

ALASKA BY DESIGN

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Alaska National Parks Self Drive Explorer

2026

Alaska Self-Drive Road Trip

12 Days / 11 Nights Anchorage to Anchorage
Not yet on sale

INTRODUCTION

This best selling 12 day Alaska road trip showcases three of Alaska's majestic National Parks. Cruise Kenai Fjords National Park, take your choice of tours at Denali National Park, witness Wrangell St. Elias National Park and take a glacier cruise into Prince William Sound. Don't forget to keep your eyes open for moose, bears, wolves, whales, sea otter and bald eagles as you adventure!

Itinerary at a Glance

- DAY 1** Anchorage to Seward
- DAY 2** Seward | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 11 Excursions
- Option 1. Tonsina Point Resurrection Bay Kayaking Adventure
 - Option 2. Bear Lake Kayak | Canoe Trip
 - Option 3. Wilderness Dog Sled Ride Tour
 - Option 4. Resurrection Bay Wildlife Tour
 - Option 5. Exit Glacier Hike
 - Option 6. Upgrade Option: Guided Walking Salmon Fishing - Seward Area
 - Option 7. Upgrade Option: Bear Glacier Iceberg Kayaking Adventure
 - Option 8. Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Flight with Landing
 - Option 9. Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled

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- Option 10. Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled with Bear Glacier Tour
- Option 11. Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Iceberg, Kayaking Adventure
- DAY 3** Seward to Talkeetna
- DAY 4** Talkeetna to Denali National Park
- Talkeetna | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 3 Excursions
- Option 1. Wilderness Excursion Jetboat Tour
- Option 2. Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing Experience | Small Aircraft
- Option 3. Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing with Glacier Landing | Small Aircraft
- DAY 5** Denali | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 4 Excursions
- Option 1. Denali Highway Jeep Excursion | Self-Drive Guided 4x4 Excursion
- Option 2. Tundra Wilderness Tour | Coach Tour
- Option 3. Upgrade Option: Denali Summit Flightseeing | Small Aircraft
- Option 4. Upgrade Option: Denali Glacier Landing | Helicopter
- DAY 6** Denali National Park to Fairbanks | Sternwheeler Riverboat Cruise
- DAY 7** Fairbanks to Chitina | Chitina to McCarthy | Flight
- DAY 8** McCarthy | Kennicott | Root Glacier Hike
- DAY 9** McCarthy to Chitina | Flight | Chitina to Valdez
- DAY 10** Valdez | Prince William Sound Columbia Glacier Cruise with lunch
- DAY 11** Freedom of Choice from Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge or Alaska Glacier Lodge
- Option 1. Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge | 309 km/192 mi
- Option 2. Valdez to Alaska Glacier Lodge | 445 km/277 mi
- DAY 12** Freedom of Choice Option from Sheep Mountain Lodge or Alaska Glacier Lodge
- Option 1. Sheep Mountain Lodge to Anchorage | 67 km/42 mi
- Option 2. Alaska Glacier Lodge to Anchorage | 80 km/50 mi



MAP

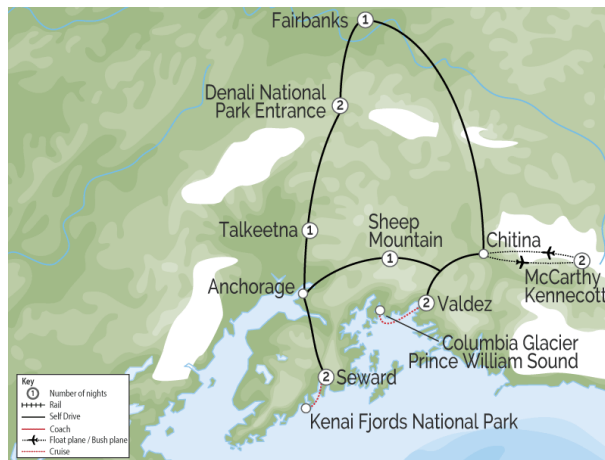
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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 Anchorage to Seward | 204 km/127 mi

This morning travel along the Seward Highway towards scenic Turnagain Arm, a body of water featuring the world's second highest tides at over 30 feet. Keep an eye out for Beluga whales chasing salmon in the bay or Dall sheep along the highway. A great stop for lunch is Alyeska Resort in Girdwood where you can take the tram up Mt. Alyeska (optional). Other stops we recommend include Portage Glacier and its visitor centre, the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center which provides care and rehabilitation for injured and orphaned wildlife. Here you can safely get close, observe, and photograph some of Alaska's largest land animals including moose, bison, elk, deer, caribou, bears, muskox and in Seward Exit Glacier and the SeaLife Centre.

