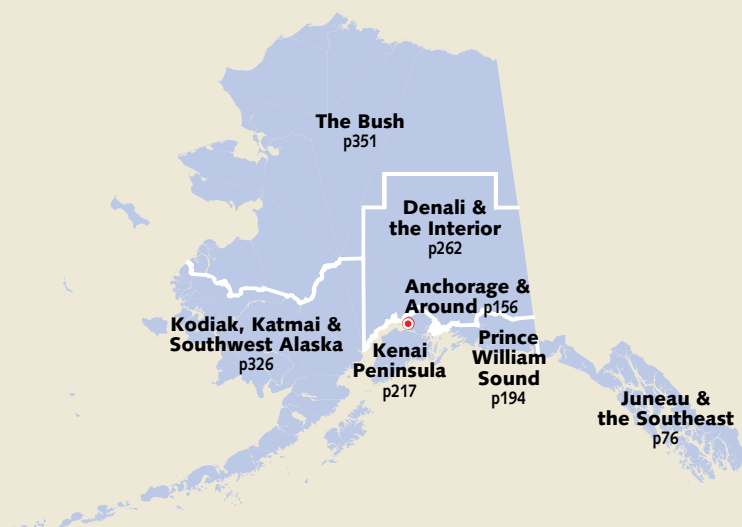




# Alaska



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

**Brendan Sainsbury,**  
**Greg Benchwick, Catherine Bodry**

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Alaska.....	6
Alaska's Top 21.....	10
Need To Know.....	20
First Time Alaska.....	22
What's New.....	24
If You Like.....	25
Month by Month.....	28
Itineraries.....	32
Outdoor Activities & Adventures.....	36
Cruising in Alaska.....	44
Travel with Children....	49
Regions at a Glance....	52

## ON THE ROAD

### ALASKA'S BEST HIKES & PADDLES..... 56

Chilkoot Trail.....	58
Petersburg Lake Trail.....	59
Misty Fiords National Monument.....	60
Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness.....	61
Iditarod National Historic Trail.....	64
Russian Lakes Trail.....	65
Resurrection Pass Trail....	66
Cross Admiralty Island Canoe Route.....	68
Dixie Pass Route.....	69

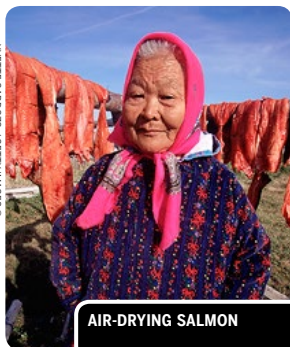
Swan Lake Canoe Route..	70
Chena Dome Trail.....	70
Kesugi Ridge/Troublesome Creek Trail.....	72
Beaver Creek Canoe Route.....	74
Savonoski Loop.....	75

### JUNEAU & THE SOUTHEAST..... 76

<b>Southern Panhandle.....</b>	<b>80</b>
Ketchikan.....	80
Misty Fiords National Monument.....	89



TUFTED PUFFIN P406



AIR-DRYING SALMON



MENDENHALL GLACIER P119

# Contents

Prince of Wales Island . . . . .	90
Wrangell & Around . . . . .	94
Petersburg . . . . .	100
<b>Northern Panhandle . . . . .</b>	<b>107</b>
Sitka . . . . .	107
Juneau . . . . .	116
Admiralty Island & Pack Creek . . . . .	133
Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve . . . . .	135
Haines . . . . .	139
Skagway . . . . .	147

## **ANCHORAGE & AROUND . . . . . 156**

<b>Anchorage . . . . .</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>South of Anchorage . . . . .</b>	<b>181</b>
Seward Highway . . . . .	181
Girdwood . . . . .	181
Portage Glacier . . . . .	185
<b>North of Anchorage . . . . .</b>	<b>186</b>
Glenn Highway . . . . .	186
Palmer . . . . .	189

## **PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND . . . . . 194**

Valdez . . . . .	196
Cordova . . . . .	203
Whittier . . . . .	212

## **KENAI PENINSULA . . . . . 217**

<b>Seward Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>219</b>
Turnagain Pass & Around . . . . .	219
Hope . . . . .	220



