



Trip Summary

Grand Alaska Road Trip

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: June 5 – 19, 2010
Location: South Central Alaska
Cost: \$ *3990
Rating: 2
Activities: Hiking, canoeing, sea-kayaking, rafting, cultural exploration
Meeting Place: Anchorage, AK
Arrive: at our hotel in Anchorage by 5pm June 5th
Depart: Flights can be scheduled for after 3pm, June 19th

* Deduct 5 % for being one of the first 5 to register (by 2/5/10) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 14 nights lodging
- all activities on the itinerary, including rafting, flight-seeing, ferries and kayaking
- all meals from dinner on June 5 through breakfast June 19 except for two lunches and two dinners
- all transport within Alaska
- entrance fees to sites that are included in the itinerary

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- transportation to/from Anchorage
- alcoholic beverages
- guide gratuities
- 2 lunches and 2 dinners

Trip Highlights

- Seeing the vast expanse of Denali National Park and towering Denali (Mt. McKinley)
- Kayaking and hiking on the Kenai peninsula
- Taking the ferry across the spectacular Prince William Sound
- Staying in the charming town of McCarthy, walking on glaciers, and rafting the Nizhina River
- Seeing an amazing diversity of wildlife, including moose, bear, Dall sheep, caribou and bald eagles
- Driving the Denali Highway, Alaska's most beautiful

Trip Overview

Alaska is a huge land, known for rugged landscapes, towering mountains, powerful rivers, and immense glaciers. Although exploring all of it would take months, a sampling of its finest can be seen on a road trip that starts in Anchorage and does a big loop through the interior and over to the coast. June is an ideal time to visit Alaska, with generally excellent weather, very long days, and fewer tourists.

Our Itinerary

As is true on any wilderness adventure, the final itinerary may be affected by weather, intervening events, group desires etc.

June 5. SAT Arrive Anchorage. We'll meet at 5 pm at our Anchorage hotel, have a trip orientation and then go out to dinner at a local restaurant. After completing any last minute preparations, we'll get to bed early. D

June 6. SUN : Today we leave Anchorage for Talkeetna. Along the way we visit the [Alaska Native Heritage Center](#), where we learn about the past and present cultures of the native Alaskans that make up 16% of the state's population. We then stop for a hike in Chugach Mountain State Park. Chugach is the third largest state park in the US and at over half a million acres, its half the size of Delaware! We, however, will only see a small part of it as we hike the Twin Peaks Trail, known for alpine meadows, incredible views, and the bands of Dall sheep that live there. We'll then hop back in the van and continue on to Talkeetna, the main staging area for Denali climbers and fascinating in its own right. Overnight at the [Talkeetna Cabins](#) B, L, D

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances.

On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$5 to \$10 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

Our Itinerary Continued

June 7. MON Today we go canoeing in the Talkeetna area. There are several lakes, imaginatively called X, Y and Z, and canoeing is the perfect way to spot some of the abundant wildlife that lives there. If we are lucky with weather, we may also get our first chance to see Denali (Mt McKinley). Talkeetna is a charming town and there will be time to explore it in the afternoon. Overnight at the [Talkeetna Cabins](#) B, L, D

June 8. TUES We leave Talkeetna for Denali National Park, stopping to hike the Coal Creek Trail in Denali State Park. This trail offers a beautiful climb to the alpine tundra, starting in lush vegetation and then quickly ascending above tree line to alpine country and amazing views of mountains and glaciers, tundra flowers, and perhaps some bears. We eat lunch on the trail and then continue on our way to [Denali Grizzly Bear Cabins](#), home for the next two nights B, L, D

June 9. WED We'll board the bus today (the only vehicle allowed inside Denali National Park) and take it to Eileson Visitor's Center. More than just a bus ride, the bus provides an opportunity to see the interior of this magnificent park and lots of opportunity to see wildlife, including grizzlies, caribou, moose and dall sheep. The entire round trip is about 7 hours, and if weather cooperates, there are several hiking options from the Center. We return in time for dinner, after which those who choose can go on a short hike to Horseshoe Lake inside the Park, home to beaver and the occasional moose. Overnight at Denali Grizzly Bear Cabins. B, L, D

