



Alaska

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HISTORY



In the Beginning Russia's first human beings arrived in Alaska between 15,000 and 13,000 BC.

At that time Alaska was part of a land bridge that extended across to Siberia. People followed the herds of animals they hunted. In the era in the 18th century, Europeans arrived. In 1741 a man known as Vitus Bering led a Russian expedition to Alaska. During this expedition, they discovered there was great wealth in the form of animal furs in Alaska. Unfortunately, they also brought diseases that the native people had no immunity to. The British arrived in 1778 when Captain Cook sailed there. (Cook Inlet is named after him). George Vancouver sailed to Alaska in 1794.

Alexander Andreyevich Baranov

As a native of northern Russia, Alexander Baranov was a middle-aged merchant trader with no experience in the fur trade, when, in 1790, he arrived in North America to take command over Russia's highly profitable sea otter business. Assuming the title of chief manager, he strengthened his leadership role following the formation of the Russian American Company in 1799. A dynamic, adventuresome, and charismatic leader, he proved to be a commercial genius in Alaska. Making enormous profits for company partners and shareholders in Irkutsk and St. Petersburg while receiving little support from the homeland.

Klondike Gold Rush

In many ways, gold put Alaska on the map. Through the 1800s, gold was discovered in all corners of the state, first by Russians and later by long-traveling, hard-working miners from around the world after America purchased Alaska in 1867. In 1896, the Klondike Gold Rush drew around 100,000 prospectors, laborers, and entrepreneurs to Northwest Canada, Dawson City, and the Yukon River. Many made their way there through Southeast Alaska ports. After word of the Klondike boom spread, Alaska's gold rush exploded in 1899 when word of dynamic discoveries came from Nome. Gold rush boomtowns sprang up as travelers took different means and routes to Nome – some communities like Skagway, Circle, and Valdez remain alive today while others are ghost towns of a bygone era. Fairbanks and its central location, access to waterways and hills filled with gold is the best example of staying power. It became a prospecting destination of its own after Felix Pedro struck gold there in 1902. Today it is known as the Golden Heart City and celebrates Golden Days every summer.



MONEY



Credit Cards

Like in the rest of the USA, Alaskan merchants are ready and willing to accept just about all major credit cards. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted cards, but American Express and Discovery are also widely used.

Debit Cards

Places that accept Visa and MasterCard are also likely to accept debit cards. If you are an overseas visitor, check with your bank at home to confirm that your debit card will be accepted in the USA.

Visitors From The USA

Tipping in Alaska, like in the rest of the USA, is expected. Bars If you order food at the table and it's brought to you, tip 15%, the same as at restaurants; 10% if you're having a drink or appetizer at the bar. Restaurants from 15% for cafes/chain eateries to 20% for upscale restaurants. Taxis 15%. Tour guides 10% for bus tour guides, 15% to 20% for wilderness guides on glacier treks, or white-water-rafting trips.

ATMs

In Alaska, ATMs are everywhere: at banks, gas stations, supermarkets, airports, and even some visitor centers. At most ATMs, you can use a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, etc.), a debit card or an ATM card that is linked to the Plus or Cirrus ATM networks. There is generally a fee (\$1 to \$3) for withdrawing cash from an ATM, but the exchange rate on transactions is usually as good if not better than what you'll get anywhere else.



HELPFUL INFO

Climate

Alaska's summers are warm, with temperatures up to 90° F.

Yukon holds the record with a sizzling 100°F recorded in 1915. Many believe that the far northern part of Alaska would be the coldest.

The record for Alaska (and the entire U.S. for that matter) was set in 1971 at Prospect Creek in the northern interior: a bone-chilling -80°F! When compared to high readings near 90°, the Alaskan temperatures range an astonishing 170°!

Electricity

In Alaska, the power plugs and sockets are of type A and B. The standard voltage is 120-V, and the standard frequency is 60-Hz.



Technology & Communication

Alaska Communications (formerly Alaska Communications Systems or ACS) is a telecommunications corporation headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska. It was the first telecommunications provider in the state of Alaska to maintain a third-generation wireless network and the only provider in Alaska that owned fully incorporated infrastructure for the major telecommunications platforms; wireless communications,

Internet networking, and local and long-distance phone service. Alaska Communications' wireline operations include advanced data networks and an underwater fiber-optic system. The Alaska Communications wireless operations included a statewide 3G CDMA network, and coverage extended from the North Slope to Southeast Alaska.

Infrastructure & Transport

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities maintains 5,609 centerline miles of roadways, 3,737-miles of which are paved. Along with state-maintained roads, there are roadways maintained by boroughs, cities, villages, and native corporations spread across communities around the state.

In Case Of An Emergency

Remote rescues in Alaska are usually coordinated by the 11th Rescue Coordination Center (RCC), which uses assets from the Air National Guard, the Alaska State Troopers, the US Coast Guard, the Civil Air Patrol, the National Park Service, and various other public and private resources, depending on the situation. If a member of your group is missing or injured and in need of emergency evacuation, the RCC should be contacted IMMEDIATELY. Weather can prevent a timely rescue, so early notification is essential to their planning process. You should also note that in some cases, a person must be missing for at least 24-hours before a rescue attempt will be mobilized. In any case, write the number of the Rescue Coordination Center and laminate it and keep it with your satellite phone.

In Case of Emergency

Emergency Long Distance: 1 (800) 420-7230

Local Anchorage Number (emergency and non-emergency) 1 (907) 551-7230 Statewide Emergency Number: 1 (800) 478-9300

Language

Although English is the most-spoken language in Alaska, the state also recognizes 20 official Native Languages. The majority of the Alaskan population (approximately 84%) speak English as their primary language. The next largest language is Spanish, spoken by 3.5% of the population. Other Indo-European languages and Asian languages are spoken by 2.2% and 4.3% of the population, respectively. In addition, 5.2% of Alaskans speak one of the Alaska Native languages.



