**JOHN HALL’S ALASKA – DESTINATIONS**

**ALASKA OVERVIEW**

* The summer Alaska tour season runs from mid-May to late September.
	+ June, July and early August bring longer summer days, brilliant wildflowers and the opportunity to see animals with their newly born young.
	+ Weather patterns are often better earlier in the summer with temperatures ranging from 60-72 on average, with highs reaching the 80s and 90s at times.
	+ Late August and September bring cooler temperatures as well as a chance to see the northern lights, vibrant fall colors and greater animal movement.
* John Hall’s Alaska also offers tours in the winter to give travelers a better chance to see the northern lights and also to experience the world-famous Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. In winter, the weather varies dramatically by region even within Alaska and Canada, with coastal areas such as Anchorage and Juneau being a bit warmer and Interior cities such as Fairbanks dropping to colder temperatures, often well below zero degrees Fahrenheit.

**DESTINATION DETAILS BY CITY/AREA**

**ALASKA**

* **Anchorage**
	+ Alaska's largest city, Anchorage, serves as the perfect basecamp for visitors to the state looking to experience a taste of city life and nature. It is situated between Cook Inlet and the Chugach Mountain range, making it ideal for a number of outdoor activities as well as sightseeing. Anchorage has a bustling craft beer and distillery scene and is also home to 223 parks with a total of 250 miles of trails.
* **Bettles/Arctic Circle**
	+ Bettles is Alaska's smallest incorporated city. Together with nearby Evansville, the communities have a total population of about 60 residents year-round. Due to its location near the Arctic Circle, Bettles is an important departure point to the Gates of the Arctic National Park, Kobuk Valley National Park, Noatak National Preserve and Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. Wilderness lodging, northern lights viewing, camping and fishing are very popular activities in Bettles.
* **Cordova**
	+ Only accessible by plane or boat, this coastal fishing community on the east coast of Prince William Sound offers up natural beauty with coastal views, nearby glaciers and an abundance of marine and land wildlife. Cordova’s museums have prehistoric and contemporary tribal artifacts from the Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta.
* **Denali National Park and Preserve**
	+ As the home of Denali, the tallest mountain in North America, this park is one of Alaska's most visited. It is accessible by the George Parks Highway, the highway that connects Anchorage and Fairbanks, and via the Alaska Railroad. Hiking, touring the park by bus, flightseeing and camping are among some of the most popular ways to experience the park.
* **Fairbanks**
	+ Alaska's second-largest city, also known as the Golden Heart City, is recognized for its views of the northern lights in winter and its 22 hours of daylight around summer solstice in June. The northern terminus of the Alaska Railroad, Fairbanks also serves as the gateway the Arctic by small plane or car.
* **Girdwood**
	+ Just 30-45 minutes south of Anchorage, Girdwood is home to the state's only luxury ski resort. In addition to skiing, the town is known for its vibrant festivals and wide array of outdoor adventure activities including hiking, rafting, paragliding and more.
* **Juneau**
	+ With no roads into Juneau, it remains the country's only state capital solely accessible by airplane or boat. Located within the Inside Passage, Juneau is a popular Alaska port for cruise ships in the summer. It is also home to Mendenhall Glacier, located in the nation's largest forest, Tongass National Forest. Flightseeing tours, complete with glacier landings and glacier trekking, as marine wildlife cruises are some of the most popular activities to do in Juneau.
* **Kantishna**
	+ Kantishna is a remote settlement deep within Denali National Park and Preserve at the end of the 92-mile Denali Park Road . The town originally started as a mining camp in 1905, and today it is home to several remote wilderness resorts.
* **Kenai Peninsula/Kenai Fjords National Park**
	+ The Kenai Peninsula extends southwest from the Chugach Mountains, south of Anchorage with the Cook Inlet to the west and the Prince William Sound to the east. Kenai Fjords National Park covers just over 600,000 acres of land with snow and ice covering 60 percent of the park. One of the most popular ways to experience the park is with a day cruise, which includes wildlife and glacier viewing. Abundant wildlife resides in the park including black and brown bears, wolverines, mountain goats, otters and more.
* **Kodiak**
	+ At 3,670 square miles, Kodiak Island is known as Alaska’s Emerald Isle. The island’s largest city shares its name. The city of Kodiak has a vibrant landscape that makes it a popular for choice for outdoor lovers. Once a naval base, Kodiak now serves as one of the nation's top fishing ports.
* **McCarthy**
	+ The town of McCarthy is mostly known for its mining history. In the early 1900s, it was a booming mining town but today has a population of a couple of dozen people. A number of buildings that played a role in McCarthy’s storied past are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. McCarthy is located in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the nation's largest park at 13.2 million acres.
* **Seward**
	+ Located at the southern terminus of the Alaska Railroad and the Seward Highway, the seaside town of Seward serves as a popular cruise port and is easily accessible by road from Anchorage. Seward is also known as the gateway to Kenai Fjords National Park, which is home to an abundance of marine wildlife and glaciers.
* **Skagway**
	+ Skagway served as the starting place of the Alaska gold-rush era in 1897 with more than 40,000 people stopping to look for gold on their way to the Yukon. Today, the town is a popular cruise stop, and many visitors experience Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, where rangers lead free 45-minute walking tours of the area during the summer.
* **Talkeetna**
	+ The artistic and outdoorsy town of Talkeetna has only one paved road. On Main Street, visitors are greeted with a sign reading "Welcome to Beautiful Downtown Talkeetna." Flightseeing trips to Denali, fishing trips and jet boat tours are among the most popular activities for visitors. The town also boasts a strong history of mountaineering, and this spirit is still alive and well today as Talkeetna serves as a basecamp for those hoping to summit Denali. In fact, all climbers must register at the Talkeetna Ranger Station before climbing on the mountain.
* **Tok**
	+ Just 93 miles from the Canada border, Tok is the first major community travelers from Canada see when driving down the Alaska Highway from Alaska. Known as the "Sled Dog Capital of the World," Tok has many residents who partake in dog sledding throughout the year. In March, the Race of Champions, the town's biggest event, takes place and features the largest field of any sprint race in all of Alaska. Other popular outdoor activities include horseback riding, gold panning, camping and wildlife viewing.
* **Valdez**
	+ Located in the heart of the Prince William Sound, picturesque Valdez is surrounded by coastal mountains and is home to about 5,000 residents. The immensely popular outdoor town is known for its abundant glaciers, mountains and marine wildlife. In the winter, Valdez becomes a backcountry skier or snowboarder's paradise.

