

# Alaska Private Tour

Wilderness and wildlife

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





## ALASKA — WILDERNESS AND WILDLIFE

Alaska is a nature lover's utopia — ice-capped mountains, ancient forests, pristine lakes and rivers full of fish. Separated from the mainland by Canada's British Columbia – Alaska also happens to be the most sparsely populated state of the US... which makes it even more desirable for those who love the great outdoors.

The modern history of the region is fascinating. Various indigenous tribes roamed the region for thousands of years before the Russians established a settlement. The US government purchased Alaska from the Russian government in 1867 for 2c an acre - about \$7 million! It became an official US territory in 1912 and official state - the US's 49th State - in 1959. In the late 1960s, oil was discovered, and an oil boom soon followed. Pipelines, refineries, roads, townships, and other infrastructure soon followed. Today, agriculture, fishing, and tourism make up the primary industries. Alaska's capital city, Anchorage, with a population of around 300,000, is 10 times the size of the nearest cities, Fairbanks and Juneau. The region is incredibly sparse, with vast wilderness and some small towns dotting the state.

There's an abundance of wildlife to be spotted in Alaska. It's most famous for the brown and black bears found in healthy numbers. Depending on the regions you visit, you are almost guaranteed to see the bears. Caribou, moose and bison (introduced from Montana) are also commonly spotted. The rivers are filled with trout and salmon. Watching bears feed during the spawning period is the classic Alaskan postcard. There are hundreds of bird species to be found – including the iconic national emblem – the American Bald Eagle, which is thankfully no longer on the endangered species list. Orca and various species of whales can also be spotted off the Alaskan Coast and Bering Sea.

Blue Dot Travel has developed a comprehensive small group tour offering the best of the region. It is an active tour that includes national parks, wildlife, history, trekking, local culture, and much more. Alaska is generally regarded as one of the most scenic places on the planet.

Grab your camera and trekking shoes and join us!.



**Day 1  
IN TRANSIT**

Depart Australia for Alaska. Ensure you check your luggage through to Anchorage. Please refer to your separate flight schedule. Arrive in Anchorage and be transferred to the Aspen Suites Hotel. *Meals in flight*

**Day 2  
ANCHORAGE**

Our tour begins in downtown Anchorage with a visit through the original Anchorage townsite, out to Earthquake Park to learn about the great quake of 1964 (where you can see real earthquake damage!) and the busiest private seaplane base in the world. Then, we continue on to the Alaska Native Heritage Centre. Here, we'll see a village of authentic and traditional structures from Alaska's many native cultures. We will have a chance to watch native dancing led by a local dance group or athletes demonstrating World Eskimo-Indian Olympic Games skills. Explore exhibits that take you back in time. You may choose to stay longer and use the Heritage Center courtesy shuttle back to the downtown visitors centre or depart with your tour guide for transport back to your starting point. Lunch is at the Alaska Native Heritage Centre before getting on the shuttle to the Anchorage Museum. Alaska's largest museum tells the real story of the North through art and design, history, science and culture. Explore and learn about the Alaskan native culture with this large collection

from the Smithsonian Institute. An expansive interactive history gallery tells the story of Alaska. A hands-on science discovery centre has marine life tanks, a planetarium and more. Tonight, you will make your way to our favourite gourmet pizza and beer restaurant, Moose's Tooth. *B/L/D*

**Day 3  
ANCHORAGE  
AND  
SURROUNDS**

This morning is free time - we suggest a walk or bike ride along the Tony Knowles coast track. After lunch (at cost), climb aboard for a fully-guided Alaskan experience unlike any other! Head north from Anchorage on the Glenn Highway Scenic Byway, passing farmland colonised during the New Deal, which now grows record-breaking produce like the 1,469-pound pumpkin! As we ascend the Talkeetna Mountains, we will enter the alpine area of Independence Mine State Historical Park in the breathtaking Hatcher Pass! We will walk through the old mining town listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Then, continue our picturesque journey



to the Musk Ox Farm, one of the world's most unique animal husbandry projects. Here, we will get up close to Musk Ox as we walk the trails aside from these fascinating Ice Age creatures and learn about their adaptations and place in the future of Alaskan agriculture. You'll also have time to explore their shop for gifts such as qiviut (Musk Ox wool, one of the most sought-after fibres in the world). A farm-to-table style meal is included at the locally owned and operated restaurant! This eatery provides delicious meals made from scratch with Alaska-grown fruits, vegetables, and meats. Drive back to Anchorage after dinner. *B/D*



