

BACKPACKING THE CHUGACH

Chugach State Park

4-Day Backpacking Adventure



ALASKA ALPINE ADVENTURES

[RETURN TO THE ALASKA ALPINE ADVENTURES HOMEPAGE](#)

EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE VACATIONS IN
ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE REFUGES

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WHAT TO EXPECT

- The Experience
- Day-by-Day Itinerary
- What's Included
- Traveling with Alaska Alpine Adventures

PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVENTURE

- Gear List
- Travel Information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Reservation & Cancellation Policy

*This trip is rated a **LEVEL 2** backpacking trip*

Physical conditioning and consistent exercise prior to these trips is essential. You will be backpacking and hiking off-trail over steep, hilly, and uneven terrain, often covering more than 6 miles in a day. You may encounter short stretches of thick vegetation and may also experience Alaska's diverse selection of insect species. You will be camping in a very remote wilderness, sleeping in tents, relieving yourself in places with a stunning view, and sometimes enjoying all of the above in the rain. You will be expected to load and unload your own gear, carry a portion of the group gear, and manage your own physical comfort and well-being. Pre-trip physical conditioning should begin no later than 2 months before departure and should include walking or hiking, preferably with loaded backpack of 30-40 lbs.

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THE EXPERIENCE

Just 15 minutes from Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, lies the third largest state park in America. Chugach State Park offers a half-million acres of the most accessible backpacking, camping and wildlife viewing in Alaska. Our backpacking loop through this fantastic wilderness will take us over an unparalleled mountain landscape and will provide scenes of browsing moose, alpine wildflowers, clear mountain streams, dramatic glaciers, azure lakes, and perhaps a grizzly bear! Our 4-day route will wind from Glenn Alps, across the south fork of Campbell Creek, up the middle fork of Campbell Creek to Williwaw Lakes, over a broad divide to Long Lake, and finally out the north & middle forks of Campbell Creek to the Prospect Heights Trailhead.



Hiking up into the alpine

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DAY - BY - DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Your trip begins today in Anchorage, Alaska. Your guide will pick you up this morning at your hotel or B&B at 8am. You'll load into our passenger van and will begin the drive 20 minutes east into Chugach State Park to the trailhead at Glen Alps. Our orientation will include a discussion of the route, an introduction to our unique style of Alaska wilderness travel, a familiarization of the principles of Leave No Trace, and a conversation about traveling safely in bear country. We'll then load packs and begin the ascent into the high country. Today's route will ascend the Powerline Pass Trail, across Campbell Creek, and up onto the Middle Fork Loop Trail to Black Lake, beneath O'Malley Peak for a total of 1600' of elevation gain in roughly 6.5 miles. Tonight you'll camp in the tundra and sleep to the soothing sounds of the Alaska wilderness. *Lunch & dinner included.*

Days 2-3: On Day 2, you'll move through the alpine tundra country from Black Lake to Upper Williwaw Lakes. We'll begin with a descent out of the Black Lake basin, down into the middle fork of Campbell Creek, before climbing again toward the pass dividing the north and middle fork valleys. You'll feel dwarfed beneath the highest peaks of the front range of the Chugach mountains, most notably the 5445' behemoth Mt. Williwaw. After traveling 2.5 miles mostly off-trail, we'll set up camp in the tundra near the lake and continue with light packs to explore the magnificent complex of ridges and basins beneath the north face of Mt. Williwaw. By Day 3, we'll be moving down the north fork to Long Lake & our next camp in the wilderness. Again, the late afternoon will be spent exploring the high country around camp thus combining both backpacking and hiking for a full day of mileage. Both days will include at least 6 miles of hiking with over 2000' of elevation gain & loss. *All meals included.*



Navigating a snowy descent in the
Chugach Mountains

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY*

Day 4: Today, after our last wilderness breakfast we'll shoulder our loads and begin the trek out the north fork valley. Our route will take us down the creek for 3 miles before trending south and up over Near Point, a rounded alpine knob with views of the Alaska Range, Cook Inlet, & Anchorage. We'll then begin the lengthy descent off Near Point down to the trailhead at Prospect Heights. Today's mileage will total over 7 miles with 1000' of elevation gain and over 3000' of elevation loss. We'll return to the van by 7pm and will be back in Anchorage no later than 8pm. Please schedule all homebound flights for after 10pm. *Breakfast & Lunch included.*

*Whenever possible Alaska Alpine Adventures endeavors to follow our itineraries as written. However, on occasion our trips deviate from the written itinerary due to weather conditions, group preference, specific safety considerations, or unforeseeable circumstances; collectively what some have called "The Alaska Factor." Therefore we suggest that you approach any adventure in Alaska with an open mind and an understanding that Alaska will always deliver an adventure of a lifetime.



