

# Things to do and see in Alaska – with Anchorage as “Home Base”

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**Mount Gilbert and Serpentine Glacier**  
(Flightseeing 50 miles east of Anchorage)

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- The **city of Anchorage** has a complete web site of information for visitors: <http://www.anchorage.net/> including their 20 best things to do: <https://www.anchorage.net/blog/20-best-things-to-do-in-anchorage/>
- The “Official / Business” site is: <http://www.muni.org/>
- Some quick, facts: <http://www.anchorage.net/anchorage-population-and-other-fun-anchorage-facts>
- More info: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchorage,\\_Alaska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchorage,_Alaska)
- **The State of Alaska** Visitor’s web site: <http://www.travelalaska.com/>
- **My Favorite quote:** “The great thing about Anchorage is it’s so close to ALASKA!”

## Things to do

- The “**Log Cabin**” Visitor’s Information Center <http://www.anchorage.net/visit-anchorage-information-centers> at 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. and F St. which can provide free maps and info is a good place to start.
- In Anchorage, we enjoy over 250 miles of **trails**, 223 **parks** and 10,900 acres of municipal parkland. <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/> An excellent map of the Anchorage Trails & Parks is available here: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/published-maps/>
- **Bicycling in Anchorage:** Enjoy the numerous paved trails all throughout the city. Bicycle rental is available at 4<sup>th</sup> between C&D streets: <http://www.alaska-bike-rentals.com/> (among others). A 132 page color document regarding bicycling in Anchorage: [here](#) and the City Ordinances: [here](#)

- **Viewpoint** at the Glen Alps Trail Head <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/chugach/glenalps.htm> for a great view of the Anchorage bowl and the mountain ranges if the visibility is clear enough. Access is shown on the Anchorage Trails map – at the southeast corner of town. Parking can be limited. Don't park along the road approaching it – they issue \$200 fines. You can take any number of hikes from there (or other starting spots). You can check if the lot is full on the webcam: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/chugach/webcam.cfm> Probably the most popular, but not-for-beginners hike is to Flattop Mountain from there. <http://aktrailhead.com/flattop/flattop.shtml>
- The **Alaska Aviation Museum** at Lake Hood. <http://alaskaairmuseum.org/>
- The newly updated **Anchorage Museum** <http://www.anchoragemuseum.org/>
- The **Native Alaskan Heritage Center**. <http://www.alaskanative.net/>
- The **Alaska Experience Theatre** <http://www.alaskaexperiencetheatre.com/> for an Imax-style movie of the beauty of Alaska. The optional Earthquake exhibit part of it is informative.
- The Anchorage City **Trolley Tours** <http://www.alaskatrolley.com/> may be of interest to see sights around town. Departs from the Log Cabin.
- Drive around **Lake Hood Seaplane Base**. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lake\\_Hood\\_Seaplane\\_Base\\_and\\_Gravel\\_Strip.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lake_Hood_Seaplane_Base_and_Gravel_Strip.jpg) Over 300 floatplanes and land planes are based there.
- The Anchorage **Weekend Market** just northeast of the Hilton is full of vendors and some entertainment on Saturdays and Sundays. <http://www.anchoragemarkets.com/Anch%20Market%20and%20Festival/amf2.html>
- ~June 21<sup>st</sup>: Summer Solstice - the longest day of the year. Many folks go to **Point Woronzoff** or **Earthquake Park** just north of the airport or climb Flattop Mountain, to watch the sunset at 11:41 PM that day. It will be light all 'night' long.
- Near Point Woronzoff you can stand on a spot on the bluff and the jet airplanes taking off or landing on Anchorage International's runway 15 / 33 will pass very close overhead. The wake turbulence from them shakes the trees and sometimes can blow your hat off.
- There is also a Summer Solstice Festival downtown.
- The **Alaska Zoo**. [www.alaskazoo.org](http://www.alaskazoo.org) hosts numerous wildlife native to Alaska.

## Restaurants

There are numerous **restaurants** downtown. A few we like:

- Simon & Seafort's - Excellent food and view <http://simonandseafort.com/>
- The Glacier Brewhouse <http://www.glacierbrewhouse.com/>, or right next-door:
- Orso <http://www.orsoalaska.com/>
- A popular place for lunch is the Snow City Café – <http://www.snowcitycafe.com/>
- We love “The Fancy Moose” Lounge <http://www.millenniumhotels.com/usa/millenniumanchorage/dining/fancy-moose-lounge.html> at the former Millenuim Hotel (now “The Lakefront Anchorage”) <http://www.millenniumhotels.com/millenniumanchorage/> to drink, eat and watch the floatplanes fly right overhead - located on Spenard Road. It can get crowded, but the setting and view is very nice.
- Another Lounge / Restaurant with a deck on the southeast corner of Lake Hood is “Piper’s” <http://www.pipersanchorage.com/>
- Also on Spenard Road is Gwennie’s Old Alaskan Restaurant. It has a full menu, but is well known for their huge breakfasts. <http://gwenniesrestaurant.com/>

- A very popular pizza place is The Moose's Tooth: <http://moosestooth.net/> (Rated 3rd Best in America!)
- A brewery with decks and views toward Denali and Mt. Susitna is The 49th State Brewing Company <https://www.49statebrewing.com> (formerly the Snow Goose).
- Sullivan's <http://sullivansteakhouse.com/anchorage> has great steaks
- Club Paris <http://www.clubparisrestaurant.com/> also known for excellent steaks
- Jen's <http://www.jensrestaurant.com/> quality European dining
- Humpy's <http://www.humpys.com/> is popular, but a bit loud.
- Due to the diversity in Anchorage many ethnic restaurants are available, including:
  - Himalayan, Thai, Indian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, as well as of course Chinese and Mexican (Several are along Spenard Road)
- The above list is only a tiny sample of the many dining options in town.