#### Day 4 **MATANUSKA GLACIER**

Sit back and relax as you take in the scenic drive north to the Matanuska Glacier. Thousands of years old, this twenty-seven-mile-long river of ice is tucked up into the

head of the Matanuska Valley. Spend time on the glacier with an experienced guide at your side. Learn how the Matanuska Glacier was born, explore meltwater pools, and photograph awesome ice formations. Since walking on the ice is slippery fun, you will be provided with helmets, a walking stick, and spikes that attach to your shoes. Don't be surprised if your shoes get filthy with glacier flour. Special note: This tour requires about two hours of walking with uneven surfaces and elevation gain. Bring sturdy footwear (stiff-soled hiking boots/shoes), and suggest bringing an extra pair of socks. Glaciers are an inherently dangerous environment, and Matanuska Glacier is no exception. The local company has operated trekking on the Matanuska Glacier since 2011 and is fully insured for glacier trekking. Safety training is part of the trek, with only small groups for additional safety, a 6-1 guest-to-guide ratio. *B/L*



#### Day 5 **TALKEETNA**

Head north from Anchorage to Talkeetna. Our local tour guides will provide knowledgeable commentary on this scenic drive and then show

you around this quaint town. Once the setting for a famous sitcom, Talkeetna retains its uniqueness with original gold rush buildings, quirky locals, an unrivalled view of Denali, and plenty of wilderness. The Ranger Station and the Talkeetna Museum will provide enough current and historical data and knowledge to understand the incredible subarctic region of Denali National Park, the Alaskan Range, and the Talkeetna Mountains. On our way to Talkeetna, we will pass through the famous town of Wasilla to visit Iditarod Headquarters. Our visit here is a great introduction to the famous Iditarod Trail

Sled Dog Race, which goes hand in hand with Alaska's rich history. Enjoy video footage of the race, trophies, exhibits, a race checkpoint replica, and a gift shop. Next, we head to Talkeetna, where we will enjoy lunch in a local eatery before heading to the Talkeetna Museum and Historical Society for the afternoon Mt. Denali Presentation. A local ranger will familiarise you with Mt. Denali and the many climbing expeditions that have occurred throughout modern history. Next, your guide will get you checked in to the Swiss Alaskan Lodge for your night's stay. You can relax there for a while and then get a taxi downtown for dinner or have your guide take you back to downtown before the guide departs back to Anchorage. Head into downtown Talkeetna for dinner at Denali Brewing/Twister Creek Restaurant - 7pm reservation. Tonight we stay at the Swiss Alaska Inn. *B/L/D*

#### Day 6 **DENALI**

Today you will travel from Talkeetna to Denali aboard the historic Alaska Railroad. Ride the Denali Star Rail over the impressive Hurricane Gulch and the once-stopover rail town of Curry (now a ghost town) where weary travellers came to rest on the long trip from Anchorage to Fairbanks. (Upon arrival in Denali, look for the shuttle to your lodgings.

Your luggage, if tagged for your specific hotel, will be transported directly to the hotel in Denali. Each hotel or hotel group has a



marked shuttle van or bus, to transport you from the rail depot). Your Alaska Railroad experience will begin onboard the historic Adventure Class railcars. These lower-level railcars offer assigned seating in comfortable chairs with large windows in each row. Make sure to visit the Vista Dome railcar, which offers open seating and glass-dome ceiling viewing for panoramic views as Alaska unfolds along the track. Depending on capacity, you may be seated four to a table on busy days to accommodate all guests best. Onboard purchases must be made with credit cards as cash payments are no longer accepted on the Alaska Railroad. Luggage Policy: During your ride on the Alaska Railroad, you are allowed one carry-on and two pieces of checked luggage. You must have a photo ID to check in for your Alaska Railroad journey. If you are travelling internationally, your passport is the required form of identification. A representative will wait with the lodge shuttle to give you your room number and key. Have your luggage tag ticket stub ready - you will have received this at your departure point when you check your luggage. You will write your room number on the ticket stub and turn the stub in to the representative so your luggage will get to your room efficiently. Then, board the shuttle, take the short ride up to the lodge, and go directly to your room or your first Denali adventure. Welcome to Denali- where you'll stay at The Denali Bluffs Hotel for two nights. *B/D*



