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## ECO-TRAVEL TO ALASKA

August 15-23, 2019

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### Itinerary

Discover Alaska when fall colors are turning and wildlife are preparing for the long winter ahead. We will start our travels aboard the world-famous Alaska Railroad from Anchorage, along the stunning Turnagain Arm, up close and personal with the Kenai Mountains to the seaport town of Seward. The ecosystem of the Kenai Peninsula is lush and vibrant. Our two days here will be highlighted with a cruise into Kenai Fjords National Park, a walk to Exit Glacier and seeing the evening catch as the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Silver Salmon Derby will be taking place.

Boarding a motorcoach to Denali National Park we will drive through the spine of the Alaska Range arriving at our home for five nights, the Denali Education Center. Staying on their riverside campus we will be treated to spectacular vistas, unparalleled wilderness and the chance to see northern lights. We will search for grizzly bears, wolves, moose, caribou and Dall Sheep while traveling through the heart of Denali National Park on one of the Park's shuttle buses. Each day will have opportunities to have a guided walk in the Park's front country and to learn from the locals about the subarctic ecosystem.

#### August 15, Thursday:

Arrive into Anchorage, plane reservations made on your own, you will be met at the airport by a Premier Alaska Tours driver and Willie, lodging to be determined but will be a downtown Anchorage hotel near to local restaurants. Recommend you arrive early so you can explore on your own. We will have an orientation at approximately 7pm to meet each other and pass out bag breakfasts for the next morning.

#### August 16, Friday:

Motorcoach will pick up group and luggage early, 5:45am, and transport to Alaska Railroad depot. Board the Alaska Railroad and head south to Seward for a 4 ½ hour trip through spectacular wilderness. Motorcoach will meet us at the Seward Railroad depot with all of our luggage and proceed to give us a tour of Seward dropping us at the marina where lunch is on our own. We will then be picked up and driven a short distance to Exit Glacier for an opportunity to hike to the toe of the Glacier and visit the Exit Glacier Nature Center. After our afternoon hike we will check into our hotel for some relax time and then go to dinner at Ray's Waterfront Lodge located in the Seward Marina.

#### August 17, Saturday:

Breakfast buffet in hotel. Morning to explore on your own. Late morning 5-hour boat trip to explore Kenai Fjords National Park on Major Marine Tours high speed catamaran. Rain or shine we will venture out to hopefully see whales, seabirds, seals, sea otters and calving glaciers. Prime rib and salmon lunch served onboard. Full rain gear (both tops and bottoms), warm hat and gloves required today. Even on a sunny day the weather can turn quickly. Dinner on own.

August 18, Sunday:

Breakfast buffet in hotel. Load luggage into motorcoach and depart at 8am. Drive through the Kenai Peninsula back through Anchorage and then north to Denali National Park. We will stop at the Fred Meyer store in Eagle River for you to purchase lunch and any supplies you will need in Denali. Good place to buy beer or wine as well as any last-minute snacks or gear you might want. Arrive at the Denali Education Center (DEC) campus and check into your cabin. Two rooms per cabin with private baths. These are simple, comfortable cabin rooms with no TV, coffee maker or microwaves. WiFi is available but AT&T is the only reliable phone carrier. All meals are included at the DEC. Laundry is available on campus. Orientation after dinner.

August 19<sup>th</sup>, Monday:

Morning, bus into Denali National Park 13 miles for the spectacular Savage River hike. Afternoon to explore the Denali Visitor Center or visit the Sled Dogs of Denali. Evening presentation, "Life in Denali" with a year-round resident\*.

August 20<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday:

Morning, "Welcome to the Subarctic" class with DEC instructors. Afternoon, explore the birch, aspen and spruce forest during the Rock Creek hike with DEC instructors. Evening presentation, "Climbing Denali" with a local mountaineer\*.

August 21<sup>st</sup>, Wednesday:

Travel to the heart of Denali National Park on a day-long journey to Eielson Visitor Center. Enjoy breathtaking views of the Alaska Range. Look for caribou, moose, grizzlies, Dall sheep and wolves while seeing the beginning of the fall colors in Denali. Evening to relax on your own.

