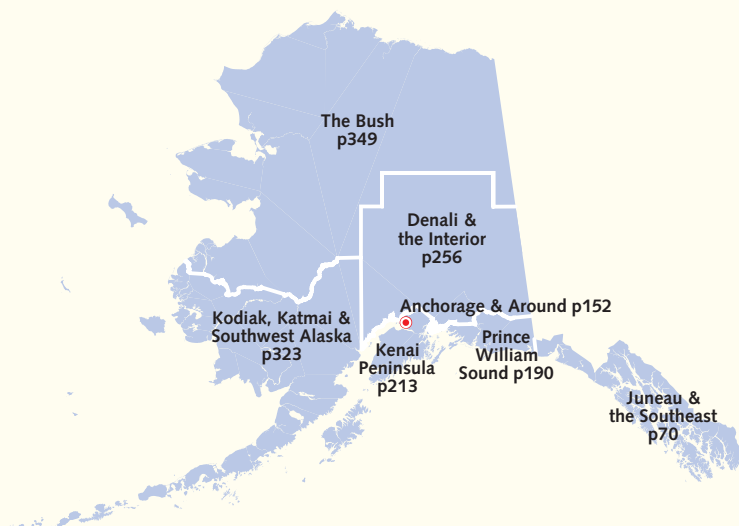


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ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips



 **Alaska's Best Hikes & Paddles** p50

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SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Jim DuFresne,
Catherine Bodry, Robert Kelly

PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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if you like...

Hiking Alaska is a hiker's paradise, offering great views and trails. From the Denali National Park to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, there are many trails to choose from. For more information, see the 'Hiking' section.	Paddling Alaska is a paddler's paradise, offering great views and trails. From the Denali National Park to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, there are many trails to choose from. For more information, see the 'Paddling' section.	Bear W Alaska is a bear's paradise, offering great views and trails. From the Denali National Park to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, there are many trails to choose from. For more information, see the 'Bear W' section.
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month by month

March

As the snow begins to melt, the weather is still cold, but the sun is out. This is a great time to visit if you want to see the snow and the sun.

Alaska Folk Festival

Alaska Folk Festival is a celebration of the state's diverse cultural heritage. It features music, dance, and crafts from various Alaska Native tribes.

UNDERSTAND ALASKA

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

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Alaska was inhabited by large clans of people who lived in the state for thousands of years, which can still be seen today in the ruins of their villages.

NE 28,000-13,000 BC
The first Alaskans arrived, migrating across a 900-mile land bridge from Asia to North America and eventually settling throughout the state in five distinct groups with distinct cultures.

AD 1741
Danish explorer Vitus Bering, employed by Peter the Great of Russia, makes his first trip to North America and becomes the first European to set foot on the continent.

Alaska Today

Environmental Issues

In other states, people are urged to see a wetland, but in Alaska, the background is an entire world of wilderness, encompassing 10 major natural areas, including the Denali National Park and Preserve.





Look out for these icons:



Our author's
recommendation



A green or
sustainable option



No payment
required

ALASKA'S BEST HIKES & PADDLES...50

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Alaska



Top Experiences >





OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Jim DuFresne

Coordinating Author, Juneau & the Southeast, Anchorage & Around Jim has lived, worked and wandered all across Alaska and has had a hand in all 10 editions of Lonely Planet's *Alaska*. As the sports and outdoors editor of the *Juneau Empire*, he was the first Alaskan sportswriter to win a national award from Associated Press. As a guide for Alaska Discovery he has witnessed Hubbard Glacier shed icebergs the size of pick-up trucks. Jim now lives in Michigan where he is

a regular contributor to www.michigantrailmaps.com, but regularly returns to the Far North to update his books.



Catherine Bodry

Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak, Katmai & Southwest Alaska

Catherine has spent the bulk of her adult life rebelling from her suburban up-bringing. She worked in Alaska during her summers in college, and then stayed to experience winter and go to grad school. She spent four years living in Seward and now calls Anchorage home. She's contributed to several Lonely Planet guides, including *Thailand*, *Canada*, *Discover Alaska* and *Pacific Northwest*

Trips. When she's not on the road for Lonely Planet, she's usually running the trails in the Chugach or dodging moose on the bike trails in Anchorage.



Robert Kelly

Denali & the Interior, The Bush A native of Canada, Robert first hitchhiked north after high school and found that he was quite at home in unbounded wilderness. Later, a series of summer jobs in Dawson City allowed him plenty of time to cross borders into Alaska and pursue his passion for hiking and road trips. For research on this guide, Robert happily returned to some old haunts (Chicken, how little you've changed!), re-drove the sublime Richardson Hwy, and finally made it

to the Arctic Ocean. Robert has been a freelance writer for the past decade and *Alaska* was his 7th guide for Lonely Planet.

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travelers.



Five Days

Fairbanks to Seward by Train

This land-based itinerary takes advantage of the scenic Alaska Railroad corridor. Start out in **Fairbanks**, the northernmost point of the Alaska Railroad, where you can spend a day exploring the museums and a night appreciating that the sun barely sets. Hop on the train to **Denali National Park**, and take a good day hike on the new Triple Lakes Trail. The next morning, take the extraordinarily scenic, eight-hour ride to **Anchorage**; along this stretch the tracks leave the road and probe into roadless wilderness, paralleling rivers instead of the highway. Spend two nights and one full day in Anchorage, taking advantage of its surprisingly sophisticated shopping and dining scene. Check out the world-class Anchorage Museum, or work off your salmon belly with a bike ride along the Coastal Trail. Then hop aboard for another scenic journey to **Seward**. Again, the train deviates from the road and takes you 10 miles into the Chugach Mountains. Seward is the southern terminus of the railroad, ending in spectacular Resurrection Bay. Be sure to take a tour of Kenai Fjords National Park to spot sea lions, sea otters and whales.



