Eagle-Eye Tours

Southeast Alaska Sailing Itinerary

Link: Southeast Alaska Sailing

Tour Overview

Join us and experience Southeast Alaska as few can ever do! View foraging humpback whales in Frederick Sound, bears fishing for salmon in some of best areas for bear viewing in the world, float among icebergs as a tidal glacier calves into the sea, and observe Native American totem poles that express artistic craftsmanship and historical meaning.

Alaska is a vast, beautiful, and truly wild place with the highest coastal mountain range in the world. Over one-half of the world's glaciers cover these mountains, and Alaska is one of only three places where tidewater glaciers remain. Most of the towering glaciers we will see flow from the massive Stikine Ice Field, sitting high in the Coast Mountains east of Petersburg and Wrangell.

Southeast Alaska (the "Panhandle") offers the chance to see an abundance of wildlife. Alaska is one of the few refuges left in North America for the brown (grizzly) bear. It is calculated that on Admiralty Island, there is one brown bear for every square mile – almost as many bears as there are eagles! Humpback whales migrate north to feed on herring and masses of tiny krill when conditions are right. Each summer, several hundred whales gather to feed in these rich northern waters. When food is plentiful, the whales are active.

On all our voyages we intentionally keep our itineraries flexible to take advantage of wildlife sightings, weather and tides, and the interests of the group. This sample itinerary describes a typical 8-day trip, however, activities may occur in a different order or be substituted by suitable alternatives. Itinerary

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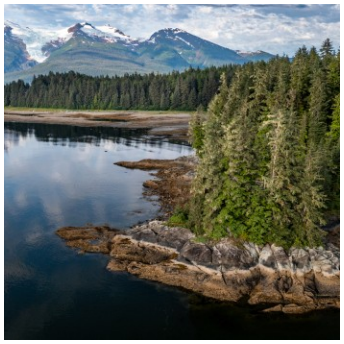
Itinerary

Day 0: Arrival in Prince Rupert, BC

We highly recommend arriving in Prince Rupert the day prior to the trip start and staying overnight at accommodation of your choice. This ensures the group departs on time as there can be unforeseen weather delays when travelling in coastal regions. Prince Rupert's historic downtown and Cow Bay shopping districts both offer shops, galleries, restaurants and cafes, and there is also the well curated Museum of Northern British Columbia housed in a large cedar longhouse, depicting a legacy of oral history, archaeological discoveries and unique artifacts that depict ten thousand years of ancient history

Day 1: Embarkation, Prince Rupert, BC



Meet your crew & vessel late morning at Cow Bay in Prince Rupert. Heading north, we pass through the topography of Chatham Sound and its myriad of islands. The entrance to Portland Canal marks the border between Alaska and British Columbia. Sailing past Misty Fjords National Monument, we enjoy the beautiful scenery of snow-capped mountains rising majestically out of the ocean.

Days 2-4: Bears and Glaciers

We stop briefly to clear US Customs in Ketchikan before continuing north among the narrow passages of Etolin and Wrangell Islands to Anan Bay. Anan Creek has the largest run of pink salmon in Southeast Alaska, and this accumulation of food attracts bears and eagles in great numbers. The US Forest Service viewing observatory is famous and access to this area is limited in order to protect the wildlife and local habitat. We will disembark for a day tour on a jet boat, escorted by a local guide, up to Le Conte Glacier – the southernmost tidewater glacier in Alaska. In the last 15 years, it has receded by over a mile and a half with enormous slabs of ice "calving" into the ocean. It is located beside the Stikine River estuary – an important stop for millions of migratory birds.

