

Contains all the best of Anchorage, including outdoor fun, dining, culture and off-season adventures!

Creekwood Inn's

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE To Enjoying Anchorage, Alaska



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Read more about Anchorage and Alaska at creekwood-inn-alaska.com/blog



The Great Outdoors



Anchorage, Alaska is all about the great outdoors. Here you can have it all — roaming wildlife, world-class fishing, breathtaking glaciers and vast stretches of wilderness and national parkland. Anchorage is also a thriving city with no shortage of arts, theatre, dining and outdoor recreation. Conveniently located in the center of town is [Creekwood Inn, the most clean, comfortable and affordable boutique motel and RV park in the state](#). Come visit and experience our genuine Alaskan-style hospitality for yourself!

Top 5 Free Outdoor Things to Do in Anchorage

Traveling to Alaska on a budget? Don't worry — there are tons of free things to do. In fact, what makes Alaska so awesome is that pretty everything awesome is outdoors, and there's usually no charge for that.

Here are our top 5 things to do in Anchorage that are 100% free:



#1: Tony Knowles Coastal Trail

Beginning at 2nd Avenue in downtown Anchorage, this multi-use trail extends over 11 scenic miles along the Cook Inlet to Kincaid Park.

Be sure to keep an eye out for wildlife, including eagles, sand terns, moose and the occasional ["urban" bear](#). Don't forget to snap a photo of the famous Sleeping Lady Mountain (Mt. Susitna) on the other side of the inlet (on clear days you can see Denali, too). You can also learn about the 1964 Earthquake at Earthquake Park.

Whether you walk, bike, or rollerblade, the Coastal Trail is a must visit.

#2: Ship Creek – Salmon Viewing

Ship Creek is a favorite fishing spot for the locals. The creek runs through the Port of Anchorage and out onto the ocean waters of Cook Inlet. Here you can witness the salmon work their way up-stream as they dodge the hooks of eager, rabid anglers.

Bonus: visit the [William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery](#) which is located on the north bank of Ship Creek at the corner of Reeve Boulevard and Post Road.



#3: Downtown Anchorage – First Friday Art Walk



Are you a fan of art? Visit downtown [Anchorage on the First Friday](#) of each month after 5 pm to view local Alaskan artwork.

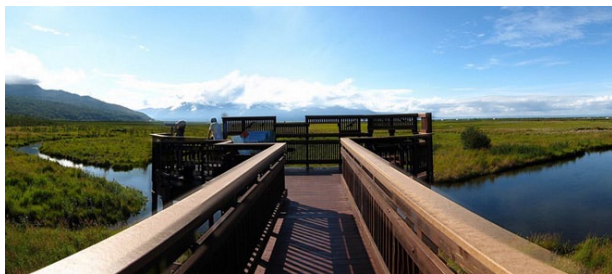
A complete list of participating businesses is found in the free [Anchorage Press](#) newspaper. Pick up a copy in the lobby at Creekwood Inn.

#4: Geocaching

If the sun is shining and you have space in your

itinerary, we recommend spending a fun day with the family Geocaching in Anchorage.

All you need is your handy GPS device (an [iPhone](#) will do) and you can join in on the fun. Pick up a geocaching guide from the [Anchorage Log Cabin Visitors Information Center](#) at Fourth Avenue and F Street.



#5: Potter Marsh Boardwalk – Bird Viewing

[Potter Marsh](#) is located at the southern tip of Anchorage as you're leaving towards Girdwood on the Seward Highway. Here you can enjoy a glimpse into the 2,300-acre [Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge](#).

A 1,150- foot wooden boardwalk awaits bird watchers and nature lovers alike (there are over 220 bird species here). During the

late spring and early fall, the wetlands are a fantastic place to spot red-necked phalaropes, horned and red-necked grebes, northern pintails, canvasback ducks and northern harriers — just to name a few.

Tip: Be on the lookout for wandering moose out in the marsh!



3 Easy Hikes in Anchorage You Wish You Found Sooner

No Alaskan adventure would be complete without an exhilarating day hike!

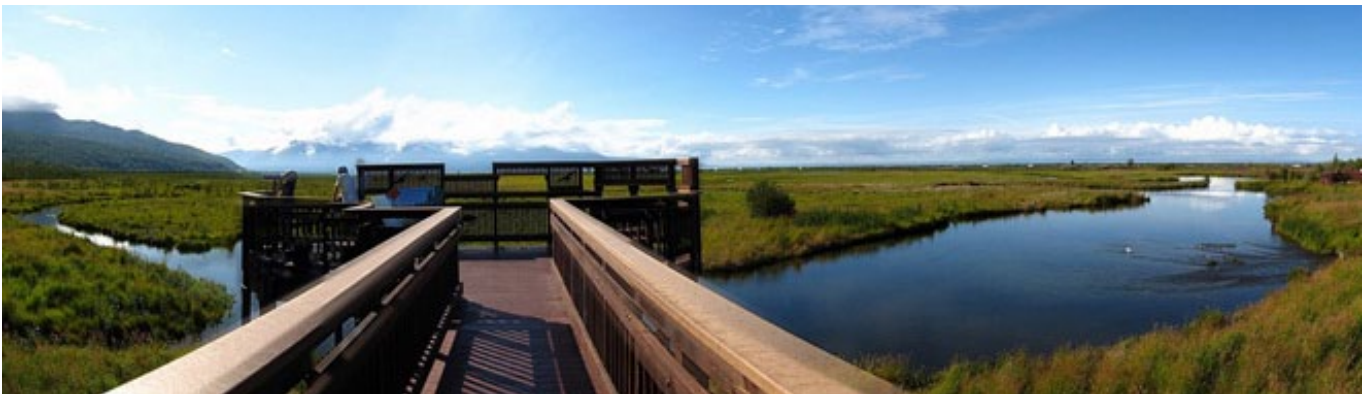
Many different trails are available in and around Anchorage. If you are traveling with children or have a walking disability, we recommend these three:

Tony Knowles Coastal Trail

[This popular trail](#) — named after former AK governor Tony Knowles — hugs the coastline (hint: sweeping inlet views) of Cook Inlet from 2nd Ave in downtown Anchorage for 10 1/3 miles southwest to Kincaid Park.

