

St Seraphim Sanctuary
Visitor's Guide
(Latest Edition 2025)



How It Works

If you are wondering how staying at St Seraphim works, the answer is that it is pretty simple. Just follow the steps below in order:

1. Look for the dates you requested on the Calendar page on the St Seraphim website (stseraphimsanctuary.org). They should be marked "RESERVED" followed by your name. Let me know if you want to change the dates or if you need to cancel.
2. I will contact you by email as the time approaches to verify the dates and arrange to get you a set of keys.
3. Print out this guide if you can, which explains how everything works in the cabin itself.
4. Make sure you pack everything you need to bring with you. See the Facilities page in this guide for a list of what is in the cabin and what you need to bring yourself.
5. Get driving directions. Allow 3 hours from San Rafael or equivalent.
6. Enjoy your stay! Call me if you have any problems or questions while you are there (415 755 5194 cell).
7. Return keys and washed kitchen towels to me. We'll arrange a convenient time and location.

Cabin Rules

1. Leave the place as clean and tidy as you find it.
 2. If anything breaks or needs repair, let Andrew know.
 3. If anything runs out during your stay (paper towels, cooking gas, etc.) buy more and re-stock.
-

Facilities

What's Already in the Cabin:

- 1 double bed, 1 double mattress in loft, 1 single bed
- Pillows (4)
- Quilts/sleeping bags (4)—bedding is in loft
- 2 person tent (orange & gray), smaller tent (green)
- Outdoor dining table (folding)
- Outdoor reclining chairs (2)
- Kitchen towels/dish towels
- Microwave, toaster oven, two-burner stove, fridge
- Water purifier on kitchen faucet for drinking water
- Coffee maker with filters, kettles (electric)
- Electric fans, electric heater, wood-burning stove
- Pots and pans, dishes and plates
- Cups, glasses, flatware
- Soap, cleaning supplies
- Maps and guidebooks
- Bookcase with Orthodox books and books on natural history
- Icons

What to Bring:

- Sheets and pillowcases
 - Blankets/light bedding for warm weather
 - Bath towels
 - Food and beverages
 - Shampoo and toiletries
-

Arrival and Departure

ARRIVAL

Parking:

Park just off the access road in the area bordered by the fallen log. It's best to reverse in.



Keys:

You have two keys, one of which opens the front door on the deck. It's not intuitive; turn clockwise to unlock, anti-clockwise to lock. If it is stiff, lift up on the door as you turn the key. The other key is for the pump house and also fits the door to the extension.

1. Unlock front door on deck and then open shutters. Some shutters may need to be opened with the pry-bar that hangs next to the mirror inside the front door (pry gently so as not to damage the wood).
-

2. Make sure the water inlet in the creek is under water.
3. Unlock pump house and turn on water pump. Switch is on the wall behind pump. Standard switch: UP=ON.
4. Plug in composting toilet.

DEPARTURE

1. Unplug composting toilet.
2. Turn off water pump in pump house and lock pump house.
3. Take garbage with you.
4. Take kitchen towels, wash and return to Andrew with keys.
5. Lock cabin door and close shutters.

Operating Instructions

Ceiling fan:

Switch is inside front door. It has three speeds—switch between them by pulling the cord on the fan.

Heating:

On cold mornings, take the chill off with the electric heater. Feel free also to use the wood-burning stove on cold evenings. Use the fatwood fire starters (no chemical firelighters). Use only the seasoned wood in the baskets, or from the woodpile. Try to keep temperature of stove between 300-600 degrees (using the stove-top thermometer)—this prevents build-up of creosote in the chimney. If it burns hotter, damp it down.

Drinking water:

Purified water is available directly from the kitchen sink faucet. Pull out the pin on the faucet to get purified water.

Dishwashing:

Heat up a kettle of purified water.

Garbage:

Use the small white (8 gal) garbage bags that fit the bin under the sink. For short stays, take your garbage with you when you go. Or you can dump bags in the garbage bins in the trailhead parking lot across the highway (this is frowned upon by Forest Service). Or take to South Lake Tahoe and use public garbage bins outside stores.

Shower:

Turn the handle fully anti-clockwise till you get hot water. Then turn clockwise to get cooler water and to regulate the temperature.

It may happen that the shower loses water pressure. This is because the filter in the pump house has become a bit clogged. It's an easy fix but you have to go out to the pump house. So if you are having this problem during your stay, you may want to do the following *before* you start your shower.



1. Unlock the filter handle using the red clip.
2. Turn the handle perpendicular to the pipeline, as shown in the photo.
3. Water will come out of the side of the pump house onto the ground. This flushes out any dirt from the filter.
4. Let it run for about ten seconds.
5. Turn the handle back to where it was and fasten the red clip.

Toilet:

See separate section of this Guide.

Couch-bed:

Move wooden chair out of the way, then pull couch left so when you unfold it will clear the ladder. Remove cover. Lift front of bed and pull to unfold.

When done, reverse the process to fold up. Replace cover.



Outdoor reclining chairs:

Stored under the stove in the kitchen. Please put them back there when you leave.

Cleaning:

Please clean up after yourself and leave the place tidy. If you would like to do more, there's always something: wipe surfaces, sweep floors, vacuum rugs, clean shower stall glass (with non-abrasive sponge), wash windows, etc.

Telephone:

Cell phone reception is normally good in the area.

Andrew's cell phone is 415 755 5194.

Composting Toilet

The unit is not really intended for continuous use. So you need to keep an eye (and a nose) on it during your stay to make sure it is functioning properly. The main principle is that the compost in the drum must not get too wet. It should be slightly damp but no more than that. If it starts to look wet, add more compost mix from the bag and rotate to stir it up.

