



## Alaskan Wildlife and Wilderness

This is the ultimate Alaskan adventure and definitely delivers the 'wow factor'! Complete with float plane flights, bear viewing, wildlife cruises and wilderness walks this tour has it all. Alaska boasts glaciers, forests, lakes and rushing rivers; legendary wildlife, thriving both in the sea and on land. One of the last bastions of true wilderness, it's the perfect place to see animals in their natural habitat.



14 days/13 nights

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Arrive Anchorage

Welcome to Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska with only 300,000 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', this is a city mixed with metropolitan luxuries and unrivalled natural wonders. It's not uncommon to find bear roaming the outskirts of the city, this is one truly wild place. A great way to spend your day is to wander around town getting a feel for the 49th state, speaking to the locals and checking out some of the great cafes and restaurants. A welcome meeting will be held at 18:00 hrs for you to meet your tour leader and fellow travelling companions. Accommodation: Comfortable hotel, Meals: (none)

#### Optional Activities:

- Alaska Native Heritage Center US\$25
- Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center US\$15
- Tony Knowles Coastal Trail US\$free
- Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum US\$10

#### Day 2: Denali National Park via Talkeetna

Leaving Anchorage, you enter the wilderness pretty much instantly and make your way towards Talkeetna where you stop for the opportunity to try a local delicacy, reindeer sausage, before arriving in Denali National Park. Home to the highest mountain in North America, legendary Mount Denali (6,194m), the park covers six million acres and houses some of the most unspoiled wilderness and spectacular scenery in the whole of Alaska. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (L, D)

#### Optional Activities:

- Denali scenic flight US\$524
- Dogsled demonstration in Denali US\$free
- Mountain biking in Denali, US\$20-\$57
- Whitewater rafting in Denali US\$92-\$187



### Day 3 & 4: Denali National Park

Enjoy two full days exploring the park with an included bus pass – the only way to get out into the incredible (and vast) wilderness. Try to spot Alaska's 'Big Five'; Caribou, Dall Sheep, moose, Grizzly Bear and wolves. Denali is one of the only national parks where you are encouraged to find your own path off the trails, great for those of you looking for pure unadulterated adventure. There are plenty of optional walks and activities in Denali or you can take to the skies on a scenic (and highly recommended) glacier landing helicopter flight. As the trails are wild and unmarked, the hiking opportunities are endless. Your tour leader will suggest some local spots of scenic beauty and the best spots to view wildlife. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

### Day 5: Alaska Range

Head into the heart of the Alaska Range to spend the night in local cabins at Maclaren Lodge. With spectacular views of the surrounding valley this rustic lodge provides the ideal setting for an authentic Alaskan experience. Although rooms are basic bunkhouse style, its remote location is something to savour with the chance to look out for grazing caribou near the quiet lakes of the tundra. This is also a birder's paradise with many species often sighted. Accommodation: Multi-share cabin, Meals: (B, L)

#### Optional Activities:

- Canoeing (unescorted) US\$50-\$65

### Day 6: Wrangell - St. Elias National Park

The scenery keeps on coming thick and fast and today is no different. Drive through the dramatic Copper River Valley and stop for a short walk on the Liberty Falls Trail, just off the Edgerton Highway en route to the small town of McCarthy (population 40 in the summer, 17 the remainder of the year). This quaint settlement at the centre of a mass of mountains, glaciers and wilderness will be your base to explore Wrangell-St Elias for the next two nights. Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve contains nine of the sixteen highest peaks in the United States, including the second highest, Mount. St. Elias (5,488m), and is the most glaciated region in the North American continent. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (L, D)

### Day 7: Wrangell - St. Elias National Park

A day of optional activities in Wrangell-St Elias. An imposing area of glaciers, mountains, forest and wilderness, with wonderful wildlife viewing opportunities including Dall Sheep, mountain goats, caribou, moose, Grizzly and Black Bear are just some of the parks inhabitants. An optional experience and highly recommended, is the chance to fix crampons to your boots and hike around the Root Glacier, exploring its deep blue pools and carved ice shapes. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

#### Optional Activities:

- Ghost Town tour – Kennecott Copper Mill US\$28
- Scenic flight US\$120-\$270

### Day 8: Worthington Glacier - Thomson Pass, Chugach Range - Valdez

Your journey continues towards Valdez, passing through the Chugach Range. On the rivers, fish wheels have been built to catch salmon migrating upstream to spawn. Stop at the famous Worthington Glacier, adjacent to the Thompson Pass for a short walk. Explore the busy seaside town of Valdez, a return to civilisation after the mountainous isolation of McCarthy. Valdez is a new town, as a major earthquake destroyed the old one in 1964. There are various hiking trails in and around Valdez such as the Mineral Creek Trail or the Keystone Canyon Pack Trail. You can also visit the historical museum to learn about the native culture, gold rush history and the famous pipeline. Why not opt for a sea kayaking excursion to get up close and personal to the glacier? Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

