Explore spectacular Denali National Park and Wrangell/St. Elias, the largest national park in North America. Spot bears catching salmon and camp in the wilderness by the Maclaren Glacier. Get the adrenaline pumping with optional glacier hikes, sea kayaking among icebergs and more on this exciting 12 day Alaskan expedition.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

**Trip Highlights**
- Anchorage - exploring this lively city in the heart of the wilderness, which is home to almost 50% of Alaska’s population
- Denali National Park - spotting incredible flora and fauna including bears, wolves, moose and caribou
- Maclaren Glacier - camping in the wilderness near the glacier under a blanket of stars
- Wrangell-St Elias National Park - enjoying optional activities such as ice climbing, rafting and glacier hikes, in North America’s largest national park
- Valdez - enjoying the scenic waterfront, spotting bears catching salmon and optional sea kayaking among glaciers

**What's Included**
- 10 nights camping, 1 night hostel
- 11 breakfasts, 11 lunches and 9 dinners
- Touring in a fully equipped overland vehicle - with high quality 4 person tents (sleeping only 2), camp chairs and cooking equipment
- Denali National Park wildlife buses to Toklat River and Eielson Visitor Center (2 days)
- Maclaren Lodge/Wilderness Glacier camp
- Boat and canoe trips on the Maclaren River
- Hikes in Denali NP, Wrangell-St. Elias NP and Valdez
- Entrance fees to national parks and monuments
- Escorted by two trained/commercially certified leaders/drivers

**What's Not Included**
- Airport transfers
- Flights and visas
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

### Local Payment
USD $550

### Detailed Itinerary

**Day 1: Anchorage**

Welcome to the largest city of Alaska, most often thought of as the state’s capital. Start off your vacation flying into stunning scenery overlooking the Chugach, Alaskan, Kenai, and Talkeetna mountain ranges. Although Mt. McKinley is only visible 20% of the year, there’s a chance you could even catch a glimpse. Anchorage is Alaska’s most populated area yet it’s shared with the likes of bears, moose, and wolves. After your flight into this urban wilderness, make your way to the hostel for the 6pm pre-departure meeting. Dine together this evening and get to know your fellow travellers and guide.

**Included:** Anchorage accommodation, Welcome Meeting

**Optional Activity before tour:** Full Day World Famous Brooks River Alaskan Brown Bear Viewing, Katmai National Park. $650-850, Anchorage City Tour ($49 - 3hrs). These optional
Alaska Denali Expedition - 12 days

Activities are subject to availability. **Overnight - Anchorage (hostel)**

**Days 2-4 : Denali National Park**

Anchorage - Denali National Park. In the morning we head off to the amazing Denali National Park. Whether its flora or fauna you came to see, this is the place to fulfill your hopes of seeing large and small wild animals living as they have for ages. We set up our campsite and the following two days you will have the opportunity to take a bus ride through the national park along its only road and hopefully spot bears, moose, caribou, or wolves. For those of you who are looking for a heart pounding and more strenuous adventure, you’ll have the opportunity for trailblazing throughout the park’s 6 million acres. No trip would be complete without adding the optional activity of flying over Denali National Park and around Mt. McKinley (20,320 ft/6194 m.) In the evenings we will sit around the campfire, listening to the sounds of the night and telling our adventures of the day.

**Included Activities:** 2-Day National Park Entrance and Shuttle Bus services, Hiking in Denali National Park (short, long, off the beaten track, that’s on you to decide!)

**Optional Activities:** Flights over Mt. McKinley $210-320 plus $75 for glacier landing (1-1.5 hrs plus additional time glacier landing)

Rafting Nenana River $90-190 on whitewater or gentle float (2 hrs to all day) **Overnight - Denali National Park** (B:3, L:3, D:3)

**Days 5-6 : Maclaren River Lodge**

Denali National Park - Maclaren River Lodge. From Denali, we drive the lightly traveled Denali Highway. First opened in 1957, this dirt road was the first to access Denali National Park (then known as Mt. McKinley National Park.) Located in the Maclaren river valley, we traverse through high alpine country on the state's second highest highway pass. Here lies the Maclaren River Lodge run by Alan and Susie, who are fantastic hosts that will take us on a boat ride up to “The Glacier Camp.” Now we’re out in the wilderness on our own, no mobile phone reception and no roads. Here we’ll stay overnight exploring and camping out underneath the stars. The next morning we’ll take a casual canoe trip back down the river for our next night at this beautifully situated lodge. While most of us will spend the rest of the afternoon relaxing, some might want to try their luck in fishing, catching our dinner?

