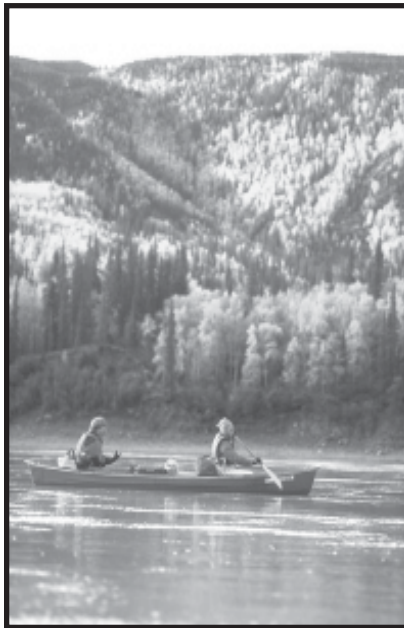


# Alaska & Yukon Adventure

## **INTRODUCTION**

This truly spectacular tour is for those that seek a more intimate acquaintance with what has come to be known as, The Last Frontier --its wilderness without equal, its history, and the unique people that inhabit both. With an incredible itinerary from paddling the mighty Yukon River, to exploring firsthand remote ghost towns of the great gold rushes, to traversing the marine sanctuaries of Prince William Sound and the Kenai Fjords National Park, our most comprehensive itinerary covers a true cross section of Alaska and the Yukon. To complement these fantastic destinations, this adventure offers a wonderful variety of easy travel modes to leave the beaten path and truly discover these lands, including light hiking and kayaking/canoeing, in addition to transport by 15-passenger van, tour boat and State Ferry. Participants are not expected to be proficient in the particular sports, the only requirement beyond a moderate level of physical conditioning, is a distinguishing sense of adventure, with wilderness camps accompanied by stays in comfortable lodgings. This tour is for those that wish to experience the Far North intimately and in its full grandeur. These are lands that first were and are still, the domain of those possessing a certain adventurousness of spirit. If you consider yourself of like mind, then come flirt personally with the mesmerizing power of the "Spell of the Yukon".



**16 Day / 15 Night**

**\$4575 p/person**

<b>2010 Tour Dates</b>	<b>Code</b>
June 8 - June 23	16A2
June 30 - July 15	16A3
July 21 - Aug 4	16A4
Aug 12 - Aug 27	16A5

## **ABBREVIATED AGENDA**

- Day 1** Anchorage - Denali: Iditarod Hqtrs, alpine tundra hike, camp on Jack River
- Day 2** Denali Natl. Park: all-day wildlife/park tour; hike, Jack River camp
- Day 3** Denali - Paxson: cross Denali Hwy, alpine & glacier hike, lodge (showers!)
- Day 4** Paxson-Eagle: stops: Delta Jct., Tok, Chicken, overnight historic cabins
- Day 5** Eagle-Dawson City, YT: historical tour, Top of The World Hwy, overnight B&B
- Day 6** Dawson-Yukon River: canoe/kayak departure on Yukon River; creekside camp
- Day 7** Yukon River: paddle to gold rush ghost town of 40 Mile, exploration, camp
- Day 8** Yukon River: paddle/float through Dozen Islands, island campsite near border
- Day 9** Yukon River-Eagle, AK:(showers!), optional afternoon hike; historic cabins
- Day 10** Eagle-Tolsana: camp on Tolsana River; hike to mud, "volcano"
- Day 11** Tolsana - McCarthy: head to Park center, glacial moraine hike, island camp
- Day 12** McCarthy/Kennicott: ghost town, hike to Root Glacier, island camp
- Day 13** McCarthy-Valdez: cross Thompson Pass to Valdez, overnight B & B
- Day 14** Valdez-Hope: ferry across Prince William Sound, log cabins in Hope
- Day 15** Seward-Hope: all-day cruise into Kenai Fjords National Park, cabins
- Day 16** Hope-Anchorage: optional morning hike, stop in Girdwood, end of tour

