

## **5 Day Heart Of Alaska** **Customized 5-Day / 4 Night Adventure:**

*... featuring Denali National Park, Wildlife, Flightseeing, Jet boats,  
Rafting, Glacier Viewing & Iditarod Dog Ride.*

*Alaska has called to you for years as the vacation of your dreams! How do you ensure your adventure will discover all the "secrets" of Alaska? Choose from one of our fully escorted wilderness adventures and experience the depth of Alaska's interior. Far from the coast, our local resident experts will treat you to the history & lore of Alaska.*

*Seasoned Alaskan guides accompany you through areas resplendent with wild beauty and take you deep into the land of the midnight sun. They serve as guide, historian and personal concierge, ensuring every aspect of your journey is effortless. Our tours combine the frontier spirit of this untamed land, the natural wonders and habitat of bear, moose, caribou and more. Choose from whitewater rafting, flightseeing, glacier hiking, wildlife tours, river jet boats, day cruises and more. From Anchorage to Denali National Park, St. Elias to Valdez stays in unique charming accommodations with all the magnificence of Alaska at your doorstep. Premium service combined with Alaskan hospitality all the way!*

*Our luxury private transport service is customized with leather captain's chairs, full bay picture windows, complete narration and complimentary soft drinks. Our intimate tours are limited to 14 guests for your sightseeing pleasure. Our adventures are set in "Adult-Only" format or "Family-Only" format. Adult Only tours allow guests 16 years and up only. Optional custom itineraries can be designed based on availability.*

### **DAY ONE:**

**ANCHORAGE:** Upon arrival in Anchorage, whether by rail, motorcoach or air, if you arrive on the day of the tour, you will be met by our representative, who will assist with your luggage and boarding process. If you are adding a pre-night hotel package (downtown area hotels only), pick up the courtesy phones in baggage area, and call for your courtesy shuttle to your hotel, and rest up for your tour. Day of your tour, our representatives will meet you at your hotel lobby at noon or as stated on your itinerary. If you are arriving the day of your tour, pick-up will be at 11:30 AM at the Anchorage International Airport.

**EKLUTNA NATIVE HISTORY:** Begin your Alaskan adventure with additional guests and a meet & greet. Travel across town to the spectacular Native Heritage Center, a renowned cultural center and museum, an exciting place where all people can come to expand their understanding of Alaska's first people. Here we share the rich heritage of Alaska's eleven cultural groups drawing upon the life ways of long ago, the wisdom of our elders, and the traditions that endure. The Welcome House is a celebration of contemporary Alaska Native cultures while the outdoor facilities and sites allow the exploration of ancient tradition and the presentation of stories from the past. The Center provides a unique opportunity to experience Alaska's many diverse Native cultures at one location. In facilitating the transmission of Alaska Native knowledge, heritage and tradition, the Center promotes self-esteem and pride among Alaska Natives. The Alaska Native Heritage Center improves understanding among all Alaskans and encourages appreciation of Alaska Native people and their traditions, history, and contributions to Alaska.

Upon leaving the Anchorage area, we will travel north to the Matanuska Valley, the farming belt of Alaska. Along the way, we will visit the native village of Eklutna. Enjoy the Russian Orthodox influenced Chapel and native influenced “spirit houses”, while sharing in their cultural traditions. Continuing north, we will pass the “Palmer Hay Flats”, and the Knik Arm of the Cook Inlet. This tundra-covered lowland is home to wildlife and several species of birds.

Upon arrival in Wasilla, dinner will be at one of Wasilla’s finest restaurants offering exceptional views. Overnight in comfortable accommodations\*\* adding a remote feel to your adventure.

### **DAY TWO:**

**CHICKALOON:** This morning brings one of the most scenic drives in the state. As you head north to Chickaloon, an overlook stop reveals the Knik Glacier, the Matanuska River and the Chugach Mountains in their full glory. The Matanuska River winds its way north beside us, cutting a cavern of beauty through the Matanuska Valley.

Next, you will have the option of choosing between two types of river rafting activities, scenic glacier float or thrilling white water.

#### **GLACIER RUN SCENIC FLOAT**

•The “Glacier Run”, a scenic glacier float trip is great for relaxed sightseeing and photo opportunities. This easily negotiable class 1-2 water makes it a great way to experience rafting and the great outdoors while drifting by the Matanuska Glacier. You will be outfitted in rain jackets and overall pants as well as with tall boots. This raft excursion lasts 2 ½ hours.

#### **LIONS HEAD WHITE WATER RAFT**

•The “Lion’s Head” thrilling raft trip offers the roar of whitewater. This is an excellent first-timers whitewater trip that is popular with experienced enthusiast as well. The most popular trip for over 28 years, this class 3 & 4 whitewater experience offers you a hand-on adventure. You will be outfitted in full dry suits over your clothing with dry water shoes. This raft excursion lasts 3 ½ hours.

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 cramp-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.