**Included Activities:** Boat Ride up to Glacier Camp, guided overnight stay at Glacier Camp sleeping under the stars, canoe trip on Maclaren River

**Optional Activity:** Fishing (pricing to be determined on number of people) **Overnight - Maclaren River Lodge (1), Bush camp (1)** (B:2, L:2, D:1)

**Days 7-9 : Wrangell/St. Elias National Park**

Maclaren River Lodge - Wrangell/St. Elias National Park. We travel on to visit Wrangell/St. Elias, the largest national park in the United States and camp at the "End-of-the-road" campground. Literally at the end of the McCarthy Road, these 60 miles of gravel road were built along the old Copper River and Northwestern railways. Most remnants left of this once thriving area were a part of the copper mines, but most people forget this was where the last great gold rush happened in Alaska. There are many optional activities like hiking, ice climbing, glacier walks, guided mine tours, rafting, and scenic flights around 16,000-foot peaks, 25-mile long glaciers and massive icefalls. So, days 8 and 9 are left for you to decide what to do: Take the optional historical tour, hike on your own in the beautiful surroundings or try some crazy outdoor stuff like ice climbing, guided glacier hikes, or whitewater rafting.

**Included Activity:** Hiking, Scenic Drive

**Optional Activities:** Ice Climbing $135 (full day), Root Glacier Hike $90 (half day) $110 (full day), Three Rivers Raft/Fly-in $285 (6-8 hrs), Kennecott History Tour $35 (2.5 hrs) **Overnight - Wrangell/St Elias National Park (bush camp)** (B:3, L:3, D:3)

**Days 10-11 : Valdez**

Alaska Denali Expedition - 12 days

www.onthegotours.com

uk 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com

AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com

NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038

USA 1 866 377 6147 SA 0800 982 686

These Trip Notes have been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.
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Wrangell/St. Elias National Park - Valdez. Valdez is the terminus of the 800-mile trans-Alaskan pipeline that begins at Prudhoe Bay and is an important gateway to the interior of Alaska. Valdez was brought to the forefront of national media March 1989. The Exxon Valdez ran aground causing an 11-million gallon oil spill. For many years, flora and fauna were devastated by this environmental catastrophe. Thankfully, order has been restored and the Chugach Mountains set a gorgeous backdrop to this quaint little town. When we arrive in the afternoon you will find fantastic hiking opportunities just a short walk from town. If you are tired of hiking there is enough to explore in the history-filled little town. The next day is focused on optional activities. High recommended is the Columbia Glacier Sea Kayaking for its beautiful scenery, mammoth icebergs and possibility of spotting all kinds of wildlife.

In the evenings we will venture out and see if we can find some bears feeding on salmon. Valdez is well known for bears to come to the local salmon fish hatchery and the surrounding creeks.

**Included Activities:** Hiking and Scenic Drive

**Optional Activities:** Glacier/Iceberg Sea Kayaking $270, Glacier Wildlife Cruises $115

Day 12 : Anchorage

Arrival Information

Joining Hostel

Alaska Backpackers Inn

327 Eagle St. Anchorage, AK 99501, United States
Hostel tel: +1 907-277-2770

We will be meeting at 6pm at the hostel on day 1. You will find a welcome note at the reception that day to provide you with any further information. Please bring your passport and insurance details (if not send beforehand) with you. We can’t wait to meet you!

**Getting There**

Airport transfers are not included. Anchorage Airport is fairly small and hopefully the immigration process won’t take you too long, however be prepared to stand in line. After leaving immigration and customs there is a door opposite and you will find taxis outside it. Taxis should cost around $25 to get you downtown to the Alaska Backpackers Inn.

Arriving at the hostel there will be a reservation under your name (and/or Infinite Adventures). If you arrive before 4pm your room might not be ready, but you can leave your luggage at the reception and explore Anchorage downtown.

If you need pre or post trip accommodation please make a reservation directly with Alaska Backpackers Inn - http://alaskabackpackers.com

**Local Payment**

Included Activities: Hiking and Scenic Drive

Optional Activities: Glacier/Iceberg Sea Kayaking $270, Glacier Wildlife Cruises $115

(half day) Overnight - Valdez (B, L, D; 2)

**Day 12 : Anchorage**

**Know Before You Go**

**Infinite Adventures**

Our North America tours are operated by Infinite Adventures.

**Local Payment**

Our North America trips have a Local Payment which is collected in US Dollars and will need to be given to your trip leader on day 1 at the Welcome Meeting. The local payment is part of the overall tour cost and is used to pay some of the day to day operational costs that are incurred while we are on the road. You will find the Local Payment amount noted under Exclusions at the beginning of these Trip Notes, please budget accordingly.

