

## 4 Day Taste of Alaska

... featuring Anchorage, Native Culture, Mt. McKinley, Talkeetna Jet Boat, Matanuska Glacier Trek & Cruise Ship Transfer.

Reconnect with your senses on this mini-adventure. Perfect for an Alaska Post Cruise tour, this adventure packs in native culture, Mt. McKinley exploration and a magnificent journey on the Talkeetna River. 24 hours of ever-changing scenery, from daylight dancing on the mountains at 11 o'clock at night to the road less traveled, these three days will leave you with memories of a lifetime!

### Day One

**ANCHORAGE:** Upon arrival in Anchorage, proceed to baggage claim to collect your luggage. Courtesy transfers will take you to your local hotel for an evening of leisure. Located in Southcentral Alaska on the shores of Cook Inlet, the Municipality of Anchorage is a unique urban environment situated in the heart of the wilderness. There's a special mystique to Alaska. The name conjures up adventure, raw natural beauty -- glaciers, mountains and seas, unmatched the world around -- fascinating wildlife, a unique cultural heritage, and independent, pioneering people. Here you will find four-star restaurants and small cafes, an outstanding Museum of History and Art and a multitude of other fun activities.

Enjoy downtown shopping at any of the artist hot spots, or relax and enjoy the nightlife of Anchorage. Infamous restaurants dot the downtown area and offer wonderful opportunities to enjoy everything from fresh salmon to prime rib. Be sure to get to sleep early, as tomorrow is the start of your tour.

### Day Two

**TALKEETNA & MT. MCKINLEY:** Begin your escorted adventure with a meet & greet of other guests. A visit to the Native Heritage Center, will expose you to many native cultures in one location. Learn the ways of the elders and watch as native dancers share their culture. Continue on to the Matanuska Valley, the farming belt of Alaska, with a visit of the native village of Eklutna. Enjoy the Russian Orthodox influenced Chapel and native influenced spirit houses, sharing their cultural traditions. Continuing north, we will pass the Palmer Hay Flats, and the Knik Arm of the Cook Inlet. This tundra area is home to wildlife and several species of birds.

Visit the home of the Iditarod. Race Headquarters expose you to the lure of the dog sleds of the past. Meet an Iditarod musher and dog team and share in the thrill of the race, as you take a ride on a summer dog sled ride around a quarter acre track. Next you will view inland scenery as you continue on to Talkeetna, a local town sporting the most photographed scenes in our state, including the towering peaks of Mt. McKinley or Denali & the Alaska mountain range. Only 1 ½ hours north, this town is a hub of international mountain climbers. Here you will have the day to visit the local town folks, stop in the shops, visit local museums or choose from an array of activities.

Today's adventure includes a riverboat trip as follows:

**2-Hour Riverboat Adventure:** Your exciting trip will begin aboard the fifty-one passenger "Talkeetna Queen" as it whisks you into the heart of the wilderness in comfort. This is the most technologically advanced river jetboat in Alaska designed to safely navigate rivers that were previously inaccessible. It is glass-domed, environmentally controlled, and has an onboard restroom for your comfort. Upon arriving at our Safari sight you will take a 1/4 mile leisurely nature walk. You will visit an authentic trapper's cabin and view how trappers lived in "Bush" Alaska at the turn of the century. Your experienced guide will display raw furs from the local area and demonstrate trapping methods. Naturalists will acquaint you with the wildflowers and plants that grow in abundance along the river system and you will learn about the edible plants that were used by the Native Indians for cooking and medicines. As you travel ten miles of river you will have opportunities to view nesting bald eagles, beaver activity, and moose and you just might see black bear and grizzly bear roaming the shore. Wildlife, folklore, artifacts and a panoramic view of Denali in the Alaska Range combine to make this an unforgettable Alaskan river adventure.

**You can also choose to upgrade today's adventure and choose to flight see over Mt. McKinley with a glacier landing (upgrade \$\$ required.) Ask your Tour Coordinator for details. Description below.**

**Denali Flightseeing & Glacier Landing:** This magnificent flight takes you within six miles of Mt. McKinley's summit. As your flight departs Talkeetna, you begin to see how the last ice age has shaped the land. Moments later you enter a world of rugged high mountain peaks and wide glacier filled valleys. Listen as your pilot describes the natural wonders of Denali National Park. See the Sheldon Amphitheater, beautiful Ruth Glacier, and the Great Gorge (the world's deepest - almost 2 miles from top to bottom). "No visit is complete without this experience!" Land on the Sheldon Amphitheater glacier beneath Mt. McKinley. The aircraft are equipped with skis, floats, and voice activated headphones. Passengers, each with comfortable window seats, enjoy narration by an experienced pilot-guide highlighting points of interest including geology, wildlife, and history. Flight time is 1.5 hrs and includes a glacier landing. Upgrades for longer flights can be purchased.

This evening enjoy infamous salmon or halibut at a Lakeview Inn in Wasilla. Overnight in Chalet lodging.

**(B)**

### *Day Three*

**MAT-SU GLACIER:** This morning, begin your day with a restful continental breakfast. Next, join your travel companions on one of the most scenic drives in the state. As we head north to Chickaloon, the Knik Glacier reveals its full glory. The Matanuska River winds its way north beside us, cutting a cavern of beauty through the Matanuska Valley. A scenic view stop will take your breath away! Upon arriving at the Matanuska

Glacier, you will stop for Dall sheep viewing in the area. Provided are binoculars as well as a high-powered spotting scope to ensure great views of the large curled sheep.