**WASILLA:** After the days fun this evening, a dinner stop is offered in Palmer or you can choose to grab a deli dinner and take it back to your comfy accommodations. Rest up for tomorrow bring s another day of high adventure. **(B)**

### **DAY THREE:**

**TALKEETNA:** Rise & Shine to 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. Today will present one of many highlights of your adventure. Talkeetna is a local town sporting the most photographed scenes in our state, the towering peaks of Mt. McKinley & the Alaska mountain range. Only 1 ½ hours north, this town is a hub of international mountain climbers. You will be able to choose one of the following adventures to enjoy in Talkeetna.

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#### **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 Amphitheatre glacier beneath Mt. McKinley, The aircraft is equipped with skis, floats, and voice activated headphones. Passengers, each with a 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.

#### **2-HR HOMESTEAD 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. 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.

This afternoon, enjoy late lunch before continuing our adventure to Denali National Park. Crossing over Hurricane Gulch, have your cameras ready. The vistas are breathtaking. Upon arrival in Denali National Park, this evening is at your leisure for shopping, dining or sightseeing. Tonight you will overnight near Denali National Park. **(B)**

#### **DAY FOUR:**

**DENALI:** Everything about Denali National Park is big: the scenery, the mountains, the incredible beauty, and the animals. Early this morning, you will embark on the Denali Park Tour, an excellent way to spot the wildlife for which Alaska is so famous: moose, bear, wolves, caribou, Dall sheep. It is a fascinating 6 to 8 hour motorcoach tour into the park. It is the only way to enter the park, as it is a preserve. So bring your camera and binoculars. A sack lunch and beverage are provided.

Mount McKinley National Park was established in 1917 to protect its large mammals, not because of majestic Mt. McKinley. In 1980, the boundary was expanded to include both the Denali caribou herds wintering and calving ground and the entire Mt. McKinley massif. This more than tripled the size of the park, and was renamed Denali National Park and Preserve. It was also designated an International Biosphere Reserve significant for the potential for sub-arctic ecosystem research.

Denali is an Athabascan word meaning "The High One". The mountain is officially named Mt. McKinley but is also referred to as Denali. Mt. McKinley is the highest peak in North America at 20,320 feet. It creates its own weather system and is often covered in clouds. Mt. McKinley is only visible about 1/3 of the time, so visitors to the park only have about a 30% chance of viewing Mt. McKinley.

Denali is one of the greatest wildlife viewing areas in the world. Visitors have a chance of seeing grizzly bears, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, foxes, and wolves. Many smaller animals also inhabit the park such as arctic ground squirrels, hoary marmots, pikas, snowshoe hares, and beavers. For those interested in bird watching, there are a variety of birds that migrate to the park for the summer. The list includes arctic tern,

American golden plover, long tailed jaegers, the surfbird, arctic warbler, the wheatear, willow ptarmigan, golden eagles, and ravens. Approximately 150 species live in and around the Denali area during the summer months.

This evening, relax and enjoy the leisure ride back to Wasilla to your comfy accommodations\*\*. A dinner stop will be provided, at a restaurant of group choice, along with DVD entertainment for a relaxing evening.

**(B)**

#### **DAY FIVE:**

**WASILLA:** Rise & Shine, as the midnight sun never sets! Continental breakfasts will be available in your private room as you begin your day. Today experience spectacular views of Hatcher's Pass and the Independence Gold Mine, built in the early 1900's. Here you have your choice of taking a walk on paved trails, or hiking back into the mountains for a real adventure. Those who love photography will have a real photo safari here with the arctic flora and fauna.

Or if learning about the history of the area is your choice, a park naturalist is here to share the history of the mine, as well as the lifestyle of the engineers to the flunkies who worked tirelessly on the mine. A lunch stop will be provided at or near Hatcher Pass.

**PALMER:** This afternoon's adventure will take you aboard an airboat ride to Lake George, the base of Knik Glacier. Lake George, an ice dammed lake was once responsible for floods of cataclysmic proportions. Knik Glacier, 28 miles long, 6 miles wide and over 1000 feet thick, is one of Alaska's grandest natural attractions.

Knik Glacier, born in the Pleistocene Glaciation period (the beginning of the Ice Age) 600,000 years ago, covered the Anchorage bowl and the entire Cook Inlet. While it remains active, with motion imperceptible to the naked eye, this glacier is in a constant state of change. Participants should be able to step in and out of a Jet Boat or Air Boat window, which requires some agility. Participants should also be able to navigate a loose gravel trail with a slight incline. Participants must have the ability to walk unassisted.

After traveling all over the state of Alaska, the Knik Glacier always turns out to be a trip highlight. We consider ourselves very fortunate to live in such a magnificent landscape and it is our pleasure to share it with you.

**ANCHORAGE:** As your adventure comes to a close, you will have gained memories that will last a lifetime. (Here you will transfer to the airport or you may choose to add a hotel night.)

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, "the city of lights". Infamous restaurants dot the downtown area and offer wonderful opportunities to enjoy fresh salmon to prime rib.

### **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 \$499 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 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.