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Day 2 Seward | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 11 Excursions

Today you can personalize your day by choosing one of these excursions

Option 1. Tonsina Point Resurrection Bay Kayaking Adventure

Resurrection Bay is surrounded by snow-capped mountains and home to several Alaska state parks that offer abundant opportunities to hike, sea kayak and explore!

Option 2. Bear Lake Kayak | Canoe Trip

Kayak or canoe on this scenic local lake with fun-loving guides. Bear Lake is located just outside Seward, Alaska and normally offers flat calm waters, and a home for Sockeye salmon. On the way there is a stop to visit the salmon weir and learn about their life cycle. Eagles, loons, and bears are often seen while on this adventure

Option 3. Wilderness Dog Sled Ride Tour

Visit the Seavey Family Homestead in Seward and tour the beautiful tether free summer camp for Iditarod athletes! Meet the dogs, feel their excitement as teams are hitched to comfortable summer sleds, then mush for two miles through the scenic rainforest.

Option 4. Resurrection Bay Wildlife Tour

Admire the icy blue waters of Resurrection Bay as your boat glides past glaciers, snowcapped mountains, and dramatic cliffs. On this 5-hour Kenai Fjords cruise, watch for whales, puffins, and otters with a wildlife guide. Visit Fox Island for a delicious lunch at a private lodge and enjoy skipping stones at a pebble beach. Learn about the area's natural history during this unforgettable Resurrection Bay adventure.

Option 5. Exit Glacier Hike

This moderate hiking adventure is great for viewing the jewel of the Resurrection River Valley - Exit Glacier. This massive wall of blue ice descends the mountainside from the Harding Ice Field, down to the Resurrection River.

Option 6. Upgrade Option: Guided Walking Salmon Fishing - Seward Area

Experience the thrill of a guided walking salmon fishing tour in Seward, Alaska. Stroll along scenic rivers and streams with an expert guide who will help you reel in the catch of the day. Learn about local fishing techniques while surrounded by stunning Alaskan wilderness. Perfect for all skill levels, this adventure offers an authentic taste of Alaska's fishing heritage in one of its most picturesque settings.

Option 7. Upgrade Option: Bear Glacier Iceberg Kayaking Adventure

Explore the massive icebergs deposited by Bear Glacier, the largest glacier of the Harding Icefield, from the comfort of your kayaks. Enjoy the stability of your boats as you glide through the glacier's calm lagoon, navigating a maze of floating ice. The lagoon's features change daily, and your guide will select the best route. Wildlife sightings, including harbor seals and black bears, are also likely on this adventure.

Option 8. Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Flight with Landing

Fly into Kenai Fjords National Park for a breathtaking flight over Bear Glacier, showcasing its massive crevasses and iceberg-filled lagoon. Land on the shore to spend 35 minutes exploring with a pilot/guide. This is a unique opportunity to explore a remote Alaskan beach, hear and see the actively calving glacier, and interact with icebergs near the shore. Moose, Dall sheep, marine wildlife, and black bears are often spotted on this tour.

Option 9. Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled

Experience the thrill of mushing your own sled-dog team on real snow in summer. Begin with a helicopter ride over glaciers, spotting wildlife like moose and bears. Land on a glacier and enjoy an hour with an Alaskan Champion dogsled team, operated by 6-time Iditarod Champion Dallas Seavey.

