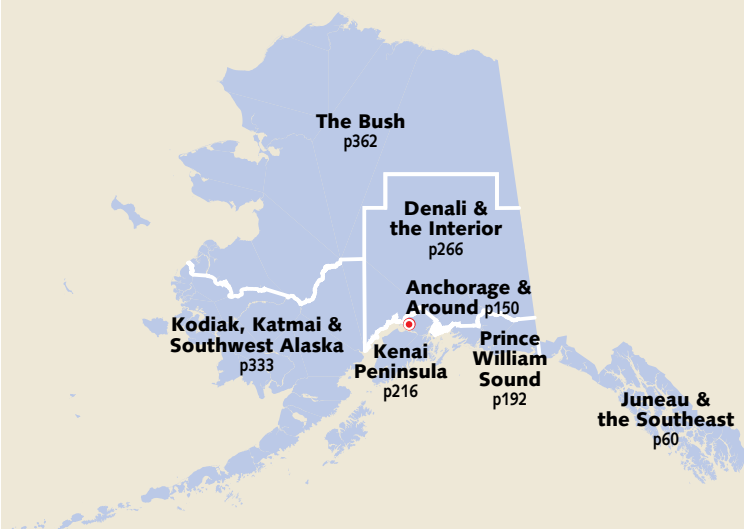




# Alaska



Brendan Sainsbury, Catherine Bodry,  
Alexander Howard, Adam Karlin

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Alaska.....	4
Alaska Map .....	8
Alaska's Top 21 .....	8
Need to Know .....	18
First Time Alaska .....	20
What's New .....	22
If You Like.....	23
Month by Month .....	26
Itineraries .....	30
Outdoor Activities & Adventures .....	34
Cruising in Alaska .....	46
Travel with Children....	52
Regions at a Glance....	56

## ON THE ROAD

### JUNEAU & THE SOUTHEAST ..... 60

<b>Southern Panhandle ...</b>	<b>73</b>
Ketchikan.....	73
Misty Fjords National Monument.....	83
Prince of Wales Island....	84
Wrangell.....	86
Petersburg.....	92
Hyder .....	98
<b>Northern Panhandle. ...</b>	<b>99</b>
Sitka .....	99
Juneau .....	109
Admiralty Island & Pack Creek .....	124
Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve .....	126
Haines .....	129
Skagway.....	139
Yakutat.....	148

### ANCHORAGE & AROUND ..... 150

<b>Anchorage .....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>South of Anchorage... 179</b>	
Girdwood .....	179
<b>North of Anchorage... 185</b>	
Eagle River .....	185
Eklutna.....	186
Palmer .....	187

### PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND..... 192

Valdez.....	194
Cordova .....	203
Whittier .....	211

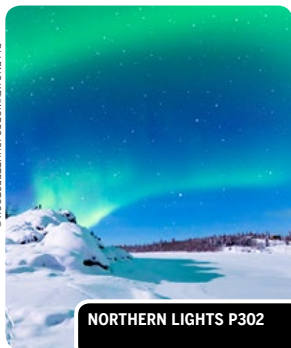
### KENAI PENINSULA..... 216

<b>Seward Highway.....</b>	<b>224</b>
Hope.....	224

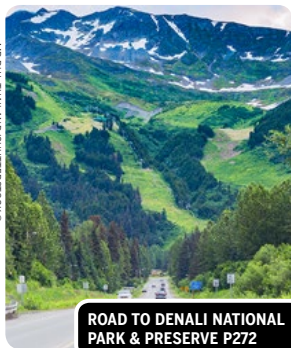
Seward.....	227
Kenai Fjords National Park .....	236
<b>Sterling Highway .....</b>	<b>239</b>
Cooper Landing .....	239
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge .....	240
Soldotna .....	242
City of Kenai .....	244
Ninilchik.....	246
Homer .....	247
Seldovia.....	257
Kachemak Bay State Park .....	263

### DENALI & THE INTERIOR..... 266

<b>Denali National Park &amp; Preserve .....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>George Parks Highway.....</b>	<b>289</b>
Talkeetna .....	289
Denali State Park.....	294
Cantwell & Broad Pass ..	295
Nenana.....	295
<b>Denali Highway.....</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Fairbanks Region ....</b>	<b>298</b>
Fairbanks .....	298
Chena Hot Springs Road.....	310
Manley Hot Springs.....	312
<b>The Alcan-Alaska Highway.....</b>	<b>313</b>
Delta Junction.....	313
Tok .....	314
<b>Taylor Highway .....</b>	<b>315</b>
Chicken .....	316
Fortymile River .....	316
Eagle.....	317
<b>Tok Cutoff &amp; Glenn Highway .....</b>	<b>320</b>
Tok Cutoff .....	320
Glenn Highway .....	321



NORTHERN LIGHTS P302



ROAD TO DENALI NATIONAL  
PARK & PRESERVE P272

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

Alaska Today .....	386
History .....	388
Way of Life .....	396
Alaska Natives .....	400
Landscapes .....	404
Wildlife .....	413

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

Directory A-Z .....	420
Transportation .....	428
Glossary .....	434
Index .....	438
Map Legend .....	447



### Richardson Highway .. 324

Delta Junction to Paxson .....	324
Paxson .....	325
Copper Center .....	326
Glennallen to Valdez .....	326

