



ALASKA & THE GREAT IDITAROD - GREAT RACE 2025

Day			Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	26-Feb-2025	Wed	Travel to Anchorage, Alaska; transfer to Hotel and check-in (meals in flight or on own)		Welcome, Safety & Orientation
2	27-Feb-2025	Thur	Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center + Wildlife Expert Talk	Musk Ox Farm + Master Class Experience Iditarod Headquarters Visit	Wasilla Hotel check-in Local Dinner
3	28-Feb-2025	Fri	Travel to Talkeetna Guided Snow-Shoe Hike	Happy Trails Kennel & Four-time Iditarod Champion, Martin Buser - Master Class Experience	Travel to Anchorage; Hotel check-In Local Dinner
4	1-Mar-2025	Sat	Official Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race	Anchorage Museum - Art, History, Ethnography, Ecology & Science	Dinner & free time Exploring Anchorage
5	2-Mar-2025	Sun	Travel to Willow	Restart (Real Start) of the Iditarod Dog Sled Race	Hotel Check-In Pizza Dinner
6	3-Mar-2025	Mon	Travel to Denali National Park	Denali National Park's Murie Science & Learning Center + National Park Film + Ranger Master Class Experience	Check-In and Local Dinner Aurora Borealis Viewing Opportunity
7	4-Mar-2025	Tues	Travel to Fairbanks Fairbanks City Tour	Trans-Alaska Pipeline Visit Morris Thompson Visitor's Center - Life in Interior Alaska	Local Dinner Aurora Borealis Viewing Opportunity
8	5-Mar-2025	Wed	Free Time for Exploration	Travel Home from Fairbanks, Alaska (usually arriving on following day)	



As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an “example” of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests, and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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Day 1 – Welcome to Alaska

Meals en route on own

Travel to stunning Anchorage! Most groups will arrive in the late evening hours, so meals will be on your own while traveling. Once you arrive, we'll meet you at the airport, transfer to our hotel, check-in and get settled. Later, time permitting, we'll have our Welcome, Safety & Orientation Meeting.



Alaska... Alaska, the 49th state, the Last Frontier. Wild, rugged, stark, mysterious, and jaw-droppingly gorgeous. With no shortage of wild mountain landscapes, beautiful glaciers, and abundant wildlife, Alaska will pull you in with its beauty and refuse to let you go from its icy grip.



Alaska is the land of superlatives: largest national park, highest peak, longest coastline, biggest state, the longest day, and night. The list goes on, and with all of these unparalleled characteristics, you'd be hard-pressed to cover even a fraction of this place in a typical one- or two-week vacation period. The 49th state offers so many things to do and see, you could vacation here for the rest of your life and never have the same experience twice. Alaska's adventure, history, culture, fishing, hiking, skiing, wildlife-watching and scenery just might be the best in all of North America!

Did you know?

- ✓ Alaska's name is based on the Eskimo word 'Alakshak' meaning great lands or peninsula. The term 'Alaska native' refers to Alaska's original inhabitants including Aleut, Eskimo, and Indian groups.
- ✓ Outsiders first discovered Alaska in 1741 when Danish explorer Vitus Jonassen Bering sighted it on a voyage from Siberia. Russian whalers and fur traders on Kodiak Island established the first settlement in Alaska in 1784.
- ✓ **Dog mushing is the official state sport.** The Alaskan Malamute sled dog is strong and heavily coated. It was developed as a breed by a group of Eskimos named the Malemiuts.
- ✓ In 1867 United States Secretary of State William H. Seward offered Russia \$7,200,000, or two cents per acre, for Alaska.
- ✓ Alaska is one of the largest crude oil producers in the nation and relies on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System to transport crude oil from the frozen North Slope to the warm-water port at Valdez in the south.
- ✓ The fishing and seafood industry is the state's largest private industry employer. Most of America's salmon, crab, halibut, and herring come from Alaska.
- ✓ Nearly one-third of Alaska lies within the Arctic Circle.
- ✓ The discovery of gold in the Yukon began a gold rush in 1898. Later gold was discovered at Nome and Fairbanks.