**CANADA**

* **Banff, Alberta**
	+ Located within pristine Banff National Park, the idyllic town of Banff offers up stunning mountain views, and its nearby lakes and rivers provide opportunities for everything from fishing to canoeing. Just outside of town, the wilderness of the national park is home to wildlife such as bears, wolves, elk and more.
* **Dawson City, Yukon Territory**
	+ Located on the banks of the Yukon River, Dawson City is a small town rich in Klondike Gold Rush history. When gold was first discovered here in 1896, prospectors flocked to the town, where more than 80 private gold mining operations active today. The town still features many original, colorful frontier-style buildings and is home to Canada’s oldest casino, which is still in operation.
* **Dawson Creek, British Columbia**
	+ This is where Alaska Highway stories begin or end. Home to “Mile 0” of the famed highway, Dawson Creek is a point of pilgrimage for many travelers. There is still a plaque to mark where the construction of the Alaska Highway began in 1942. In addition to its historic signification, Dawson Creek’s 10,000 local residents love the town for its small-town charm and abundance of outdoor activities, from fishing to hiking to enjoying more than 20 miles of cross-country ski trails.
* **Fort Nelson, British Columbia**
	+ In the Northern Rockies at mile 300 of the famed Alaska Highway, the small town of Fort Nelson is home to less than 4,000 people year-round. Its remote location makes it a prime place to spot wildlife in its natural habitat. Bison, stone sheep, brown and black bears, caribou and mountain goats can all be spotted in the area.
* **Jasper, Alberta**
	+ Jasper National Park is the biggest draw to Jasper, Alberta, located in the Canadian Rockies and home to just under 4,500 people year-round. From Jasper, the Icefields Parkway takes travelers past the Columbia Icefield, which is the largest icefield in the Rocky Mountains.
* **Kelowna, British Columbia**
	+ Located on the banks of glacier-fed Okanagan Lake, Kelowna boasts a downtown waterfront boardwalk and spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. Visitors can also take to the water for canoeing, kayaking, swimming, fishing and more.
* **Whitehorse, Yukon Territory**
	+ The capital of Canada’s Yukon Territory, Whitehorse is situated along the Alaska Highway on the banks of the Yukon River. From shopping or seeing a play downtown to venturing out on a cross-country ski excursion, Whitehorse offers a perfect pairing of urban and outdoor activities for travelers.

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