Days 5 – 10: Frederick Sound and Admiralty Island

Frederick Sound, Chatham Strait, and Stephens Passage are the core feeding area for humpback whales in Southeast Alaska. We will take the time to observe these 15-metre-long creatures whenever the opportunity arises and hope to witness spectacular behaviours like breaches, pectoral slaps, and possibly bubble-net feeding (an amazing cooperative foraging technique). We will also keep an eye out for wary sea otters – over 150 years of hunting by Europeans for their luxurious pelts nearly wiped them out completely until the 1960's saw efforts to rebuild the population by reintroducing otters from the Aleutians. Admiralty Island National Monument has the highest concentration of brown (grizzly) bears in North America. Pack Creek on Admiralty Island has been a protected area for brown bears for the last 40 years and offers amazing viewing opportunities in the estuary of their estimated resident 1,500 bears. Please note: Only a limited number of visitors are permitted to visit these bear viewing areas, daily, due to National Park restrictions. Access is dependent on our success in obtaining these permits for our guests.

Day 11: Departure - Petersburg

We arrive in Petersburg late in the morning to complete our voyage. After clearing customs, guests can catch a later afternoon flight to Seattle or explore the area further on their own.

What to Expect

Regardless, in all of our destinations our itineraries remain flexible. This allows the crew to take time to enjoy wildlife sightings, spend more time at an ancient village site, or simply cater to the interests of the group.

This is a general natural history expedition rather than a dedicated birding tour. Travellers can look forward to a mix of wildlife viewing and time to appreciate the region's incredible scenery — with opportunities for birding included along the way.

Usually on the Pacific Coast we have a good variety of constantly changing weather. Expect a mixture of sunshine, rain and wind on most trips. You will require waterproof rain gear and rubber boots as most of our landings will be wet, where you will be stepping into the water and onto the beach. Boots can be provided for guests who require them; sizing must be supplied well in advance of the trip. Large rain ponchos are also available, however guests should plan to bring their own waterproof jacket and pants, which also serve as excellent wind protection while on deck viewing wildlife.

We travel in protected areas most of the time. On many days of the summer this coast is like sailing on a lake – flat and calm. Sometimes we cross into open water for short periods of time where we may experience greater motion. If you are prone to motion sickness it is a good idea to bring sea sickness medication. Check with your doctor.

All of our meals are served buffet style. We can usually accommodate most special dietary concerns if we are given sufficient advance notice. Alcoholic beverages are available for purchase onboard. A modest amount of wine is served at dinner and beer is usually available. Coffee and a wide selection

of herbal teas are available throughout the day. Guests are also welcome to bring their own preferred drinks, including soft drinks, which can be refrigerated as space allows.

Typical Day
In the morning, you might expect to have breakfast served around 8am. If you are an early riser there is always the opportunity for a morning kayak around the secluded bay we are anchored in. After the meal, a shore excursion will take place – Either to search for wildlife, look at intertidal zones, or go for a culture/nature hike. We will load into the zodiacs and take off to see what nature has in store for us. Bring your backpack, water bottle and camera! You never know what you will see on these outings.

We come back to the boat for a gourmet lunch served by one of our amazing chefs. At this time, the skipper might take us to our next destination, while we look for more wildlife along the shores, or try to find pods of whales. The crew will be explaining all the places we are passing and all the species that you might see flying, swimming, or walking near the vessel. If something is of interest we will stop or slow down to enjoy. We are never in any hurry. We travel to all of our destinations only when the weather and wildlife is consistently good – And our skippers are experts and finding exciting things to show you. A stop at an ancient village site is always a unique experience for our guests.

After lunch, we might spend some time relaxing, while the crew puts up the sails and takes you through a passage or strait. This would be a good time to reflect in a journal or take a book from our extensive reading library. If we are lucky, you may see some Humpbacks frolicking in the waters around the boat. If this happens we turn off the engines and float silently among them – quite spectacular. Before dinner we might do a shore excursion or zodiac cruise to look for wildlife or perhaps we can enjoy a kayak in calm waters.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes
• All meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on the last day
• All accommodation onboard ship; skipper, cook, naturalist;
• Full use of all onboard facilities, including kayaks.

Tour Price Does Not Include
• Transportation to the start point and from the finish point of the trip
• Accommodation or meals prior to the start of the trip or after the completion
• Travel or cancellation insurance
• $200 CAD Sustainability fee
• Taxes (5% GST)
• Airport transfers
• The only money participants require during the trip is for optional purchases and gratuities for the crew.