June 10. THURS Today we leave open for you to choose what interests you most. How about a helicopter ride with a chance to walk on a glacier? Or perhaps river rafting is more your speed? Other possibilities include going to the dogsled demo in the park, joining a ranger for a naturalist hike, and walking the 2-mile Savage Loop Trail. We'll leave Denali about 3 pm and start our drive along Denali Highway, widely considered one of the most beautiful highways in the entire US (and for good reason!). Overnight MacLaren Lodge. B, D

June 11. FRI We finish our drive to McCarthy today, stopping for a short hike along the way. McCarthy was on the verge of becoming a ghost town until recently, when interest in Wrangell-St Elias park and the energy of some entrepreneurs revitalized it. It's still quiet though- the bridge across the river doesn't support autos so the town and the surrounding area have limited vehicles. It's a charming town and we'll have free time to explore the area before dinner. Overnight [Ma Johnson's](#), where we'll stay for the next three nights. B, L, D

June 12. SAT On Saturday we meet our local guide for a 4-6 hour hike out onto the Root Glacier. We will learn how to use crampons (pointy spikes that we strap onto our shoes) to stay steady on the ice, and enjoy a walk around the ice to see features such as crevasses, blue streams and pools, and moulins (holes drilled in the ice by flowing water). We'll have a picnic lunch and return to Kennecott by mid-afternoon. After a short break, we will spend 2.5 hours touring the 14-story mill building, where we will get a chance to see the original machinery used in the milling process and learn in detail about the history and mining processes found in Kennecott during its heyday as a copper mining town B, L

Our Itinerary Continued

June 13. SUN We totally change gears on Sunday! We will meet our rafting guides in the morning to get geared up and head down the river. The first part of the river-rafting trip is splashy and fast with spectacular views of the Stairway Icefall. After a big, hearty lunch, we head into the mighty Nizina Canyon, where the river is squeezed tightly between limestone cliffs that cause it to surge around the corners in an impressive show of power. At the end of the canyon we stop for a short hike near the banks of the Chitina River, then cross the river to where our bush plane will pick us up. For a spectacular ending to the day, we enjoy a flight back up the river and over the Kennicott and Root Glaciers with marvelous views of Mt. Blackburn, the Stairway Icefall, and the tiny towns of McCarthy & Kennecott. B, L, D

June 14. MON We leave McCarthy today and drive to Valdez, a small but important port on Prince William Sound. During the drive we often catch glimpses of the Alaska pipeline, the incredible 800 mile pipe that carries oil from the North slope down to the port of Valdez. Stopping along the way to hike Goat Trail and Wagon Road, we stretch our legs on this moderate five-mile hike. We also stop for a look at the Worthington Glacier before arriving in Valdez, where the lodging is basic and a local restaurant is surprisingly excellent. B, L, D

June 15. TUES Today we take the ferry across the spectacular Prince William Sound, which became a household word with the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989. Our journey is enhanced by a naturalist on board who willingly shares her knowledge of the area. There is no evidence of damage to the casual observer and the chance to be surrounded by wild beauty and look for wildlife, including whales and puffins, make it an unforgettable day. We'll arrive in Whittier early afternoon and you can choose whether to spend a couple of hours exploring this small town, doing your laundry., and/or going for a short, steep and spectacular hike to Portage Pass. Overnight Whittier. B, L, D

June 16 WED Today we hike along the Lower Russian River Trail to a beautiful falls where, with any luck, the salmon will be running. Nature, of course, is never predictable but the hike is so lovely that it is worth doing regardless. We then continue to Seward, one of the most beautiful towns in Alaska, and our lodging for the next three nights, the [Alaska Saltwater Lodge](#). The lodge is right on the bay and a peaceful place to relax or walk along the beach. Overnight Seward. B, L, D