Religion

A survey conducted by Pew Research Center revealed that a majority (79%) of Alaskans were Christians. Of this, Protestantism was the largest.

Christian sect with Evangelical Protestants making up 26% of the population, Mainline Protestants at 19%, and Black Protestants at 2%.

Catholicism was the next biggest sect with 14%, followed by Orthodoxy at 12.5% and Latter-day Saints at 4%. Jehovah's Witnesses and other Christian denominations make up less than 0.5% of the population. The sizeable Orthodox community is attributed to the early Russian colonization of Alaska, with the first Russian Orthodox Church being established in 1795.

LGBT Travel

The gay community in Alaska is far smaller and much less open than in major US cities, and Alaskans, in general, are not as tolerant of diversity. In 1998 Alaska passed a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages. However, attitudes are slowly changing.

A 2014 poll found 47% of Alaskan voters in favor of same-sex marriage. In Anchorage, the only city in Alaska of any real size, there is Identity Inc, which has a gay and lesbian helpline, a handful of openly gay clubs and bars, and a weeklong PrideFest in mid-June. The Southeast Alaska Gay & Lesbian Alliance is based in Juneau and offers links and travel lists geared to gay visitors. The list is short, however, because most towns do not have an openly active gay community. In rural Alaska, same-sex couples should exercise discretion.



Getting There

Getting to Anchorage is simple. Take a plane, climb aboard a ship, or hit the road, but keep the camera close at hand as the journey itself can be breathtaking. With rail, road, and air connections to the rest of the state, Anchorage is an easy choice for Alaska adventure. More than 240 flights arrive daily to the Anchorage airport. Flights on a variety of carriers connect Anchorage with major U.S. cities, as well as Asia and Europe.

View direct service from domestic airports. Cruises and the state ferry system connect the Pacific Northwest with Alaska. One-way cruises depart Vancouver, British Columbia, travel the Inside Passage in Southeast Alaska, and into Southcentral Alaska and the Anchorage area.

The ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway System provide regular service between Bellingham, Wash. and Whittier, Alaska, 60-miles south of Anchorage. The Alaska Highway runs more than 1,300-miles between British Columbia, Canada, and Alaska. The trip to Anchorage via Canada varies by departure point, but you'll want to plan on several days of travel time.

Driving

Driving to Alaska is high on the list of many adventurers. The trip is legendary for its beauty. Once a bumpy dirt road, the Alaska Highway is now a modern, well-maintained highway. Construction occurs seasonally and may cause delays in small sections, but otherwise, it's smooth driving!

Particularly in summer, visitor amenities, including gasoline, food, and motels, are abundant along the entire 1,500-mile Alaska Highway. The Alaska Highway officially begins in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. To reach "Mile Zero," you can drive north on Highway 97 through British Columbia, or cruise through Alberta's high prairie westward to Dawson Creek.

Driving to Alaska in a private car or RV offers the opportunity to linger along the way. Some of the world's wildest and most beautiful national and state parks are along this route. Cultural attractions, adventure tours, incredible scenery, and unforgettable experiences make this option popular with independent travelers.



THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Alaskan culture may not immediately appear different than the other 48 states, yet the state's outdoorsy inhabitants engage in a range of activities that are unique to Alaska. Some of these activities can be experienced through the state's annual events, such as the Tesoro Iron Dog Snowmobile Race from Anchorage to Nome and on to Fairbanks. Other not-to-be-missed cultural happenings include the BP World

Ice Art.

Championships (Fairbanks) and the Sitka Whalefest (Sitka). Visits to native settlements can be made on Alaskan tours, while in Anchorage Alaska.

Native Heritage Center encourages cross-cultural exchanges between visitors and native and American Indians. It is here where visitors will find the state's most detailed exhibits on Alaskan cultural groups. Additionally, artworks by local people are widely sold in the state's galleries and souvenir shops.



Bucket List

Stay in a Forest Service Cabin

Climb Flat Top Mountain

Sea kayaking

Stand on a glacier

Ice cave exploration

Enjoy a long or short trip on a train

See the Northern Lights



Family Travel Highlights

Hike and fish in Alaska's Emerald Isle

Meet the creatures that live under the sea in Homer

Mingle with the wildlife at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

Pan for Gold at El Dorado Gold Mine

Experience Alaska's only true all-season ski resort, Alyeska Resort

Tourism Authority

Tourism is an integral part of Alaska's economy and enhances the quality of life for Alaskans. Visitor spending provides an immediate and substantial impact on jobs and families. The State of Alaska's tourism marketing program is managed by the Alaska Travel Industry Association.



Foods To Try

Wild Alaska King Crab Legs Caribou Chili

Wild Alaska Seafood Etouffee

BBQ Wild Alaska Halibut

Moose Steak

Reindeer Burger

Fresh Kachemak Bay Oysters

Copper River Salmon

Bucket of Butt

Gooseberry Pie

Drinks To Try

Alaskan Iced Tea

Smoked Salmon Bloody Mary

Alaska Gold Rush

Duck Fart



Photography Hot Spots

Denali National Park and Preserve

Kenai Fjords National Park

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Katmai National Park and Preserve

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

Sukakpak Mountain

Worthington Glacier Northern Lights from Fairbanks

Souvenirs To Buy

Bear Salad/Pasta Claws Ulu Knife

Handmade Totem Pole

Native Carvings

Mukluks

Musk Ox Knit Good and Yarn