Option 10. Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled with Bear Glacier Tour

Experience the thrill of mushing your own sled-dog team on real snow in summer. Begin with a helicopter ride over glaciers, spotting wildlife like moose and bears. Land on a glacier and enjoy an hour with an Alaskan Champion dogsled team, operated by 6-time Iditarod Champion Dallas Seavey. Then, soar across Resurrection Bay into Kenai Fjords National Park to explore Bear Glacier, with its massive icebergs and calving glacier

Option 11. Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Iceberg, Kayaking Adventure

Experience the ultimate Alaskan adventure by escaping the crowds and discovering an untouched gem. Start with a scenic helicopter ride over mountains and glaciers, then kayak through a freshwater lagoon filled with monumental icebergs. Bear Glacier, one of the largest off the Harding Ice Field in Kenai Fjords National Park, offers a unique and dynamic environment, where seals and bears can be spotted. Routes vary based on current ice conditions, ensuring each trip is a one-of-a-kind experience.

Day 3 Seward to Talkeetna | 386 km/240 mi

Head back towards Anchorage today taking in the sights of the Seward Highway as you go. Pass through Anchorage and drive the Glenn Highway north to Wasilla and onto Talkeetna. Stops can include a visit to the Alaska Native Heritage Centre in Anchorage and the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry in Wasilla. Talkeetna serves as a base camp for Denali climbers; the community of under 1000 residents is located at the confluence of the Talkeetna and Susitna Rivers. A turn-of-the-20th-century gold-mining centre, the town has retained much of its early Alaskan flavour.

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Day 4 Talkeetna to Denali National Park | 257 km/153 mi*Talkeetna | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 3 Excursions*

Today you can personalize your day by choosing one of these excursions

Option 1. Wilderness Excursion Jetboat Tour

Embark on a narrated river cruise into Alaska's wilderness, with views of Denali. Travel 20 miles as a naturalist shares insights on local history, wildlife, and Denali. Explore a Dena'ina Indian encampment and a historic trapper's cabin, learn about trapping, and discover edible plants used by Native communities.

Option 2. Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing Experience | Small Aircraft

This flightseeing tour brings you within 6 miles of Denali's north (19,470 ft.) and south (20,320 ft.) summits. Explore rugged peaks, glacier-filled valleys, and Denali's south and east faces. View the dramatic rise from 2,000 ft. to over 20,320 ft., the Ruth Glacier, Sheldon Amphitheater, Great Gorge, and stunning blue meltwater pools.

Option 3. Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing with Glacier Landing | Small Aircraft

Fly within 6 miles of Denali's north summit (19,470 ft) and south summit (20,320 ft), showcasing a landscape of rugged peaks, snow-capped mountains, and glacier-filled valleys. Explore the south and east faces of Denali, witnessing its dramatic rise from 2,000 ft to over 20,320 ft. Highlights include the flowing Ruth Glacier, Sheldon Amphitheater, Great Gorge with mile-high granite walls, and striking blue meltwater pools.

After your excursion, drive the Parks Highway north to Denali National Park, passing by incredible forest and mountain landscapes. You'll have as much time as you like to experience the majesty of Denali National Park, take in the sights of the George Parks Highway or arrive at your hotel near the park entrance to take advantage of an optional excursion or a visit to the Denali Visitor Centre.

Day 5 Denali | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 4 Excursions*Option 1. Denali Highway Jeep Excursion | Self-Drive Guided 4x4 Excursion*

Ranked #2 in Drives of a Lifetime by National Geographic Traveler magazine, experience the natural wonders of Alaska's Denali Highway — this time by Jeep! This 4-hour guided excursion travels along a 135 mi (217 km) gravel road & takes you off the beaten path in a 4 x 4 to enjoy scenic views of Denali, the Alaska Range, glaciers and wildlife.

Option 2. Tundra Wilderness Tour | Coach Tour

This half day tour offers incredible scenery, a narrated history of the park road and opportunities to view the park's wildlife inhabitants. Picturesque highlights include the craggy cliffside of Cathedral Mountain, wildlife rich Sable Pass and braided wash of the East Fork River in Denali National Park.

Option 3. Upgrade Option: Denali Summit Flightseeing | Small Aircraft

Get a closer look at Alaska's majestic Denali from the comfortable window seat of a small aircraft. Slip on your provided headset to hear commentary from your guide as you fly over the snow-covered peaks, jagged ridgelines, and glacier carved valleys of Denali National Park, and get within half a mile of the mountain peak.