**Group Participation**

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you’re part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and firewood, loading the back locker, etc.

**Meals**

On our overland journeys, all included meals are cooked at campsites and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind us at your welcome meeting.

A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and sometimes something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, sometimes with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local food.

We do cater to vegetarians/vegans and most types of food allergies. However please understand that in a group environment there are limits and often the vegetarian dish will be the same as the main dish just with the meat left out/cooked separately. Also in Alaska as well as in Canada there are some areas with limited supply on e.g. lactose/wheat free products so it is recommended to bring certain products with you or understand that they might not be available.

**The Overland Truck**

The overland vehicle that we use in North America is rather unique because it’s a converted US school bus and it even has a name - ATK. The truck provides ample space for everyone to stretch out along with providing at least 8 passengers tables for card playing or writing in their journals. The multitude of windows are big and open easily to allow you to take pictures at any time from the best angles. The overland vehicle is a large part of the experience and most travellers think of it as a second ‘home’ by the end of the trip.

The truck includes:

- Viewing platform on top of vehicle for taking 360 Degree pictures of wildlife or landscape
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- Wood rack to carry firewood for campfires
- Interior tables for at least 8 people to write journals or play cards during the ride
- Coolers for drinks and food
- Individual overhead lockers for personal belongings
- Overhead lights and speakers (to switch on and off individually)
- Individual seats (no benches) which are fitted with seatbelts
- Plenty of windows which are not tinted and open for maximum view and possibility to take photos at any time
- On-board safe for passenger passports and money
- Safety rating of the overland vehicle (statistics show that school buses built after 1977 are 8 times safer than passenger vehicles)
- Overland Vehicle that withstands the worst gravel roads

Camping

Our North America trips are overland camping adventures. We provide 4 person tents to accommodate 2 people. The tents are easy to put up and take down. You will need to pack your own sleeping mat, pillow and sleeping bag.

The first night of our North America tours is spent at a hostel/hotel. In hostels we reserve twin share rooms with shared facilities. Twin/ double hotel rooms are ensuite. If we have odd numbers there might be the occasional triple share room, but this is rare.

Campsites

Most of the campsites we stay are established campgrounds with flush toilets and hot showers. However we try to get out into the wilderness and this means some of our campsites are bush camps with an outhouse only and no showers. But don’t worry, you will be rewarded with spectacular views on glaciers and mountains and the next campsite we go to the shower will feel even better;) If you are in doubt, please contact us: we also do carry water with us, so that you can have a basic wash, if you’d like to.

Camping with bears

Some might be thrilled about this possibility; some might feel slightly nervous about it. Yes, bears might visit our campsites but as long as we follow certain rules while hiking and camping in the wilderness, there is little to worry about.

While you are hiking we always stay together in groups. This gives us the opportunity to talk and make some noise to make sure wild animals are aware of our presence. Bears have usually no interest in human beings and tend to stay away. Making noise scares them and most likely you won’t even see them as they turn their back towards us and go the other direction. If we come across one of these big hairy fellows, the best thing is to stop and talk calmly to the bear.

We will all stay together in a group and make us look as big as possible while slowly moving backwards. And if you are still not convinced: to be on the safe side we will carry bear spray to use in the very unlikely event a bear comes too close.

Camping with bears requires some other/ additional rules to be safe. The main reason bears are interested in a campsite is food. This will mean for us to not have any food (including granola bars, peanuts or any kind of snacks) in your tents. Also tooth paste with its minty smell seems to be of bears’ interest which means that all your toiletries will stay in our overland vehicle during nights.

When we cook dinner we make sure that all trash will either go back into ATKA or will be safely disposed in bear-proof bins, which are provided by many National Parks or campsites/rest areas. It comes without saying that also all our cooking gear will be safely stored away during night. Bears need to feed all summer to prepare for the long winter season. If they don’t expect and smell any food in our camp there is hardly any chance we will have a visitor during night.

What to pack

High quality outdoor gear is a nice thing to have, but is not a necessity! As long as you have some decent rain gear, shoes you feel comfortable hiking with, comfortable sleeping pad, a warm sleeping bag and some layers to keep you warm in chilly nights you will be fine.

We can’t, with 100% certainty, tell you what will give you the optimal comfort in your overland adventure. But, we can give you a good idea about what to bring and then you can add on whatever you might feel is essential to your personal needs.