HALIBUT COVE P255

Moose Pass & Around . . . . .	222
Seward . . . . .	223
Kenai Fjords National Park . . . . .	231
<b>Sterling Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>234</b>
Tern Lake Junction to Cooper Landing . . . . .	234
Cooper Landing & Around . . . . .	234
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge . . . . .	236
Soldotna . . . . .	240
Kenai & Around . . . . .	242
Homer . . . . .	245
Seldovia . . . . .	256
Kachemak Bay State Park . . . . .	259

## **DENALI & THE INTERIOR . . . . . 262**

<b>Denali National Park . . . . .</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>George Parks Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>281</b>
Talkeetna . . . . .	281

Denali State Park . . . . .	285
Cantwell & Broad Pass . . . . .	289
Nenana . . . . .	289
<b>Denali Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>290</b>
Cantwell to Tangle Lakes . . . . .	290
Tangle Lakes to Paxson . . . . .	291
<b>Fairbanks . . . . .</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>Around Fairbanks . . . . .</b>	<b>302</b>
Chena Hot Springs Road . . . . .	302
Stees Highway . . . . .	304
Elliot Highway . . . . .	304
Manley Hot Springs . . . . .	305
<b>The Alcan/Alaska Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>306</b>
Fairbanks to Delta Junction . . . . .	306
Delta Junction . . . . .	307
Tok . . . . .	308
Tok to Canada . . . . .	309
<b>Taylor Highway . . . . .</b>	<b>310</b>
Chicken . . . . .	310

## ON THE ROAD

FUSE / GETTY IMAGES ©



AUTUMN FOREST

BRUCE TUNANTOLE BI / GETTY IMAGES ©



TALKEETNA P281

KERI OBERLY / GETTY IMAGES ©



ICE CLIMBERS OUTSIDE  
ANCHORAGE

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND



PAUL SOUTHERS / GETTY IMAGES ©

ICE CLIMBING, PORTAGE  
GLACIER (P185)