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- ✓ Alaska is the USA's largest state and is over twice the size of Texas. Measuring from north to south, the state is approximately 1,400 miles long, and measuring from east to west it is 2,700 miles wide.
- ✓ 17 of the 20 highest peaks in the United States are located in Alaska. At 20,320 feet above sea level, Mt. McKinley, located in Alaska's interior, is the highest point in North America.
- ✓ Juneau is the capital city and it can only be visited by way of boat or plane.
- ✓ In 1915 the record high temperature in Alaska was 100oF at Fort Yukon; the record low temperature was -80oF at Prospect Creek Camp in 1971.

Sample Hotel – Springhill Suites Anchorage - Retreat to this “suites” hotel located in Midtown, right in the center of the hustle and bustle of the city. All rooms contain two queen beds. Students will sleep quad occupancy; staff will sleep double occupancy. Room amenities include free high-speed internet access, cable television, hairdryers, in-room coffee maker, mini-fridges and microwaves, and more. Hotel amenities include elevators, business center, guest laundry, indoor corridors, small outdoor pool, sundry shop, and meeting rooms. [WEBSITE](#)



Day 2 – Alaska Wildlife

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

After breakfast at our hotel, we'll board our transportation and travel to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center.

Alaska Wildlife 'Big Game' Conservation Center – The Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Alaska's wildlife through public education. AWCC takes in injured and orphaned animals year-round and provides spacious enclosures and quality animal care. Animals that cannot be released into the wild are given a permanent home at the center. Students will have a chance to see Alaska's most iconic wildlife up close. A local guide from the center will share information and stories about the wildlife at the center.



Afterwards, we'll travel north to the communities of Palmer and then Wasilla, about a 1-hour travel time. First stop – Musk Ox!



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Musk Ox Farm – In this visit, we'll learn all about the Musk Ox species. Observe and photograph these Ice Age animals at close range, as we learn from the guides and educational exhibits about their fascinating natural history.

Meet the Woolly Mammoth's Neighbor: The Musk Ox—one of the Arctic's oldest living species, and once a contemporary of the woolly mammoth and saber-toothed tiger—possesses a soft under-wool called qiviut. In the early 1950s, anthropologist John Jerome Teal Jr. recognized that the best—or sometimes only—way that rural Alaskans could earn a cash income was to leave home and seek work elsewhere. Teal's dream was to domesticate a geographically appropriate animal and bring an economic opportunity - gentle and sustainable agriculture - to a part of the world that had previously known none. By 1969 Teal split his new organization into two separate entities: The Musk Ox Farm, to focus on the domestication of the musk ox and to harvest the qiviut fiber; and Oomingmak, a cooperative of Native knitters who would take the raw fiber from fluff to yarn and then to beautiful, hand-knit garments. Both organizations carry on the vision of John Teal today.



Next stop, Wasilla!

The Iditarod Headquarters - Learn about the history of the Iditarod! When you visit the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race Headquarters, you will be immersing yourself in the rich history and culture of this event. For instance, did you know that “The Last Great Race” covers part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, which was once used to transport mail and supplies throughout Alaska? James Redington Sr. left a legacy of preserving this in Alaskan culture to honor our historical roots. The “Father of the Iditarod” helped to cement this trail as part of history and created the famous Iditarod sled dog race.



If you want to learn more about the Iditarod, visit the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Museum located within the headquarters. You will find a variety of exhibits and displays detailing the past, present, and future of this iconic Alaskan event. One noteworthy example is the display of Togo, an inspirational dog that battled the elements in 1925. He was part of the famous “Serum Run” and brought crucial medical supplies to Nome. This heroic animal has been stuffed and preserved at the museum for visitors to honor. You can also see a statue of Joe Redington Sr. and his dog, Feets, outside the headquarters. In addition to the exhibits, groups can view a daily showing of Iditarod race footage in the video room. [Teaching Tools](#)

Afterwards, we'll get checked in to our Wasilla hotel and have a great dinner!



