



# Exploring **Alaska** with Un-Cruise Adventures

Story and Photo By Cheryl-Anne Millsap

I keep a copy of one particular photograph on my phone because I know that whenever I show it around the table at a dinner party, at a meeting or even just getting together with friends and family, it will always get a big response.

The photo is of a pair of young grizzly bears wrestling in a stream in Alaska. The bears, probably siblings, are splashing and pretending to do great harm to one another. The photo was snapped just as one yearling wrapped

his paws around the other, in a true bear hug.

It is, if I say so myself, a terrific image and people always love it. When they ask how I got it, I was obviously not too far away when I took it, I always tell them it is a souvenir from my un-cruise to Alaska.

The number of people boarding mega ships to cruise the Inside Passage of Southwest Alaska keeps growing. A cruise to Alaska is one of those “life list” adventures we talk so much about. But rubbing shoulders with 4,000 other

people on a floating palace is just one more way to see the scenery between shore excursions at crowded ports. When you board one of Un-Cruise Adventure’s small ships and stow your gear in a comfortable cabin, you’re on an altogether different kind of adventure. Unlike the big ships, the Un-Cruise Adventures ships are small enough to fit into private coves and can linger in places the big boys can only sail through. Off-ship expeditions take you to unexpected places. Most of the crew are wilderness guides and naturalists and days at sea include kayaking, snorkeling and hiking. The day we saw the grizzlies we were on a path no more than 100 yards from the shore but we could just as well have been deep in the interior. And because we had the one luxury so often missing on cruise ships, time, we were able to linger and absorb the rarity and privilege of stepping into the true wild Alaska.

The meals on board are delicious and well-prepared. And although there are no 24-hour buffets, you never go hungry. The Un-Cruise focus is on the experience and the exceptional opportunity to mingle with fewer than 100 other passengers from all over the world, while sailing through some of the most beautiful waterways in the world.

Just like the photo on my phone, my week on the Wilderness Explorer gave me a peek into a world I would not have seen any other way. And that makes it special enough to carry with me wherever I go.

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*Cheryl-Anne Millsap writes about travel at [www.spokesman.com/blogs/homeplanet](http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/homeplanet).*

*For more information about Un-Cruise Adventures go to [www.un-cruise.com](http://www.un-cruise.com)*