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Trip cost includes all modes of transportation, lodging, meals, equipment and guiding. Additional information and a suggested personal equipment list sent upon deposit. Accommodations range from semi-deluxe to rustic. When camping, all group gear is provided, with two persons to a tent, and a full length sleeping pad included. Moderate physical fitness is desirable as this is a wilderness trip with hiking and outdoor activities, though it is not overly strenuous. Passports are now required for re-entry into the US. Alcoholic beverages and gratuities to the guide not included. Group size is limited to eight persons.

**Day 1** The adventure begins at 8AM, meeting in downtown Anchorage at your B&B, or a previously arranged location. From here we'll head northward with a quick stop in Wasilla at the headquarters for the 1000 mile Iditarod Sled Dog Race. The displays and short video here give a good insight into dog mushing in general, as well as the lifestyle and the commitment it takes to train for and run the Iditarod itself. Pushing northward towards the beacon of North America's highest peak Denali (also still referred to as Mt. McKinley), we'll enter into the great Alaska Range of mountains which serves as the divide between the vast drainages of the Yukon to the north and the Matanuska-Susitna Rivers to the south. The location of our hike this afternoon will depend upon recent weather and trail conditions, but will certainly feature some wonderful scenery and the possibility of coming across wildlife such as moose or caribou. Our alpine camp for the next two nights is along the Jack River, with The Great One, Denali, hopefully deigning to fill our tents' doors . . .

**Day 2** In the morning we'll drive the last 30 miles northward to the entrance of Denali National Park. A stop at the Visitor's Center will better acquaint us with Denali, and it is here that we will board a Park Service bus to travel into the Park, as the vast interior is closed to private vehicles. The round trip is a full day, and opportunities are some of the best anywhere for wildlife viewing. And then there's the scenery . . . chances are very good to see bears, caribou, moose, and possibly even wolves. Photographic possibilities are excellent, as the bus will stop at any desired location at the group's request. In the late afternoon when we exit the Park, our legs will most likely demand a stretch and a variety of trails await. Should the weather be cooperating another option is flightseeing from a nearby airstrip (\$250-275/person). It's a truly indescribable experience to witness the stark and formidable higher elevations from this perspective--and if "The Mountain" is "out", then there's just no question. It's then back to our camp for dinner and an evening tundra exploration.

**Day 3** After breakfast we'll pack up and turn east to cross the spectacular Denali Highway. It is a 135 mile gravel road across wide valleys, alpine tundra and haunting scenery that is open only in the summer months and the only road through this remote area. Crossing glacial river and lake country, wildlife viewing opportunities abound in this large stretch of wilderness inhabited year-round only by the occasional trapper and wilderness hermit. We'll stop along the way at a couple of the unique establishments to mingle with some of the locals. After crossing the beautiful Maclaren River we will gradually climb up to Maclaren Summit (elev. 4082 ft), the second highest point on Alaska's road system. Here we will leave the van for a great ramble above treeline, walking north towards the impressive Maclaren Glacier and mountains of the Alaska Range. This alpine tundra hike is spectacular, allowing for expansive views in all directions. Numerous kettle lakes dot the landscape and the possibility of seeing migrating caribou is good. After reaching Paxson, we will turn north on the Richardson Highway and depart the road to reach the base of the imposing Gulkana Glacier for a quick hike across a swinging bridge and onto the glacier's terminal moraine. A few miles south we'll find our dinner, and evening's lodging in the comfortable Paxson Inn.