Option 4. Upgrade Option: Denali Glacier Landing | Helicopter

Be immersed in the vastness of the Denali National Preserve. On your way to the massive Yanert Glacier, your pilot will serve as your guide through this unique glacially carved environment. Soar over the rolling tundra, keeping an eye out for local residents – caribou, moose, bear, and Dall sheep. Snow capped peaks and glaciers abound on this journey before you set down on a river of ice.

Day 6 Denali National Park to Fairbanks | 198 km/123 mi | Sternwheeler Riverboat Cruise

Continue on the George Parks Highway north to Fairbanks. Accompanied by incredible forest and mountain landscapes, you drive through the communities of Healy, Nenana and Ester - an old mining camp. In the afternoon, climb aboard the Riverboat Discovery III for an unforgettable 3-hour cruise into the Alaskan Interior, traveling the Chena and Tanana Rivers on the only authentic sternwheeler riverboat operating in Alaska. This narrated tour provides background on the area's natural history and the Athabascan Indian culture.

Day 7 Fairbanks to Chitina | 498 km/310 mi | Chitina to McCarthy | Flight

Depart early this morning for an approximate 6-hour drive through broad, meandering river valleys characteristic of the north side of the Alaska Range. Reaching Copper River, you'll find the scenery changes dramatically as Mt. Drum, Mt. Wrangell and Mt. Blackburn rise to stunning heights. A quick visit to Copper Centre is well worth the few extra miles off the main Richardson Highway – located at the confluence of the Klutina and Copper Rivers it offers classic Alaskan character and some interesting sites. Continue south to the town of Chitina, the main entry point by flight into McCarthy-Kennicott and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Day 8 McCarthy | Kennicott | Root Glacier Hike

Spend the morning exploring the dynamic features of nearby Root Glacier on a guided trail and ice hike. The afternoon is yours to visit the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark and the funky-rustic nearby enclave of McCarthy.

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Day 9 McCarthy to Chitina | Flight | Chitina to Valdez | 194 km/120 mi

Today fly back to Chitina by bush plane while enjoying great views of the Wrangell Mountains. From Chitina continue south where you will begin to enter the Chugach Mountains that ring the coast of Alaska from Prince William Sound. At Thompson Pass you may wish to stop at one of the pullouts for the scenery and views of Worthington Glacier before you begin the descent into Valdez.

Day 10 Valdez | Prince William Sound Columbia Glacier Cruise with lunch

Discover the magic of Alaska on this 7-hour Columbia Glacier cruise from Valdez. A local captain and crew will guide you through the Trans Alaska Pipeline Terminal and Columbia Bay before arriving at Columbia Glacier, the largest tidewater glacier in South Central Alaska. Look out for wildlife along the way; if you're lucky you could spot porpoises, puffins, sea lions and sea otters among other creatures. (Lunch included)

Day 11 Freedom of Choice from Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge or Alaska Glacier Lodge*Option 1. Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge | 309 km/192 mi*

Today, drive north from Valdez through the dramatic Thompson Pass, known for its towering peaks and cascading waterfalls. Stop at Worthington Glacier, where you can explore the glacier up close. Continue along the Richardson Highway, passing through the lush Chugach Mountains. Visit the historic Copper Center, a former supply hub during the Klondike Gold Rush, to explore the local museum showcasing Native Alaskan artifacts and gold rush memorabilia. Stop by the Gulkana River viewpoint to watch for salmon or spot bald eagles. Continue toward Sheep Mountain Lodge, where the colorful mountains and surrounding glacial valleys offer stunning views of Alaska's rugged terrain.

Option 2. Valdez to Alaska Glacier Lodge | 445 km/277 mi

Today drive north from Valdez along the Richardson Highway, first stopping at Worthington Glacier, a must-see roadside glacier offering a close-up view of ice formations. Continue towards Thompson Pass, where high mountain peaks and sweeping vistas define this historically significant trade route. Further along, visit Bridal Veil Falls, a towering waterfall cascading down steep cliffs. Pause at the abandoned Copper Center, once a critical hub for prospectors during the Gold Rush. End at Alaska Glacier Lodge near the Matanuska Glacier, where glacial formations and the lodge's rustic setting provide a glimpse into the area's rich geological and settlement history.

