
GEEO ITINERARY

ALASKA 7/24/2021 - Summer

Day 1: Anchorage Arrive at any time.

Arrive at any time today, but we highly recommend coming in a day early so you have time to see the sites of Anchorage. We typically have a group meeting at the hotel around 6:00 p.m. Upon arrival at the hotel, please check the notice board for information about the group meeting. During the group meeting, the leader will outline the trip itinerary and answer questions.

Day 2: Anchorage/Seward (L) Drive south through the Kenai Peninsula along one of the US's most scenic highways, the Seward Highway. Pass between cliffs and ocean and through the Chugach National Forest surrounded by mountains. Hike one of the trails of Kenai Fjords National Park to the Exit Glacier and Harding Icefield in the afternoon to witness the size of this natural phenomenon in person.

Leave Anchorage in the morning and drive south through the Kenai Peninsula along one of the US's most scenic highways, the Seward Highway. Pass between cliffs and ocean and through the Chugach National Forest surrounded by mountains. We arrive at the tip of the Kenai Peninsula where the ice age still lingers. Spend the day exploring this site to discover the fjords, their history, science, and remote splendor. Head out on an amazing hike to the Exit Glacier and Harding Icefield. The 11.9km (7.4 mi) round trip of the Harding Icefield Trail is a spectacular day hike (5 to 8 hrs) through the Alaska backcountry. Starting on the valley floor, the trail winds through cottonwood and alder forests, passes through heather-filled meadows, and ultimately climbs well above the tree line to a breathtaking view of the icefield. The top of the trail is a window to past ice ages - a horizon of ice and snow that stretches as far as the eye can see, broken only by an occasional nunatak or lonely peak. There are various lookout points along the trail that serve as good turnaround points. Portions of the upper trail are covered by ice and snow part of the year. Easier, shorter hikes to the base of the glacier are also options that also afford beautiful views for those not looking for a strenuous hike. Black bears are spotted frequently from the Harding Icefield Trail. Approximate travel time: 2.5-3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 3: Seward Enjoy a free day for activities around Seward. Opt to take a scenic boat cruise through the Kenai fjords to get up close and personal with glaciers and marine life, hike through breathtaking scenery, or visit the Alaska SeaLife Center.

Enjoy a free day for activities around Seward. Opt to take a scenic boat cruise through the Kenai fjords to get up close and personal with glaciers and marine life, hike through breathtaking scenery, or visit the Alaska SeaLife Center. See optional activities further below for more info.

Day 4: Seward/Talkeetna Travel north to quaint Talkeetna. Visit the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Museum and learn all about this historical event. Opt to take a scenic flight over the area, float by raft or go further afield by jet boat on the Talkeetna River to learn about local flora, fauna and early settlers to the area, or stay in town to shop or sample beer from the local microbrewery.

Travel north to quaint Talkeetna. We visit the Iditarod Headquarters in Wasilla is just one of the many interesting places to visit in the Mat-Su Valley. Filled with historical information and fascinating exhibits, this spot is sure to pique interest and draw you into the unique Alaskan culture. Immerse yourself in the rich history and culture of "The Last Great Race". Today countless mushers and their loyal dogs traverse a diverse landscape in a race for over 1,000 miles from Anchorage to Nome. The museum's exhibits and displays detail the past, present, and future of this iconic Alaskan event. In addition to these exhibits, if

you visit in the summer, you will even have an opportunity to go on a dog-led cart ride! Later opt to take a scenic flight over the area, float by raft or go further afield by jet boat on the Talkeetna River to learn about local flora, fauna, and early settlers to the area, or stay in town to shop or sample beer from the local microbrewery. Approximate travel time: 5-6 hrs by private vehicle

Day 5: Talkeetna/Denali National Park and Preserve Head north and keep cameras at the ready for the stunning scenery on the way to Denali National Park. Enjoy a dog sledding demo, and opt to hike in the park.

Head north and keep cameras at the ready for the stunning scenery on the way to Denali National Park. When we arrive we will visit the Denali visitor center to learn about the flora and fauna throughout the national park at the visitor center, followed by a dog sledding talk and demonstration by the park rangers. We will spend the day exploring Denali National Park where you will have the option to go on a hike. The area is well-known for its diversity of wildlife and Denali, the highest peak in North America, formerly called Mt McKinley. There are 39 species of mammals, 167 species of birds, 10 species of fish, and one species of amphibian known in Denali. Summer is a time for raising the young and preparing for migration, hibernation, or survival during the winter, and, with a little luck, we witness it all. Discover the dynamic glaciated landscape providing large rivers, countless lakes and ponds, and unique landforms that form the foundation of the ecosystems that thrive in Denali. Use any of the hiking trails around the park to enjoy the rugged beauty of Denali National Park. If the weather is clear, look up to see Denali (formerly named Mt McKinley) towering overhead. Some of the most popular trails are the Mount Healy overlook trail and Horseshoe Lake trail. The Mount Healy trail allows hikers to travel part of the way up Mount Healy which overlooks the entrance area to the park. Even though it is one of the steepest trails in Denali the effort is well worth it. You will walk steadily through spruce forest before encountering the switchbacks that will have you above the tree-line in no time. The official trail ends at the overlook with great views to the south where you can choose to continue to the true peak of Mount Healy or you can turn back. Please note that this trail is not a loop. The Horseshoe Lake trail is a rather popular loop hike that attracts quite a few people, so you certainly won't be the only one out there. As you follow this well-developed trail down to the lake you will pass the overlook which gives you a gorgeous panoramic view of the Nenana river often referred to as "Glitter Gulch" right outside the park. You will also be able to see the surrounding mountains towering in the distance. Once you arrive at the lake stay on the lookout for full-racked bull moose as this can be a popular spot for them to cool off during the summer months. This hike is truly a great starter trail in the area that will get you a bit more acquainted with the beauty of Denali National Park.

Approximate travel time: 3-3.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 6: Denali National Park and Preserve (B,L) Hop on a Denali NP bus to Eielson Visitor Center on a full-day excursion to take in the beautiful flora, fauna, and mountains in the park. Keep an eye out for moose, bears, and caribou!

Depart early to explore Denali National Park. Take the shuttle bus to the Eielson Visitor Center and back, getting deep into the heart of the park. Keep an eye out for moose, bears, and caribou! The journey takes approximately 8 hours and shows off the stunning wilderness of Denali. You will be able to get in a bit of hiking too if you like.

Day 7: Denali National Park and Preserve/Anchorage (B) Free morning for optional whitewater rafting or hiking, then say farewell to Denali NP and travel back to Anchorage. Opt to join the group for a farewell dinner.

Have a free morning for optional whitewater rafting or hiking, then say farewell to Denali NP and travel back to Anchorage. Opt to join the group for a farewell dinner. Approximate travel time: 4-5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 8: Anchorage Depart Anchorage at any time.

Depart Anchorage at any time. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can offer still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!