10 Days

Katmai National Park to Anchorage

One of the fastest growing activities in Alaska is bear viewing. There's no shortage of bears here, nor tourists wanting to see one – preferably catching and devouring a salmon. Make it to at least one of the following destinations and you're likely to spot one.

One of the most famous bear-viewing sites is Brooks Falls in **Katmai National Park & Preserve**. Here is where you'll catch the ultimate Alaskan photo: a dozen grizzlies perched on the edge of a waterfall, snapping salmon out of the air as they leap upstream. There are so many bears here in July, in fact, that the moment you step out of your float plane at Brooks Camp you are ushered into the National Parks office for a mandatory bear orientation, likely passing a grizzly or two ambling up the shore of Naknek Lake on your way.

A bit more accessible than Katmai National Park & Preserve is **Denali National Park**, which sits on the road system. Here you can jump onto a park shuttle bus and press your face against the glass as you scour the sweeping landscape for both brown and black bears. Though you're likely to spot one of these legendary beasts, you'll probably also catch sight of caribou and moose.

Keep heading north to **Point Barrow** for a chance to spot a polar bear at the top of the world. Photographing one of these massive white creatures is an experience few will ever have. A guided tour will take you out of town where you might also catch sight of a walrus.

For a more urban experience, fly to **Juneau**. The most affordable bear watching is found here, since you don't have to travel far from the city to catch brown and black bears feasting on salmon at the capital city's Steep Creek near Mendenhall Glacier.

Finally, if you haven't had the luck to be in the right spot at the right time, you can always head to **Anchorage** and see, all in the same hour, a black bear, a grizzly and the magnificent polar bear at the Alaska Zoo. It's not quite as cool as seeing a bear in its natural setting, but you can get much closer to them, and it's a lot safer.



Two Weeks Cruising Southeast Alaska

One of the most exciting trips is taking the Alaska Marine Highway from Bellingham, WA, to Skagway. It's an easy-to-plan journey through a scenic region of Alaska, although you should reserve space on the Alaska Marine Highway ferry if you want a cabin. Board the ferry in Bellingham and enjoy the coastal scenery of Canada – including staffed lighthouses – for a couple of days before disembarking for two days at **Ketchikan**. If it's not raining spend a day climbing Deer Mountain and enjoy lunch on the peak with panoramic views of the Inside Passage. Head out to Totem Bight State Park to see totems and a colorful community house. If it *is* raining, book a flightseeing tour of Misty Fjords National Monument, an almost mystical landscape of steep fjords and waterfalls running off foggy green mountains.

Catch the ferry to **Wrangell** and take a wild jet-boat tour up the Stikine River, North America's fastest navigable river. Be sure to visit Petroglyph Beach, where ancient rock carvings of faces and spirals emerge at low tide. Continue to **Sitka** on the ferry for an afternoon at Sitka National Historical Park and another on a whale-watching cruise.

Head to **Juneau** and sign up for a walk across the beautiful ice of Mendenhall Glacier. Top that off the next day by climbing Mt Roberts and then having a beer (or two) before taking the Mt Roberts tramway back to the city. In the evening enjoy one of the city's salmon bakes and indulge in the tourist trap that is the Red Dog Saloon.

Climb aboard high-speed catamaran MV *Fairweather* for two days in **Skagway**, the historic start of the Klondike Gold Rush. Board the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad for a day trip to Lake Bennett and in the evening catch the rollicking *Days of '98 Show*. Take a hike in the Dewey Lakes Trail System, which originates right in town. After Skagway you'll need to backtrack to Juneau if you want to fly home. Spend your final day flying through the rainforest like an eagle on one of the city's two ziplines. Fly home from here or extend your trip and take the state ferry back.



Two Weeks Road Tripping

Driving the very open roads in such a dramatic land is what road tripping is all about. Get yourself a rental vehicle and crank up your tunes: you're in for an amazing ride. Fly into **Anchorage** and pick up your car (make sure you book well in advance). Stop at one of the city's large supermarkets, stock up with road-trip goodies and the local brew and then beat it out of town.

Head north out of town and take the George Parks Hwy through Wasilla. Turn at the Talkeetna Spur Rd and hang out in **Talkeetna**, a laid-back climbers' town. Spend the day on the last flagstop train in the US, the *Hurricane Turn*. In the evening, be sure to check out the antics at the historic Fairview Inn's bar.

Head back to the Parks Hwy and continue north to the **Denali Highway**. Open only in summer, this 135-mile dirt road traverses the foothills of the Alaska Range. Take your time; the road is rough and the scenery stunning. Pitch a tent along the road wherever it feels right – preferably next to a rushing stream – and then continue heading east in the morning until you hit the Richardson Hwy.

Travel south and then follow the McCarthy Rd east to the Kennecott River, 127 miles from Glennallen. Spend the next day exploring the quaint village of **McCarthy** and the amazing mining ruins at Kennecott. Return to the Richardson Hwy and head south.

Continue into **Valdez** and stay an extra day to splurge on a Columbia Glacier cruise. Drive onto the Alaska Marine Highway ferry (reserve this in advance) and sail across Prince William Sound to Cordova. Drive the amazing Copper River Hwy, which runs across one of the largest continual wetlands in North America, out to **Childs Glacier** and the Million Dollar Bridge. Spend a night camped across the river from the glacier, listening to the boom of calving ice. Drive back into Cordova and onto the ferry to Whittier. On the same day drive 90 miles south to **Seward**, passing through scenic Turnagain Pass. Stay two days in Seward; book a boat tour or kayak in Resurrection Bay, but on the afternoon of the second day hightail it back to Anchorage (127 miles) to turn in your car before the dealer closes.

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