You can reach this beautiful trail from Creekwood Inn by turning out of the parking lot onto AK-1 / Seward Hwy heading south and turning right onto Northern Lights Blvd. Stay straight until you see the Earthquake Park sign on your right hand side. You can also choose to start the trail from Downtown Anchorage at the end of 5th Ave.

The trail is long, so here's the [official Coastal Trail map](#) so you don't get lost.



Potter Marsh

Okay, so [Potter Marsh](#) is more of a nature viewing platform than a trail, but it's totally worth it when you have kids. A wooden boardwalk winds 1,550 feet from the parking area through the marsh and across watery openings and sedges — a pristine habitat for a rich variety of birds. If you're lucky you may even spot a moose.

To reach Potter Marsh from Creekwood Inn, pull onto AK-1 / Seward Hwy heading south and stay straight until you see the turn off for Potter Marsh just past the Rabbit Creek exit and across from the Rabbit Creek Rifle Range entrance. A small highway pullout at the south end of the marsh also allows for viewing and photos.



Anchorage Overlook via Flattop

This trail has its own sitting area and viewing deck with views of Anchorage, the Alaska Range and Cook Inlet. Be sure to bring a coat as it can be quite windy, which in Alaska means guaranteed chilly.

The viewing platform is located at the base of Flattop Mountain, which rises 3,350 feet. You can choose to simply take in the stunning view or tackle the short but steep trail up Flattop Mountain. The hike is 3 miles round trip and the elevation gain is 1,350 feet.

The Flattop Mountain Shuttle provides transportation from downtown Anchorage to the Glen Alps Trailhead between mid-May and mid-November. Visit this great Anchorage hiking website for details, or call (907) 279-3334. The price is \$23.00 per person round-trip.

The Best Ways to View Moose, Bears and Eagles in Anchorage

Anchorage may be a city, but it's also a pretty wild place with a [ton of wildlife](#). If you get out and explore the city, chances are you'll spot one or more of the animals we've listed here (except maybe the muskox!).

Eagles (and other truly awesome birds)

The best place to bird watch in Anchorage is Westchester Lagoon which sits along the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. This lagoon is home to many different species of bird including the bald eagle and the sand tern.



Tree Swallow at Potter Marsh

A little south of Anchorage is Potters Marsh. There are at least 130 species of

birds passing through to breed here during the summer season.

Arctic terns nest here after long migrations from the southern hemisphere. Trumpeter swans breed and raise cygnets. Bald eagles soar above the marsh in search of prey. Sometimes you'll see terns and gulls trying to steal their meal.

Other Potters Marsh creature you might see include moose (most active in May and June), beavers and salmon (June-July) which are visible from the boardwalk.

Moose

Moose are all over Alaska, although they prefer to hang out in hardwood forests, tall-shrub thickets and coastal wetlands. In Anchorage you'll see moose pretty much anywhere vegetation is available for munching (see above photo).



Watch for newborn calves at the end of May. Bull moose with full racks are more prevalent in late September and October.

[Kincaid Park](#) in Anchorage is a great place to spot moose. You may get lucky and see a cow and a couple calves while walking or biking on one of Kincaid's many trails. *Just don't ever get between them!*



Bears

First thing's first: don't go out of your way to find a bear, and definitely don't let one find you. The result [can be very horrible](#).

Chance encounters with black and grizzly bears as well occur in Anchorage neighborhoods as well as many areas of the [Chugach State Park](#).

Your best bet to see a live bear is at the [Alaska Zoo](#) in Anchorage or [Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center](#) about 30 minutes south by car. Here you can safely view bears, moose, reindeer, eagles, owls and other awesome animals.

In the event you do happen to cross paths with a bear in the wild, be sure not to run (make noise instead), and never feed them. [Bear safety in Alaska](#) is a big deal.

BONUS: Muskox

Aren't you glad these bad boys haven't gone extinct?

Muskox, you say? That's right, muskox. These spectacular "bearded" beasts used to roam Alaska in the last ice age until their disappearance from the state in 1920s.

Efforts to restore their population include a herd of 34 transplanted in Fairbanks in 1930. Today, you can have a close encounter with muskoxen at [The Musk Ox Farm](#) in Palmer Alaska.

The Farm is less than an hour's drive from Anchorage, and offers a guided tour, exhibits and [giviut](#) samples (muskox wool is used by Alaskan Native women to create beautiful hats and scarves).



6 Quick Alaska Survival Tips for the Novice Outdoorsman

Camping in Alaska — it's certainly a thrilling experience — but you gotta be prepared when it comes to hanging out in the wilderness.

We at Creekwood Inn want to offer you a few outdoorsy pointers so you can enjoy yourself the fullest without getting hurt, lost or embarrassed:



Protection



There are many predators in the Alaskan woods, and bears top the list. Bears are extremely active (very hungry) during the summer season, so always be bear aware and keep [food, garbage and waste properly secured](#).