**Day 4** From Paxson we will get an early start to continue north through the Alaska Range following the Delta River to Delta Junction, and then take the Alaska Highway to Tok. Here, we'll pick up the twisting gravel road to historic Eagle, home of the early Army outpost of Fort Egbert, the army's northernmost presence until World War II. Eagle has long served as the last supply post for the vast upper Yukon valley, providing the earliest miners and current wilderness dwellers with their link to mail delivery, telephones and the rest of the world. Its frontier nature hasn't changed much, as it is still cut off from the rest of the road system during the eight winter months of the year. We'll bunk for the evening in historic cabins overlooking

the Yukon. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the cabins are where the famous Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen "wintered", after arriving in December of 1905 from mushing by dog team from his ship locked in the ice 1000 miles to the north. It was by telegraph from Eagle that he was able to notify the world of his success in finding the long sought Northwest Passage, after three years with no communication.

**Day 5** After a morning historic tour of old Eagle and Ft. Egbert we'll load up the canoes and kayaks and head down the road toward Dawson City via the "Top of The World Highway". The road follows magnificent ridgelines and descends through many old mining camps from days gone by, including the tiny outpost of Boundary, Alaska. After crossing the Canadian border, the road descends into the Yukon River Valley and to the goal of all the Stampeders of the Great Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, Dawson City. Dawson is still a frontier town with plenty of its history evident in the old structures and dirt streets. An excellent recitation of famous works at the cabin of the poet laureate of the north, Robert Service, is optional but highly recommended with the rest of the afternoon left open to those that would like to explore on their own or get cleaned up before dinner on the town. Lodging will be in a lovely bed and breakfast, after sampling a bit of the nightlife.

**Day 6** After breakfast, there will be plenty of time for prowling around, shopping, and visiting the museums. We'll meet for lunch and then have some more free time for a last taste of "civilization", as the guide readies the equipment for us to set out on the mighty Yukon River in kayaks and canoes in mid-afternoon. First we will float past a steamboat graveyard a short ways downstream, and from here continue on past the Native village of Moosehide for a three hour paddle/float past rock bluffs and waterfalls to a creekside camp on the river.

**Day 7** Slipping into our boats after breakfast we will continue downriver to explore the abandoned homestead of Percy "Iron Man" DeWolfe, who ran the mail up and down the Yukon between Eagle and Dawson by boat in summer and by dog team during the harsh winter months, until he was well into his seventies and was forcibly replaced by the airplane. Percy's presence is still felt in the many items of his life hidden in the overgrowth and wild raspberries (delicious!) that have claimed the site since. An afternoon stop at the wilderness homestead of Cor Guimand will give an idea of what it's like to live in the wilderness year-round, hunting and trapping with his dog team and leading a subsistence lifestyle. The evening's camp will be at the remote abandoned gold rush town of Forty Mile with many structures still standing; including a church, store, and the log cabin headquarters of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A prowl through this ghostly presence is mandatory . . .

**Day 8** Another day on the river past many islands, drainages and cliff walls dropping directly into the river, before lunch at Old Woman's and Old Man's Rock (a native legend that will have to wait for on-site explanation). We'll see if we can pick out any of the wood camps that supplied fuel to the hundreds of steam boats that used to ply the river until roads were built opening up the great river valleys to more economical vehicle traffic in the 1950's. Camp for the evening will most likely be just shy of the US border on an island. The views are magnificent.

**Day 9** An early morning departure will have us paddling back across the U.S. border and into Eagle

around noon for lunch (and showers!) at the riverbank cafe. In the early afternoon we are solidly back on "terra firma" and those opting can stretch their legs with a short but vigorous hike to the top of Eagle Bluff, long a landmark to river travelers. The history is so palpable in Eagle, you'll probably want to spend a few hours just strolling about, maybe talking with the locals about how and why they might live in such a remote outpost with road access only a few months a year. After a hearty dinner, we'll again spend the night in the cabins by the river.