A Grizzly catches our scent across the tundra

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WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- All group camping gear (tents, stoves, fuel, etc.) and safety equipment
- Roundtrip surface transportation from Anchorage to Chugach State Park
- Professional guide service at a 4:1 guest to guide ratio
- All meals & snacks from lunch on day one through lunch on the final day of the itinerary
- Storage for your extra travel items while in the field

WHAT'S NOT:

- Lodging in Anchorage prior to and after your adventure
- Personal gear (sleeping bags, packs, rain gear, etc.)
- Trip insurance
- Guide Gratuities



Enjoying a cozy dinner under the cook tarp

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TRAVELING WITH ALASKA ALPINE ADVENTURES

GUIDES

It takes a talented individual to be able to lead an Alaska expedition, and our Alaska guides are true outdoor multi-sport professionals. We hand-select each guide based on their ability to deliver an unparalleled level of customer service, a strong wilderness skill set and background, and an insatiable passion for Alaska's wild spaces. Each lead guide is medically certified as a Wilderness First Responder and carries the necessary qualifications to competently backpack, hike, kayak, canoe, climb and ski throughout Alaska's vast wilderness. When you choose to travel with us, you can rest assured that your trip has been meticulously planned and executed by real Alaskans with authentic Alaska know-how, skill, and ability.

FOOD

Our food is excellent – in fact it is something that clearly differentiates us from our competition. We have spent the past fifteen years fine tuning our backcountry menu. And in 2012, we launched [Adventure Appetites](#) – an award winning food company focused on bringing our lightweight and packable wilderness cuisine to adventurers everywhere. Breakfasts include pancakes, scrambles, homemade granola and cereal, locally roasted gourmet coffee, assorted tea and cocoa. Lunches could include an Italian club torta sandwich, asiago bagels and Alaska lox, a curried tuna pita, or perhaps crackers with genoa salami with a roasted red pepper goat cheese spread. We also feature housemade snack mixes (both savory & sweet), and an assortment of energy bars available throughout the day. Dinners could include pasta carbonara, Alaska reindeer rotini, chicken and chorizo enchiladas, penne pasta with a roasted red pepper pesto, and more. And we ALWAYS experience one of Adventure Appetites home baked desserts after dinner.

CAMPING

Alaska Alpine Adventures has camped in some of Alaska's most remote and wild places; from the remote beaches of the Alaska Peninsula, the rugged glaciers of the Neacola Mountains, to the open tundra expanses of the Brooks Range, With literally thousands of nights camped in the Alaska wilderness in all seasons, we have refined camp craft to a science. Expedition quality tents, included trekking poles, group-size tarp shelters, and only the best cooking equipment accompany each and every one of our wilderness trips. Not only does including the finest equipment make camp life more comfortable, it also adds a level of safety to trips that could otherwise be relentlessly unforgiving to the unprepared. In other words, we take our camping very seriously! Don't be surprised if you find yourself waiting out a storm under the group tarp, out of the weather, enjoying hot drinks, sumptuous meals and excellent company, while your guide fastidiously tensions all of the tent guy lines!

SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are the best way to witness the Last Frontier! This wilderness trip is limited to 8 guests. And with a guest to guide ratio of 4:1 you are assured of our commitment to risk management and safe operations. Furthermore, it is a best practice to keep groups exceptionally small to minimize our impact on the Alaskan backcountry by following Leave No Trace principles.

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Chugach State Park

4-Day Backpacking Adventure



GEAR LIST – BACKPACKING TRIPS

ON THE HIKE:

GEAR

- Backpack – 73L-75L (4500cu3) or larger - We recommend a professional fitting if purchasing a new backpack prior to the departure.
- Waterproof Pack Cover – Large enough to fit your pack when it's full
- 1L Water Bottle (Hydration bladders are acceptable) - Guides Choice: Wide-mouth Nalgene water bottle

CLOTHING

Footwear

- Hiking Boots - Quality medium/heavy-duty hiking boots - Guides Choice: Salomon Quest 4D GTX
***It is very critical that you break in your boots BEFORE you arrive, as traveling with blisters is a painful way to enjoy Alaska! ***
- 5 pair synthetic / wool mid-weight hiking socks