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Day 3 – Snow & Kennels!

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

After breakfast at our hotel, today we'll take a scenic transfer north to the historic community of Talkeetna.

Guided Snowshoe Hike - Upon arrival, we'll test our balance with a snowshoe hike (wear your snow boots!). Our guide will lead us on a short hike through old-growth boreal forest. Keep your eyes open for stunning views of the Alaska Range.

Iditarod Kennel Visit – This afternoon, meet **four-time Iditarod Champion Martin Buser** at his **Happy Trails Kennel**. Hear his personal stories while viewing a glimpse of the grandeur Alaska has to offer along the Iditarod Trail.

Arriving at the kennel, you will be greeted by between thirty and sixty sled dogs resting comfortably on their houses in the dog lot. The experience begins with a welcome and introduction to Happy Trails, with some guidelines for appropriate behavior with the dogs. In the Visitor Center, your path along the Iditarod trail begins... Via a twenty-minute video, you travel from Anchorage to Nome. Martin's narration includes anecdotal stories from his thirty-five years of racing, as well as a great deal of Iditarod history.



The next stop on your tour is the log amphitheater. The campfire and wall tent, a mockup of the checkpoint at Cripple, set the stage for a description of life on the trail. The presentation includes an in-depth look at how the real athletes -- the dogs -- are cared for and outfitted for the elements, complete with a "runway" model wearing the latest trail fashion.

A dog sled demonstration run is the noisy part of the tour. A team of six lucky dogs is harnessed to the gang-line. You will see and can photograph them as they pull an ATV on a short, highly visible loop. During the harnessing, the uproar of barks of "take me" prohibits any discussion, and the smiles on the dogs' faces show visitors what Martin's sled dogs love the most - running.

The experience finishes with puppy time, usually the favorite part of the visit! You will get to hold puppies and be a part of the socialization program since a primary goal at Happy Trails is to raise happy dogs!

In the evening, we'll return to Anchorage, check into our hotel, and have dinner.

Day 4 – Official Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod Trail Dog Sled Race

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

This morning we'll learn all about the Iditarod at the "Official Ceremonial Start" of the race. We'll find a great spot on 4th Avenue to spend time cheering on mushers from all over the world. Mushers will depart the gate every two minutes. Watch each of them depart or take off early and enjoy other Iditarod festivities in Anchorage. Note that this is the "Ceremonial" start, not to be confused with the "Restart" which is the real race start on Day 5.



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This afternoon, we'll visit the Anchorage Museum.



The Anchorage Museum – A vast art, history, ethnography, ecology, and science museum in the heart of downtown Anchorage. The museum is dedicated to study in exploring the land, people, art, and history of Alaska. Alaska's largest museum tells the real story of the North. Explore Alaska Native cultures with a collection from the Smithsonian Institution. An expansive interactive history gallery tells the story of Alaska. A hands-on science discovery center has marine life tanks, a planetarium and more. The

Anchorage Museum sits on the traditional homeland of the Eklutna Dena'ina. The Museum is committed to recognizing and honoring the land, culture, and language of the native Alaskan cultures.

This evening, we'll have dinner locally, free time to get out and explore, and overnight in Anchorage.

Day 5 – Restart of the Iditarod Dog Sled Race

Breakfast included + a \$25 credit, per person, on a group gift card, pizza dinner

This morning, we'll check out of our hotel, load up and travel north to Willow, Alaska, for the "Restart" of the Iditarod Dog Sled Race. Be sure to dress in layers to maximize staying warm as the entire day will be spent outside cheering on your favorite dog teams. In route, we'll stop at a local grocery store in Wasilla to pick up snack and lunch items (your head teacher will be allowed a \$25 credit per person via gift card). Prepare for a bit of a walk to find the perfect spot along the fence line of the race. Mushers take off across Willow Lake on their 1,049-mile journey by dog sled to Nome. The Willow Community Center is open and offers a break from the cold with vendors selling food and drink as well as local crafts. Don't miss out on snacks throughout the day! Your departure time from Willow will depend on weather conditions and guests' comfort level. We will try to see as many of the mushers as possible.



