



2025 FACT SHEET

LOCATION

Nestled between the grand rise of the Sierra and the treasured beauty of the Pine Nut Mountains, Carson Valley, Nevada, encompasses the four small communities of Gardnerville, Genoa, Minden and Topaz Lake – all located in Douglas County. Accessed by three main highways (U.S. Highway 395, and State Routes 88 or 207), visitors relish unspoiled views in northern Nevada’s most scenic valley.

- 12 miles west to Lake Tahoe, 12 miles north to Carson City, 45 miles north to Reno, 140 miles west to Sacramento and 218 miles west to San Francisco
- 751 square miles of scenic territory
- Elevation of approximately 4,700 feet at the valley floor
- Nearby Jobs Peak rises to 10,633 feet
- Minden Airport, a 990-acre general aviation facility

WEATHER

Boasting an average of 300 days of sunshine, Carson Valley offers four distinct seasons. During the summer, high temperatures average in the 80s and 90s with snow in the winter months. A plethora of deciduous trees throughout the valley make it an ideal destination for fall and spring photography with the Sierra Nevada as an often-snowy backdrop.

HERITAGE

Carson Valley claims the oldest non-native town in Nevada – Genoa – which was settled by John Reese in 1851. Within the main town square are Mormon Station State Historic Park, the Courthouse Museum of Genoa and the Oldest Bar in Nevada, the Genoa Bar & Saloon, a popular watering hole to this day. Boutique shops, antiques, a general store, restaurants and an art gallery are all found within this quiet, peaceful small town.

Gardnerville got its start in 1879 when Lawrence Gilman purchased the Kent House and had it moved from its location south of Genoa to a seven-acre parcel of land on the east fork of the Carson River. There, near the site of what is today the J.T. Basque Bar and Dining Room, the building was converted to a hotel. A blacksmith shop and saloon were later added. The hotel was the center of the hay and grain-producing community that became Gardnerville, named for Gilman’s friend John Gardner.

H.F. Dangberg, Jr. established Minden in 1905 to fulfill his vision of a European-style planned community designed around a town square, Minden Park. Thus, Minden is one of the country’s first master-planned communities. The V&T Railroad’s extension of a rail line to Carson Valley, with Minden as the terminus, was key to Dangberg’s plans for the town’s future. The railroad spurred the growth of Carson Valley into a hub of agriculture.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Carson Valley is a wonderland for outdoor adventures of all types and for all abilities. The scenery paints the perfect backdrop for exploring historic ranches, experiencing world-class soaring over the valley, off-roading through the wide-open expanse of undisturbed lands, mountain biking up (or down) the foothills, hiking, walking, bird watching, fishing, water sports and so much more. There are more than 70 miles of trails to conquer, most of which are dog-friendly. The Bently Heritage Trail along the Carson

River winds through a working cattle ranch and the River Fork Ranch Trail System is wheelchair accessible. Topaz Lake offers some of the best trout and bass fishing around, or it's the perfect place to enjoy watersports. Get in a few rounds at one of four local golf courses or simply kick back and relax at a natural hot spring. Located less than 30 minutes away, Lake Tahoe offers reasons to play in any season – hiking, biking and water activities, and snow sports galore. Heavenly Mountain Resort is one of the most recognized ski resorts at Lake Tahoe offering skiing, riding and après choices in both Nevada and California.

CARSON VALLEY MUSEUMS

Carson Valley is the Great American West, and its communities honor those historic roots today through museums and historic sites. In Gardnerville, the Museum and Cultural Center is a marvelous place to spend an afternoon exploring exhibits on Nevada's Basque and Native American heritage and its modern-day wild mustangs. Learn more about early life in Carson Valley at the Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park, founded by a family that was here when Nevada began. Take a guided tour of the ranch house or explore the ranch on foot. In Genoa, the Courthouse Museum offers another rich look back in history.

LODGING

Carson Valley offers 12 lodging properties with one sure to suit any visitor's preference – representing more than 800 hotel rooms. Choices include a casino resort, bed and breakfast establishments, and several hotel and motel options. Topaz Lake offers a hotel casino property in addition to camping. There are five gaming casinos in Carson Valley. Five different RV resorts provide full services to the campers at heart.

DINING

With more than 80 options to please any palate, the food in Carson Valley matches the air: fresh and uplifting. Head to Gardnerville for chef-driven cuisine at the Overland Restaurant and Pub or traditional Basque fare family-style at J.T. Basque Bar and Dining Room. Both popular establishments have been serving up inspired dishes and fabled Picon Punch in old-time style since around 1900. Daniel's brings back fine dining to Genoa with fine Country French cuisine.

EVENTS

- Eagles & Agriculture: Each February visitors can observe eagles and other raptors of all varieties, including Bald Eagles, nesting in Carson Valley during the calving season. Eagles and Ag features exclusive access to ranches for viewing. Tours at multiple ranches give insights into this annual pilgrimage.
- Genoa Western Heritage Days: Celebrating all things Nevada, this annual event takes place in late April or early May and features award-winning Western songwriters and live performers, a trade show highlighting Western artists and craftsmanship, cowboy poets, and much more.
- BackCountry Festival: Held at the start of each summer at the historic Corley Ranch in Gardnerville, this music festival features live country music performances, barbecue, and brews.
- Carson Valley Days: Celebrating 115 years in 2025, thousands of locals and visitors alike head to Gardnerville each June for a weekend-long lineup of carnival midway games, rides, free live

music, a themed parade, craft and food vendors, children’s games, horseshoe tournaments and more. This is the ultimate family-fun carnival.

- Summer Concerts: Throughout the summer, Minden Park hosts an outdoor concert series for the whole family. Nearby, the Carson Valley Inn’s summer concerts at TJ’s Corral feature known entertainers and up-and-comers. A more laid-back concert experience can be had at the Dangberg Ranch Historic Park in Minden. Or head out to Genoa for their Concerts on the Green. Select a venue, choose a spot to drop a blanket and take in a concert while the sun dips behind the Sierra.
- Douglas County Rodeo: Each September this wild event is held at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, the perfect combination of all the small-town feels and the big-time rodeo events. Featuring bull and bronc riding, barrel racing, team roping, trick riders, the mutton busters and more. Before the chutes open, food trucks, vendors and kids’ activities provide entertainment for the whole family and after the evening events enjoy a live concert.
- Genoa Candy Dance: The Candy Dance Arts and Crafts Faire dates back to 1919 when it began as a fundraiser for the city’s street lights. Today, the event is a fundraiser for city programs and a mainstay in the life of the Genoa community. Held annually on the last full weekend of September, thousands flock to this community to enjoy over 300 craft and food vendors, live music and, of course, hand-crafted candy.
- Carson Valley Christmas: Christmastime in Carson Valley’s small towns somewhat resembles those seen in those classic Hallmark movies. With a wide range of events each year to welcome the holiday season, from festive kickoff celebrations to special shopping events, there's something for the whole family to enjoy.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Carson Valley Visitors Authority is the designated tourism marketing organization for the Carson Valley and surrounding areas offering visitor services, event planning and organizational support to groups, sports organizations, tour companies and independent travelers. Visit visitcarsonvalley.org for more information.

MEDIA CONTACT

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