## Day 7 DENALI

Your adventure begins with pickup at your hotel before embarking on your unforgettable full-day Denali tour. The

Park's single-stretch gravel road curves through the rugged landscapes of verdant tundra, magnificent mountain peaks and braided glacial rivers. Be on the lookout for resident wildlife roaming the scenes with help from your experienced driver guide, who will provide interesting narration of the fascinating history and points of interest along the journey. Take a short scenic stop at Mile 30, a picturesque landscape of the meandering Teklanika River, before continuing towards Mile 46, the Polychrome Overlook, an incredible vantage of colourful vegetation, streams, glaciers and mountains. Stretch your legs at Mile 53 Toklat River and again at the interesting Eielson Visitor Center with dramatic views of Denali as your backdrop. After a complete morning of sightseeing, you will arrive at the idyllic frontier land of Kantishna, a historic mining district in the heart of Denali National Park. Here, enjoy a buffet deli lunch at an exclusive lodge. Next, join the experienced guides for a dog sled or gold panning demonstration. There is always an option to spend some peaceful time in the surrounding wilderness before the bus departs back down the road. We have an 8:00 pm (20:00 hrs) reservation for dinner in the Mountaineer, the restaurant in the main building of the Denali Bluffs Hotel. *B/L/D*

## Day 8 DENALI – ANCHORAGE

Ensure your photo ID is handy again to check in for your Alaska Railroad journey. Check-in an hour before departure at the Denali Rail Depot for your rail journey south to Anchorage. We recommend heading over to the park entrance area early and taking time to visit the Murie Science Center if you have not already. Your Alaska Railroad experience will be on board the GoldStar Service railcars as you pass through unique towns like Wasilla, Talkeetna, and the ghost town of Curry where weary travellers came to rest on the trip between Fairbanks and Anchorage. These upper-level glass-dome ceiling railcars allow you to sit in your spacious and comfortable assigned seating while panoramic views of Alaska unfold along the tracks! Your Alaska Railroad tour guide is stationed in the GoldStar railcar, providing narration and answering any questions. You will also have access to the exclusive GoldStar open-air, 2nd story viewing platform, which offers fresh air and excellent photo opportunities. Onboard dining and bar service is included with your GoldStar ticket! Enjoy soft drinks and two complimentary adult beverages per person at the bar on the upper level. Lunch and dinner will be served in the lower-level, full-service dining room. We'll arrive back in Anchorage in the evening, where we'll take the Aspen Suites shuttle back to our suite for the night. *B/L/D*

## Day 9 HOMER

The Kenai Peninsula is often referred to as the Alaska's Playground. Your local guide will share some secrets of this area during one of the most scenic drives in Alaska. Pass through unique tiny towns along the way, that all share an Alaskan fishing culture along the banks of the world-famous Kenai, Russian, and Kaslof Rivers. One of the highlights of our day is a visit to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, where we will visit bears, musk ox, moose, elk herd, caribou herd, and more rescued Alaskan wild animals.

These animals are visible in a natural environment, cared for year-round at

the Center. We will stop for lunch en route at our favourite deli and enjoy a chance to stretch our legs. Upon arrival in Homer, we will have dinner at another local favourite before heading over to check into our lodgings for the next three nights at Homer's Second Star Vacation Mansion. *B/L/D*



## Day 10 HOMER AND SURROUNDS

This morning, your guide will take you up to the Wynn Nature Centre to enjoy the beauty of the boreal forest. On our guided hike through nature, smell the freshness of the spruce forest, gaze at the wildflowers and watch for the appearance of moose, bear, lynx, and songbirds on this 140-acre wildlife reserve. We will eat a casual sack lunch outdoors, here at the Center, before heading down the mountain to the water's edge. This afternoon, another local naturalist guide will introduce you to the seaside creatures of Homer. Peak under the docks to view some of Alaska's marine invertebrates while our guide illuminates some of the diverse and unique animals hiding under the Homer docks! This evening, a birding presentation will be hosted at the Beluga Slough, with chances to see several species of seabirds common to the beautiful and abundant Kachemak Bay. *B/L/D*

