

From Seward to Talkeetna: The Best Alaska Has to Offer

All Roads Are Not Created Equal

A 2.5-hour drive along one of the most breathtaking routes in Alaska doesn't even begin to reveal it all. Designated a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road, the Seward Highway stretches 127 miles from Anchorage to Seward, bordered by the picturesque Turnagain Arm. It's no mystery why scenic viewpoints are plentiful. Travelers can scan the adjacent cliffs for Dall sheep and eagles and see beluga whales in the inlet, spotted by their telltale white heads poking up through the waves.

Upon reaching the end of the road and the southern edge of the Kenai Peninsula, Seward appears, the massive Resurrection Bay at its back. As it all comes into view — the busy boat harbor, the mountains, a patchwork of quaint restaurants, shops and travel companies, cars tugging boats and kayaks — there is little doubt: recreation happens here. TripAdvisor.com viewers wholeheartedly agree, naming Seward the number one US Destination for 2010.



A Wilderness Retreat

One of the most popular options for Seward travelers is a cruise with Kenai Fjords Tours (Kenai fjords.com) and optional overnight (or two) at the Kenai Fjords Wilderness Lodge (Kenai fjordslodge.com). The adventure begins on a wildlife-and-glacier cruise across Resurrection Bay and continues into Kenai Fjords National Park. With camera in hand, witness calving glaciers, orca whales, sea lions, otters, puffins and more.

Waterfalls and dramatic cliffs greet the boat at the dock of the Kenai Fjords Wilderness Lodge,

located on exclusive Fox Island. As if the ride over wasn't indulgence enough, a wild Alaska salmon and prime rib lunch awaits guests at the day lodge. Spend the afternoon exploring the rain forest, combing the beach, kayaking along the shores or simply basking in the views. According to lodge staff (and some lucky guests) orcas can sometimes be spotted coming right up on the beach to rub against the rocky shore.



Even if guests don't stay overnight, they don't have to miss out on the Fox Island experience. Some day cruise options make a stop at the newly remodeled Kenai Fjords day lodge. Return to the mainland via a full-day cruise into the glacier-carved Northwestern Fjord. As the boat nears the towering wall of ice known as the Northwestern Glacier, the engine of the boat idles, and the thundering cracks of ice can be heard as it breaks away from the glacier and crashes into the sea.

See More of Seward

Travelers will definitely want to explore more of what Seward has to offer. The Seward Windsong Lodge (Sewardwindsong.com) — winner of the prestigious Studiosus Award in 2009 — is the perfect base camp for exploration. Close to town yet in a secluded setting, the lodge is close to kayaking, fishing, glacier dog sled rides and offers the popular Exit Glacier Hike. Traveling just minutes from the lodge through alders and rock croppings, hikers arrive at the base of the crystal blue Exit Glacier, the crown jewel of the Resurrection River Valley.



Just the Tip of the Iceberg

It's hard to depart Seward, but this coastal town is just one of many must-see destinations Alaska offers. Head back towards Anchorage with a detour through the longest vehicle tunnel in North America. On the other side, Whittier is another coastal community with a lot to offer. Day cruises with Prince William Sound Glacier Cruises (Princewilliamsound.com) explore the largest collection of tidewater glaciers in Alaska and travel through wildlife-rich waters to a salmon hatchery.

But don't stop there. Head 113 miles north of Anchorage to the small town of Talkeetna. Here, on the south side of Denali National Park and Preserve, the Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge (Talkeetnalodge.com) offers the best view of Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range and is located just minutes from adventure. Guests can fish or hike, take a river float or jet boat trip or choose a flightseeing tour over Denali National Park and Preserve, one of the most dramatic experiences available.

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Alaska Native-owned and operated, CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation is the umbrella company for premium-quality tourism products, providing customers with the best that Alaska has to offer in Seward, Whittier, Talkeetna, Denali and beyond.

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