

## ***ALASKA PARK BYWAYS***

### ***10-Day / 9 Night Adventure***

*... featuring Denali National Park, Wildlife, Rafting, Dog Sled tours, Hiking, ATV Riding, & Optional Fishing!!*

*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?*

#### ***DAY ONE***

**ANCHORAGE:** Upon arrival in Anchorage, proceed to baggage claim to collect your luggage. After collecting your luggage, please proceed to your Rental Car Counter (**booked on your own**) in the lower section of the Anchorage Airport. Once you have secured your rental car you will drive to your Anchorage **\*\*accommodations**, for an evening of leisure.

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.

#### ***DAY TWO***

**ANCHORAGE TO HOMER:** Today you will begin your Alaskan Adventure with a journey along the Seward Highway and Kenai Peninsula. As one of Alaska's most scenic highways, there are numerous photographic opportunities along the way.

Consider a stop to Gold Pan at Crow Creek Mine, located approximately 40 miles south of Anchorage. This is a great way to experience Gold Panning in Alaska.

Take in the Chugach Mountains and National Forest, Turnagain Arm and Tern Lake as well as the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Once you arrive in Homer, you will check into Deluxe **\*\*accommodations** on the World Famous Homer Spit.

#### ***DAY THREE***

**HOMER:** This afternoon you will sail through some of the most scenic and vibrant waters to Halibut Cove. The highlight of the cruise to Halibut Cove is a visit to Gull Island, a bird sanctuary a short twenty minutes from Homer.

Gull Island is home to nine nesting species of birds. Many other species may be found here during migration, and before and after nesting. Binoculars and camera gear are a must! In addition to the fabulous

birds at Gull Island, Kachemak Bay is full of sea life - sea otters, seals, whales, porpoise and more. Once docked in Halibut Cove, you'll have time to explore Halibut Cove, visit the Experience Gallery, Diana Tillion's Gallery and have a bite to eat, before heading back to Homer.

#### **HOMER UPGRADE: SALMON / HALIBUT FULL DAY FISHING CHARTER**

•Trolling for Salmon in Homer is some of the best in the world. Species are typically Kings (Chinook) and Silver (Coho). Feeder Kings are off-season King salmon which are not migrating, but "feeding" in the open ocean and find Kachemak Bay a favored year-round source of food. Saltwater salmon put up a fight, and are typically in deeper water so the thrill of the catch is enhanced. The scenic beauty of Homer and the abundant wildlife are always the greatest part of any adventure: seals, otters, puffins, gulls and whales are all here to enjoy at the same time you experience the greatest Salmon fishing available anywhere. These fish can weigh anywhere from 10 to 60 pounds.

Homer, Alaska is the halibut fishing capital of the world. Aside from the abundance of fish, Kachemak Bay also affords a multitude of experiences, from the deep sea chase for a 400 pound world class derby winner, to a tamer experience for the grandchildren. People come from all over the world to experience the thrill of hooking the monster-sized halibut with one of our fishing charters. Alaskans find Homer a "boater friendly" destination due to the more protected inland waters and deep water bays. Lingcod is a plentiful and tasty by-catch that helps to fill the freezer. The highlight to any fishing expedition out of Homer is always the natural beauty of the ocean and surrounding area: whales, seals, otter, sea lions and a variety of birds provide an endlessly fascinating array of natural wonder. **UPGRADE: \$ Ask your Tour Coordinator for details.**

**HOMER TO COOPER LANDING:** Today, we have left your itinerary flexible to allow for a leisurely drive from Homer to Cooper Landing. There are quite a few things for you to stop and see along the way. The Alaska Islands & Ocean Visitor's Center is located in Homer. Stunning exhibits and films take you on a "virtual" tour of the 4.9 million acre refuge and reserve. There are numerous Russian Orthodox churches along the Sterling Highway in Ninilchik and Kenai.

Once you arrive in Cooper Landing, you'll have deluxe \*\*accommodations, nestled in a wooded setting on the banks of the Kenai River. The hotel decks are optimal for viewing the Kenai River valley, nearby mountains, and the bright blue waters of the Kenai River. Wildlife is abundant in the Kenai River Valley, so be sure to keep an eye out for bears, moose, owls, eagles and fox.

### **DAY FOUR**

**COOPER LANDING TO GIRDWOOD:** This morning is a fun filled scenic rafting adventure. This exciting 7 hour Alaska river rafting adventure continues past "Jim's Landing" and includes the exhilarating rapids of

the Kenai Canyon. Enjoy excellent wildlife viewing in the heart of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, a hearty Alaska lunch, and either a 5-mile boat ride across Skilak Lake or a 1.5-mile nature walk up Hidden Creek Trail, depending on the weather conditions. This rafting adventure is suitable for all ages.

