



ITINERARY

Gateway to the Arctic

ALASKA 10 DAYS HIKING/CANOEING

The call of the wild continually beckons as we explore one of the most remote and magnificent wilderness regions left in North America. Our journey begins in the frontier town of Fairbanks and presses ever northward as we hike and paddle our way through the Alaskan Bush. As we travel along the storied Dalton Highway towards the Arctic Circle, we'll enjoy a half-day canoe exploration and a hot spring soak near the small community of Manley. A spectacular flight over the Brooks Range to the Nunamiut village of Anaktuvuk offers an opportunity to learn more about the history of these resilient people. Finally, as we approach the North Slope, two amazing treasures lay waiting. Gates of the Arctic National Park and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge offer unparalleled hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities as we share the tundra with caribou, grizzly bear and wolverine. A dip in the Arctic Ocean concludes this unforgettable adventure under the midnight sun!

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Day 1 is the day you should plan to arrive at the meeting point for the trip. This may require departing your home town one or more days in advance.

DAY 1

Your trip begins today in Fairbanks, Alaska. An after-dinner orientation meeting with our guide and traveling companions will be held at our hotel in Fairbanks this evening. *Hotel included. All meals on your own today.*

DAY 2

We'll gather in the hotel lobby at 8 a.m. and travel north and west this morning along the Elliott Highway toward the road's end community of Manley Hot Springs. Near the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers, Manley was a major center of trade during the gold rush but in its current, quieter incarnation, is home to only 100 year-round inhabitants. We'll spend the afternoon hiking and perhaps berry-picking in the nearby White Mountains and continue on to Manley to set up camp for the next two nights. Our guide prepares a delicious dinner for us this evening under the boundless Alaska sky. *All meals included.*

Hiking: 7 miles

DAY 3

Long associated with the lore of backcountry Alaska, dog sledding is a popular pastime as well as a practical mode of winter travel in this snowy climate. Some of the world's most accomplished dog mushers have made Manley their home and we'll spend time this morning visiting a working sled dog kennel and learning about the unique relationship that evolves between dog and musher. This afternoon, our canoes stand ready for our half-day paddle exploration through the wetland environment of the Manley Slough. We'll watch for sandhill cranes, beaver, eagles and moose as we glide silently through the water. Tonight, we'll have the opportunity to relax in Manley's garden oasis hot springs. *All meals included.*

Canoeing: up to 10 miles.

DAY 4

Our journey along the remote, 414-mile long Dalton Highway begins as we leave peaceful Manley behind and head due north towards the edge of the continent. We'll stop along the way at the Yukon River and as we cross the Arctic Circle to stretch our legs and enjoy a picnic lunch. A particularly memorable view (among many that the highway has to offer) awaits us as we pass Gobbler's Knob at Milepost 132. Looming in the distance are the jagged peaks of the rugged Brooks Range. Stretching over 700 miles, the Brooks is home to golden eagles, Dall's sheep, wolves and grizzly bear and we'll spend the next two days immersed in the unspoiled beauty of this mountain range. The Coldfoot Interagency Visitor Center is the official visitor center for both Gates of the Arctic National Park and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and we'll stop here to learn more about the geology, flora and fauna of these unspoiled national treasures. We camp for the next three nights at Marion Creek. Driving distance: 240 miles (approx. 5 hours not including various stops). *All meals included.*

DAY 5

In the town of Wiseman, hardscrabble sourdoughs once answered the call of the wild to seek their fortunes in gold. Renowned conservationist Robert Marshall chose this settlement as the focal point of his acclaimed book *Arctic Village: A Nineteen Thirties Portrait of Wiseman, Alaska*, documenting the hardships of life on the frontier. Today, gold-mining is still practiced in Wiseman but the sourdoughs have been replaced by ingenious and friendly Alaskans who live off the land they share with the lynx,

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moose and wolverine. We'll visit Wiseman and take a walking tour with a resident trapper who enjoys enlightening travelers to the local way of life in this untamed environment. After an early afternoon ridge hike offering spectacular panoramic views, we'll board a small plane at the Wiseman airstrip for an unforgettable thirty-minute scenic flight through the Gates of the Arctic and over the Brooks Range to the Nunamiut village of Anaktuvuk. The Nunamiuts were the last group of indigenous people in North America to give up their nomadic lifestyle and settle in a permanent village. We are met by a Nunamiut guide upon arrival who shares the fascinating history of his people with us before we board our return flight to Wiseman and our campsite at Marion Creek. *All meals included.*

Hiking: 4 miles.

