

# JUMP INTO THE ICE COLD WATER! IT'S SEWARD WINTER FESTIVAL



Alaska is one of those states that will always retain an aura of mysterious appeal. Its rough character and unrivaled scenic beauty rightfully deserve the highest praise. The pristine clarity of the nature combined with almost sacred tranquility creates a perfect holiday destination for adventurous tourists who do not need 5-star luxury.

There is one event here, which has been attracting an increasing number of tourists over the past years - the infamous winter festival in Seward - "Polar Bear Jumpoff" - is the place to be in mid-January.

This unique event appeared in 1986 with a very noble intention - to help children suffering from cancer as well as provide more support to local non-profit groups. The annual Jumpoff is definitely the hook of the festival. The participants show up dressed in original eye-catching costumes, gather up, and then jump into the Resurrection Bay. Considering the tough conditions of an Alaskan January, whoever is brave enough to join the ice-breaking heroes deserves a medal.

For those who fear this might just be the last activity they would ever do in their lifetime, there are plenty of other bizarre opportunities to test their skill and appetite for a bit of risk. Especially the 'Ugly Fish Toss' has become a very popular game at the event. It is exactly how it seems on first reading - contestants pair up and toss between each other a slimy salmon - each time extending the distance between them. The challenge grows as the fish becomes slimier each time it gets thrown in the air.

The list of games and events extends each year. Ice bowling, cross-country ski races, a seafood feed, a bed-making contest, oyster slurping, dog sled races, and many other contests push the already appealing festival beyond all expectations and make it a memorable event which attracts considerable tourist attention which is always more than welcome in Alaska.

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