We get lots of questions about the weather conditions and climate in Alaska and Canada. All we can say is that the summer up north can average between 15 to 25 C during the day, and the nights can get chilly. Weather can change pretty quickly; the best way to dress is in layers! Here you can find a packing list with what we think is worth bringing…

THE BASICS

1. Passport (along with any visas needed)
2. Travel Insurance
3. Back pack or soft luggage (max. 23 kg/50 lb)
4. Daypack
5. Sleeping bag (3-season)
6. Sleeping Mat
7. Travel Pillow
8. Personal Medical Kit/ Medications/ Prescriptions
9. Extra Glasses/ Contacts / Solution
10. Sunscreen SPF 25+ / After-sun lotion
11. Insect Repellent
12. Antihistamine / After bite cream
13. Antibacterial gel
14. Head torch / lamp
15. Alarm Clock
16. Sunglasses
17. Hat
18. Water Bottle
19. Travel Towel
20. Toiletries

CLOTHING

1. Warm microfleece / sweater
2. Long sleeve shirts
3. Long trousers
4. T-shirts
5. Thermal shirt / trousers
6. Underwear
7. Beanie
8. Water proof jacket / pants
9. Socks (cotton / smart wool / trekking)
10. Mid-weight gloves

GEAR

1. Waterproof bags
2. Comfortable hiking shoes / boots
3. Sandals / flip-flops
4. Binoculars
5. Camera gear
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6. Extra batteries/charger/memory cards
7. Universal Adapter
8. Hiking Sticks (if you are used to them/need them)
9. Rubber Boots (if you have space/like to wear them)

TRAVEL ACCESSORIES
1. MP3/Ipod
2. 16/32 GB flash drive (for group compilation of photos)
3. Notebook/Journal
4. Magazines/Books/Kindle

Laundry
Some campsites we stay at provide washing machines and dryers for a small charge. The following campsites are a good place to do laundry: Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Calgary, Dawson City, Teslin, Tok, Denali, Valdez, Seward, and Homer and of course the hostel in Anchorage.

WIFI and Cell Phone Reception
Alaska is called “The Last Frontier” for a reason! The same applies to the northern parts of Canada. There will be times and days where there might be no cell phone reception or internet. Some of the campsites and lodges we stay do offer wifi, but some of them run on satellite connection, which is not as reliable and fast as broadband. However we will make you aware of internet cafes and any wifi possibilities that will occur during our trip.

Electrical equipment
Our overland vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone. Please be aware that only a limited amount of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle’s batteries low.

Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electrical outlets so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

Mosquitos in Alaska/Canada
You may have heard some bad stories about mosquitos in Alaska and that they are often jokingly referred to as the state bird. There are 35 different species in Alaska and yes, sometimes these little insects can get annoying. But they are not nearly as bad as rumors have it. While mosquitos can gather in big swarms, it is very rare.

Nevertheless there are a few places where mosquitos definitely can be a pain in the butt. But the good thing is: You can do something about it!

- Cover up! Alaska can be warm but in the late afternoon when mosquitos are most active you will be fine with an extra layer. Long trousers and long sleeve tops are recommended.
- Spray your neck and your ankles with some mosquito spray.
- We carry two big cook tents with mosquito mesh on the sides to make it breathable yet mosquito resistant. So while we are cooking and hanging out in the evenings we will be covered for the most part. Also the entrance to the truck is protected with a magic mesh so that we don’t have to deal with a mosquito invasion while having our next truck party.
- If you really get angry with the mosquitos for biting you, you can take your revenge with electric tennis rackets. They are fun to play so that we don’t have to deal with a mosquito invasion while having our next truck party.

Personal Spending
Based on the range that previous travelers have spent on trips with us, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US$10 and a maximum of US$25 per day. This will cover individual expenses such as drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips.

Please bear in mind that we don’t know your personal preferences (yet): If you are an excessive souvenir shopper or desperate for coffee and snacks every single time we stop you might reconsider the extra amount of money needed. We also are giving an overview in the itinerary what optional activities will cost. These prices are estimated and can change!

Emergency Phone Number
The emergency phone number for this trip is +1 877 763 4958

Please do not call if you forgot to pack your favorite socks. This is for emergencies (flight delays, etc) only.

Usa Country Guide

Visas
Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Canada.

Canadian passport holders do not require a visa to enter America, but must carry their passport on them. British, Australian and New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa to enter the USA for up to 90 days under the Visa Waiver Program. These nationalities require machine-readable passports valid for the length of their stay, and must have proof of return travel. To travel under the Visa Waiver Program, passengers must obtain authorisation from the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) by filling out a form at least 72 hours prior to arrival. Note: There is a fee of US$14 and receiving authorisation from ESTA does not guarantee entry to the USA.