## Day 11 KATMAI NATIONAL PARK

This morning is free time at your leisure. At breakfast, you'll have the chance to pack a lunch from the sandwich bar to take with you on your adventure. Alternatively, you are welcome to relax at the house and eat at your leisure until after lunch, when we depart for a bear viewing. Sasquatch Alaska Adventures will lead you to some of the most amazing places in Alaska where you can experience wild Alaskan brown bears in their natural habitat. The area they fly to is in the middle of the world's largest population concentration of brown bears! This is a wilderness tour: we walk along the same trails as the bears do, sit on the same river banks, and observe them as they go about their daily lives. No barriers, fences or platforms separate us from the bears

or other wildlife. Depending on the time of year, you can expect to see the bears grazing on sedge grass, digging up clams, playing together, courting each other, resting, and fishing. On these tours in the parks, we follow strict 'leave no trace' policies and behave in a way that has



the least impact on the bears and other wildlife and the natural environment. The bear viewing tour departs by bush plane from the airport in

Homer and fly past glaciers and volcanoes along the rugged coastlines of Katmai National Park and Lake Clark National Park. They are perfect for professional and amateur photographers, naturalists, wildlife viewers, National Park enthusiasts and anyone who enjoys spending time in a beautiful wilderness. *B/L/D*

### Day Trip Bear Viewing Essentials

- Bottles of water to last the day. (Lunch provided)
- Small day pack large enough to carry your equipment & lunch
- Warm clothing and Rain jacket, rain pants and rain hat.
- Insect repellent and Sunblock
- Medications - any you regularly take, bring enough for two days. If the weather prevents us from returning back to Homer from Katmai, we will spend the night at our wilderness camp. This way, you will have your extra medication with you, which could prevent a medical emergency or, at a minimum, prevent undue stress
- Rubber Boots: We supply the knee-high rubber boots sizes between 5-13. Any guest with a foot size smaller or larger than this will have to supply their own rubber boots for the trip
- Rain Gear: Guests are recommended to bring with them rain jackets with rain pants



### Day 12 SEWARD

This morning your guide will drive you to Seward (approximately 3 hours). When we arrive in Seward, we will meet up with the friendly folks from Ididaride Sled Dog Tours, eat lunch, and spend the afternoon at the Alaska SeaLife Center. Your adventure begins with a 2-mile dog sled ride. Feel the power, excitement, and energy of our amazing sled

dogs as they are harnessed to our comfortable wheeled sleds on this tour. Mush through the Seward Alaska wilderness to the base of Resurrection Mountain and along Box Canyon Creek. Your guide will explain how

we train and steer the dogs, and tell stories from the trail. Our afternoon adventure is a behind-the-scenes tour of the Alaska Sea Life Centre. This tour includes a guided walk through the Alaska Sea Life Centre's back hallways, getting familiar with their scientific research, wildlife response and other marine science programs that happen behind the scenes to support Alaska's marine ecosystem. Then, we'll check into the Harbour 360 Hotel. There's an early dinner planned at Ray's waterfront restaurant. *B/L/D*

### Day 13 GIRDWOOD

After breakfast we will depart Seward around 10:00am this morning, heading back through the Kenai Mountains, and then through the 2.5-mile-long Anton Anderson Memorial tunnel to Whittier. Then, check in at Lazy Otter Charters for a 4-hour cruise. Journey into Prince William Sound onboard the Explorer or Sound Voyager! View tidewater glaciers and magnificent waterfalls. Sit at the face of a wall of ice. Cruise up to a bird rookery. Lunch will be served onboard this intimate boat cruise.

Then we will travel back through the tunnel and continue on the Girdwood. We will get checked into our rooms at Hotel Alyeska and take a break for about an hour,



before heading up the mountain to dinner. As this is our second last night, it will provide us with an opportunity to reflect on our previous two weeks and we'll use this lovely restaurant as our official farewell dinner. *B/L/D*

### Day 14 GIRDWOOD – ANCHORAGE

This morning our guide will collect you from the hotel and we will head to our favourite local eatery for an Alaskan breakfast! We will drive along the scenic Turnagain Arm, back to Anchorage, for your last night in Alaska where we will stay at the Aspen Suites. The rest of the day is at leisure. Dinner is included at Anchorage 49th State restaurant. *B/D*

### Day 15 ANCHORAGE AND DEPARTURE

Breakfast is included before we transfer to the airport for home – or our next destination. *B*

### Day 16 IN TRANSIT