Day 12 Freedom of Choice Option from Sheep Mountain Lodge or Alaska Glacier Lodge*Option 1. Sheep Mountain Lodge to Anchorage | 67 km/42 mi*

Continue your journey towards Anchorage, stop at Matanuska Glacier, offering incredible views and hiking opportunities. Explore Independence Mine State Historical Park near Hatcher Pass, where you can walk through the remnants of an old gold mining town and learn about Alaska's mining heritage. Glenn Highway offers expansive views of the Chugach Mountains and winding rivers. Eagle River Nature Center is perfect for a short walk with mountain and river views, rich in wildlife. Finish your trip with a visit to the Alaska Native Heritage Center, offering cultural insights into Alaska's indigenous history.

Option 2. Alaska Glacier Lodge to Anchorage | 80 km/50 mi

Continue along the Glenn Highway towards Anchorage, passing through Matanuska Valley, where sweeping views of Matanuska Glacier provide an impressive backdrop. Stop at the Musk Ox Farm in Palmer to observe unique arctic wildlife and learn about their historical significance to the region's indigenous cultures. Further along, Thunderbird Falls offers an accessible hike leading to a waterfall surrounded by lush greenery. Explore the Eklutna Historical Park, home to St. Nicholas Church and traditional Athabaskan spirit houses. The journey concludes in Anchorage, where the stunning Chugach Mountains and Cook Inlet meet, offering views steeped in Alaskan history.



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INCLUDED

Package Includes:

- Accommodation including taxes for 11 nights
- Seward | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 11 Excursions
- Tonsina Point Resurrection Bay Kayaking Adventure
- Bear Lake Kayak | Canoe Trip
- Wilderness Dog Sled Ride Tour
- Resurrection Bay Wildlife Cruise
- Exit Glacier Hike
- Upgrade Option: Guided Walking Salmon Fishing | Seward Area
- Upgrade Option: Bear Glacier Iceberg Kayaking Adventure
- Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Flight with Landing
- Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled
- Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled with Bear Glacier Tour
- Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Iceberg, Kayaking Adventure
- Admission to Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Talkeetna | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 3 Excursions
- Wilderness Excursion Jetboat Tour
- Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing Experience
- Upgrade Option: Denali Flightseeing Experience with Glacier Landing
- Denali | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 4 Excursions
- Denali Highway Jeep Excursion
- Tundra Wilderness Tour
- Upgrade Option: Denali Summit Flightseeing by Plane
- Upgrade Option: Denali Glacier Landing by Helicopter
- Sternwheeler Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Scenic Return Flight Chitina - McCarthy
- Kennecott Mill Town Tour
- McCarthy | Kennicott Morning Glacier Hike
- Prince William Sound Columbia Glacier Cruise with lunch
- Meals as per Itinerary

Hotel Information | Moderate Grade

- Seward - Seward Windsong Lodge | Standard Room
- Talkeetna - Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge | Main Lodge Room
- Denali Park Entrance - Denali Cabins | Standard Cabin
- Fairbanks - Rivers Edge Resort | Garden Cottage
- McCarthy - Ma Johnson Hotel | Standard Room
- Valdez - Best Western Valdez Harbor Inn | Standard Room
- Sheep Mountain - Sheep Mountain Lodge | Premier Cabin

Hotel Information | Superior Grade

- Seward - Seward Windsong Lodge | Standard Room with Deck
- Talkeetna - Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge | Mountainside Lodge Room

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- Denali Park Entrance - Grande Denali Lodge | Standard Room
- Fairbanks - Rivers Edge Resort | River Cottage
- McCarthy - Ma Johnson Hotel | Standard Room
- Valdez - Best Western Valdez Harbor Inn | Standard Room
- Sheep Mountain - Sheep Mountain Lodge | Premier Cabin

Not included:

- Gratuities
- Activities other than specified
- Portage fees
- Rental car
- Road and tunnel tolls

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