



Wild + Wonderful Alaska

With the smallest groups in Alaska, deluxe rail journeys through remote wilderness, two nights inside Denali, and a wildlife cruise in Kenai Fjords National Park, our unique adventures show you more of Alaska's extraordinary landscapes and abundant wildlife. Native culture, farm-to-table dining and spending time with lifelong residents plumb lesser-known facets of life in the Far North.



Your Small Group Journey Value

Wild + Wonderful Alaska

- + Fully guided throughout by our experienced Alaska Trip Leader
- + Extensive sightseeing with never more than 16 guests including all entry fees.
- + A choice of included nature adventures to personalize your stays in Denali National Park and Talkeetna.
- + 8 nights at our handpicked resorts and lodges including the Kantishna Roadhouse at the end of the Park Road 92 miles inside Denali National Park.
- + 17 meals: 8 breakfasts + 5 lunches + 4 dinners including a glass of wine or beer at all midday and evening meals
- + All on-tour transportation including deluxe *Wilderness Express* dome car seating for two journeys aboard the Alaska Railroad: Fairbanks to Denali and Denali to Talkeetna.
- + Luggage handling and all hotel taxes & service charges
- + Gratuities for all included meals, porters and lodge guides

Your Small Group Journey Discoveries

Wild + Wonderful Alaska

- + Join the owner of a family-run farm and walk with their reindeer through a boreal forest as you learn about this unique Far North ecosystem.
- + Thrill to the 360° views from your *Wilderness Express* deluxe dome car seat on two journeys aboard the Alaska Railroad, including the epic route from Fairbanks to Denali.
- + Venture to the very end of the Park Road and spend two nights deep inside Denali National Park just 25 miles from the base of North America's tallest peak.
- + Tailor your exploration of the remote Denali wilderness with a choice of guided adventures including nature walks, fishing and gold panning.
- + Get up close to musk ox on a 1930's colonial-era farm, home to a pioneering organization dedicated to the conservation and sustainable domestication of this prehistoric creature that once roamed the Earth with saber-tooth tigers and woolly mammoths!
- + Cruise into Resurrection Bay and Kenai Fjords National Park, surrounded by glaciers and ice fields and teeming with sea lions, porpoises, eagles, bears and whales.



Day by Day Itinerary

July 19, 2018 Day 1 – Welcome to Fairbanks, Alaska

On arrival, you'll be warmly greeted and escorted to the *River's Edge Resort*. Settle in to your private cottage and enjoy this wonderful setting on the banks of the Chena River. A brief orientation with our engaging Alaskan guide sets the stage for the adventures that await.

July 20, 2018 Day 2 – Exploring Fairbanks + Running with the Reindeer

Situated at the 64th Parallel, Fairbanks is very much a city of the far north. Surrounded by the imposing mountain ranges, pristine waterways and abundant wildlife of Central Alaska, it also boasts a charming downtown, thriving arts community and rich Alaska Native culture. Setting out this morning with our local guide, you'll get to know the varied facets of this vibrant river city. Heading north of town, you'll also visit the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Viewpoint for an up-close view of this \$8 billion engineering marvel. As you stand here watching this silver thread winding its way across the Alaskan wilderness, know that more than a million dollars of black gold is flowing through it every hour.

This morning, we'll also take you for a private visit to a family farm in the picturesque Goldstream Valley. Learn about the family's herd of reindeer as you walk with them through the towering conifers. Accompanied by one of the ranch's owners, a lifelong Alaskan resident, you'll learn about the natural history of this boreal forest as you follow these amazing creatures; the reindeer are domesticated but not trained, and sometimes decide to take their own route... So bring your spirit of adventure along with your camera!

In the afternoon, our visit through the Museum of the North, located on the Fairbanks Campus of the University of Alaska, includes a private talk about the Aurora Borealis and life in Alaska. This evening's welcome dinner includes fresh local fare accompanied by a couple glasses of wine or beer. Meals B+D

July 21, 2018 Day 3 – Deluxe Dome Train + Into Denali National Park

This morning, we'll take you to the Fairbanks Rail Depot to board the deluxe *Wilderness Express* train bound for Denali. From your luxurious reclining leather seat on the upper level, you'll have breathtaking 360° views through the full-length curved glass dome of these private rail cars. A freshly-prepared breakfast will be served in the lower level dining room as you make your way southward through the Alaska wilderness. Late in the morning, the spectacular vistas of the Nenana River Gorge signal our approach to Denali.

Step off the train at midday and embark on the unforgettable overland journey that will take us 92 miles to the very end of the Denali Park Road - where it dead ends in the Kantishna Valley deep inside America's third largest national park. As you make your way over four high mountain passes and through all of Denali's major vegetation zones (taiga, moist tundra and dry tundra), you'll want to keep your eyes sharp for Denali's Big Five – Bear, Moose, Caribou, Wolves and Dall sheep. The scenery, too, is amazing from the Riley Creek Railroad Bridge, a photographer's favorite, to the picturesque Yanert Valley that stretches through the mighty Alaska Range. And of course, there are the breathtaking views of Denali's impressive 20,000-foot peak!