DAY 6

We'll set off on foot into Gates of the Arctic National Park and spend the day enjoying an amazing hike through this vast (8.5 million acres), awe-inspiring landscape rarely visited humans. *Breakfast and lunch included.*

Hiking: 8 miles.

DAY 7

Beyond the northernmost tree, we drive over the continental divide of the north, Atigun Pass (the highest pass in Alaska at 4,739'), and hike into this true wilderness where the gates of the great Brooks Range open onto the vast tundra plains of the Arctic. We cross the spectacular treeless landscape, where herds of caribou migrate and northward flowing rivers run toward the Arctic Ocean. Along the way, we'll have abundant opportunities to view the many animals which roam this virtually uninhabited environment while catching occasional glimpses of the Alaskan pipeline, a quiet reminder of the modern world we've left behind. We'll camp at Galbraith Lake for the next two nights. *All meals included.*

Hiking: 5 miles.

DAY 8

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most complete and undisturbed ecosystems on our planet and one of America's natural treasures. Home to a surprisingly large variety of wildlife as well as Inupiat Eskimo and Gwich'in Indian communities, it represents an entire cross-section of Arctic life protected in one seamless expanse. We spend the entire day hiking on the tundra that lies along the western edge of the refuge, enjoying the solitude and appreciating the pristine and untamed wilds that surround us. Possible animal sightings include musk ox, caribou, brown bear, Dall's sheep, wolverine, fox and a variety of swans, terns, loons and raptors. *All meals included.*

Hiking: 8 miles

DAY 9

The final leg of our odyssey points us towards the northern edge of the continent as we travel through the seemingly boundless arctic tundra en route to the village of Deadhorse. We'll stop along the way for a hike on the otherworldly North Slope before reaching our lodging in Deadhorse late this afternoon. A bed and hot shower feel great after a week in the backcountry! *All meals included.*

Hiking: 4 miles.

DAY 10

The end of our journey is also the terminus of the Alaska pipeline and we'll take a brief guided tour of the Prudhoe Bay oil fields this morning before the courageous (or foolhardy!) among us dip our toes

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into the Arctic Ocean. An exhilarating conclusion to an unforgettable Alaskan adventure! The later flight from Deadhorse back to Anchorage (not included) departs in mid-afternoon and we'll check in together with time to spare. Do not schedule a flight out of Anchorage until after 7 p.m. today. *Lunch included.*

NOTE ON ITINERARY

Although we do our very best to adhere to the schedule above, the itinerary is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control, including weather and terrain conditions. Many of our hikes are over trail-less tundra and actual daily hiking mileage may vary.

AIR TRAVEL

Please check with us before purchasing your airline tickets to ensure your trip has the necessary minimum number of participants required to operate.

QUALIFICATIONS

This trip is rated **Moderate [3]**. Participants should expect to hike 4-8 miles on most days and canoe up to 10 miles on one day. While it is not necessary to be an expert hiker/paddler to participate, you should be in good physical condition, enjoy hiking and feel comfortable hiking off-trail on open tundra with elevation gains and losses of up to 2,500'. To maximize your enjoyment of the trip and to avoid sore muscles, we suggest beginning a regular exercise regimen at least 3 months prior to departure that includes hiking, paddling, jogging, cycling and/or swimming. The better shape you are in, the more fun you will have! During this adventure, we will be camping at a combination of established campgrounds with showers and bathrooms (2 nights) and primitive campsites with pit toilets (5 nights). Previous camping experience is a plus and participants should be willing to pitch in with tent set-up and breakdown.

WEATHER

As this trip takes place in northern Alaska, weather patterns can be unpredictable and change rapidly. Although our departures operate during mid-summer when sunshine may be abundant, there is always a chance of rain showers and cool weather making adequate raingear/insulation a necessity. Daytime temperatures typically range between 50°-70° F with nighttime temperatures dropping 10-20 degrees.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation and travel insurance. This comprehensive travel protection provides for: trip cancellation and interruption, travel delay, loss of baggage and travel documents, baggage delay, medical expenses and emergency assistance. An insurance application is included with all trip confirmations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This trip is subject to the booking information set forth in the current REI Adventures Reservation Information. Please read this information carefully and call us if you have any questions. A full gear list and pre-departure information is sent upon sign-up. **We highly recommend the purchase of travel insurance through REI Adventures. If coverage is purchased at the time of your initial reservation, the "Pre-existing Conditions Exclusion" is waived** (certain exclusions apply). Call us today or go to REI.com/adventures to reserve your adventure.