*In the event that the Iditarod Start is relocated, a full day of activities will be substituted.



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Day 6 – Denali!

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

Today, after breakfast, we'll check-out of our hotel, board our coach and travel north to Denali National Park, approximately a 3-hour drive.

Denali National Park – Denali is six million acres of wild land, bisected by one ribbon of road. Travelers along it see the relatively low-elevation taiga forest give way to high alpine tundra and snowy mountains, culminating in North America's tallest peak, 20,310' Denali. Wild animals large and small roam unfenced lands, living as they have for ages. Solitude, tranquility, and wilderness await.

As permafrost thaws, glaciers shrink, and tree lines rise, we feel humbled to care for this living laboratory that is so critical to understanding the effects of climate change on our global community. More than anything else, we hope you celebrate the true ideal of national parks here in Denali, a place that has been set aside to connect people to America's past, a place that protects present wildlife and amazing landscapes for your enjoyment and that of future generations, and a place that celebrates the individual's opportunity to experience inspiration, reflection, awe, and wonder. -- Don Striker, Park Superintendent



Upon arrival, we'll visit the Murie Science & Learning Center, which acts as Denali's Visitor's Center in the winter months. Enjoy the National Park film, "Heartbeats of Denali," hear from a local ranger about the park and ask questions about seasonal differences.

Murie Science & Learning Center - Research and discovery in the subarctic and arctic! The Murie Science and Learning Center promotes science and stewardship on behalf of national parks in Alaska. Murie is part of a national effort to increase scientific literacy by showcasing research from living laboratories like Denali.



Tonight, we'll have dinner and check-in to our hotel in the Denali area. Later this evening, we'll go out in search of Northern Lights!



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Aurora Borealis Hunt – Board your motorcoach and start off in search of the Northern Lights! It’s not easy to feel small in a world determined to keep us all connected, but spend an evening staring wide-eyed at the Northern Lights, and you’ll quickly be reminded of just how small we all are. But like any natural phenomena, the Aurora Borealis is as elusive as it is beautiful. Pair the specific weather conditions needed for them to appear with how difficult it can be to get away from light pollution, and you’re in for an adventure. Alaska, however, is one of the best places in the world to see the aurora borealis dancing overhead. At 65 degrees north, the sky here is a canvas for the sweeping colors, which are on show four out of five nights from August to April. Caused by supercharged solar particles colliding with the earth's atmosphere, these ethereal streamers of green, white, purple, blue, and even red light draw awestruck travelers from all over the world.



Please note that the Aurora viewing is not guaranteed as it is based on weather and solar activity. Typical viewing times are between 10 PM – 2 AM.

Day 7 – The Trans-Alaska Pipeline & Life in Interior Alaska

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

After breakfast, we’ll head out to Alaska’s “Golden Heart City” - Fairbanks. Start exploring with a city tour.

Fairbanks, Alaska - Go deep inside Alaska to Fairbanks, a city that emanates a quality of light, energy, and warmth found nowhere else on Earth. The northern lights will change you, while the summer midnight sun charms you. Greet the Arctic wilderness on your doorstep, be transported into the gold rush past, or engaged in the art and culture of this vibrant and diverse city.



Before the construction of the Alaska Highway, the establishment of military bases, and Alaska's induction into the union as the 49th state of the USA, Fairbanks was an energetic mining town. Italian immigrant, Felix Pedro is credited with the initial discovery of gold in 1902. As luck would have it, Captain E.T. Barnette's goal of building a trading post on the banks of the Chena River coincided with this, as well as other key gold strikes north of town. Subsequently, Fairbanks was incorporated in 1903.