Outerwear

- Waterproof/breathable rain jacket - Guides Choice: OR Foray Jacket
- Waterproof/breathable rain pants - Guides Choice: OR Foray Pants
Gore-Tex or similar quality waterproof/breathable - Good rain gear is essential on any wilderness outing, and is probably the most important piece of gear that you have on your trip
- Lightweight Windshirt – Guides Choice: OR Redline Jacket

Hiking Layers – Synthetic or wool (no cotton)

- 1 mid-weight short sleeve top - daily use base layer shirt that you'll wear all day in warmer temperatures - Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight T-shirt
- 1 mid-weight long sleeve synthetic top – daily use base layer shirt that you'll wear all day - Guides Choice: OR Sequence L/S Crew
- 1 mid-weight synthetic bottom – to put under your hiking pant or rain pant on a cold/wet day - Guides Choice: Patagonia Capilene 2 Lightweight Bottoms
- 1 pair synthetic hiking pants – daily use hiking pant that you'll wear all day - Guides Choice: OR Ferrosi Pants
- 1 pair lightweight synthetic shorts (convertible hiking pant/shorts OK) - Guides Choice: ExOfficio Neo Amphi Convertible Pant

Headwear

- 1 Warm beanie hat – synthetic / wool - Guides Choice: OR Storm Beanie
- 1 Billed hat – keeps your face protected from the sun - Guides Choice: AAA Truckers Hat
- 1 Mosquito head net - Guides Choice: OR Deluxe Spring Ring Headnet

Gloves

- 1 pair fleece or wool gloves - Guides Choice: OR Versaliner Gloves

BACKPACKING THE CHUGACH

Chugach State Park

4-Day Backpacking Adventure



GEAR LIST – BACKPACKING TRIPS

AROUND CAMP:

GEAR

- Sleeping Bag - Synthetic or down sleeping bag rated to a minimum of 30 degrees F - Guides Choice: Cascade Designs Antares 15F Down Bag
- 2 Waterproof Compression Stuffsacks - Guides Choice: Sea to Summit eVent Compression Dry Sacks
1 Large enough to fit your sleeping bag, 1 Large enough to fit your extra layers
- Sleeping Pad - Closed-cell foam pad or inflatable air mattress - Guides Choice: Thermarest ProLite Mattress
- Camp Chair - Crazy-Creek style, soft, folding camp chair or Therm-a-Rest conversion chair kit to fit mattress - Guides Choice: Crazy Creek Hex 2.0 Original Chair
- Headlamp - For trips departing after August 1.
- Insulated Mug - Guides Choice: Wide-mouth Nalgene water bottle
Save weight and the bulk – use your wide mouth water bottle for both hot and cold drinks. We recommend wide mouth, as it's easier to pour hot water into for hot drinks

CLOTHING

Camp Layers

- 1 Heavyweight synthetic top - Guides Choice: OR Radiant Hybrid Pullover
- 1 Heavyweight synthetic or fleece bottoms - Guides Choice: OR Radiant Hybrid Tights
- 1 Synthetic or down lightweight puffy jacket - Guides Choice: OR Transcendent Hoody

Footwear

- Camp Shoes - Light weight Crocs or sport sandals (for around camp and crossing streams and rivers) - Guides choice: Crocs Original Classic Clogs
- Sacred Socks – Heavy, warm pair of socks to put on at night. The name says it all – they're sacred – they live with your sleeping bag until you need them.

BACKPACKING THE CHUGACH

Chugach State Park

4-Day Backpacking Adventure



GEAR LIST – BACKPACKING TRIPS

PERSONAL EFFECTS:

- Sunglasses with case
- Toiletries
- Personal medications
- Sun screen/lip protection
- Pack Towel
- Book/reading materials
- Camera/film
- Journal and pen
- Binoculars
- Insect repellent

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ITEMS:

- Lightweight synthetic glove liners
- Bandana
- 2 accessory carabiners
- 2 pair synthetic liner socks
- Gore-Tex or Lightweight Neoprene Socks - Guides Choice: NRS Wetsocks
Great for keeping your feet dry in camp and to protect your weary feet from marauding insects
- Waterproof gaiters - Guides Choice: OR Verglas Gaiters

AVAILABLE RENTAL ITEMS:

Alaska Alpine Adventures rents quality down and synthetic sleeping bags, inflatable air mattresses, Crazy Creek chairs, and waterproof/breathable chest waders (for our rafting/canoeing trips). Please click **THIS LINK** to our website for prices.

