

ALASKA BY DESIGN

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Alaska Rail & Road Trip Circle Tour

2026

Alaska | Rail + Self-Drive

9 Days / 8 Nights Anchorage to Anchorage
Not yet on sale

INTRODUCTION

Explore some of the best natural wonders that Alaska has to offer on this 9-day rail and road trip through numerous scenic destinations. Highlights include traveling on Alaska Railroad's luxury Goldstar railcar between Anchorage and Fairbanks and your choice of tours in Denali National Park from a Backcountry Adventure Tour, Jeep Excursion or Tundra Wilderness Tour. Lastly, pick up your rental car in Fairbanks and drive to Valdez, the Kenai Peninsula and Seward for more excursions.

Itinerary at a Glance

- DAY 1** Anchorage to Denali National Park Entrance | Alaska Railroad
- DAY 2** 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 3** Denali National Park Entrance to Fairbanks | Alaska Railroad
- DAY 4** Fairbanks to Valdez
- DAY 5** Valdez | Prince William Sound Columbia Glacier Cruise with lunch
- DAY 6** Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge

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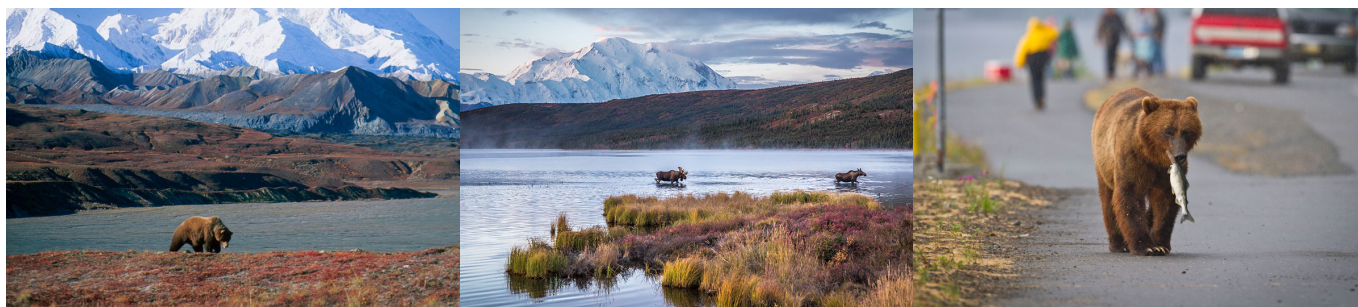
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- DAY 7** Sheep Mountain Lodge to Seward
- DAY 8** Seward | Freedom of Choice - Choose 1 of 11 Excursions
- Option 1. Tonsina Point Resurrection Bay Kayaking Adventure
- Option 2. Bear Lake Kayak | Canoe Trip
- Option 3. Wilderness Dog Sled Ride Tour
- 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
- Option 10. Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled with Bear Glacier Tour
- Option 11. Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Iceberg, Kayaking Adventure
- DAY 9** Seward to Anchorage



MAP



DETAILED ITINERARY

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Day 1 Anchorage to Denali National Park Entrance | Alaska Railroad

Early this morning take the Denali Star, the Alaska Railroad's flagship train, in the Goldstar Railcar with service to Denali National Park. Watch for views of Denali and keep an eye out for wildlife. Arrive mid-afternoon; the rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy an optional activity. (Breakfast & lunch is included onboard the train today)

Day 2 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 3 Denali National Park Entrance to Fairbanks | Alaska Railroad

This morning is at leisure to enjoy optional activities such as: whitewater rafting down the Nenana River, helicopter flightseeing over the park, landing on a glacier or hiking. By early afternoon, board Alaska Railroad's Denali Star Train in the Goldstar Railcar to Fairbanks. Enjoy the late afternoon scenery as you travel north to Fairbanks. (Dinner is included on board the train today)

Day 4 Fairbanks to Valdez | 584 km/363 mi

Settle in for a day of driving through some of Alaska's most diverse and dynamic landscapes. You'll drive the Richardson Highway along the Tanana River through Delta Junction, home to the Delta Bison Sanctuary. 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 5 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 6 Valdez to Sheep Mountain Lodge | 309 km/192 mi

Today you will drive back north on the Richardson Highway with great views of the Wrangell Mountains as you return to Glennallen (weather permitting). Here you follow the Glenn Highway towards Palmer/Anchorage until you reach Sheep Mountain Lodge. The rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy the scenic mountain views or recreational activities in the area. There are over 20 km/12 mi of trails near the lodge perfect for exploring. Birds and wildflowers abound. Maps are provided in each cabin for self-guided hiking.

Day 7 Sheep Mountain Lodge to Seward | 373 km/232 mi

Drive the Glenn Highway south to Anchorage. Highlights on today's trip include the Independence Mine in beautiful Hatcher Pass and the many communities in the Mat-Su Valley. This valley contains many farms with the remarkable growing season in Alaska and offers beautiful views of the Chugach Range. Continue on through Anchorage 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. In Seward we suggest a visit to Exit Glacier and the SeaLife Center.

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Day 8 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 9 Seward to Anchorage | 204 km/127 mi

Begin your day with a short drive to Exit Glacier to take the easy walk to stand beside this spectacular Glacier. Next, visit the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center which provides care and rehabilitation for injured and orphaned wildlife. Here you can safely observe and photograph some of Alaska's largest land animals including moose, bison, elk, deer, caribou, bears and muskox. If time permits, take the aerial tram up Alyeska Mountain for views of Turnagain Arm, up to seven "hanging" glaciers and the endless peaks of the Chugach Mountain Range before continuing the short drive from Girdwood to Anchorage.

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INCLUDED

Package Includes:

- Accommodation including taxes for 8 nights
- Alaska Railroad - Anchorage to Denali Goldstar Service
(Dome car seating & private outdoor viewing deck with meals included on train)
- 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
- Alaska Railroad - Denali to Fairbanks Goldstar Service
(Dome car seating & private outdoor viewing deck with meals included on train)
- Prince William Sound Columbia Glacier Cruise with lunch
- 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
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- Upgrade Option: Helicopter & Glacier Dogsled with Bear Glacier Tour
- Upgrade Option: Helicopter Bear Glacier Iceberg, Kayaking Adventure
- Admission to Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Meals as per itinerary

Hotel Information | Moderate Grade

- Denali Park Entrance - Denali Cabins | Standard Cabin
- Fairbanks - Rivers Edge Resort | Garden Cottage
- Valdez - Best Western Valdez Harbor Inn | Standard Room
- Sheep Mountain - Sheep Mountain Lodge | Premium Cabin
- Seward - Seward Windsong Lodge | Standard Room

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Hotel Information | Superior Grade

- Denali Park Entrance - Grande Denali Lodge | Standard Room
- Fairbanks - Rivers Edge Resort | River Cottage
- Valdez - Best Western Valdez Harbor Inn | Standard Room
- Sheep Mountain - Sheep Mountain Lodge | Classic Cabin
- Seward - Seward Windsong Lodge | Standard Room with Deck

Valdez accommodation is the best available in the area and considered lower end of 3 star.

Not included:

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

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