You'll need a way to protect yourself when you're hiking, camping or venturing into the great outdoors. A shotgun is the best option, and bear mace is a great alternative if you're not comfortable (or able to obtain) a firearm.

Doing your business outdoors

If you're hiking in a secluded spot without an outhouse, be sure to scoot at least 200 feet away from any body of water, trail or campsite before relieving yourself. This simple rule prevents water contamination as well as unwanted attention from animals.



Water

Whatever you do, never drink from any water source without purifying it first, unless the water is clearly marked "potable" by the state. Drinking untreated water could lead to three weeks of giardia, a miserable condition which includes fever, vomiting and, shall we say, accelerated bowel movements.

Buy a [LifeStraw](#) if you plan to hike longer than you can enough fresh water — they're good for up to 1,000 liters of water. The LifeStraw lets you drink directly from any unpolluted water source by sipping through the straw itself, and they're easy to find at most outdoor stores at about \$12-\$15 each.

Fire

What's camping without fire, right? Fires are fun to build, fun to watch and they're obviously helpful when it comes to cooking and staying warm. Fires also keep insects away, especially those [world-famous Alaska mosquitos](#).

When [building your fire](#), take note of any warnings or "no fires" signs. Be sure to also bring waterproof matches and a lighter.

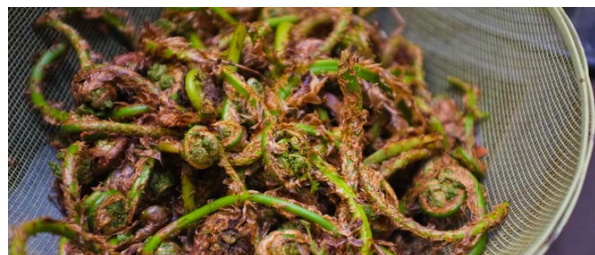


If you don't have firewood, use bark from the birch tree for kindling — it's usually everywhere. You can also use dry paper or dry branches from nearby willow and alder trees.

Food

Alaska has an abundance of wild plant edibles. The [rule of thumb](#) is don't eat a plant if it has any of the following:

- Milky or discolored sap, bitter or soapy taste
- Beans, bulbs or seeds inside pods
- Spines, fine hairs or thorns
- Dill, carrot, parsnip or parsley-like foliage
- Almond scent in woody parts and leaves
- Grain heads with pink, purplish or black spur
- Three-leafed growth pattern



Fiddleheads ferns are a fine forest treat

Medicine

If you get sick in the woods and don't have traditional medicine handy, Mother Nature offers some options. The red or purple flowers of the Bee Balm can be brewed into an "[Oswego tea](#)," which can alleviate fever.

Yarrow helps slow bleeding when you don't have a bandage or tourniquet — just make a poultice by chewing a few of the leaves and applying them to the wound. Learn more about Alaska's healing plants and [download the free PDF book Medicinal Flora of the Alaska Natives](#) by Ann Garibaldi. Now go have fun!

The Ultimate Guide to Summer Festivals in Anchorage

When you visit our beautiful city of Anchorage make memories by attending one of our annual summer festivals. Join the fun and festivities while the midnight sun hangs high in the sky. *Check websites for exact times.*

Slam'n Salm'n Derby

The Slam'n Salm'n Derby is an annual fundraiser for the Downtown Soup Kitchen. Admission is FREE. So join in on the fun, grab a pole, and head to Ship Creek in downtown Anchorage to catch some king salmon!



When: 2nd to 3rd week of June

Where: 211 W Ship Creek Ave Anchorage, AK 99501 (across from the Ulu Factory)

Website: <http://www.shipcreeksalmonderby.com/>

Anchorage Downtown Summer Solstice Festival

The Solstice Festival takes place from 12 noon-6:00pm. The Festival is a short drive from Creekwood Inn, and a perfect way to spend your day. Find out about the exciting events. It's guaranteed fun for all ages!



When: Summer solstice day (usually the 20th or 21st of June)

Where: 4th Avenue between C – L Streets

Website: <http://www.anchoragedowntown.org/upcoming-events/downtown-summer-solstice-festival/>

Anchorage July 4th Celebration Parade & Festival

Celebrate America's birthday on July 4th in true Alaskan style in Downtown Anchorage. Fireworks are at midnight at Mulcahy Field.



This old-fashioned, patriotic celebration is complete with family-oriented events such as the pancake breakfast, downtown parade, picnic and other activities.

When: July 4th, 8am – 6pm...then fireworks at midnight (dependent on burn ban/closure)

Where: Downtown Anchorage at Delany Park Strip

Website: <http://www.anchoragejuly4thcelebration.com/>

Bear Paw Festival

Travel 15 minutes North of Creekwood Inn to Eagle River, AK and take part in the 2015 Bear Paw Festival. Events include Friday's Teddy Bear Picnic, Human Foosball, the 5-K Bear Paw Classic, parade and Slippery Salmon Olympics on Saturday and the I Did a Duck Race on Sunday.



When: traditionally the 2nd week of July

Where: 12001 Business Blvd Suite 108 in Eagle River (Right across the hall from the Chugiak-Eagle River Library)

Website: <http://www.bearpawfestival.org/>

Want more or can't make the festivals season? Here are a few more ongoing summer events:

Anchorage Live After 5 Concert Series

Take in a show while in Anchorage! Venture to Downtown Anchorage any Friday night between 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm and enjoy free music and great food.