### North of Anchorage

- The **Eagle River Nature Center** <http://www.ernc.org/> is ~ 10 miles south east of Eagle River, thus about a :50 drive northeast of ANC.
- You could take a 1 to 2 mile **hike at Thunderbird Falls**, <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/maps/thunderbirdfallsguide.pdf> near Eklutna, (~ :50 northeast of ANC)
- Visiting **Eklutna Lake** <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/maps/eklutnalaketrailguide.pdf> is very scenic. Also ~ :50 northeast of ANC
- We recently went to the **Matanuska Glacier** and thoroughly enjoyed being able to drive to it and walk out on it. <http://www.matanuska-glacier.com/> 2 hours from ANC.
- For a bit more \$\$\$ you could take a Rust's Flying Service charter for **fishing or bear viewing**. [www.flyrusts.com](http://www.flyrusts.com). We've done this a few times. One day of fishing \$495 ea. Flightseeing from ANC starts at \$100 ea. to ~\$375 ea.
- My favorite thing to do is **FlightSeeing** the glaciers and Denali. Rust's does this (\$375), or you could fly out of Talkeetna. I've flown this many, many times in my own airplane, and on a nice weather day it is the most incredible, scenic flying anywhere in the world. Rust's has a good video, try to watch it in full-screen, HD mode:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVagf03qFUY>

Some links from my web site on this:

<http://www.experimentalairplane.com/alaska-photos2.html>

<http://www.experimentalairplane.com/alaska-journal-2010.html#glacier-flying>

<http://www.experimentalairplane.com/navajo.html#alaska>

- My wife Linda's favorite place is **Talkeetna**. <http://www.talkeetnachamber.org/> About a 2+15 drive north from ANC. (30 minutes in our plane...) It's a quirky, artsy town (its mayor is a cat.) It has a fancy Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge <http://www.talkeetnalodge.com/> that is one of our favorites - just south of town with a deck high enough to view Denali on nice days. You can also take the train to Talkeetna from ANC.
- Many take the train or drive to **Denali National Park**. <http://www.nps.gov/dena/index.htm>. Many superlatives of beauty, wilderness and wildlife could be inserted here... A few hours north of ANC.

### South of Anchorage

- I strongly recommend a drive south of town along the **Turnagain Arm**, a very scenic byway with numerous viewing points. <http://alaska.org/driving/turnagain-arm-drive.htm>

- 30 minutes south along the Turnagain Arm is **Girdwood** and the **Alyeska Resort** <http://www.alyeskaresort.com/index.aspx> where you can ride the **scenic tram**. The view is tremendous. They have a tram / lunch special for \$35 /ea. If you go for dinner, the fine-dining “Seven Glaciers” restaurant at the top is very scenic, but quite expensive. <http://www.alyeskaresort.com/dining/seven-glaciers-dinner.aspx>
- In Girdwood the **Double Musky Inn** <http://www.doublemuskyinn.com/> is well-regarded for its Cajun Cuisine.
- Also in Girdwood, **The Bake Shop** <http://www.thebakeshop.com/> has great soups and lunches.
- The Phillip’s 26 **Glacier cruise** <http://www.phillipscruises.com/> is an excellent, all-day event out of Whittier. Very well worth the \$169 price. You can drive there or take the train or bus from downtown for \$89 / \$55 more. We’ve taken guests on this several times. Try to pick a good weather day, but even if marginal weather, it’s still worth it. You can book it at their office on 4<sup>th</sup> St. or online.
- Visit **Portage Glacier**. At Portage, ~ 1 hour southeast of ANC. The most-visited glacier in Alaska since it’s so close to Anchorage. When we first visited Alaska the glacier was right in front of you, now you need to take a boat ride “around the corner” to see it. <http://www.travelalaska.com/Destinations/Communities/Portage%20Glacier.aspx>  
<http://www.portageglaciercruises.com/>
- We really enjoy the **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center** [www.alaskawildlife.org](http://www.alaskawildlife.org) near Portage. (~ 1 hour southeast). You can get right up to a fence for each large animal species in Alaska – including black and brown bears, moose, caribou, etc. A large, nice habitat setting.
- Further south is Cooper Landing and the Kenai River for **fishing**. King Salmon are usually near their peak in late June. Other salmon are available other summer months.
- Also on the Kenai Peninsula is **Seward**, <http://www.cityofseward.us/> a 2+30 drive. A very scenic drive and scenic town on the water. The marina is quite impressive. The Alaska SeaLife Center is a first-class exhibit worth a visit. <http://www.alaskasealife.org/>
- **Kenai Fjords Tours** has day cruises to view wildlife with a salmon and prime rib meal on Fox Island that we have taken and recommend. <http://www.kenaifjords.com/>
- Near Seward is **Exit Glacier** <http://www.nps.gov/kefj/planyourvisit/exit-glacier-area.htm> A 1 ½ mile hike will take you right to its edge.
- 5 hours south is scenic **Homer** <http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/> — literally “The End of the Road” in North America. You can drive to a very unique spot at the Lands End Inn at the end of “the spit”. <http://www.lands-end-resort.com/>. You can take halibut fishing charters out of Seward or Homer.

## Weather

- I strongly suggest bringing a day pack with a rain jacket and warmer jacket wherever you go, even on short hikes because it can get cold, windy and rainy on very short notice.

Keep in mind that much of what Alaska has to offer is not in the city of Anchorage, but I bet you’ll find plenty to do in and near town.

As you can see from my list, two weeks will “only get you started...” ☺

If you get ‘hooked’ as we did, the following link will become useful:

<http://www.alaskarealestate.com/> Enjoy!