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Thursday:

Morning, Oxbow or Triple Lakes hike with DEC instructors. Afternoon on your own to take in your last afternoon in Denali. We can help to facilitate a hike or you can take in an optional activities such as rafting, flightseeing or visiting a local Iditarod kennel. After dinner good bye social and slideshow in the Charles Sheldon Center.

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Friday:

Morning motorcoach ride back to Anchorage. Stops along the way for pictures if Denali is out. As most flights out of Anchorage are late night you will have the day on your own to explore. We will drop off anyone at their hotel if they are staying an extra night but for the remainder we will drop off at the airport. You can store your bags in the airport for a small fee and then Uber or take a cab to wherever you would like to explore for the remainder of the day.

If you have any questions whatsoever please contact me at [denaliwillie@hotmail.com](mailto:denaliwillie@hotmail.com) or 414-688-4367.

Looking forward to showing you Alaska!

# Gear List

In preparation for your trip to Alaska you may want to consider some or all of these items to bring along to both wear and use. Realizing that you will have to make choices to best serve your particular needs the following list is made as a guide to consider. Best of luck making your decisions and as always if any questions please do not hesitate to contact me, [denaliwillie@hotmail.com](mailto:denaliwillie@hotmail.com)

Quality - I have durable gear which will last a long time. This is really important to me but might not be as important to you, that's ok. A brand like Columbia is really great quality but you won't pay the premium of say North Face or Marmot. However, you can find good quality brands at your local department store which will certainly do the trick at the most reasonable prices.

Layering - The concept of layering is how I am basing all my descriptions to you. For instance, instead of wearing a light shirt and a heavy coat consider a long underwear top, a wool sweater and a fleece top with zip neck. On top of all this would be a wind or rain layer depending on conditions.

Style - In Alaska, especially where we are going, there is none. You're fine. In practical terms this means you do not need a new outfit for each day, in fact, this is highly discouraged as your luggage will weigh a ton and you will pay more when you check your bags at the airport.

## Must Haves:

1. Rain gear, both tops and bottoms. If you are purchasing rain gear please consider purchasing a rain top which has a hood which can be cinched close to your face. For pants if you are able the easiest kinds to get in and out of contain full side zips which make it really easy to pull over your shoes. Another tip, remember to purchase rain gear which is large enough to fit over your other clothes. Also, your rain gear will effectively function as wind gear. Even if it isn't raining you may have your rain gear on to break the wind to keep you warm.
2. Sturdy walking shoes. You will have the option of walking quite a bit on this trip. There are lots of shoes/ hiking boots which you can get to serve your needs, my suggestion, find a waterproof shoe which is comfortable. This cannot be overstated. The last thing you want to do is break your new shoes in on this trip. Get your shoes now and break them in over the summer, they will become part of you and this is a good thing.
3. Long underwear, tops and bottoms. I love long underwear! Long underwear improves your quality of vacation life experience, day in and day out. There is one major rule which applies to all your gear but especially here, Cotton Kills. Cotton holds water and it is hard to dry out, don't purchase long underwear which is cotton. If I had one item to spend a little extra money on it is here. I typically purchase brands such as Patagonia, NorthFace or Woolrich and for purposes of this trip would get Medium weight products. There are a variety of styles to choose with tops and I always select tops with zip necks. This allows you to help regulate your temperature during changing weather and activity level. (If you are going all out the best thing to do is to get an underlayer of silk, both tops and bottoms, to wear against your body before putting on the long underwear.)
4. Warm hat and gloves.
5. Tops,
  - a) long sleeve pullover top with a zip neck
  - b) warm sweater of your choice, 100% wool or high percentage of wool is best.
  - c) fleece pullover which can fit over all of these tops with a zip neck
6. Pants, jeans and cotton pants are perfectly acceptable in combination with long underwear and rain/wind pants. I will have a pair of shorts which I wear over my long underwear for maximum comfort while walking.
7. Socks, 100% wool. SmartWool socks are great.