When: Any Friday from 5pm-8pm

Website: <http://www.anchoragedowntown.org/upcoming-events/live-after-five/>

Secret Saturdays with Scared Scriptless Improv

This show is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get! Long form Improv, Musical Improv, Blue show, Puppet show, or something else. All we can guarantee is it will be different than our other shows and it will be awesome fun!



When: Every Saturday

Where: Snow Goose Theater: 717 West 3rd Ave in Downtown Anchorage

Website: <http://scaredscriptless.com/>





Food and Drink



When it comes to food and drink, Alaska is known for its seafood, wild game and beer — not too shabby! The following pages is an intro to Anchorage’s vibrant dining and brewery scene, including some must-try foods and must visit restaurants. Reindeer sausage with a fresh IPA, anyone?

Where to Eat Like an Alaskan in Anchorage

Want to immerse yourself in a city that's like no other? Go to Anchorage, Alaska! It's one of the few special places where city life meets wildlife.

One of the best ways to experience Anchorage [is through food!](#) We've hand-picked a few Anchorage eateries that feature authentic Alaskan dishes and atmosphere. Simply pick a meal — breakfast, lunch, or dinner — then create a delicious memory of your trip to our wonderful city.

Breakfast: Gwennie's Old Alaskan Restaurant

This [truly Alaskan restaurant](#) has been an Anchorage landmark for over 30 years. Gwennie's is a first choice for a unique Alaskan breakfast. Large, Alaska-sized portions guarantee you'll leave feeling full and satisfied. Step into Alaskan history and enjoy a meal where time stands still.



Located at 4333 Spenard Rd, Gwennie's is located 3.1 miles or 10 minutes driving distance from Creekwood Inn.



Lunch: Bear Tooth Grill & Theatre

This gem is truly a favorite of Anchorage residents. Not only is it a restaurant, [Bear Tooth](#) is also a theatre with one of the biggest movie screens in Alaska. Enjoy a delicious meal and a refreshing draft beer while watching a movie. Bear Tooth Grill brews its own award winning beer down the street.

Located at 1230 W 27th Ave, Bear Tooth Grill is just a short 1.7 miles or 6 minutes driving distance from Creekwood Inn.

Dinner: Sourdough Mining Company

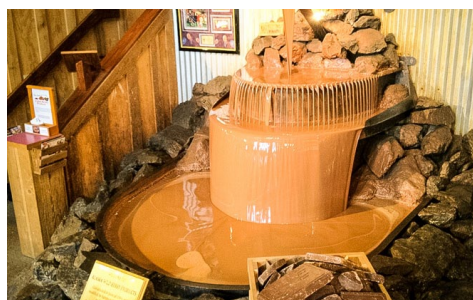
Opened on Mother's Day in 1984, [Sourdough Mining Company](#) is a replica of the old Mill House at Independence Mine. When you walk in the front door, you arrive in a "mining tunnel."

Take a look around! You'll notice the walls and ceiling are lined with rock from Hatcher's Pass. Just like at the mine, you are shielded from the rocks by fencing...just in case of an Avalanche!!!

Enjoy great Alaskan cuisine while watching the Dusty Sourdough show which is performed nightly in Tent City Theatre alongside the restaurant. Located at 5200 Juneau St., Sourdough Mining Company is 2.1 miles or 4 minutes driving distance from Creekwood Inn.



Dessert: Alaska Wildberry Products



Located directly across the parking lot from Sourdough Mining company sits a [chocolate factory](#) with fresh made Alaskan jams and chocolates.

Boasting a large authentic chocolate waterfall in the main entrance this gem is sure to amaze all ages.

Watch via the glass viewing window as skilled chocolatiers prepare a range of scrumptious treats.



Where to Find Excellent Craft Beer in Anchorage

Just like every state in our country, Alaska has its own craft brewing companies. Anchorage in particular has a few that tourists can check out while visiting, namely the [Midnight Sun Brewing Company](#) and the [Anchorage Brewing Company](#).

Midnight Sun Brewing Company

With colorful names of tasty brews such as Arctic Rhino Coffee Porter, Pleasure Town IPA, Kodiak Brown Ale and Sockeye Red, the Midnight Sun Brewing Co. is about as good as it gets for Alaskan beer.



They've got their own restaurant called the Loft (open from 11 am -8 pm) where you can relax over a huge variety of beers and house specialty foods. Servers are helpful when it comes to beer and food pairings. Don't forget to take a growler (64 oz. bottle) filled with your favorite beer when you leave.

Address: 811 Dimond Hook Drive Anchorage, AK 99507

Phone: (907) 344-1179

Website: <http://midnightsunbrewing.com/>

Free brewery tours every Thursday at 6pm (they'll let you sample new beers if you're lucky)

Our beer pick: Sockeye Red IPA

Anchorage Brewing Company

This is a fairly new brewery founded by former Midnight Sun brewer Gabe Fletcher. According to their website, Gabe and his crew "specialize in barrel fermentation with brettanomyces and souring cultures." Brettanomyces is a "wild yeast" which produces uniquely flavored (and often sour) beers.

The beer names are just as catchy: Galaxy White IPA, Bitter Monk Belgian Style Double IPA, Love Buzz Saison, The Tide and its Takers Triple and Rony Brew Saison.

Address: 148 W 91st Street Anchorage, AK 99515

Phone: (907) 360-5104

Hours: 2-8 Wed.-Sun.