#### Optional Activities:

- Valdez Sea Kayaking US\$259

### Day 9: Valdez

Free day exploring Valdez. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

### Day 10: Ferry to Seward

Board the Alaska state ferry, leaving Valdez behind and crossing Prince William Sound to reach Whittier. The views of the mountains, bays, fjords and glaciers are unforgettable and the water is home to a unique array of marine life, Harbour Seals and sea lions. On arrival, explore the small fishing town of Seward. 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. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

### Day 11: Resurrection Bay & Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

Set off on a full day wildlife viewing cruise around Resurrection Bay and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. To maximise your experience on board your guide will give a detailed commentary on the wildlife you see and the local area. On previous trips, travellers have spotted sea lions, otters, Dall's Porpoise and an endless variety of seabirds including puffins and eagles. Orcas are often spotted and if you're lucky, Humpback Whales can also be seen! Enjoy an



included fresh salmon and prime rib lunch on board (vegetarian options available). Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L)

#### Day 12: Harding Icefield Trail - Exit Glacier

The staggeringly beautiful Kenai Fjords National Park offers wonderful wildlife and bird watching opportunities amidst dramatic fjords and glaciers. Within the park is the huge Harding Icefield, claiming 300 square miles in its entirety. If weather conditions permit, take a spectacular walk from Exit Glacier to the Harding Icefield for views of deep crevasses and huge seracs. At an elevation 900m you will eventually reach a lookout point over the icefield and the views will be out of this world. The walk is strenuous and entirely dependent on weather conditions; if there is too much snow and ice on the trail, it may be impassable. There's an easier option available if you prefer, using an accessible trail to reach a different viewpoint of the glacier. For those who want to explore Seward a little more, the impressive Alaska SeaLife Center, which houses a remarkable public aquarium and ocean wildlife rescue centre, is a fun place to visit. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

#### Day 13: Big River Lakes

Head to Soldotna, your launch site for the bear float plane activity. Float planes are a way of life for many of the more remote Alaskan communities, particularly those who still have no road access and too little space amongst the mountains to build runways. Float planes generally seat a maximum of 10 people and you'll take to the air for a beautiful flight across the Cook Inlet. Land in the Big River Lakes area and transfer to the waiting boats to explore the river and lake system keeping your eyes open for bear. The lakes are just on the fringe of the Lake Clark Park and Wilderness Reserve but a long way from any roads and civilisation and the chance of bear sightings is excellent; you can usually see Brown (Grizzly) or Black Bear here. You may see thousands of salmon pushing upstream to spawn and if you're lucky, you'll see bear catching and feeding upon them. This is Alaska at its best, almost completely untouched wilderness with a backdrop of ice-clad mountains and active volcanoes. Accommodation: Basic Camping, Meals: (B, L, D)

#### Optional Activities:

- Fishing with licence US\$50

#### Day 14: Alyeska - Anchorage

After breakfast and packing up camp, you'll drive for a couple of hours to Alyeska in the Chugach Mountain Range which is ideal for a final wilderness walk before returning to the state's capital, Anchorage. Containing around half the population of the state, Anchorage in some ways looks just like any other sprawling American town and after nearly two weeks in the small towns and villages the bustling streets of the city will feel somewhat different. Explore the art galleries and craft shops where you can see the beautiful Eskimo handicrafts being made. This tour ends at in Anchorage at approximately 5:00pm. We recommend booking at least one night post-tour accommodation, which we can add onto your program. However, if you are planning to fly out this evening please do not book a flight that departs before 9:00pm. Meals: (B, L)

## Details

#### Trip Code:

009390 - W20

### INCLUDED

- Transportation: 1 float plane trip, 1 cruise, Denali bus pass
- 11 nights participatory camping, 1 night multi-share cabin, 1 night hotel accommodation
- Camping equipment, except sleeping bag
- All meals while camping, except 2 dinners (B) Breakfast, (L) Lunch, (D) Dinner
- 2 day walks and up to 8 shorter walks
- Tour leader throughout

### NOT INCLUDED

- Flight to/from Anchorage
- Airport transfers
- Single supplement for single accommodation, limited, on request
- Gratuities to Tour Leader and local guides
- Optional activities
- Passport and visa fees, vaccinations as required
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature

## TOUR NOTES



*Disclaimer: We do our utmost to ensure that information posted on our website is correct at the time of publication, however trip details are subject to change without notice by the suppliers and operators involved. We update the information as soon as possible when changes are advised to us, however, we cannot assume responsibility for such changes made by the suppliers and operators.*

## ROUTE MAP



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