June 17 THURS Today we combine free time to visit the town of Seward with a visit to Exit Glacier. There will be plenty of time to visit the Alaska SeaLife Center, watch the movie about the tsunami at the local library, and wander this beautiful town with its many interesting shops. Then in the afternoon we drive to Exit Glacier, in time to join a ranger on an interpretative walk. There are several walks possible, designed to give us close up views and an enhanced understanding of the ecosystem there. If we need any more hiking, the original Iditarod Trail starts here and makes a fun out and back. Overnight. B, D

June 18 FRI Having spent yesterday on the land, we spend our last full day on the water. Our trip combines a half day of sea kayaking with a half day wildlife cruise in Resurrection Bay. We start with a short boat transfer to Fox Island where our sea kayaking adventure begins with some instruction for those who are new to the sport. After a salmon bake lunch, we go on a 3-hour boat cruise in search of sea otters, whales, harbor seals and marine birds. We return to Seward in time for a final farewell dinner at the best restaurant in town. B, L, D.

June 19 SAT Today we drive back to Anchorage and we will have you back at the airport by 1 pm. This may be modified once flight schedules are known but please do not schedule your flights prior to 3 pm. Anchorage is a pretty and interesting town and if you have the time, we highly recommend spending a day there before or after the trip. B

Packing List

Packing for this trip is challenging because of the variety of activities we do. At the same time there is limited luggage room so please do not bring large suitcases. There will be opportunities to go to laundromats during the trip.

FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair light to mid-weight hiking boots. Be sure they fit comfortably, without constriction, when you are wearing one liner sock and one hiking sock. Your boots should be well broken in before the trip.
- 1 pair comfortable shoes to wear when we're not hiking/kayaking/etc: athletic shoes, Chaco/Teva/Keen sandals
- 1 pair boat shoes that can get wet: neoprene booties, Keens, Teva/Chaco sandals (could be your walking shoes)
- 2-3 pair thin liner socks: silk or synthetic equivalent (Coolmax, Polypropylene, Thermastat, etc.)
- 3-4 pairs hiking socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (Thorlo, Ultimax, or Coolmax). **Do not skimp on socks.**
- seal skinz/Neoprene Socks for kayaking and rafting (optional but highly recommended)

CLOTHING

- 1-2 pair lightweight, quick-drying hiking pants (supplex/nylon/blend). Zip offs are a good option.
- 1-2 pair lightweight long underwear top and bottoms: silk, wool or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, Thermastat, MTS, or polypropylene)
- 2 lightweight long sleeved shirt: one quick-drying button up is recommended
- 1 medium-weight top layer: wool shirt/pull-over or synthetic equivalent ("expedition-weight" Capilene, MTS) **no cotton, please.** A fleece/wool vest works well for this layer.
- 1 warm fleece jacket/pants
- 1 raincoat with hood and rain pants: good quality "waterproof" PVC coated nylon, e-vent, or Gore-Tex. "Water resistant" rainwear is **not** adequate.
- 1- 2 pair shorts: quick drying nylon shorts work well. (may not be necessary if you have zip-off pants)
- 3 t-shirts or short-sleeved shirts (synthetic or lightweight wool are recommended)
- 1 warm hat and gloves: wool or fleece.
- 1 wide-brimmed hat or baseball cap for rain, sun and high fashion.
- underwear/nightwear
- comfortable clothes to wear in our hotels, out to dinner, etc. Cotton is fine for these.

ESSENTIALS

- bandana
- 1 one-quart water bottle or hydration system
- insect repellent
- sunscreen and lip balm with at least SPF 15
- 1 day pack (lined with a garbage bag or with a pack cover) large enough to hold your supplies for the day (water, sunscreen, rain gear, extra layer, camera, etc.)
- ear plugs and eye mask (recommended)
- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- sunglasses with case and retention strap

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- medium sized towel (like a PakTowl)
- toilet paper; tampons or pads in ziplock bags
- biodegradable soap, toothbrush, paste, dental floss, lotion, extra contact lenses/glasses, if you wear them. Please limit the scented items you bring, as we will be in bear country.
- personal "patch kit": bandaids, ibuprofen, moleskin and Compeed (blister bandaids), personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician.