Website: <http://anchoragebrewingcompany.com>

Our beer pick: Galaxy White IPA



Other Anchorage Breweries

If by chance you do not have time to visit all the breweries, do not fret. Their beers can be found all over the city at various restaurants, bars and grills, and pubs. Have fun tasting the great beers the city has to offer. Cheers!

Links to other brewing companies in Anchorage:

- [King Street Brewery](#)
- [Resolution Brewing Company](#)
- [Sleeping Lady Brewing Company](#)
- [Broken Tooth Brewing](#)

Links to other brewing companies in Alaska:

- [Hoodoo Brewing Company](#) – Fairbanks, AK
- [Alaskan Brewing Company](#) – Juneau, AK



4 Tasty Foods You Must Try In Anchorage (and Where to Find Them)

Anchorage may not be known as the ultimate foodie town, but you need to trust that we have our [share of tasty treasures here](#). There's actually plenty to choose from, too, so no excuse if you're a picky eater!

Reindeer Sausage

Go to [Snow City Café](#) for reindeer sausage, especially if it's breakfast time. You can find it in the "Tundra Scramble" or as a side-dish. You can also find king crab and smoked salmon cakes, as well as vegetarian-friendly options.

Snow City has been voted "Best Breakfast Place" in Anchorage by the Anchorage Press since 2003, which means the setting, service, and the food are all excellent. TIP: this place is popular so reservations for breakfast is a MUST!!



Oysters

Ready to put some oysters to the test? We highly recommend the [Bubbly Mermaid Oyster Bar](#) located in downtown Anchorage.

Sure, it's a little small in there, but it's cozy just the same — and filled oyster (both raw and baked) and champagne lovers! This is a

great little place to meet people, too.

Seafood ANYTHING!!!

May all your cravings of Alaskan seafood be satisfied at [Kincaid Grill and Wine Bar](#). This "Alaska Regional Cuisine" hotspot offers Alaska-harvested salmon, scallops, prawns, halibut, king crab, clams...you name it.



Alaskan-style Pizza

For [literally the best pizza in Alaska](#), you need to go to the [Moose's Tooth Pub and Pizzeria](#).

We're really fond of the Shrimp Fiesta pizza.



And let's not forget, the Moose's Tooth brews their own [Alaskan beer](#)...so you simple CAN'T go wrong!

There are many other great eateries in the city. Ask around any local where the best of ANYTHING is served and you'll get answers just as eclectic as the people who call Alaska home.

To discover more unique Alaska foods and the restaurants that serve them, go to [TripAdvisor](#). They'll help match your taste buds.





Alaskan Culture



Alaska is a home to a number of distinct cultures. The Alaska Natives have called The Great Land their home for thousands of years, and continue to practice traditional hunting, fishing and spirituality. The modern mainstream culture of Alaska is just as interesting, with its own lingo and lifestyle quirks. Read on and learn more about the people of this amazing place.

The 10 Best Things About Living in Alaska

Poll any resident of the great state of Alaska and they'll tell you they either love or hate living here...or both! But if you ask them to name the top 10 best things ever about living in Alaska, you might hear this:

It's a conscious lifestyle



Nobody just ends up in Alaska — it's a choice to live here. All Alaskans have their unique own story.

Constant summer sunshine



During the short summer season of mid-May through August is when everyone gets out and explores the great AK wilderness. It's total bliss!

A hiker's fantasy



Pick almost any Alaska city or town on a map and you'll find that every single one is surrounded by beautiful views and extensive trail systems.

Glacier water!



Drive less than 30 minutes from an Alaska city and you can literally drink ice cold filtered water from a glacier.

The North Pole

If you love Christmas, you'll be excited to know Santa's home base is here! The Santa Claus House in North Pole, AK offers a [special experience](#) for the kid at heart.

Seafood



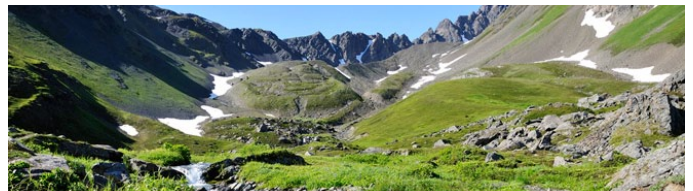
Yes, Alaska has the freshest and most abundant selection of delicious, healthy seafood. The best part? You can catch your own dinner, drive home and cook it — all in the same day.

Northern Lights



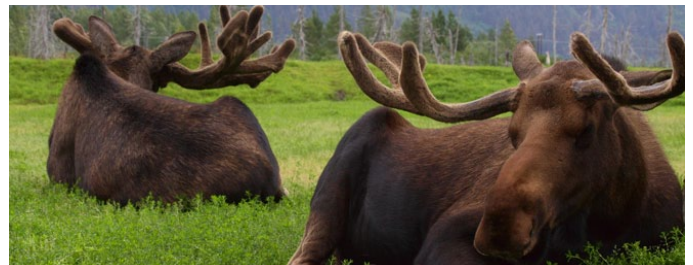
The best way to redeem a freezing winter day (and night) is to walk outside in the chilly air and gaze up at the stunning display of [Northern Lights](#).

Clean, fresh, crisp air



Not much more to say about that!

Wildlife



Local wildlife roaming around makes driving around town really exciting. Just be sure to keep your distance!

Friendly people



Alaska is teeming with upbeat, pleasant people who are happy to talk to you and help whenever you need it.



The Outsider's Guide to Alaskan Lingo

If you're ever planning to visit Alaska, it will be worth your while to read through this post and learn some of the "Slang of the Last Frontier." These are all words and vernacular Alaskans use on a daily basis, which will definitely help when you're chatting it up with the locals.