This afternoon, you will drive to The Alyeska Resort in Girdwood, Alaska. Set in the pristine wilderness, Alyeska Resort is an AAA four-diamond rated hotel. Towering spruce trees, mountains and hanging glaciers, surround the hotel. Featuring a variety of restaurants for the assorted tastes of our guests, you are bound to find what you are looking for at one of their venues. The diversity in menu choices and the food prepared are sure to please your palate. The menus are created in a way to take advantage of produce in season as well as the fresh catch of the Alaska seafood and also wild game. Choose to enjoy dinner at the famous Seven Glacier Restaurant and enjoy a complimentary ride on the tram up the face of the mountain to the restaurant. Stunning views of the Cook Inlet and alpine glaciers set the mood. Deluxe \*\*accommodations await you at the Alyeska Resort.

## **DAY FIVE**

**GIRDWOOD TO WASILLA:** This morning, you will depart on a "Guided Nature Hike". The Winner Creek Trail, (part of the Historic Iditarod Trail), in the lush Rainforest of Girdwood is a wonderful hike and a memorable experience for everyone. A guided hike is different from hiking the trail on your own; the naturalist guides are knowledgeable, funny and will explain at least 3 things you have never heard before!! Rainforest in Alaska? Passing through North America's Northern most rainforest, the Winner Creek trail has gentle, graded, maintained sections with boardwalks as well as plenty of rugged, rooty sections of trail. This 5 mile "out and back" hike takes about 2-3 hours and includes rain gear (if necessary), a snack, natural interpretation, bear protection and a friendly guide. Trips start and finish from a Yurt at the Hotel Alyeska. Your naturalist guide will point out and discuss the flora and fauna of North America's northern-most temperate rainforest. You may even see a moose or a bear!

### ***GIRDWOOD UPGRADE: Glacier Dogsled Tour***

•Enjoy a spectacular helicopter ride into the majestic Chugach Mountains and onto Punch Bowl Glacier, 3200 feet above sea level. It is a giant snowfield consisting of 700ft of snow on top of 500ft of ice. Learn how the dogs are bred. Relax and enjoy the view as you ride on the sled around the glacier enjoying the scenic peaks and valleys surrounding you, see how the dogs are trained to pull the sled, and how they have this everlasting endurance, how they possess an inherent drive to run, and if you pull on the brakes it's still hard to hold them back.

Dog Sledding with Alaskan Huskies is such a large part of Alaskan life and history, the Iditarod Trail started out as a mail and supply route from the towns of Seward and Knik to the interior, and part of the Iditarod trail was used as a life saving highway for epidemic stricken Nome, where sled dogs were used to deliver Serum in 1925 to cure Diphtheria. It is now the famous "Last Great Race on Earth" where Dogs, Sleds and

their Musher's leave from Anchorage to Nome, each with a team of 12-16 Dogs on a journey of 1150 in 10-17 days.

If you have never followed this race before, after experiencing this tour, I know you will be in awe of this great race and sport! **UPGRADE: \$ Ask your Tour Coordinator for details.**

- PLEASE make sure your camera battery is full!
- Please dress in layers, expect temperatures on the glacier to be from 50°- 60°.
- Wear warm comfortable clothing, sturdy shoes, and sunglasses.
- We will provide you with a waterproof outer layer and Neos over boots.

This afternoon you will pack up and travel North to Wasilla. The Seward Highway is one of North America's most scenic highways. Views of wildlife and breathtaking scenery are common along this picturesque drive. There are some great optional places to stop along the way. Stops at Windy Point & Beluga point will allow for Dall Sheep sightseeing as well as Beluga Whale spotting.

Stop at Potter's Marsh, a state game refuge, a very popular stop for bird watching from a boardwalk. This is a nesting area for waterfowl as well as arctic tern, Canada geese, swans, and ducks. From hawks, to eagles, guests love this walk to view salmon as well as the birds. We even see an occasional moose.

You will travel north though Anchorage to the Matanuska Valley, the farming belt of Alaska. Continuing north, you 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, you will check into Deluxe \*\*accommodations for the evening

## **DAY SIX**

**WASILLA TO DENALI:** This morning you will travel north to Willow to visit an accomplished musher who presents his story of Alaska and the Iditarod in a provocative fashion that captures the essence of the Iditarod. He weaves in the history of sled dogs from early native use, gold rush use, the famous Serum run to Nome during the 1925 diphtheria epidemic-the focus is on the husky. The uniqueness of the Iditarod from the standpoint of length, diversity of competition and the NO HELP rule are highlights. Training and care of Iditarod dogs is demonstrated.