OPTIONAL PERSONAL GEAR

- binoculars
- pocket knife
- extra sunglasses w/Chums (eyeglass retention straps)
- camera, film/memory card, and extra batteries
- your favorite snack (we will also provide group snacks periodically during the day)
- small games or deck of cards
- small dry bag
- watch: water resistant
- mosquito head net or suit
- book(s), notebook, journal and pen/pencil
- +waterproof camera bag

Notes on the Packing List

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers everything you need to assure your safety and comfort. This time of year is quite variable. It may be warm and sunny, cool and drizzly, or both. It is better to not use everything you bring than to not have something you need. It is essential that you have the rain gear and clothes to stay warm during the day when you are out on the trail.

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack with space for all of your items (1800-2400 cu in). Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day. Having a daypack with a hip belt and padded shoulder straps will provide for much more comfortable hiking.

Footwear: Well-fitting, sturdy boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes *before* your trip. For general trekking, lightweight cordura or leather boots work well. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they are lined with Gore-Tex. We recommend boots that come above the ankle – you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain.

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use, ESPECIALLY blister or foot remedies like moleskin, gelskin, blister bandages or similar. The amount and kind you bring will depend on your tendency to blister but many people get blisters on hiking tours. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it with you than experiment on a trip.

Clothing: Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. The weather can be quite variable, so please follow the packing list.

Fabric Names: There are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store Cotton is not! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

Rain Gear: You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. **Be sure it keeps water out.** Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put on your daypack; can you still raise your arms? Lastly, the wind/rain pants. They should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots.

Hydration: It is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are hiking you will need water to be accessible in order to drink frequently. One option is to use a **HYDRATION SYSTEM** such as CamelBak, Platypus, and Gregory bladder bags which are simply a collapsible water bag with a hose attachment that you drink from. These fit inside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder where you can access your water without the use of your hands. Some models are designed to attach to the outside of your pack. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post
800-713-4534
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

Additional Trip Preparations

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Denali National Park: the official website of the National Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov/dena/>

Women in Alaska's History: This site was produced by two women students. Truly delightful, it introduces the diverse women who helped shape today's Alaska. <http://library.thinkquest.org/1131>

WEATHER

Alaskan weather is notoriously unpredictable. June is typically one of the driest months in Alaska and it is not uncommon to experience a week of warm, sunny weather. However, we could have a week of continual cold drizzle. The important thing to keep in mind is that with proper preparation, both of these can provide a pleasurable experience. Temperatures typically range from 70 to 35 degrees, though average lows are in the 50s.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

We will be staying at a variety of lodging throughout the week, so the best number for people to call is the office number (877/439-4042) and we will be able to get in touch with you. Cell phone reception is pretty good throughout Alaska as well.

CONDITIONING

In order to gain the most enjoyment from your Alaska adventure, its best to be in good physical condition when you arrive in Alaska. If you don't exercise regularly now, we advise you to start an exercise program at least three months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 4 or 5 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is fast enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Gradually add time until you are comfortable hiking for two hours. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe harder. The key is to exercise at a rate that makes you work, but not so hard that you are unable to talk or gasping for breath. Alternate longer days with shorter days.

While aerobic conditioning is much more important than strength training, you may also want to add a little weight training in your routine - specifically exercises that help strengthen your quads (for your knees) and upper back, shoulders and arms (for kayaking). Higher reps with lighter weights are better than training with heavy weights. Please call if you would like us to help you develop a specific conditioning program.

RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

A good source of information and books is:

Alaska Natural History Association
Phone:(907) 274-8440 or 866-AK-Parks
<http://www.alaskanha.org>

Alaska by James Michener. A typical weighty Michener history of Alaska from prehistoric up to modern times.