Alaska Marine Highway – Alaska's statewide ferry system, connecting remote villages throughout the inside passage as well as along the Aleutian Islands.

ALCAN – Short for the Alaska / Canada Highway, this long highway runs through Canada and connects Alaska with the Lower 48.

Alpenglow – A pink glow splashed upon the mountain peaks at sunset.

Breakup – The process by which all snow and ice finally melts away. This lasts for about 2-3 weeks. For Alaskans, it means the end of winter and the beginning of the summer season.

The Bush – Generally refers to places in Alaska which are not accessible by the road system. The Bush encompasses a large portion of the state.

Cabin Fever – a state characterized by anxiety, restlessness, and boredom which arises from a prolonged stay in indoors during the winter months.

Cheechako – This is a term for a newcomer to Alaska.

Combat Fishing – Hundreds of anglers lining the banks of a river, shoulder to shoulder, casting for fish. The tricky part is hooking a salmon and not fishermen.

Denali – tallest peak in North America (massive 20,320-foot); Koyukon Athabascan word means the "High One"

Ditch Diver – Someone who owns a 4-wheel-drive vehicle and learns the hard way by driving too fast on ice and snow.

Floatplane – Planes with floats in place of wheels for water landings. For some examples visit Anchorage's Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

Inside Passage – Maze of islands and protected waterways along the Southeast Panhandle. Longest sheltered waterway in the world, popular cruise route.

Lower 48 – The contiguous United States, excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

Mudflats – Full of glacial silt these beach-like tidal zones are found along the coast of Anchorage. Do not walk on them; there's the possibility of getting stuck in the mud or caught by the incoming tide.

Mukluk – An Alaskan Native boot made of seal or other animal skin, with fur lining the inside or outside of the boot. Usually knee high in length.

Mushing – Alaska's state sport. Mushers drive a sled pulled by a team of energetic dogs. Mushing can be experienced in summer as well as winter.

Permafrost – Ground that stays frozen all year round and causes the bumps in the Alaska road system.

Run – Refers to the time when fish swim back up the rivers to spawn. During the run is when they are harvested.

Sleeping Lady – The local name for Mount Susitna and a well-told Alaska legend of a silhouette of a woman stretched out and sleeping on her back. Visible from Anchorage.

Snowbird – A snowbird is an individual who spends summers in Alaska and migrates south for winter.

Sourdough – A long-time Alaskan. derived from the yeasty starter many early pioneers carried with them.

Snowmachine – Alaska word for snowmobiles. Snowmachines are a popular way to explore the backcountry in winter, and are an important form of transportation in the Bush.

Subsistence – The practice of harvesting natural resources for food, shelter, cultural or other personal needs.

Termination dust – The first snowfall found on mountaintops each year, the sign that winter is on its way.



A Brief Intro to Alaska Native Art

For Alaska’s indigenous people — who lived off the sea and land — art was not originally decorative but rather a symbol of spiritual and metaphysical activity, a reference to living in harmony with nature.

It was not until the 17th century – when Europeans first made contact with the people of coastal Alaska — that these non-utilitarian art objects were traded in exchange for tools, cloth, food and more. These objects became useful items for trade, such as:

- harpoon pikes carved from ivory tusks
- clothing woven from grass
- outerwear sewn from the membranes in the innards of seals
- animal skins used for warm overcoats



Items increased in value as they became more ornate and decorative, often ending up as souvenirs for whalers and explorers.

Ceremonial art objects



Aside from “useful” art objects, Alaskans also sold and traded items such as dance fans, masks and artifacts.

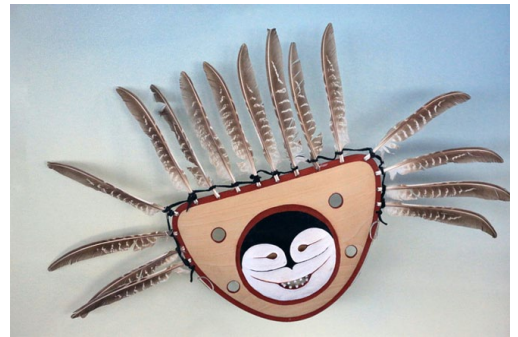
For example, scrimshaw is essentially elaborate aesthetic carving done in tusk, bone or ivory, depicting scenes of hunting and foraging. Yupik masks are used to bring the person wearing it luck and good fortune in hunts. They also have ceremonial purposes — bringing the hunter, animals and spirits together into one being.

Inupiat sculptures are not made for decoration, but as “good luck amulets” for hunting, or sometimes children’s toys. Totem poles reflect Tlingit oral history (versus written), with carved animal on the pole representing a family crests or specific story of importance.

One interesting practice of North American indigenous people is that no part of an animal hunted, fished or trapped should be wasted. Because of this, one might see boots made of bearded seal skin for soles, salmon skin for the outer layer, and straps of deerskin or caribou dyed with berries.

Alaska Native art today

Because Alaskan art is so distant from prestigious art markets, it was largely unknown and unseen outside the state of Alaska until the internet. Nowadays the tradition and art forms have evolved through westernization. The distinction between “traditional” and “contemporary” art isn’t always so clear.



Fortunately, there are now non-profit organizations dedicated to supporting Native artists and their traditional subsistence lifestyles.



The Outsider's Guide to Alaska's Native Youth Olympics

The Native Youth Olympics, or NYO Games, are games rooted in Alaska Native history in which people tested their physical and mental strength, concentration and stamina. The Games have been active since 1972, and take place once a year in the Anchorage area in February (youth division) and April (senior division).