**Day 10** After breakfast we climb out of the valley of the Yukon, back to the road through "downtown" Chicken and on to Tok. This time we'll turn south on the Tok Cut-off, through Mentasta Pass and a valley of small lakes and streams, great for spotting moose before breaking out into the great basin of the Copper River. Long a corridor for game and hence migrating peoples, our route follows the border of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, our nation's largest. Passing through Slana and the old mining community of Chistochina, we'll continue southward to Glennallen, then turn west on the Glenn Highway. Camp for the night is not far, on the banks of the Tolsana River, in the Tolsana Wilderness Campground (showers!). After dinner a hike is in order to a nearby geologic oddity --a mud "volcano". Not quite as spectacular as a lava spouting dome, nonetheless this strange phenomenon consists of mostly methane gasses bubbling up from the coal deposits of the Lower Cretaceous and Upper Jurassic formations that underly the Copper River Basin. As the bubbles travel up through the earth to the surface, they pick up and carry fine particles of silt which over time have formed the hill from which the springs emerge. The cold salty water flows all winter and is an important source of liquid to the local creatures large and small, during the long months when all about is frozen.

**Day 11** The Richardson Highway, following the old Valdez-Eagle trail, leads us southward through Glennallen to the Visitor Center of our nation's largest National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias. An undeveloped jewel, the Park coupled with the adjoining Kluane National Park of Canada, is the largest piece of protected wilderness on the planet. We'll pick up a one-lane abandoned railroad grade at the confluence of the Copper and Chitina Rivers, that leads us 60 miles into the center of the Park and the near ghost towns of McCarthy and Kennicott. The road ends at the Kennicott River, with public access to McCarthy limited to a footbridge. We though, will utilize a private vehicle bridge to access our own private facility on the island between the Kennicott River and McCarthy Creek. It's truly a fantastic spot with views in all directions, from the towering icefalls up high, to the glacial creek tumbling just out front. Legs and palates will no doubt demand a short walk to the tiny ghost town of McCarthy (possibly wetting whistles at the unique tavern/watering hole) followed by an "untrailed" hike over the glacial moraine below where the Kennicott and Root glaciers join. It's an eery landscape seemingly of another planet, and darned beautiful. Working our way back along one fork of the Kennicott river to the confluence with McCarthy Creek, leads us back to camp and surely an evening fire on the river gravel bar.

**Day 12** A post breakfast van trip up the remainder of the road four miles to the abandoned company town of Kennicott overlooking its glacier namesake, allows an almost unbelievable exploration of an entire town sitting much the way it was when the mines closed in 1938. The Park Service has been busy for the last several years, renovating, shoring and adding interpretive displays to the historic buildings, as well as the incredible 14-story mill building itself. Kennicott is truly a ghost town without equal, with its remoteness dictating that many things were not worth transporting out, coupled with a fortunate lack of vandalism. We'll continue onward by foot paralleling the glacial moraine to reach the face of the Root Glacier itself. If careful,

# adventure **ALASKA**

## *Expanded Itinerary - cont.* **16-Day Overland & Marine Adventure**

it's possible to walk up onto the face for a little ways. It truly is another world. Heading back down, possibly by the manual method along the old Wagon Road, brings us back to McCarthy for possibly an appetizer and drink in the local bar. The contrast between the two towns is now very apparent, with Kennicott the regimented company town, and McCarthy, the nearby free wheeling outlet for all of the those lonely miners . . . Another delicious camp dinner and evening creekside fire with views all about is definitely in order.

**Day 13** Today feels a bit more leisurely, with the morning open to explore such options as fantastic flightseeing, hiking, or just plain relaxing. In the afternoon we'll reluctantly be on our way, winding out of the park and back to pavement for the beautiful trip to Valdez, up and over the Chugach Range. Crossing Thompson Pass, we descend to follow to the ocean, the long impenetrable Keystone Canyon, whose sheer cliff walls kept the route from even being discovered for many years. Valdez, situated in beautiful surroundings, feels a bit different than many of the old Alaska places we've seen, in that it was "moved" after the near complete devastation of its former, geologically unstable location during the great 1964 earthquake (9.2 Richter!). Though the urban planning "grid" ideals of the mid-60's is quite apparent, all's you have to do is turn in any direction to see the mountains meeting the sea. Dinner will be on the town in Valdez, with bed & breakfast accommodations nearby to allow an early morning trip to the ferry terminal.

