



# Fjords of Alaska Cruise—Ultimate Expedition

14 NIGHTS | SITKA TO JUNEAU TO KETCHIKAN, ALASKA | APRIL-SEPTEMBER

## INCLUDED HIGHLIGHTS

- **Glaciers:** Margerie, Grand Pacific, and Dawes
- **Glacier Bay National Park;** a park ranger joins you on board
- **Whale watching and wildlife searches**
- **Mendenhall paddle and hike - or - Mt. Roberts Tram, raptor center and hike**
- **Tlingit culture—Kiksetti Totem Park and Chief Shakes Tribal House visit**
- **Birds and wildlife at South Marble Island—birding and sea lion haulout**
- **Beachcomb, hike, and bushwhack in muskeg and the Tongass National Forest**
- **Kayak, paddle board, and skiff in glacial fjords**
- **Captain's choice adventure exploration**

## DAY 1 Sitka - Embarkation

There's nothing like a hearty greeting from your crew and some bon voyage bubbly. With all souls settled in on board, you're underway. From the bow, Southeast Alaska welcomes you with grand views. (D)

## DAY 2 Krestof & Nakwasina Sounds

There aren't many straight lines along Baranof Island. Its western side is spattered with remote, uninhabited islands. These features mean endless opportunities for adventure. Secluded coves. Tree-covered islets. Drop anchor, pick your modus operandi, and get going. Kayak, paddle board, or skiff—you're on the level with curious sea lions and possibly whales. Rocky intertidal zones make good beach combing. Turn a stone or two to see what's underneath. There are no groomed trails here—get out on a guided hike John Muir would approve of. (BLD)

## DAY 3 Sergius Narrows / Neva Strait

There's an eerie, enigmatic feeling in these woods. Morning fog catches like cotton balls on trees. The aptly named narrows squeezes to only 300 feet wide in one spot and a shallow 24 feet deep. The shorelines are close and it's good territory for play. Skiff ashore and hike into the backcountry. Otters back float working to crack snacks resting on their bellies. Opening at Hoonah Sound, the squeeze is back on. Wind into Neva Strait. Watch the scenery change in the late fading light—from the hot tub of course. (BLD)

## DAY 4 Peril Strait / Chichagof Island

Kick off the morn with on-deck yoga stretches (your guides love it when you join them). Wend along a twisting channel known for dramatic currents. Peril Strait runs 50 miles to Salisbury Sound. Meander through glacier-carved fjords along the Chichagof coast. Then stop. It's a prime time to lower the kayaks and skiffs. Camera in hand, set off on land and sea explorations. Closer inspection by skiff, moss-dripping trees run right down to the water. Any bears in there? With one of the world's largest populations of bears, it's possible. Go searching for giant trees and tidal pools. Hiking in the Tongass, it won't take long to find them. Your eagle-eyed guides lead the pack—and pull up the rear. (BLD)

small ships, BIG adventures



### **DAY 5 Icy Strait**

Nearly to the Pacific Ocean, Icy Strait is remote and wild. The plan? Whales and marine mammals. Spouts and fin slaps are certain giveaways. More rollicking sea lions and birds. But don't forget to look straight down. Porpoises and dolphins may hitch a ride on the bow wave. And don't worry about missing any wildlife; it's a favorite mission of the crew to point out any creatures they spot. Make a break for it and head for a quiet pocket along the rugged coastline. A different sort of wild than the open strait, muskeg leads to forest bushwhacks. Skiff the shore and down along kelp-threaded channels. (BLD)

### **DAY 6 Glacier Bay National Park**

What a privilege. At 3.3 million acres—this UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve is massive. At Bartlett Cove, a park ranger joins in on your day's exploration and shares the park's history. Orange-beaked puffins, guillemots, marbled murrelets are just a few possible sightings. Keep a tally—the list will grow. Arriving at South Marble Island, you can hear and smell 'em before you see 'em—it's a haulout for sea lions. Perched above around the bend, watch for mountain goats, and lower along shore, foraging bears. Up bay, glacial silt turns the water a milky white. Margerie and Grand Pacific Glaciers—one holding steady, the other retreating. Lounging harbor seals laze on bits of bergs. And if time allows, tuck up in Tidal Inlet. End this very full day with your feet up for the sail into Icy Strait. (BLD)

### **DAY 7 Captain's Choice**

Lynn Canal or Chatham Strait, your captain makes the call. Either choice, go with the flow. The water is fine. The guides help you gear up, and lead your adventure along the rocky outcroppings. By kayak or paddle board, take in the size of this wilderness. Bald eagles dot the tree tops. Harbor seals bob up and under. Pods of orcas—the largest in the dolphin family—skim along the water's surface. (BLD)