Fortymile River ..... 311

Eagle ..... 312

**Tok Cutoff & Glenn  
Highway ..... 312**

Tok Cutoff ..... 312

Glenn Highway ..... 313

**Richardson  
Highway ..... 316**

Delta Junction to  
Glennallen ..... 316

Copper Center ..... 318

Glennallen to Valdez .... 318

**Wrangell-St Elias  
National Park ..... 319**

McCarthy Road ..... 321

McCarthy ..... 322

Kennecott ..... 324

**KODIAK, KATMAI  
& SOUTHWEST  
ALASKA ..... 326**

**Kodiak Island ..... 327**

Kodiak ..... 330

**Alaska Peninsula ..... 337**

King Salmon ..... 338

Katmai National Park  
& Preserve ..... 338

The Lower Peninsula ... 344

**Aleutian Islands ..... 345**

False Pass ..... 345

Akutan ..... 345

Unalaska &  
Dutch Harbor ..... 345

**THE BUSH ..... 351**

**Western Alaska ..... 353**

Nome ..... 353

**Arctic Alaska ..... 360**

Dalton Highway ..... 360

Gates of the Arctic  
National Park  
& Preserve ..... 364

Barrow ..... 368

**Alaska  
Today ..... 372**

**History ..... 375**

**The Alaskan  
Way of Life ..... 383**

**Alaska Natives ..... 387**

**Alaskan Landscapes ... 391**

**Alaskan Wildlife ..... 400**

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

**Directory A–Z ..... 408**

**Transportation ..... 416**

**Glossary ..... 422**

**Index ..... 426**

**Map Legend ..... 439**

## SPECIAL FEATURES

**Outdoor Activities  
& Adventures ..... 36**

**Cruising in Alaska ... 44**

**Juneau & Southeast  
Alaska Highlights ... 103**

**Prince William Sound  
Wild Explorer ..... 207**

**Kenai Peninsula  
Highlights ..... 239**

**Denali & the Interior  
Highlights ..... 287**

**The Alaskan Way  
of Life ..... 383**

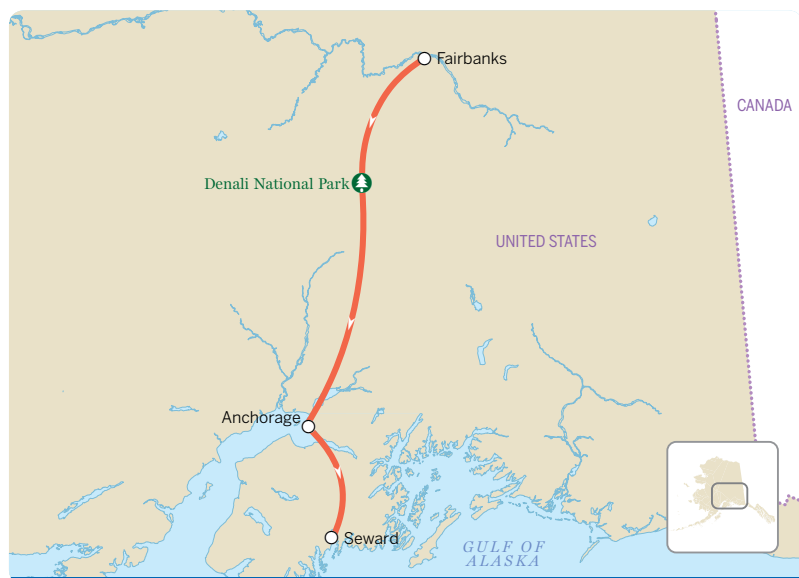
**Alaska Natives ..... 387**

**Alaskan  
Landscapes ..... 391**

**Alaskan Wildlife .... 400**



# Itineraries

**5  
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 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 road-less 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.



## Katmai National Park to Anchorage

One of the fastest growing activities in Alaska is bear watching. 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 **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.



## 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.





## 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 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 flag-stop 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 Kennicott River, 127 miles from Glennallen. Spend the next day exploring the quaint village of **McCarthy** and the amazing mining ruins at Kennicott. Return to the Richardson Hwy and head south and then west.

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**. Spend 24 hours dissecting the Sound's most attractive town and its free-thinking locals, incorporating a hike around the Copper River Delta with its many bird species. From Cordova take a ferry to Whittier. On the same day drive 90 miles 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.



## 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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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



### Brendan Sainsbury

**Coordinating Author; Denali & the Interior; Kodiak, Katmai & the Southwest; The Bush** An expat Brit from Hampshire, England, now living near Vancouver, Canada, Brendan has long relished the thrill of masochistic endurance events in remote wilderness areas and thus jumped at the chance to cover Alaska for Lonely Planet. He particularly relished getting his hands numb in Nome, re-reading Jack London, and bussing it along the Top of the World Highway from Chicken to

the Yukon. When not scribbling research notes for Lonely Planet in countries such as Cuba, Peru, Spain and Canada, Brendan likes refining his cross-country skiing technique, strumming old Clash songs on the guitar, and experiencing the pain and occasional pleasures of following Southampton Football Club.

Read more about Brendan at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/brendansainsbury](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/brendansainsbury)



### Greg Benchwick

**Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound** Greg Benchwick first came to Alaska in college when he spent a summer working in the canneries, tramping in the parking lots of the Kenai Peninsula and exploring the underbelly of Alaska's sub-cultures. He later returned as a Lonely Planet writer. For this edition, he visited Prince William Sound for the first time, including a bluewater paddle to Columbia Glacier to shoot video for the website. He also hiked the Russian Lakes Trail with

friends and shot his first gun! Greg lives in Colorado with his 100-pound Anatolian shepherd and 30-pound daughter. Follow him on twitter @greentravels. Greg also wrote the Cruising in Alaska, Outdoor Activities & Adventures, Alaska Today, History, The Alaskan Way of Life, Alaska Natives and Alaska's Best Hikes & Paddles chapters.

Read more about Greg at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/gbenchwick](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/gbenchwick)



### Catherine Bodry

**Juneau & the Southeast, Anchorage & Around** Catherine is a travel writer who covers Alaska, Asia and as many other places as she can. For Lonely Planet, she's contributed to guidebooks to Thailand and Canada as well as Alaska, and to LonelyPlanet.com, BBC Travel, Trail Runner Magazine, Korean Air's Morning-Calm and more. In love with motion, she spends any time not traveling day-dreaming about traveling. She's a trail runner in love with mountains, curry and

second-class bus rides in foreign countries. Find out more about her at [www.catherinebodry.com](http://www.catherinebodry.com). Catherine also wrote the Alaskan Landscapes and Alaskan Wildlife chapters.

Read more about Catherine at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/catherinebodry](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/catherinebodry)

### Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

11th edition – April 2015

ISBN 978 1 74220 602 8

© Lonely Planet 2015 Photographs © as indicated 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: [lonelyplanet.com/ip](http://lonelyplanet.com/ip).

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'