More than one hundred years later, this small boomtown has a diversified economy, with oil, gas, gold and coal mining, military, tourism, and the University of Alaska as key components. Fairbanks continues in its role as the



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services hub and gateway to Alaska's Interior and Arctic. With a population of close to 33,000, Fairbanks' citizenry swells to almost 97,000 when including the surrounding Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Later, we're off to learn about the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, where students will learn what it takes to move the oil from the North Slope to Valdez.

The Alaska Pipeline – The 800-mile-long Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) is one of the world's largest pipeline systems. Starting in Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope, TAPS stretches through rugged and beautiful terrain to Valdez, the northernmost ice-free port in North America. Since the pipeline startup in 1977, Alyeska - TAPS' operator - has successfully transported billion of barrels of oil.



The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System includes the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, 11 pump stations, several hundred miles of feeder pipelines, and the Valdez Marine Terminal. The pipeline was built between 1974 and 1977 after the 1973 oil crisis caused a sharp rise in oil prices in the United States. This rise made exploration of the Prudhoe Bay oil field economically feasible.

The task of building the pipeline had to address a wide range of difficulties, stemming mainly from the extreme cold and the difficult, isolated terrain. The construction of the pipeline was one of the first large-scale projects to deal with problems caused by permafrost, and special construction techniques had to be developed to cope with the frozen ground. The project attracted tens of thousands of workers to Alaska, causing a boomtown atmosphere in Valdez, Fairbanks, and Anchorage.

This afternoon we'll learn more about life in Interior Alaska at the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center.

Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center – The Center is a place for gathering, discovery, education, and celebration made possible by a cross-organizational, multi-cultural partnership built on the values lived by the late Morris Thompson. The partner organizations are housed together in the center, collaborating to offer visitor services, public lands information, cultural programs, and world-class exhibits that show the history and seasonal flow of local lifestyles. Visitors and locals gather here to discover and learn about Interior and Arctic Alaska, celebrating who we are and how we live. Come explore the world-class exhibits of Alaska's four seasons, experience Alaska Native art, music, stories & dance, and talk with local experts to gather information about Interior and Arctic Alaska.



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Later this evening, we'll have dinner and then once again search for the elusive Northern Lights!

Day 8 – Goodbye Alaska

Breakfast included but dependent upon hours of service; lunch & dinner on own

This morning we will have a bit of free time this morning, dependent upon flights, and then bid goodbye to our new friends, board our coach and head to the Fairbanks airport. We'll take away unbelievable memories and hopefully, are already planning to come back to visit the wilds of Alaska in the glorious summer!

Goodbye Alaska!

Q'u yet dahdi ki q'u negh tgheshdud!

(I'll visit you again!)



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ALASKA & THE 2023 IDITAROD

Minimum Booking Numbers:

18 students

What's Included:

Roundtrip flights to Alaska
7-nights' accommodation in Alaska
Airport transfers & group transportation to activities (please note that transport may be shared among multiple small groups for the event)
Breakfasts & dinners daily starting with breakfast on Day 2 and ending with breakfast on Day 8
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center + Wildlife Talk
Musk Ox Farm & Master Class
Iditarod Headquarters + Iditarod Overview
Guided Snowshoe Hike
Happy Trails Kennel Visit + Dog Mushing Master Class
Official Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race
Restart of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race
Anchorage Museum
Denali National Park Excursion
Murie Science & Learning Center + Ranger Talk
National Park Film – Heartbeats of Denali
Fairbanks City Tour
Trans-Alaska Pipeline Visit
Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center
Aurora Borealis Viewing Opportunities
Event Tour Ambassador
24-hour emergency cover

What's Not Included:

Lunches, Snack & Beverages during non-meal times – Budget \$25 - \$30 per day
Luggage fees if not included with airline ticketing
Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
Transfers to/from home airport
Cost of visas, full or collective passports
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
Sightseeing / Entertainment Options not shown in Itinerary
Hotel incidental deposits & bills – meals, mini-bar items, recreation charges, purchases billed to room,
Any gratuities – coach drivers, Ambassador, local guides

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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