**Day 14** After breakfast, we'll board the Alaska State ferry for the ride across spectacular Prince William Sound, passing the Columbia Glacier with its calving icebergs and numerous harbor seals. There is a good chance of seeing humpback and maybe even orca or killer whales as well as porpoises as we weave amongst the many islands of the Sound before reaching the small harbor town of Whittier. Here we will meet up with our van and drive through the longest combined vehicle/train tunnel in North America to reach the 1964 earthquake-destroyed town of Portage on the other side, which will lead us through the Kenai Mountains to the tiny end-of-the-road frontier town of Hope on Cook Inlet. Far older than Anchorage, this first gold rush community in Alaska is still a place of log buildings and an atmosphere that can only be experienced. After dinner in a local cafe, we'll settle into our cozy cabins on the edge of rushing Bear Creek.

**Day 15** Bright and early we'll head down the road to Seward and board the tour boat to head out into the Gulf of Alaska for the spectacular Kenai Fjords National Park, passing through the Chiswell Islands Refuge. Here we will view calving glaciers up very close in our small vessel and cruise the rugged coastline to view a tremendous concentration of wildlife, possibly including orcas and humpback whales, sea otters, sea lions, porpoises, eagles, and many different kinds of sea birds. Returning that evening, we'll take a look around Seward before heading north through the mountain lake community of Moose Pass and back to Hope for a barbecue on the deck. If the weather's conducive we'll have a campfire and contemplate a walk to the historic Seaview Bar down on the waterfront to meet some of the local "wildlife". Or, you might just like to poke around the old settlement and see the magnificent views of the mountains bordering Cook Inlet. Lodging for the night is again at Discovery Cabins.

**Day 16** After breakfast, and perhaps a bit of gold panning taught by a local miner (optional - \$25), we will follow the road to the small town of Girdwood, home of the world-class Alyeska Ski Resort. Here there is an option to take the tram ride to the summit if the clouds permit for a spectacular view of the surrounding Chugach Range and Cook Inlet, while others might opt for a short hike through the rainforest (yes, rainforest) before having lunch at the locally famous bakery. We'll return to Anchorage in late afternoon and officially end our incomparable journey on the Last Frontier . . . and now is the true test of, the Spell of the Yukon . . .



## Client Pre-Trip Information 16-Day Overland & Marine Adventure

### Accessibility/Fitness

This is in great part a wilderness trip and while no particular skills are needed for any portion, a prerequisite for personal enjoyment as well as the ability of the group as a whole to proceed without hindrance, is a moderate level of physical conditioning. This does not mean brute strength or endurance but simply the ability to sit in a canoe or kayak (of which you will have a choice) for up to two hours at once, or sleep in a tent for three consecutive nights with no established toilet facilities.

### Clothing/Equipment

While all group equipment is provided, this is an outdoor trip and personal gear should be chosen carefully (see separate packing list). The weather we might encounter could range from temperatures in the low thirties to the mid eighties, with rain of course always a possibility. This variety would suggest being prepared for the coldest to ensure comfort at all times, with multiple layers of versatile clothing the best approach. **Clothing:** Four to five changes of lightweight clothing are recommended which can be layered on cooler evenings. For outerwear, a sweater or pullover is perfect with the best being made of polypropylene pile (fleece) accompanied by a light jacket or vest. A high quality, two piece rainsuit is absolutely necessary which can also be used as a windbreaker or outer shell and should include a hood or else a rain hat. A hat is also ideal for the sun, with some also preferring an additional light stocking cap and gloves. Footwear should be suitable for the intended hiking, fairly lightweight and comfortable - this is not a time to break in new boots! Knee high rubber boots will be issued in Eagle for the river portion, but some folks prefer to bring aqua socks or "Teva" sandals as well. A small bath towel is also useful in camp. **Sleeping Bag:** Should be comfortable to thirty degrees to ensure warmth if it gets damp, with mummy styles recommended. (NOTE: Clean, appropriate sleeping bags can also be rented from Adventure Alaska for a fee of \$30 for the trip - please indicate in advance if needed. A very comfortable full-length ThermoRest sleeping pad is provided, that with another gizmo, doubles as a wonderful camp chair. A daypack enough to hold a jacket, camera, water bottle, lunch is also recommended.