By early evening, in a remote sector of the Park where few are fortunate enough to venture, you'll be checked in to your deluxe, log cabin accommodations at the *Kantishna Roadhouse*, situated amidst grand wilderness just 25 miles from the base of Denali! There'll be time to refresh and take in this magnificent setting before you sit down to a congenial meal here at our inviting backcountry lodge. After dinner, our Lodge's expert guides and naturalists will help you plan your activities for tomorrow. Meals B+D

[*Please Note:* Due to limited space on the bus that travels the Denali Park Road, guests are limited to soft-sided luggage not to exceed 35 lbs. Before boarding the bus, there is a storage facility where you can leave bags for a nominal fee.]

July 22, 2018 Day 4 – Guided Adventure Deep Inside Denali National Park

Arise this morning in the heart of Denali's untouched wilderness, surrounded by secluded forests along the banks of Moose Creek. This is the farthest point inside Denali National Park accessible by road, and the closest you can get to the base of North America's highest mountain without hiking or flying in! And this will be your base for the day as you tailor your wilderness exploration with the included fully-guided adventures of your choice:

+ **Hiking + Nature Walks:** Setting out after breakfast, you can choose a 2-hour walk or take a picnic lunch and hike for up to 6 hours deeper into the wilds of Denali! Designed for beginner, intermediate and advanced trekkers these guided walks are led by experienced naturalists who will enrich your experience with

their deep knowledge and passion for the wildlife and flora of the Kantishna Hills.

+ **Mountain Biking:** Cover more ground as you explore the century-old mining roads that were built during the Gold Rush. Unforgettable vistas await in every direction and the road to Wonder Lake is especially rewarding. Helmets, daypacks and water bottles are available for your use on this exciting, guided adventure.

+ **Fly Fishing:** Arctic Grayling, a member of the trout family, are abundant in the crystal clear waters of nearby Moose Creek. With hip boots and rods available for your use, first-timers and experienced fishing enthusiasts alike can join our expert guide for catch-and-release fly fishing. Your first lure or fly is on us and a variety of other tackle is available for purchase at the Lodge. A fishing license is not required inside Denali National Park.

+ **Gold Panning:** Slip on a pair of rubber boots, grab a pan, and follow in the footsteps of those long-ago gold adventurers who flocked to the Kantishna Valley in the early 1900's. Our guide will be there to share some of the colorful history of the Gold Rush days and can teach you the methods of those old-time prospectors. Of course, any gold you find is yours to keep.

In addition to these included activities, we offer a Flightseeing Adventure for breathtaking aerial views of the Park's rugged terrain, vast tracts of untouched wilderness, and pristine waterways. In the air for about an hour, you'll have incredible views of the shimmering glaciers, towering granite walls and snow-covered peaks that enshrine North America's greatest mountain.

After dinner, you can join a talk with one of our Lodge's engaging naturalists.
Meals B+L+D

July 23, 2018 Day 5 – Deluxe Dome Train to Talkeetna

After breakfast, you'll make the return journey along the 92-mile Denali Park Road back to the National Park entrance. As with your inbound journey, the large windows and impressive height of the motorcoach offer the perfect viewing platform as you meander through the Park's wilderness. Our experienced driver guides are expert wildlife spotters and will stop the bus whenever an animal or view of Denali comes into range. In the early afternoon, board the *Wilderness Express* train and settle in to your reclining seat with its 360° views through the full-length curved glass dome. This leg of the journey south of Denali offers some of the best views of the mountain and also takes you over Hurricane Gulch on a 914-foot long bridge that spans a creek flowing nearly 300 feet below the train! Lunch will be served in the lower level Dining Room.

On arrival in Talkeetna, you'll be escorted to the outstanding *Talkeetna Alaska*

Lodge. Set on a ridge just above this small community, our lodge offers majestic views of Denali. This evening, you can explore the quaint town of Talkeetna at your own pace or just enjoy the ambience of our Lodge, with its curated collection of Native art. Meals B+L

July 24, 2018 Day 6 – Tailor your Stay in Talkeetna

After breakfast, tailor your morning to your personal taste for adventure with one of our included guided adventures!

+ **Jet Boat Expedition:** Fed by clear icy waters of the Susitna Glacier, this eponymous river flows for more than 300 miles through South Central Alaska. With broad tranquil stretches and narrow rushing courses, its picturesque forested shores are home to diverse wildlife including beavers and bald eagles. Capable of navigating even through extremely shallow waters, our fleet of high-tech jet boats are one of the few ways to explore this otherwise impenetrable wilderness. Accompanied by our engaging naturalist, this 2-hour adventure offers plenty of excitement, great views of the Alaska Range, and another chance to really experience Alaska's wild and wonderful beauty.

+ **Forest Zipline Adventure:** Covering vast swaths of the Northern Hemisphere, mostly north of the 50th Parallel, our planet's boreal forests are characterized by coniferous woodland of mostly pine, spruce and larch. Here outside of town, you'll find a pristine boreal forest set on a ridge above the Talkeetna River. Setting out with an experienced guide, you'll explore this unique biome along a carefully planned network of nine ziplines and three suspension bridges. Spectacular views of Denali and the Alaska Range are enhanced by heart-pounding adventure and a chance to learn more about the boreal forest and the formation of the Alaska Range and the area's glacial river valleys.