### **DAY 8 Juneau**

You have a choice in how to spend your day off the boat. At Mendenhall Lake\*, it's hard-charging adventure. After a short drive, push off from shore and canoe among icebergs, temperate rainforest, and Nugget Falls. Make a beach landing then hike 5 miles roundtrip to the edge of Mendenhall Glacier with a natural history lesson along the way. Return the way you came, paddling back across the lake. Or, opt for a more relaxed pace visiting Juneau highlights on your own. An included tramway ticket provides a ride up the Mt. Roberts Tram, where views unfold as you ascend 1,800 feet through the forest. At the top, explore the trails and Nature Center. This option also includes a lunch voucher for a local restaurant and admission to the Alaska State Museum. Complimentary laundry service is provided today. (BLD)

\*Children must be 12 years and older to participate in the Mendenhall Lake/Glacier outing. Guests with children under 12 years old must select the Tram, Lunch, Museum package.

## DAY 9 Endicott Arm / Fords Terror

Take an early peek out your window. Fjord cliffs reach skyward. Floating ice. And deep u-shaped valleys. There's no abracadabra here. Mother Nature's magic is real. Cruise past harbor seals and their pups lounging on chunks of ice. At the end of Endicott, the blue face of Dawes Glacier is stories high. Will it calve? Listen for a crack and unmistakable white thunder. The name Fords Terror originated from a trick of the tides on an early mariner. And tides permitting, your skiff driver knows its character and guides you along. It's a mashup of towering walls, temperamental currents, and the Coastal Mountains. So many waterfalls. Mountain goats show off fancy foot work on the cliffs. Look for them. (BLD)

## DAY 10 Stephens Passage

Yoga stretches on-deck jump start the day. Humpback and orca are frequent visitors of this Southeast passage. A misty spout is a sure sign they're in the neighborhood. Your captain navigates Stephens Passage to Port Houghton. And you're in for a boot-sucking, paddle-smacking day of adventure with your guide team. The routes are all picked out. Make your choice and make your move. Slip off the kayak launch and take it slow spotting sea stars and shore birds. Hard chargers take a long wild paddle to the salt chuck at the back of the inlet. Or, hike into the Tongass. It's a landscape of hanging waterfalls and shades green. (BLD)

## DAY 11 Thomas Bay / Wrangell Narrows

When you come this far, you might as well go all in. This is way back backcountry of Alaska's wilderness. Glacial landscapes marked by moraines, muskegs, and mud. In this playground, it's all an option today. Kayak and skiff in water almost clear as glass. The mirror image of fjord walls plays on the surface. Hike through the outwash of Baird Glacier. Or keep it green tromping through a grassy meadow into the forest. Later, pass by the fishing town of Petersburg and wind into the Wrangell Narrows. Abundant bright red and green navigation lights guide the way. It's "Christmas Tree Lane," of course. (BLD)

## DAY 12 Wrangell

Native culture and wildlife have gotten along just fine for centuries. Wrangell is one of the oldest towns in Alaska. It's also the only one ever governed by four nations. The Tlingit cultures have deep roots here. And local islanders come aboard this morning with a presentation that brings their stories and legends to life. Venture into town for a view of recently carved totem poles at Kiksetti Totem Park. See how many totems you can pick out on each pole. Step inside famed Chief Shakes Tribal House. Can you feel the history in this historic community house? (BLD)

## DAY 13 Behm Canal

Wildlife abounds. Black bears, mink, eagles. In Behm Canal, it's all remote waterways and the isolated Tongass National Forest. On Cleveland Peninsula, your expedition team leads a low-elevation hike with wide-stretching views. Good opportunities for panoramic shots of Southeast. In the water orca, porpoises, seals, and otters go about their business. Go about yours on a guided paddle along the canal. An intertidal shore walk circles a tall sea stack covered in green. (BLD)

## DAY 14 Misty Fjords National Monument

Its affectionate nickname, "The Yosemite of the North," is deserved. There are places on the planet that completely overcome you. This is one of them. The beauty. The peace. The sense of place you feel. Misty Fjords National Monument represents nearly every ecosystem found in Southeast Alaska. And that alone is a lot to consider. Glacial valleys filled with sea water. Sheer 3,000 foot cliffs. Sea birds, brown and black bears, mountain goats, Sitka black-tailed deer, all find safe haven here. Kayak in Walker Cove or Rudyerd Bay and you find it's just as easy to paddle and go, as it is to sit and float and take it all in. Or skiff to the base of a waterfall for fjord-released shower. It's an amazing wrap to your week. Your captain joins you tonight for a Farewell Dinner. Celebrate and reminisce about your Alaskan journey with a photo recap by your crew. (BLD)

## DAY 15 Ketchikan - Disembarkation

After breakfast this morning, bid adieu to your new pals before you disembark and transfer to the Ketchikan airport or begin your extended UnCruise hotel stay or land tour. (B)

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

*Itineraries are guidelines; variations in itinerary and the order of days may occur to maximize your experience.*

*Passport required (non USA citizens).*



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