

ALASKAN HIGHLIGHTS – 11 DAYS

Day 1: Anchorage

Welcome to Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska with only 250,000 people and a city which has undergone quite a change since the earthquake of 1964. Now a bustling city fuelled by the oil boom and tourism, it wasn't that long ago that Anchorage was the last outpost before heading into the 'Last Frontier'. It's also common place to find bear roaming the outskirts of the city. A great way to spend your day is wandering around the town getting a feel for the 49th state, speaking to the locals and breathing in that fresh Alaskan air! A welcome meeting will be held at 18:00 hrs for you to meet your tour leader and fellow travelling companions.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 2: Kenai Peninsula - Seward

Leaving Anchorage your first stop is to visit the Portage Glacier where you round Cook Inlet's Turnagain Arm and venture onto the Kenai (pronounced `keen eye') Peninsula followed by the chance to walk the Byron Glacier Trail. This short trail takes you along a rushing glacial river into a dramatic, steep valley all the way to the base of Byron Glacier. From here you make your way to the colourful fishing village of Seward - the gateway to Kenai Fjords National Park. In its past life, Seward was a railroad port which means there is now plenty of great shopping and a picturesque old-time downtown area.

Upon arrival, you will enjoy an included five hour guided wildlife cruise to view sea mammals, including pods of orca, an array of birdlife and be able to experience the sights and sounds of icebergs being calved into the sea. What you'll see on this cruise cannot be guaranteed however, this day has always proven to be a popular and rewarding tour with loads of wildlife sightings.

Accommodation: Lodge in twin share | Meals: Paid locally

Day 3: Kenai Fjords National Park - Seward

Today is a full free day to hike one of the most beautiful trails in Alaska - the Harding Icefield. This is not an easy hike but the views are absolutely worth it. This trail is popular for spotting wildlife and delivers breathtaking views of Exit Glacier along the way. Nothing will prepare you for the incredible views at the top and it's worth eating your lunch up there if the weather is good.

Accommodation: Lodge in twin share | Meals: Paid locally

Day 4-5: Valdez

Tucked away at the end of a glacier-carved fjord and called the 'Switzerland of Alaska' due to its surrounding snow-capped mountains, Valdez is the most northerly ice-free port in the Western Hemisphere and the terminus of the Alaskan Pipeline that stretches over 800 miles to Prudhoe Bay. There's no better way to experience this pristine environment than with an optional (and highly recommended) sea kayaking trip up to the mouth of the glacier. A variety of hiking trails make this area a walker's paradise.

Accommodation: Hotel in twin share | Meals: Paid locally

Day 6-7: Wrangell-St Elias National Park

Bordering Canada's Yukon Territory, Wrangell-St Elias National Park is the largest in the United States, containing glaciers five times the size of Manhattan and nine of the sixteen highest peaks in North America! With endless hours of daylight you'll never tire of such magnificent glaciers and remote views. To explore the historic area of McCarthy and the Kennecott Mine, why not take the Kennecott Copper Mill Ghost Town tour or if you're feeling adventurous why not opt to try glacier walking or ice climbing? You stay at the McCarthy Lodge, a comfortable and quirky hotel without the modern trappings of the chain hotel. The atmosphere is welcoming and is often described as a `home away

from home'.

Accommodation: Hotel in twin share with shared facilities | Meals: Paid locally

Day 8: Alaska Range

Head into the heart of the Alaska Mountain Range on what is considered to be one of the most beautiful drives in the state, enjoy sweeping views of the Alaska Range on the Denali Highway before arriving to the Maclaren River Lodge. With spectacular views of the surrounding valley, this rustic lodge provides the ideal setting for an authentic Alaskan experience. This is a birder's paradise with many species often sighted and with the chance to fish for grayling (permit purchased locally) the activities are plentiful.

Accommodation: Lodge in multi-share bunkhouse with shared facilities included with meals paid locally

Day 9-10: Denali National Park

As you travel along the old Denali Highway to Denali National Park, keep an eye open for caribou and other wildlife while enjoying the peaceful, unspoilt Alaskan wilderness. Surrounded by the tallest mountain peak in North America, Denali National Park offers a variety of wildlife including Grizzly Bear, caribou, Dall Sheep, marmots and wolves. Activities such as river rafting, watching a dog sled demonstration and walks on quiet nature trails are available, all nearby your lovely campground setting which borders the park. Take the included Denali shuttle bus, which offers scenic views of the taiga and sub-arctic tundra as well as superb opportunities to view wildlife and hike the many trails in the park. Denali is one of the few national parks where visitors are encouraged to walk off the beaten track and make their own trails. As a real treat and highly recommended, why not opt for a scenic flight over Denali National Park with the chance to land on an ice sheet under the watchful gaze of Mount Denali's towering peak, North America's tallest mountain?

Accommodation: Cabins in twin share | Meals: Paid locally

Day 11: Talkeetna to Anchorage

Departing Denali, you make your way towards Anchorage stopping en route in the town of Talkeetna where you have the opportunity to try a local speciality; reindeer sausage. You also take in a visit to the Talkeetna Ranger Station depending on availability.

Leave Alaska's highlights behind and return to civilisation for the end of your tour. Why not add on a half day bear viewing extension which includes a float plane flight into the wilderness? This wonderful experience with local guides gives you the opportunity to get up close to the four legged animals that call this place home.

This tour ends at our gateway hotel at approximately 17:00 hrs. We recommend booking post-tour accommodation if time allows. If you are planning to fly tonight, please do not book a flight that departs before 21:00 hrs.