

Authentiques BOUTIQUE

VERDI, NEVADA · GATEWAY TO THE SIERRA · EST. MMXXVI

Sierra Pre-Drive Checklist

The Sierra Nevada is among the most beautiful — and most weather-active — driving environments in the country. Mountain conditions can change inside an hour, particularly between September and April, and sometimes into June. **Treat every trip as a mountain-weather trip, not a routine commute.** Two minutes of preparation is often the difference between a highlight and a headache.

Use this checklist the night before, again before departure, and one final time right before you enter the mountains. Keep the printed copy in your glove box.

— BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME —

- Check official road status** — Caltrans QuickMap (quickmap.dot.ca.gov) for California; Nevada 511 (nvroads.com or dial **511**) for Nevada
- Check mountain weather**, not just the valley forecast — NWS Reno (weather.gov/rev)
- Check air quality and wildfire smoke** in summer and early fall — airnow.gov · purpleair.com
- Start with a full tank** — winter closures, detours, and slow traffic can extend drive time
- Charge your phone** and download offline maps for your full route
- Tell someone your route**, departure time, and expected arrival window
- Carry properly fitted chains or traction devices** whenever winter weather is possible — and know how to install them before you need them
- Plan winter mountain travel in daylight** when possible; avoid night driving in storms unless necessary

— TRIP NOTES —

Supplies

Snacks

Notes

Other Stops



*This checklist is provided by Authentiques Boutique for general informational purposes only. It is not professional driving, safety, or emergency-preparedness advice, and it is not exhaustive — it is intended as a starting point for your own planning. Sierra Nevada conditions change rapidly and without warning; readers must consult current official advisories from **Caltrans, Nevada Department of Transportation, the National Weather Service, and applicable law-enforcement agencies** before and during travel, and rely on their own judgment regarding their vehicle, abilities, route, and conditions on the day of the trip. **All travel decisions, and any consequences arising from them, are the sole responsibility of the traveler.** Authentiques Boutique makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or fitness of this information for any particular purpose, and disclaims any and all liability for loss, injury, property damage, or other harm arising from reliance on this material.*

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The Six-Item Sierra Checklist

Read each item before you set out.

1 Check the road first

Check official road status before you leave, and again before each major climb or pass. Use official road, weather, and chain-control sources only — do not rely on general map apps for winter decisions.

- **California:** Caltrans QuickMap (quickmap.dot.ca.gov) — live road status, chain controls, closures, and traffic on every Interstate and state highway, updated continuously.
- **Nevada:** Nevada 511 (nvroads.com) — same coverage on the Nevada side, including I-80, US-395, and NV-431. Or dial **511** from any Nevada phone.
- **Mountain weather:** National Weather Service Reno (weather.gov/rev) publishes Sierra point forecasts that are noticeably more useful than generic weather apps for elevation-sensitive routes.

2 Carry chains whenever winter weather is possible

Carry properly fitted chains or approved traction devices whenever winter weather is possible — even if the forecast looks mild at departure. California enforces chain controls on Interstate 80 (designated R1, R2, or R3) at short notice during winter storms. Chain requirements can change quickly, and the posted control level on the road is the one that matters, not what you expected before leaving.

- **R1** — chains required on all vehicles except 4WD with snow-rated tires.
- **R2** — chains on everything except 4WD with snow tires.
- **R3** — chains on everything, no exceptions.

If winter conditions are possible and you do not already have the right traction equipment, obtain it before entering the mountains, or postpone the trip. **Truckee, California** and **Reno, Nevada** are the closest places to buy or rent chains. **Practice installing them in dry, safe conditions** before a storm forces you to use them on the roadside.

3 Don't trust GPS in winter

Never follow a GPS detour onto unmaintained roads, fire roads, or closed routes during winter storms. When Interstate 80 closes, mapping apps will sometimes route around the closure via Forest Service roads, gravel roads, or unmaintained mountain passes. Every winter brings stories of travelers stranded on a "shortcut" that turned out to be a snowed-in fire road.

If a route is closed, **wait for official reopening** or choose another legal, officially open route. Do not assume Old US-40 (4th Street through Truckee) is a safe backup unless official conditions confirm it is open and passable. Stay on posted, maintained highways and follow all closure signs, chain-control signs, and law-enforcement directions.

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The Sierra Checklist – *continued*

4 Drive the freeway like a freeway

Interstate 80 through the Truckee River corridor sees heavy commercial-truck traffic, frequent merging from on-ramps, and very fast through-traffic.

- Keep right except to pass; signal early and avoid sudden lane changes.
- Cold pavement, ice, and packed snow greatly increase stopping distance – **brake early and gently**, and leave generous following distance.
- **Plan lane changes well in advance** so you are not making a last-second move at an exit. The **Verdi exit** comes up faster than first-time visitors expect.

5 Cell service is spotty

Assume you may lose signal in canyons and on mountain routes. The Truckee River canyon, Mt. Rose Highway, and most of US-50 between South Lake Tahoe and Carson City have stretches with limited or no coverage.

- Download offline maps before you climb.
- Keep a paper map or printed directions for the last few miles.
- Let someone know your planned route and arrival window if you're driving alone – particularly off-season or after dark.

6 Summer carries its own risks

In summer, check for wildfire smoke and fire-related closures before leaving, especially on mountain corridors. Wildfire smoke can reduce visibility on short notice, and active fires occasionally close I-80, US-50, or NV-431 for days at a time.

- Air-quality apps (**AirNow**, **PurpleAir**) are useful for same-day planning.
- The same QuickMap and Nevada 511 resources cover summer closures.
- **If smoke is dense, consider postponing.** The Sierra is most rewarding when you can see it.

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Emergency Reference

Keep official road, weather, and emergency numbers available; rely on 911 for true emergencies.

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| Live California road status | quickmap.dot.ca.gov |
| Live Nevada road status | nvroads.com · dial 511 in NV |
| Sierra mountain weather | weather.gov/rev (NWS Reno) |
| Wildfire smoke / air quality | airnow.gov · purpleair.com |
| CHP non-emergency | (800) 835-5247 |
| Nevada Highway Patrol non-emergency | (775) 689-4680 |
| Roadside emergency, life-safety | 911 |

— ON ARRIVAL —

When you reach Verdi, the boutique is on the south side of the freeway, about a quarter-mile from the I-80 exit. Visitor parking is on-site.

AUTHENTIKES BOUTIQUE
Verdi, Nevada · ten minutes west of Reno on Interstate 80
authentiques.shop/visit
We hope your drive is a wonderful part of the trip. Safe travels.

Always double-check current official advisories before and during travel. See page one for full terms of use.

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