In the afternoon, it's off to Sheep Mountain Lodge, for a bite to eat. Sheep Mountain Lodge offers spectacular homemade soups, triple berry pie, and try their glacier cookies drizzled in chocolate syrup!! This area is also a famous viewing area for Dall sheep. So keep your cameras handy.

After a stop for a hearty lunch, discover the true beauty of glaciers up close. Ice cram-ons and walking sticks are your first step to enjoying your glacier trek adventure. You'll experience glacier walking as well as the natural history of the Matanuska Glacier. Enjoy the splendor of the "frozen river" as you walk out to a scenic lake hidden under the face of an ice fall. No experience is necessary to join in the fun; however, the terrain presents shale rocks, muddy silt, slippery ice, and small ice fissures. Intermittently placed picnic benches allow guests to choose their own participation level. Great photo ops from all picnic benches.

For guests who would like an even more invigorating activity, you can upgrade to a whitewater raft trip down the Matanuska River past Lion's Head canyon. This tour is available for a \$ upgrade. Ask your Tour Coordinator for details.

This evening, after a dinner stop, return to your chalets for a restful night and a new adventure in the morning! **(B)**

### *Day Four*

**WASILLA TO WHITTIER OR SEWARD:** Potters Marsh is a state game refuge, is a very popular spot for bird watching from a boardwalk. This is a nesting area for waterfowl as well as arctic tern, Canada geese, swans, and ducks. Windy Point provides the opportunity to watch for Dall sheep on the roadside cliffs. The salt licks here provide nourishment to the sheep. Beluga Point provides a possible whale watch in July through September, as you travel along the beautiful Turnagain Arm of the Cook Inlet. This drive also provides a great backdrop for stunning photography.

Next, visit the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, opened to the public in 1993. It is located on 140 acres at the southern edge of Turnagain Arm and the entrance to Portage Valley. AWCC provides care and rehabilitation for injured and orphaned wildlife and to provide wildlife education and awareness. Animals that are unable to be released or survive in the wild are given refuge in the center's spacious habitats. Here people can safely get close, observe and photograph some of Alaska's largest land animals, including moose, bison, elk, deer, caribou, bears musk ox, small mammals and birds of prey.

**WHITTIER:** Arrive at Portage glacier, leisure time offers a great area to view the icebergs in the lake as well as hanging glaciers that will keep your camera busy. Begich-Boggs Visitors Center offers an unique opportunity to learn about the Chugach National Forest, America's second largest national forest. Award-

winning exhibits, educational presentations, the film "Voices from the Ice," information services, and an Alaska Natural History Association bookstore are available. Join a Forest Service Interpreter or go it alone on this short 1/4 mile loop trail located just outside our doors. Interpretive signs along the trail help paint the picture of Portage Glacier's retreat revealing a landscape full of new life. A stop to view salmon spawning may be available depending on season.

Complete your adventure with a ride through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, the longest tunnel in North America, 2.5 miles! It is the first tunnel designed for -40° F. and 150 mph winds. The tunnel is located fifty miles southeast of Anchorage near Portage Glacier, and connects the port city of Whittier on Prince William Sound to the Seward Highway and Southcentral Alaska. It opened to vehicle traffic on June 7, 2000 after extensive conversion from a World War II railroad tunnel.

**SEWARD:** Enjoy this afternoons scenery further down the Seward Hwy corridor. As you approach Turnagain Pass, a restroom break will open up a world of unbelievable photos! Views will rival the best Alps. Flora and fauna of this area include lupine, columbine, arctic chocolate lilies, pasque flowers and more. Streams are carved out of solid rock and cavernous canyons call to visiting raft thrill seekers. Moose Pass features a quick stop for ice cream scoops or souvenirs at the original Estes Groceteria.

Arriving at Exit Glacier, an eight mile drive off the main road, reveals a spectacular view and a short easy riverbed walk provides a close-up and personal view of a magnificent glacier. Leisure time allows for hikes, comfortable walks or photo moments. The Visitor Center features books and information from park rangers. Watch for black bear as they are prevalent in this area.

Finally, after a day of photos galore, you will discover our bustling harbor and historic downtown district filled with quaint shops and art galleries. At 3,022 feet, towering Mt. Marathon provides a breathtaking backdrop for the town. Behind Mt. Marathon and extending down the coast lies the Harding Icefield, measuring 35 by 20 miles. Here you will be transferred to the cruise ship terminal, and after boarding and settling in, you may choose to get off the ship and walk around this 10 block town to see a bit more of its fun and history. Be sure to be back on board - your cruise adventure awaits you.

#### **Available for groups of 6 or more.**

\*Rates include all accommodations, transportation, all activities including flightseeing, rafting, jet boats, etc. (unless stated as optional), and complimentary beverages onboard. Rates do not include some meals, gratuities, tax, or alcoholic beverages. Itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of the escort due to weather, road maintenance & time factors.. Single supplement is \$399 pp. 50% Deposit is due at time of booking. 100% Final Payment is due Feb 15th of the year of travel. Cancellations will incur a 100% penalty after deposit payment date. Travel insurance is available. Ask your agent for details.

**Travel Insurance:** If you become ill or injured prior to or during one of our adventures, we will do everything we can to help, but any and all expenses for cancellation, care or evacuation are entirely your responsibility. Trip delays such as road closures, floods, mechanical breakdowns or backcountry injury may cause you to miss your flight home, your hotel reservations or your next activity. Our tours are non-refundable. Travel insurance is available. It is your choice to accept the



Phone: 1-800-580-3494

risk of not purchasing insurance. We like personal choice! But thanks for understanding our perspective if something happens.

\*\*Accommodations are chosen at time of booking. They can vary from private cabins to hotels or lodges based on availability and block space. They all include private bathrooms.