sandwich grilled to perfection topped with mushrooms & onions 16.00

Philly Cheese Steak grilled roast beef/ mushrooms/ bell peppers & onions 11.00

Traditional Ruben served on marble rye 12.00

BLTA served with loads of bacon & Avocado served on multi-grain bread 11.00

Grilled Cheese filled with tomatoes/ avocado/ swiss & cheddar cheese 12.00

Grilled Ham n Cheese served with a spread of honey mustard and all the fixin's 11.00

Traditional Deli Sandwich / Ham / Turkey or Roast beef 10.00

Bringing Back an Old Favorite: Turkey Melt on a multi-grain / cheddar cheese / bacon / grilled onions 13.00

All sandwiches come with fries

Customize your side as well: take away your fries and add sweet potato fries, beer fries, onion rings 3.00 or a salad 4.00.

Add Avocado to any sandwich for 2.00

We purchase all of our breads from a local bread company containing no preservatives or additives, it's a little more work on our part but well worth the flavor! Enjoy...

Gluten-free bread available

Parties of 6 or more will have a gratuity of 18%



What's in Your Closet?

The Donner Summit Historical Society is always looking for more history. Maybe you've got some old picture albums tucked away in boxes in the attic. We'll make copies and maybe even some stories to go with the photographs and you'll be helping preserve and pass on the unique history of Donner Summit.

Contact the society: info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.org



The two pictures above came from a photo album Bill and Diane Kirkham of Serene Lakes found when clearing out Bill's father's things. The top is some travelers on Donner Summit. The bottom picture shows an auto emerging from the Lincoln Highway underpass (opened in 1914) under the railroad tracks. The structure on top is part of the snowsheds which once covered forty miles of railroad tracks.

The route changed with the building of the Donner Summit Bridge. Now you can walk through the underpass and see some great views - see below: Mt. Stephens, Donner Summit Bridge, Donner Lake.



Dinner

Scott's Famous Teriyaki Chicken
Tender breast of chicken simmered in Scott's teriyaki sauce accompanied by rice 16.00

Chicken or Egg Plant Florentine
Seasoned chicken breast or egg plant topped with a spinach & fresh vegetables sautéed / house red sauce / melted mozzarella accompanied by pasta 18.00

Grilled Steak Selection
Ask your server about our hand-cut steak selection Market Price

Grilled Seafood Selection
Ask your server about our fresh seafood availability Market Price

All dinner entrées come with a seasonal vegetables.

Parties of 6 or more will have a gratuity of 18%

Thirst Quenchers:

Coffee, Tea & Decafe 2.25

Pepsi, Diet, Sierra Mist, Root Beer, Lemonade and Ice Tea 2.25

Juices 3.75

Milk 3.75

From the Bar
Ask to see our Specialty Drinks Menu, which includes our Wine List

Coors, Coors Light, Bud, Bud Light, Miller Light 3.50

Choose from our wide selection of Premium Drafts 6.00

We also have a full bar so let your imagination go wild....

Don't forget to try "Our Famous Bloody Mary" you don't want to miss it! 8.00



More of Arthur Foote's 1911 trip over Donner Summit. Bottom picture, his Model "T" in Summit Valley with today's Soda Springs Ski Area in the background. Note the tires wrapped in burlap and rope for traction.

Children's Menu Available on Request

LOCAL BUSINESSES WORTH PATRONIZING



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