8. Day pack large enough to hold rain gear, lunch, extra top, miscellaneous gear.

Be Great to Have:

1. Binoculars
2. Camera
3. Walking stick
4. Water bottle (you can buy Denali Education Center water bottles if you care to)
5. One set of comfortable clothes to hang out in your room at night.
6. Notebook/pens (if you are so inclined)
7. Bug dope, they might be gone if there has been a freeze.

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## Book List

There are many great books written about Alaska. This list contains some recommendations for those who'd like to read up on the region before they arrive. Enjoy!

### Denali National Park and Preserve

The Denali Road Guide.....Kim Heacox  
Denali: Symbol of the Alaskan Wild... William E. Brown  
Valued Landscapes of the Far North..... Eugene Palka  
Denali, The Story Behind the Scenery... Steve Buskirk  
Denali: A Literary Anthology.....ed: Bill Sherwonit

### Archaeology and Prehistory

American Beginnings.....Ed. Frederick West  
Quest for the Origins of the First Americans..E. Jane Dixon

### Animals

Grizzly.....Michio Hoshino  
Backcountry Bear Basics.....Dave Smith  
Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance..Stephen Herrero  
The Sibley Guide to Birds.....David Allen Sibley  
Guide to the Birds of Alaska.....Robert H. Armstrong  
Alaska's Birds, Pocket Guide.....Robert H. Armstrong  
A Naturalist in Alaska.....Adolph Murie  
Alaska's Wildlife.....Tom Walker  
Wolves of Mount McKinley (new ed.).....Adolph Murie  
Of Wolves and Men.....Barry Holstun Lopez  
Wild Harmony, Animals of the North....William O. Pruitt Jr.  
Mountains without Handrails.....Joseph Sax

### Natural History

Naturalist's Guide to the Arctic.....E.C. Pielou  
Visions of Wild America.....Kim Heacox  
Plants of the Western Boreal Forest Wildflowers of Denali National Park.....Verna E. Pratt  
Aspen Parkland.....Derek Johnson  
After the Ice Age.....E.C Pielou

### Geology and Glaciers

The Geology of Denali National Park Roadside Geology of Alaska..... Cathy Connor  
and Preserve.....Michael Collier

## History

Alaska: History of the 49th State.....Claus M. Naske  
Preserving Nature in the National Parks.....Richard Sellars

## Literature Anthology and Literary Criticism

Last New Land.....Edited by Wayne Mergler  
Nature Writing..... Scott Slovic

## Mountaineering

To the Top of Denali.....Bill Sherwonit  
Mount McKinley: Conquest of Denali...Bradford Washburn  
Mount McKinley: The Pioneer Climbs.....Terris Moore  
Minus 148°.....Art Davidson

## Narratives, Contemporary

Coming Into the Country.....John McPhee  
Arctic Dreams.....Barry Lopez

## Narratives, Historical

Two in the Far North.....Margaret Murie  
Ten Thousand Miles With a Dog Sled.....Hudson Stuck  
The Wilderness of Denali.....Charles Sheldon

## Native Culture and History

Make Prayers to the Raven.....Richard Nelson  
Arctic Village.....Robert Marshall  
Hunters of the Northern Forest .....Richard Nelson  
Shadows on the Koyukuk: An Alaskan Native's Life Along the River.....Sidney Huntington

## Wilderness

The Idea of Wilderness.....Max Oelschlaeger  
Wilderness and the American Mind.....Roderick Nash

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## Worthy Websites

<http://www.denali.org> Denali Education Center (esp. Taiga Notes and Natural History Notes)

<http://www.nps.gov/dena> Denali National Park and Preserve homepage

<http://www.murieslc.org> Murie Science and Learning Center

<http://www.anchorage.net> Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau

<http://www.anchagemuseum.org> Anchorage Museum homepage

<http://www.alaskanative.net> Alaska Native Heritage Center

<http://www.alaskageographic.org> Alaska Geographic

<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/tourism> Alaska State Division of Tourism

<http://www.akrr.com> The Alaska Railroad

<http://wildernessofdenali100.blogspot.com> Blog chronicling the 61 day winter trip on the Toklat River from January 21-March 21, 2008. Written by Christine and Willie Karidis.