The logistics of the race and food drops, checkpoints, veterinarian care, the Iditarod Air Force and trail conditions inspire questions. Race strategy and the changes to the Iditarod Race Vern has seen in his twenty five years of racing elicit more dialogue. Clothing and survival gear along with sleds and equipment are topics that are backed up with demonstrations. Stories from the trail are exciting and fun. Ride in comfort in Our New Dog Mobile. As there is no snow this time of your or a sled, the dogs pull you in a free

wheeled buggy as this is how they train during the summer months. Better for the dogs! Safe and Fun! Our wilderness trail is over bridges and through the woods. You can see and feel the power and love the dogs have for what they do. Finally taking the summer pups for a walk is a fantastic experience. You will soon see why we fell in love with the Alaskan Husky. Pups tell the story of their care and they inspire us. You will walk away from the hike feeling great!

This afternoon, continue your 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.

## ***DAY SEVEN***

**DENALI WILDLIFE PARK TOUR:** 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 fully guided and narrated motorcoach tour of Denali National Park. This is the only way to enter the park, as it is a preserve. A box lunch and beverage are included with your tour. This is an excellent way to spot the wildlife for which Alaska is so famous: moose, bear, wolves, caribou, Dall sheep. It is a fascinating 12 hour Motor coach tour into the park. So bring your camera and binoculars.

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. Continued overnight \*\*accommodations at Denali National Park entrance area.

## ***DAY EIGHT***

**DENALI:** Today get ready for some adventure! Whether a novice or expert ATVer, this tour will be a memorable ride in the scenic Alaskan wilderness on your own Single or Side by Side ATV. Ride on several terrain types - coal mining tails, rocky creek beds, hill climbing, water and mud crossings. Total tour covers about 10 miles, with approx. 1 ½ hours on the trails.

This evening, relax and enjoy a special treat. Dinner and a show at Alaska's "Cabin Nite Dinner Theater", Fannie Quigley and her group of unforgettable characters treat you to hilarious stories of the Gold Rush featuring foot-stompin', knee-slapping music. The all-you-can-eat, family style meal is sure to please. Feast on salmon, BBQ ribs, corn on the cob, baked beans, sour dough rolls and tasty dessert. Tonight you will overnight again near Denali National Park. Continued overnight \*\*accommodations at Denali National Park entrance area.

## ***DAY NINE***

**DENALI TO ANCHORAGE:** Today will be a transportation day. You will be traveling south from Denali National Park to Anchorage. This morning's adventure will take you on a Jet Boat Safari ride. Your Jet Boat Safari trip is fully guided by experts familiar with Alaska Living - prospecting, trapping, artistry, hunting, and living off this land of extremes. Operated in a heated jet boat, it heads into the "bush", where locals share hunting, prospecting, trapping and dog mushing lore on the Nenana River. There is a good chance of getting a great close-up view of some of the "locals". Alaskan wildlife viewing opportunities are plentiful - our guests have spotted moose, grizzly bear, ptarmigan, eagles, and more!

This afternoon you will be traveling south from Denali National Park to Anchorage. Take some time to stop in Talkeetna for a light afternoon meal. Talkeetna offers some of the state's grandest views of The Alaska Range. Enjoy shopping or just meander around and soak up the local flair.

Upon your arrival in Anchorage, you'll check into your Deluxe overnight Anchorage \*\*accommodations.

## ***DAY TEN***

**ANCHORAGE:** This morning is at 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.

Some suggestions for your time in Anchorage; A visit to the Anchorage Museum, the Alaska Experience Theatre to view one of many Alaska themed movies, including "The Earthquake Experience", and The Alaska Native Heritage Museum.

As the end of your tour draws near, you will depart Anchorage, dropping your rental car off at the Anchorage Airport. As your journey comes to an end you will have gained memories that will last a lifetime!

*\*Rates include all accommodations, all activities based on the package purchased. (unless stated as optional. Rates DO NOT include rental car, meals, gratuities, tax, fuel supplement if applicable, alcoholic beverages, or optional activities not listed. Itinerary is subject to change at our discretion. Single supplement is \$999 pp. 25% Deposit is due at time of booking. 50% is subsequently due on Nov 15, 2014. 100% Final Payment is due Feb 15, 2015. Bookings after Feb 2015 are due in full at time of booking. **Cancellations will incur full 100% penalty.** Travel insurance is available. AAU reserves rights to alter 2015 rates/itinerary due to extreme changes in economic/weather conditions.*

*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. Deluxe package properties are similar to Embassy Suites. In smaller towns, all package properties will be quality 3-4 star, local lodging. Some properties offer jacuzzi jetted tubs. Ask your agent at booking.