### Luggage

Soft-sided luggage, duffles or travel packs are fine for travel to and from Anchorage, but your gear will need to be transferred to dry sacks (provided) for the actual trip. Total amount of personal gear for the trip including sleeping bag, should not exceed fifty pounds and should be manageable. Extra luggage can usually be stored in Anchorage during the trip if necessary. While this is not a backpacking trip, you will need to be able to carry your gear a short ways (up to 50 yards), as these are wilderness camps. **Packing:** Waterproof nylon dry sacks are distributed upon arrival in Anchorage that serve as your "luggage" during the trip. Though it might take a little getting used to, we have found this system to work best throughout the trip. Space is at a premium in the van, and extremely so in the boats, so *please* pack accordingly - what won't fit in the allotted dry bags won't be able to go.

### Accommodations/Meals

**Accommodations:** Include a bed & breakfast and cabins, both without private baths, as well as eight nights camping. Established facilities are set up for double occupancy while camps are of course camps. Camping will be with two persons to a tent designed for three. No toilet facilities are available along the River. **Meals:** Some of the meals will be in local restaurants or lodges, sometimes with a limited menu. While in camp, due to the nature of wilderness travel, choice will often be limited to a single entree with choice of side dishes. We make no pretense toward gourmet cuisine, though all meals are hearty and cookbook-worthy! Special dietary needs cannot always be met, though vegetarianism is not a problem. Let us know if you have any special or medical dietary requirements and we'll be happy to discuss the options. Alcoholic beverages are not included.



## *Client Pre-Trip Information*

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### **16-Day Overland & Marine Adventure**

#### **Legal Requirement**

**Passports:** As this trip crosses the US/Canada border two times, a valid Passport is necessary. Please make sure you arrange for this early enough in advance so you have it by the time the trip starts. Minor children must have a birth certificate as well as written notarized parental permission unless both parents are present.

#### **Pre/Post-Trip Lodging/Trip Addons**

Many types of lodging are available in Anchorage as are independent extensions before or after your trip with us. Facilities fill up very early during the summer season. Please advise us of your interests well in advance so that we are able to guarantee suitable accommodations. If you need suggestions for other things to do, just let us know.

#### **Miscellaneous**

**Money:** Though most everything is included in the overall price, purchases for souvenirs, alcoholic beverages etc, can be made with either cash, traveler's checks in US Dollars, or, accepted in most places but not all, credit card. **Traveler's Insurance:** is strongly recommended, as the season is very short and our cancellation policy is necessarily quite strict. Ask us for recommendations. **Emergencies:** A trip list of the individual accommodation addresses and emergency phone numbers with the specific dates when you will be there is sent prior to trip departure. As some places are quite remote, the best way to be reached while on the trip, is through the Adventure Alaska office in Hope. Smoking is not permitted in the vans and nearly all lodging facilities in Alaska are non-smoking. Cell phone use is strongly discouraged in the van. Gratuities to your guide not included.

#### **Suggested Reading**

Each client's appreciation will be immeasurably heightened by gaining some background beforehand of Alaska and the areas of our travels. A wide selection of books and information is available from Alaska Geographic: 810 E 9th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501; (866) 257-2757; [www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org) and also from our local bookseller, Title Wave Books, in Anchorage - [www.wavebooks.com](http://www.wavebooks.com); 907-278-9283