### Wrangell–St Elias National Park .....

McCarthy Road .....	327
McCarthy .....	329
Kennecott .....	331

### KODIAK, KATMAI & SOUTHWEST ALASKA .....

#### Kodiak Island .....

Kodiak .....	345
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge .....	351

#### Alaska Peninsula .....

King Salmon .....	351
Katmai National Park & Preserve .....	352

#### Aleutian Islands .....

Unalaska & Dutch Harbor .....	355
-------------------------------	-----

### THE BUSH .....

#### Western Alaska .....

Nome .....	364
Nome–Council Road .....	370
Kougarok Road .....	371
Nome–Teller Road .....	371

#### Arctic Alaska .....

Dalton Highway .....	371
Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve .....	378
Utqiagvik (Barrow) .....	379

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### Outdoor Activities & Adventures .....

#### Cruising in Alaska .....

#### Juneau & Southeast Alaska Highlights .....

#### Prince William Sound Wild Explorer .....

### Denali & the Interior Highlights .....

#### Way of Life .....

#### Alaska Natives .....

#### Landscapes .....

#### Wildlife .....

# Itineraries

**5  
DAYS**

## Fairbanks to Seward by Train

This land-based itinerary takes advantage of the beautifully maintained Alaska Railroad.

Start out in **Fairbanks**, the railroad's northernmost terminus, 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 enjoy a good day hike on the Triple Lakes Trail. The next morning, take the extraordinary eight-hour ride to **Anchorage**. Along this stretch the tracks leave the road and probe into asphalt-free wilderness, paralleling rivers instead of the highway, with the icy mass of Denali in view if you're lucky.

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 rev up for a salmon bake with a bike ride along the Coastal Trail. Then hop aboard for another spectacular 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 gorgeous 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 Anan Creek

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. Not only are you likely to spot one of these legendary beasts, you'll also probably catch sight of caribou and moose.

You'll need a airplane to get to Utqiagvik and **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 black bears feasting on salmon at the capital city's Steep Creek near Mendenhall Glacier. Alternatively, you can make a short hop in a seaplane to Pack Creek on Admiralty Island.

Finish off in the southern panhandle at the **Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory** 30 miles southeast of Wrangell, one of the only places in Alaska where black and brown bears coexist.



## 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 Fiords 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*. If you can eke out another day, take the fast ferry to **Haines**, a quiet, local-loving Alaskan town with some fine hikes and a great brewery. After returning to Skagway, you'll need to backtrack to Juneau if you want to fly home – or you can jump back on the state ferry in Auke Bay.



## 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 stick on some Springsteen: 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 some liquid refreshment 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 134-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 **Kennecott**. 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.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

*Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book*





## 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, Dublin, 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

**Curator, Juneau & the Southeast, Prince William Sound** Originally from Hampshire, England, Brendan has traveled all over Alaska from Ketchikan in the south to Deadhorse in the north by bus, train, kayak, bicycle, ferry, airplane and his own two feet. Memorable moments have included taking a bus up the Dalton Highway from Fairbanks to the Arctic Ocean, catching a ferry through the off-the-grid Alaskan peninsula to the Aleutian Islands, and running the Chilkoot trail

in the footsteps of the Klondike 'stampeders' in a day. Now based in Vancouver, Canada, Brendan has contributed to over 50 Lonely Planet guides including six editions of LP *Cuba*. Brendan also wrote the Plan Your Trips chapters (with the exception of Outdoor Activities & Adventures) and Survival Guide.



### Catherine Bodry

**Anchorage & Around, Kenai Peninsula** Catherine is based in Anchorage, Alaska, but spends much of her time in Southeast Asia. As a writer, she's covered Alaska, Thailand and China, among other destinations. A lover of mountains, she spends as much time as possible in or near hills, whether it's running, hiking, camping, berry picking, rafting or just gazing at them. For Lonely Planet, she's contributed to about a dozen guide and trade books including several editions of

Alaska, as well as *Canada, Thailand and Pacific Northwest Trips*.



### Alexander Howard

**Kodiak, Katmai & Southwest Alaska** Alex is a Nashville-based editor, writer and photographer for Lonely Planet. Since joining Lonely Planet in 2014, he has commissioned, edited and managed 34 guidebooks covering Canada and the Western United States. His work frequently takes him into the field, most recently trekking into the lava fields of Hawai'i and scuba diving in Bali. He is the managing editor of the US edition of *Lonely Planet* magazine.



### Adam Karlin

**Denali & the Interior, The Bush** Adam has contributed to dozens of Lonely Planet guidebooks, covering an alphabetical spread that ranges from the Andaman Islands to the Zimbabwe border. As a journalist, he has written on travel, crime, politics, archaeology, and the Sri Lankan Civil War, among other topics. He has sent dispatches from every continent barring Antarctica (one day!) and his essays and articles have featured in the BBC, NPR, and multiple non-fiction

anthologies. Adam is based out of New Orleans, which explains his love of wetlands, food and good music. Learn more at <http://walkonfine.com> or Instagram @adamwalkonfine. Adam also wrote the Outdoor Activities & Adventures chapter plus the Understand Alaska chapters.

### Published by Lonely Planet Global Limited

CRN 554153

12th edition – May 2018

ISBN 978 1 78657 458 9

© Lonely Planet 2018 Photographs © as indicated 2018

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Singapore

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.'