Click the link below to check out Alaska Alpine Adventure's helpful and informative packing and gear videos:

BACKPACKING EQUIPMENT VIDEO PACKING A BACKPACK

BACKPACKING THE CHUGACH

Chugach State Park

4-Day Backpacking Adventure



TRAVEL INFORMATION

GETTING TO ALASKA

This trip begins and ends in Anchorage, Alaska. Getting to Anchorage is a snap. Alaska Airlines, your travel agent, online travel sources, or the carrier of your choice are options to easily arrange roundtrip airfare from international cities or the lower 48.

ACCOMMODATIONS

This is a real wilderness camping trip and you will be sleeping in backpacking-style tents for the three nights within Chugach State Park. You will need to bring a sleeping bag, rated to 30 degrees F. or warmer, and a sleeping pad (see included equipment list for details). There will be no hot running water, showers, beds, or cabins. This is "real" Alaska and you will be completely immersed in it for the 3 nights.



Mid-summer Fireweed in full bloom

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about the mosquitoes?

In case you've heard horror stories... the number of mosquitoes is greatly dependent on hatching season, annual weather conditions, specific locations, and time of year. While you are bound to encounter some mosquitoes during the course of your summer adventure, their numbers rarely present major problems. That said, please arrive prepared with insect repellent and a head net to fend off any bugs that are present.

Will bears be a problem?

Alaska is bear country! There are both grizzly and black bears in most of the wilderness areas of Alaska we visit. We love seeing bears in the wild, and consider bear sightings one of the most thrilling privileges common in Alaska's backcountry. That said, traveling safely and taking precautions to minimize a negative encounter are considerations we take very seriously. In addition to conducting a thorough pre-trip bear safety orientation, your guides also take many precautions on all of our trips including: 1) all of our food is packaged to minimize odors – we vacuum seal most of our fresh ingredients and sauces, we pack our food in bear resistant food canisters, and we store our food well away from camp. 2) We make noise when we're hiking in thick brush or when we're hiking in windy conditions to minimize surprise encounters. 3) We keep an exceptionally clean camp and 4) as a last resort guides travel armed carrying a .44 magnum or a shotgun. Alaska's national parks allow firearms and our guides are thoroughly trained. Again, using a firearm is a last resort and thankfully we've never had to call one into service on a trip!

Will I see wildlife on my trip?

It's important to keep in mind that while we do have abundant wildlife populations in Alaska, animals are often obscured by the vastness of the landscape, subject to imprecise migration routes and often affected by Alaska's dynamic weather patterns. While wildlife viewing on our trips has been historically reliable, and we schedule our trips to maximize the chances of seeing wildlife, there are simply too many factors to make any guarantees.

What will the weather be like on my trip?

Alaska has some of the most dynamic and dramatic weather on the planet. During the summer months in Alaska, average daytime temperatures range from 60 to 80 degrees F, nighttime and morning temperatures are cooler, but rarely dip below 40 degrees F. Fall arrives early at these latitudes and you'll experience cooler temperatures and fewer hours of daylight in late August and early September. Throughout the summer season, you may experience rain, sun, wind, clouds and fog on your departure. We live by the adage "prepare for the worst, hope for the best, and you'll likely end up with some of both".



A mother moose and calf browse amongst the willows

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4-Day Backpacking Adventure



RESERVATION AND CANCELLATION POLICY:

Deposit: This Alaska Alpine Adventures trip requires payment in full at the time of reservation. If the participant cancels a reservation earlier than 60 days prior to the starting date, the deposit will be refunded, minus a \$100.00 administration fee. If the participant cancels within 59-31 days of the starting date, 50% of the trip balance will be refunded. If cancellation is made within 30-0 days of the trip starting date, there will be no refund of any costs. Alaska Alpine Adventures recommends cancellation insurance available through Travel Guard. Please call or email us for details.

Trip Cancellations or Delays: Alaska Alpine Adventures reserves the right to cancel or change the itinerary of a trip. In the event that Alaska Alpine Adventures cancels your trip and you are unable to participate, your total balance will be refunded. Occasionally, weather or other factors may cause delays or make completing a trip impossible. In these circumstances, there will be no refund of fees. Furthermore, Alaska Alpine Adventures is not responsible for any additional costs (e.g. airline flight changes, additional hotel nights, etc.) associated with trip delays or itinerary changes due to weather or other factors.

Trip Minimums: In order to guarantee any Alaska Alpine Adventures departure, a minimum number of participants must sign up. Our wilderness trips (including our Ultimate Alaska Multisport) require a minimum of 3 guests to guarantee departure, while our Source to Sea Multisport and our trips into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge require a minimum of 4 guests to guarantee departure. However we will operate our adventures at below the minimum required for a modest surcharge. Please contact us for details.



Early season conditions in the Chugach Mountains

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