



# Prince William Sound

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## Best Hikes

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## Best Places to Stay

- USFS Cabins out of Cordova (p210)
- Robe Lake Lodge (p201)
- Orca Adventure Lodge (p210)

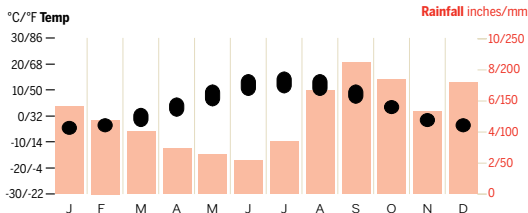
## Why Go?

This 15,000-sq-mile region is home to precipitous fjords, impossibly steep coastal mountains, 150 boom-crashing glaciers, remarkable bird and animal life, and three very unique villages that provide your jumping off point to adventure.

Connected to the highway system (and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline), Valdez has dramatic mountain views, and helicopter skiing and blue-water paddling that is out of this world. The rough-neck city is flat, industrial and stark. Earthy Cordova is only accessed by boat or plane. This fun-loving fishing town has a quaint and compact city center, excellent bird watching and access to great hikes in the Chugach Mountains. On the western edge of the Sound, Whittier is easily reached by car from Anchorage. It is a bizarre city born out of war-time necessity that's hideous, gorgeous, evocative and eerie. There are fun glacier cruises and paddles out here, but the geography limits your land-bound adventures.

## When to Go

### Valdez



**Apr–May** Tail end of the heli-skiing season, massive bird migrations and pre-season discounts.

**Jun** Things dry out (kind of), hotels open and the wildlife kicks into overdrive.

**Jul** Whale watching picks up, the salmon are running and the sun shines bright.

## History

Prince William Sound was long a crossroads of Alaska Native cultures; the region has been inhabited at various times by coastal Chugach Inuit people, Athabascans originally from the Interior, and Tlingits who traveled up from Alaska's panhandle. The first European to arrive was Vitus Bering, a Danish navigator sailing for the tsar of Russia,

who anchored his ship near Kayak Island, east of Copper River, in 1741.

Prince William Sound's three major towns have rather divergent modern histories. Valdez was settled in 1897, when 4000 gold prospectors took what had been billed as the 'All-American Route' to the Klondike goldfields. It turned out to be one of the most dangerous trails, with hundreds of



## Prince William Sound Highlights

- 1 Listening to the snap-crackle-and-pop of icebergs from your blue-water paddle near **Columbia Glacier** (p199)
- 2 Taking a helicopter ride above and around the vertical peaks of **Valdez** (p196)
- 3 Cruising out to **Blackstone Bay** (p213) from

- Whittier for good kayaking and wildlife watching
- 4 Scanning the horizon for whales, seals, sea otters and more aboard the **Alaska Marine Highway ferry** (p196)
  - 5 Exploring the birds and bears of the **Copper River**

- Delta** (p209) by boat, raft, car and bike
- 6 Boasting about the salmon that got away with the genuine-article fishermen of **Cordova** (p203)
  - 7 Kayaking out to McAllister Creek Cabin on **Shoup Bay** (p199)