The ten events that make up the Native Youth Olympics:

- **Kneel Jump:** jump up and forward from a kneeling position, land both feet simultaneously and remain in that position without moving and or otherwise touching the floor
- **Wrist Carry:** suspend entire body from a pole using just one wrist while two people carry the pole
- **Alaskan High Kick:** sit on the floor balanced on one foot while holding other foot, then thrust balancing foot straight up to kick a suspended ball, then land on the kicking foot while keeping balance
- **Eskimo Stick Pull:** two opponents sit facing each other gripping a stick, winner pulls up opponent or causes them to lose balance
- **Scissor Broad Jump:** make four continuous hops/steps without losing balance
- **One-Hand Reach:** balancing body weight on palm or knuckles of one hand, then touch a suspended ball with free hand, then place their free hand on the floor
- **Two-Foot High Kick:** jumping with both feet simultaneously and kick a suspended ball, then land back on both feet
- **Indian Stick Pull:** with feet planted on marked positions, and arms held down, two opponents must attempt to pull a tapered and greased wooden dowel from the other's hand
- **One-Foot High Kick:** take a standing or running start and jump with both feet, kick a suspended ball with one foot, then land on the kicking foot
- **Seal Hop:** from a push-up position, contestants must hop — seal-like — across the floor on their hands and toes while maintaining the push-up position



Learn more about each event at the [NYO Games Alaska website](#).



The NYO Games are rooted in traditions of survival and hunting in the harsh Alaskan terrain and climate, most notably in the winter. They were played to keep the hunters sharp and in top form. The Eskimo stick pull, for instance, is based on the Native hunter exercise of pulling seals out of the water.

A testament to cultural heritage and future generations

The main goal of the NYO Games is to catalyze values of sportsmanship, leadership and respect to Alaska's youth... and have fun, of course. The competition is open to all grade school students regardless of ethnicity.

The NYO Games are hosted by the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, a nonprofit social service agency. Their mission is to provide culturally appropriate services for Alaska Native people to promote self-determination through individual, family and community development. The NYO honors Alaska's rich Native heritage and ensures Native Alaskans that the traditions of their forefathers will not be forgotten.





Fall and Winter



If you've ever been to Alaska in the summer, then you might agree it's pretty close to heaven on Earth. Want to know a secret? Fall and winter isn't so bad, either — and to really enjoy it, you just need to be willing to dress warm, get outside and move around. If you're ever in Anchorage in fall and winter and need a clean and cozy place to stay, try [Creekwood Inn's extended stay and long-term rentals](#). We offer fully furnished suites and studios at very reasonable rates from October 1 - May 31.

8 Ways to Thoroughly Enjoy Anchorage When It's Not Summer

Anchorage is abundant with adventure, culture and entertainment all year long. Check out these 8 awesome activities to keep your happy in the non-summer months:

1. Snowshoeing

The [Eagle River Nature Center](#) is located miles about 25 miles from Anchorage or about a 25 minute drive. You can rent a pair of snowshoes and immerse yourself in the gorgeous scenery of Eagle River Valley. Rentals are only \$10/day, available Friday thru Sunday between 10am – 5pm only.



2. Skiing and Snowboarding

[Hilltop Ski Area](#) has been operating for 33 years in Anchorage, Alaska. It offers courses for skiers and snowboarders. The perfect option for skiers who want to stay within Anchorage.

[Alyeska Resort](#) boasts an average annual snowfall of 650 inches(!) and 2,500 vertical feet of diverse terrain over 1,610 skiable acres — a dream come true for skiers, snowboarders and winter lovers anywhere. You can find Alyeska just 40 minutes south of Creekwood Inn in Girdwood, Alaska.

3. Walking, Hiking or Cross-Country Skiing



Picture, if you will, 11+ miles of paved trails, complete with stunning Alaskan views, set aside for walkers, cyclists and cross-country skiers. Now put that scene against the dramatic Cook Inlet coastline and you have the [Tony Knowles Coastal Trail](#).

Whether you take a short or long trek, you're guaranteed to be surrounded by Alaska's beauty. The Chester Creek Trail System connects with the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail at Westchester Lagoon and runs parallel to Creekwood Inn.

4. Ice Skating

If you're an avid ice skater with your own skates, head down to Westchester Lagoon when it's frozen solid. It's an idyllic place for social skating, with families and friends hunkered around warming barrels between skating sessions.

Occasional weekend events at Westchester offer a bonus of live music and toasty drinks. Westchester Lagoon is a mere 7 minute drive from Creekwood Inn. Pay attention to the warning signs along the lagoon — they will warn you of thin spots in the ice!



[Dimond Center Ice Chalet](#) is an indoor ice rink is located in the Dimond Mall, just 15 minutes from Creekwood Inn.

5. Disc Golf

If you enjoy Frisbee, targets and scorekeeping, you just might fall in love with what the locals call Frolf (or "Disc Golf" as the pros call it). This exciting outdoor game will keep you and the family entertained and active for hours while surrounded by the beautiful mountain scenery of Anchorage. [Anchorage has 6 courses to choose from.](#)

6. Eklutna Village

[Historic Eklutna Village](#) is a short 24-mile drive north of Anchorage where you can learn about the Eklutna people of Alaska. Explore the cemetery (including spirit houses) and Russian Orthodox Church.



7. Anchorage Museum

The [Anchorage Museum](#) brings the best of Alaska to the world and the best of the world to Alaska. Through a combination of art, history and science the Museum creates a rich understanding of the human experience and offers something for everyone.



8. Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

[AK Center for the Performing Arts](#) has truly elevated the level of performance and enriched life in Alaska. People from all walks of life enjoy first-rate performances of comedy and tragedy, dance and vocals, symphony and [opera](#), Broadway and local talent, Alaskan artists and renowned actors.



A Brief Intro to Alaska's Top Winter Sports

Watch out, winter is coming to Alaska! The season may be not filled with midnight sunshine or [epic fishing](#), but it's definitely just as fun as summertime.

We've put together a short list of top activities to keep you busy on a cold winter day (or [night](#)), with one caveat: snow needs to be on the ground!



Snowboarding / Skiing

Skiing and snowboarding in Alaska falls into two categories: ski resorts or backcountry. There are only a handful of ski resorts in the Anchorage area, but select parts of AK (such as [Juneau](#) and [Valdez](#)) offer world-class backcountry skiing.

For resorts, there are 3 locations near Anchorage to snowboard or ski: [Hilltop Ski Area](#), [Alpenglow at Arctic Valley](#) & [Alyeska Ski Resort](#) in Girdwood, about 26 miles south of town.

All three ski areas offer a lot of fun whether you're a beginner or a pro. Alyeska is the definite high end of the bunch — it's a sprawling magical alpine resort nestled at base of majestic Mt. Alyeska. Hilltop is your best bet if you want to stay in Anchorage.



Snowshoeing

Many summer hikers become winter snowshoers in Alaska. Many of the trails are still accessible, sometimes even more so with snow cover rather than rocks and bramble.

The best place to snowshoe near Anchorage is at the Eagle River Nature Center, where you can [rent a pair of snowshoes](#) and take off into the quiet, snowy woods.

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling (or snow machining) is for, shall we say, Type-A adventurous folks who really want to explore the Alaskan winter wilderness. Snow machines can get you off the beaten path by powering over bulky snowbanks which would be otherwise inaccessible by foot.

Hatcher's Pass to the north is a popular 300,000 acre nature preserve to snowmobile, cross-country ski and snowshoe. Girdwood to the south also has a great areas, as well as a tour outfit called [Glacier City Snowmobile Tours](#).



Cross Country Skiing



[Nordic skiing](#) (aka cross-country) might be the most popular snow sport among Anchorage residents simply because it's so accessible throughout the city. Many of the running/biking trails that weave through Anchorage in the summer become ski trails in the winter.

The hotspot for cross country skiing is [Kincaid Park](#) on the far west end of the city. Here's you'll find many 1,400 acres of open park and miles of trails, not to mention breathtaking natural scenery and even wildlife.

As with any snow sport, always be aware of avalanche danger.



Here's Everything You Want to Know About Iditarod and Fur Rondy

Get excited for the [Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Celebration](#) & [Iditarod sled dog race](#) with these fun facts about these historic events.

Iditarod Fun Facts

- The Last Great Race on Earth begins on near March 7
- Iditarod translates to "clear water" via the Shageluk Indians, who named the Iditarod River
- The first Iditarod race was on March 3, 1973
- An average team contains 16 dogs, which means over 1,000 dogs leave Anchorage for Nome
- Iditarod is a city, a river, a trail and a race
- Only Siberian husky and Alaskan malamute dog breeds are allowed to race in the Iditarod
- The last team to finish the Iditarod wins the "Red Lantern Award." Longest finish was 32.5 days
- Mushers sleep with their dog team outside during the race
- Sled dogs require 10-12,000 calories a day
- Sled dog standard commands include:
 - Hike! (Let's go! Get moving!)
 - Haw! (Turn left!)
 - Gee! (Turn right)
 - On by! (Pass another team!)
 - Easy! (Slow down!)
 - Whoa! (Stop!)



Website: <http://iditarod.com/>



Fur Rendezvous History and Info

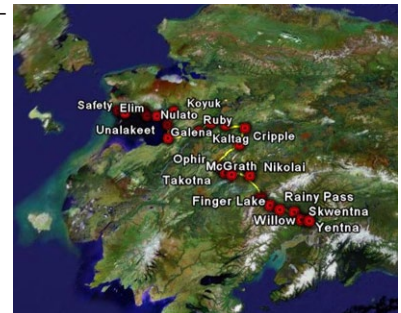
The 2015 Fur Rendezvous begins near the last day of February and ends after the first week of March.

The Fur Rendezvous —aka Fur Rondy or "Rondy" — is an Anchorage winter festival tradition dating back to the mid-1930's. Back then, Anchorage was a small town of about 3,000 people in the area between the Park Strip and Ship Creek.

Without modern comforts and conveniences, (or even an Iditarod!), winters were often defined by tough survival rituals of stoking fires and shoveling snow. To ease the harshness, Anchorage citizen and Fur Rondy founder Vern Johnson decided to start a 3-day winter festival to coincide with the time that miners and trappers came to town with their harvests.

Here are a few popular events scheduled during the Fur Rondy Festival:

- Frostbite Footrace & Costume Fun Run: Dress up and hit the streets for a Saturday morning family event!
- Miners & Trappers Ball: Wear an authentic costume, and if you're a man — sport your best beard to compete in the Mr. Fur Face Beard and Moustache Contest.
- Rondy Grand Parade: Witness Rondy royalty, Rondy Bear, nifty cars, roller girls and much more in this festival tradition.
- Running of the Reindeer: A much mellow version of Pamplona's Running of the Bulls pits racers against reindeer.



Website: <http://furrondy.net>





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