After lunch at the *Roadhouse Restaurant* in Talkeetna, the balance of your afternoon is free to explore or relax as you wish. If you wish, a variety of optional excursions are available including Flightseeing around Denali, river rafting, nature hikes and mountain biking. Meals B+L

July 25, 2018 Day 7 – Through the Matanuska-Susitna Valley to Mt. Alyeska

The Matanuska-Susitna Valley is known to historians and agriculturalists as a fertile farmland that was settled by families who came here from the lower 48 as part of the New Deal relief programs in the mid 1930's. But as you depart Talkeetna after breakfast and travel along the celebrated George Parks and Glenn Highways into the Valley, you'll soon discover that it's also still a land of pure Alaska wilderness; indeed, its farms and communities are set amidst towering mountains and deep glacier valleys blessed with waterfalls, fish-filled rivers and abundant wildlife.

Your destination this morning is the Musk Ox Farm where our privately arranged visit offers a fun and educational up-close introduction to this Ice Age mammal that roamed the Earth alongside saber-toothed tigers and woolly mammoths! Today, this once-endangered animal is prized for its dense undercoat that produces qiviut, one of the world's finest wools. Set on one of the 1930's-era farms deep in the picturesque Matanuska Valley, this not-for-profit organization is dedicated to the preservation and domestication of the musk ox, and to the promotion of qiviut production as a gentle and sustainable agricultural practice in the Far North. With the largest herd of musk ox in the world, you'll see frisky calves and seasoned old bulls as you explore the property and learn more about these giant prehistoric creatures.

The Valley's colonial-era farms are not just historic, but known as well for their produce – which grow to incredible size due to the fertile soil and immense amount of summer sunlight. Taking a break from sightseeing, today's lunch will feature this locally-sourced, farm-to-table bounty. In the afternoon, our visit to the Alaska Native Heritage Center will be led by a native Alaskan eager to share their knowledge and passion for Alaska's history and culture.

Continue along the Seward Highway, celebrated for spectacular views as it hugs the shoreline between the jutting peaks of the Chugach Mountains and the waters of the Turnagain Arm. Arrive in Girdwood and check in to the *Hotel Alyeska*, where your evening is free to enjoy the splendid setting of our resort. We also provide a ticket for the Alyeska Aerial Tram. Departing right from the hotel, the ride up to the 2,300-foot peak of Mt. Alyeska offers sweeping views in all directions – including the Turnagain Arm and several hanging glaciers in the Chugach Range. As you make the ascent to the summit, be sure to look down: Moose and bear sightings are common from the Tram! Meals B+L

July 26, 2018 Day 8 – Kenai Fjords Wildlife Cruise

This morning's scenic journey takes you around the eastern end of the Turnagain Arm, the site of one of the world's most impressive bore tides. Continuing southward, be sure to keep your eyes peeled for bald eagles, moose, bear and the Dall sheep that spend their time high up in the rocky cliffs. As we make our way over the Kenai Mountains through the Grandview Pass, you'll have spectacular views of glaciers, waterfalls, scenic gorges and rushing rivers.

Arriving in Seward, we'll continue to the harbor to embark our afternoon cruise into the dramatic landscapes of Resurrection Bay and Kenai Fjords National Park, home to calving glaciers and the massive 300 square mile Harding Ice Field. These waters are teeming with marine wildlife, and engaging guides are onboard to help you identify the animals - including stellar sea lions, harbor seals, Dall porpoises, sea otters and walruses. Humpback, killer and Minke whales also inhabit these waters, and the shores are home to bears and other Alaskan mammals. After this marine adventure, we'll return to the *Hotel Alyeska*

where you'll have time to refresh before a farewell dinner at one of our favorite restaurants in Girdwood. We include a couple glasses of wine or beer so you can raise a toast to your fellow travelers. Meals B+L+D

July 27, 2018 Day 9 – Departure from Anchorage

After breakfast, we'll take you to the Anchorage Airport for your homeward flight.
Meals B

Hotels

Wild + Wonderful Alaska

River's Edge Resort - Fairbanks, Alaska

Set along the banks of the tranquil Chena River, your overnight stay in a charming private cottage is the perfect way to start your Alaska adventure!



Kantishna Roadhouse - Denali, Alaska

Situated 90 miles inside the National Park, our deluxe backcountry lodge is surrounded by remote wilderness 25 miles from the base of Denali's 20,000-foot peak.



Talkeetna Alaska Lodge - Talkeetna, Alaska

Built of stone and timber, our charming lodge is set on a ridge just above the town of Talkeetna with inspiring views of the mighty Alaska Range.



Hotel Alyeska - Girdwood, Alaska

Surrounded by mountain peaks and hanging glaciers, your stay at our deluxe resort includes a ride on the Aerial Tram to the 2,300-foot peak of Mt. Alyeska.