If you are staying for one to three nights only, follow these instructions:

- Every time you add solid waste to the toilet, add a scoop of compost mix and turn the handle on the front of the toilet 24-36 times clockwise to mix the compost. Make sure you finish with the hole at the top! Compost mix is kept next to the unit.
- Also every second day, spray a few blasts of Compost Quick onto the compost surface in the toilet.

If you are staying for more than three nights, do everything in the list above and also:

- Read the SunMar Composting Toilet manual and understand how it works.
 - Follow instructions in the manual to empty compost when the drum gets more than half full (you can tell it's half full if the hinged lid of the drum starts touching the surface of the compost). Take the lower drawer outside and dump the contents in the compost dump site. Get the spade from the pump house and bury the compost. Do
-

not leave any compost above ground or flies may gather.

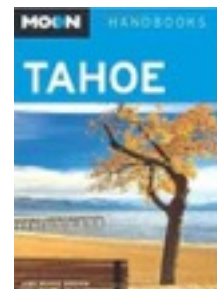
The compost dump site is alongside the fallen log that has been sawn into two pieces, and which blocks the entrance to vehicles. There is a hand-written sign saying "Compost."

Nearest

Here are the locations of the nearest:

- Convenience store: Strawberry Market, 2 miles West
- Supermarket: Holiday Market, Meyers, 20 minute drive East
- Restaurant/Bar: Several in Meyers (Strawberry Lodge, 2 miles West closed during Covid and has not reopened yet)
- Gas station: Meyers, 20 minute drive East, or Silverfork, 20 minute drive West
- Pharmacy: CVS, at the "Y," South Lake Tahoe. 30 minutes East
- Organic food store: Grass Roots, Dunlap Drive, at the "Y," South Lake Tahoe.
- Big market for food and wine: Raley's, South Y Center, 1040 Emerald Bay Road.
- Orthodox Church: St Elias, 4253 Fowler Lane, Diamond Springs, CA 95619

For activities and recommendations in the wider area, see the *Moon Handbook: Tahoe*, by Ann Marie Brown (copy in the cabin).

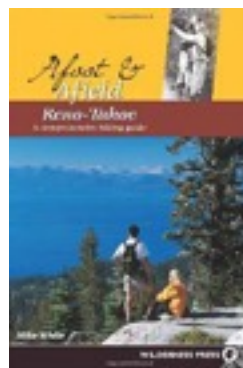


Hiking

Major Trailheads (with driving time):

1. Horsetail Falls (walk across the highway)
2. Echo Lake (East, 20 minutes)
3. Big Meadow (East, 25 minutes)
4. Wrights Lake (West, 30 minutes)
5. Lake Tahoe Visitor Center (East, 35 minutes)
6. Carson Pass (East, 45 minutes)

For easy local hikes see the hand-written directions sheets in the Guest Information folder. For complete guide to hikes in the area see the book: *Afoot and Afield: Reno-Tahoe* by Mike White (copy in the cabin). Hiking maps are in the kitchen drawer under the microwave.



Kids' Stuff

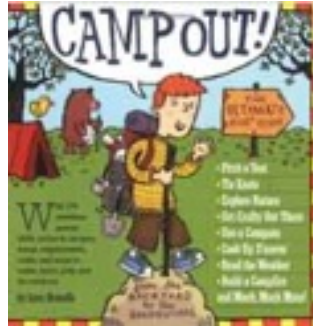
Resources in and around the cabin:

- Green dome tent. Easy set up on the deck or on flat ground in front of the cabin.
- *Camp Out* book. Many suggestions for camp-related activities.
- Natural history books: animals, birds, trees, flowers, rocks, stars.
- Binoculars for viewing birds and wildlife.
- Pyramid Creek. 150 feet from the cabin is a natural playground. If the neighbors in cabin #11 are away, you can use their path to the creek. There are child-size bathing places just in front of the bridge.

Easy Trips:

- Pyramid Creek loop trail. See the directions sheet in the Guest Information folder.
 - Hike to swimming hole. See the directions sheet in the Guest Information folder.
 - Lake Tahoe Visitor Center (Taylor Creek). Apart from the interesting Visitor Center staffed by rangers, there is an excellent nature trail with the famous stream-profile chamber where you can watch trout at eye-level. You can also walk down to the lakeshore from here.
-

- Beaches. Baldwin Beach is close to the Visitor Center. Nice sand and clean water. Restrooms \$ parking fee. OR Kiva Beach, no restrooms, no parking fee.



Camp Out! The Ultimate Kids' Guide by Lynn Brunelle
(copy in the cabin).

Fishing

There are trout in many streams and lakes close to the cabin. It's even possible to catch fish in Pyramid Creek itself, although the fish are small (6-8"). Here is a list of some of the places to fish within an hour's drive (in order of distance):

Rivers and Streams

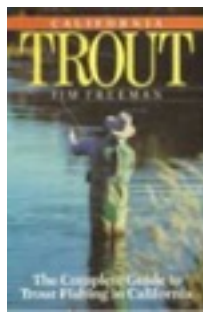
- Pyramid Creek
- South Fork American River (Camp Sacramento)
- Silver Fork American River (Kyburz)
- West Fork Carson River (Hope Valley)
- East Fork Carson River (Markleeville)

Lakes

- Echo Lake
- Cody Lake
- Wrights Lake

Suppliers

- Fly Fishing: Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters, 2705 Lake Tahoe Blvd, South Lake Tahoe
- Spin fishing tackle, spinning rods or spin casting rods: Big 5 Sporting Goods, 2062 Lake Tahoe Blvd, South Lake Tahoe



California Trout by Jim Freeman (copy in the cabin).