Facing the Extreme: One Woman's Story of true Courage,Death-Defying Survival, and her Quest for the Summit by Ruth Anne Kocour. Despite the over-hyped title, this is a well written and interesting account of the challenges of climbing Denali.

Collected Poems by Robert Service. No poet has ever better captured the flavor of northern life than this one. Who can forget The Cremation of Sam McGee?

Riding the Wild Side of Denali: Alaska Adventures with Horses and Huskies by Miki and Julie Collins. The true story of twin sisters who live in the interior of Alaska with their huskies and Icelandic horses.

Arctic Daughter by Jean Aspen. The amazing and true story of a young woman who went into the Alaskan bush with her boyfriend and dog to live off the land in the Brooks Range.

Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer. The true story of Chris McCandless, a young man who ventured into the Alaskan Wild with only a gas station map and a bag of rice. Also a very good movie.

Getting There

OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is sara@scaneastwest.com.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com. The location code is 20-0016.

TRAVEL

We will be meeting at our hotel in Anchorage at 5 pm the first day of the trip. You can arrive any time before then. Our hotel has a shuttle you can call from the airport. Anchorage International Airport (ANC) is served by most of the major airlines.

Alaska Airlines (800-426-0333 or www.Alaska-air.com)

Continental (800-525-0280 or www.flycontinental.com)

Delta Airlines (800-221-1212 or www.delta.com)

Northwest (800-225-2525 or www.nwa.com)

United (800-241-6522 or www.UAL.com)

LODGING

You should be able to fly in the day of the trip, but Anchorage is a fascinating town to visit and you may want to stay an extra night or two.

If you have a gambling spirit, the cheapest way to find a hotel room is to go through Priceline (www.priceline.com). We cannot guarantee that all the hotels in this area offer an airport shuttle. Our guides have stayed at very nice places in other cities for \$25 to \$40 a night, a bit more with service fees and taxes but still a bargain.

If you prefer to know what you're getting into, the following are a sample of the possibilities:

Days Inn Downtown (907-276-7226)

321 East 5th Avenue

Anchorage, AK 99501

Avg Price: \$152 - \$177

Located in the heart of downtown and affordably priced with complimentary transportation to and from the airport.

Millenium Alaskan Hotel Anchorage (907-243-2300)

4800 Spenard Rd.

Anchorage, AK

Average Price: \$248 - \$258

On the shore of Lake Spenard, this hotel is 1 mile from the airport and 4 miles from downtown, with complimentary shuttles to both. Health Club with Sauna, restaurant on site. In-room amenities: refrigerator, high speed internet, cable TV.

Getting There Continued

Bent Prop Inn & Hostel of Alaska (907-222-5220)

3104 Eide St. Anchorage, AK 99503

Private suites: \$59 -\$159

Semi Private hostel bunk \$30

Airport shuttle (surcharge), kitchen, complimentary WiFi, linens included.

Voyager Hotel (Roadway Inn)

501 K Street

Anchorage, AK 99501

Average Price: \$126

Located downtown. Rooms include a small kitchen with refrigerator, microwave and coffeemaker.

WHAT TO DO

Alaska Native Heritage Center

Address: 8800 Heritage Center Dr Anchorage, AK 99506

Tel: 907 330 8000

Anchorage Museum of Art and History

Address: 121 W 7th Ave Anchorage, AK 99501

Tel: 907-343-432

Tony Knowles Coastal Trail – an 11 mile (one way) paved bike trail that starts right from downtown Anchorage. Rent from Downtown Bicycle Rental: **Address:** 333 W. 4th St. **Tel:** 907-279-5293

Imaginarium: hands on science and discovery center

Address: 737 W 5th Ave # G Anchorage, AK 99501

Tel: 907-276-3179

REI Anchorage

Address: 502 W. Northern Lights Blvd

Tel: 907-272-4565