Visa Waiver Program website: https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/

South Africans are required to apply for a visa in advance of travel to the USA. Please visit the relevant embassy for a visa form and instructions.

Time
Las Vegas and other western states are 7 hours behind Greenwich Meantime (GMT), and Anchorage in Alaska is 8 hours behind GMT. From March to November the United States observes Daylight Saving and is 6 hours behind and 7 hours behind GMT.
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Voltage
Standard voltage is between 110 and 120 volts. Primary sockets generally require the 2-flat pin variety. We recommend you pack a universal travel adaptor and you will need a voltage converter to use non-US appliances.

Currency
The official currency in the USA is the US Dollar (USD).

Euro. British Pounds and other major currencies can be exchanged locally or in advance of departure. While exchange facilities will be available at most airports they can incur substantial fees, therefore it is recommended to change money at a bureau de change or bank. Cash can also be withdrawn from ATMs and debit/credit cards are accepted at most establishments. It’s advisable to request bank notes in a mix of denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities.

Health
You should seek medical advice before travelling to the USA from your local health practitioner to ensure you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Tetanus is recommended. Emergency health care in the USA is expensive therefore it is important to ensure you have invested in good travel insurance.

Water: The water quality in the USA is good and tap water is always drinkable.

Food
The palate of the United States is much more diverse than most would expect it to be, with a different speciality from state to state, and there is much more to it than hotdogs and hamburgers! In the northernmost state of Alaska the traditional Eskimo staple of caribou is a firm favourite with steak and reindeer burgers on the menu at most restaurants. The nation’s beloved sweet wobbly treat of Jell-o is most popular in Utah, and you can even try it deep fried at the state fair. In Arizona fried dough was once a staple for many Native American tribes and is still eaten today, either plain or with ground beef, beans and cheese. If you’re in Nevada, try locally-made pesto or pignoli cookies made with pine nuts that have been harvest here for over 10,000 years. Or in Wyoming chow down on buffalo jerky, just like the cowboys did.

Eating out is very common in the USA, with families dining at restaurants on the weekends and during the week too. Most cities will have a wide range of restaurants and cuisines to choose from, ranging from traditional American favourites to more exotic dishes. You’ll also find eating establishments to suit any budget or time-frame, whether you want to grab a quick bite at a fast food joint or are looking to splash out as a Michelin-starred restaurant. If eating out it is important to remember that most wait staff rely on tips as the basis of their income, and generally expect to receive between 15-20% of the total bill price.

Weather in Alaska
Our Alaska trips run in the summer months when we can camp and enjoy the great outdoors like hiking, sea kayaking or ice climbing. You will be spoiled with 18 to 20 hours of daylight and daytime temperatures between 14-25 but it is colder at night.

June: The longest days of the year come in the month of June. The sun does set below the horizon at Anchorage and the surrounding areas below the Arctic Circle, but it will never get completely dark. You will experience why Alaska is called the land of the midnight sun! The beginning of June can sometimes still be chilly and you might spot some snow piles in shady areas. That being said, if you follow our guidelines for what to pack, you’ll be comfortable throughout the trip.

July: Days are still long and on average this is probably the warmest and driest out of the four summer months. July starts berry season and where there’s berries, there are usually bears chomping away on hundreds of thousands of these delectable treats. Along with the berries, the salmon runs are finding their way along the shorelines and into the world-renowned Kenai and Russian Rivers. Anglers will test their skill along with their courage, as brown bears love to watch the local fly fisherman catch a potential meal.

August: Nights will bring some hours of darkness and at the end of the month in some regions temperatures during night might get a bit chilly, all the more reason to build ourselves a beautiful campfire. The highest peaks will get their first dusting of snow, which amplifies the amazing scenery. By August, the mosquitos have almost tapered off completely and rainfall can be more common. The salmon are running up all rivers and streams and the ecosystem is saturated with an abundance of food sources.

Weather in the Southwest
Our Southwest America trips operate in the spring and autumn when the weather is generally nice. It’s important to note that these trips pass through very different climate zones and we will go from the desert of Nevada to Calgary, which is the gateway to the Rocky Mountains. This means average temperatures in spring and autumn can vary from 30 Celsius in Las Vegas and some of the national parks in Arizona/Utah to 15 Celsius in Yellowstone and Calgary (day temperatures) and nights in general can be pretty chilly. As weather conditions vary you need to be prepared by packing some warm layers and a good sleeping bag.

TRIP NOTES