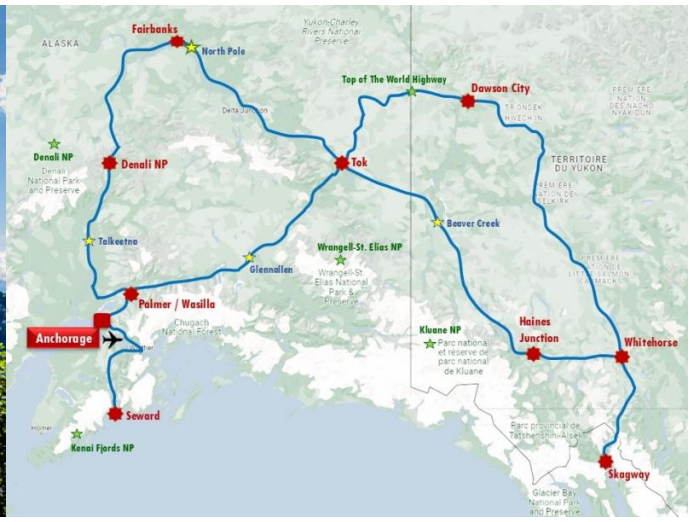
Alaska & Yukon, the Great 8





The Far North, the Roof of the World... **Alaska** is the land of extremes, the country of superlatives! Follow in the footsteps of great explorers, **bears** and the **northern lights**. From north to south, from **Alaska** to neighboring **Yukon** in **Canadian** territory, you are headed for little-known lands at the limits of human endurance. Breathtaking **landscapes** , unique **wildlife**, traces of the **gold rush**, **Native culture**... On the road to the Great White North. Departures from **Anchorage** or **Whitehorse**.



Day 1

Arrival at Anchorage Airport. Pick up your rental car and drive to your hotel.

Even if it is not exceptional, Anchorage has some great spots.

It is pleasant to stroll along the waterfront at the mouth of Knik Arm.

Overnight in Anchorage.



Day 2

Head north on superb scenic roads that run along the borders of Denali State Park.

The little brother of the “great” Denali has the advantage of offering beautiful views while being less crowded than Denali National Park.

The highest peaks of the Alaska Range will accompany you…

Denali National Park is one of the largest wilderness areas in the world. For a first introduction to this unique universe, stop at the Visitor Center at the park entrance. You will find information and ranger advice.

Nearby you will also find the train station, a restaurant and a General Store, accessible by a free shuttle.

Overnight near the park.



Day 3

Enjoy a wonderful bus ride inside the national park, lasting about 6 to 8 hours.

You can get on and off the bus at your own pace; they run roughly every 30 minutes… Snack included. Several routes are offered by the rangers.

Leave early as it can be busy. The driver will stop to let you off to photograph a moose (an adult male can weigh up to nearly 700 kg). Be careful: the animal is impressive and it is best to avoid provoking a charge!

Denali is also the kingdom of the grizzly bear. Around 300 live in the park (especially around Sable Pass).

Near Polychrome Pass you may spot wolves. Near Highway Pass, you may see caribou. Feel free to move away from the road a little, but read the safety guidelines beforehand…

Overnight near the park entrance.



Day 4

Head north to Fairbanks. Mountain and forest landscapes will accompany your drive.

You will pass through the communities of Healy, Nenana and Ester, a former mining town turned into a Fairbanks bedroom community.

Fairbanks (about 35,000 inhabitants) is known for its activities and for the northern lights, visible in winter.

Closely linked to the era of the gold rush—whose scars you can still see by visiting impressive dredges (such as Gold Dredge No. 8)—the downtown area is pleasant and lively.

Stroll through Pioneer Park, hop on a paddle-wheeler for a short narrated cruise on the Chena and the Tanana. The Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge is home to many bird species.

Overnight in Fairbanks.



Day 5

Drive a few miles north of town to Gold Dredge No. 8 to admire the impressive excavators. Don’t get your hopes up—you won’t be coming back with suitcases full of gold…

On the way, stop at Chena Hot Springs, home to one of the country’s best ice museums: the Aurora Ice Museum. Everything is made of ice, even the bar!

Head to the small town of North Pole, a few miles from Fairbanks. It’s Christmas ahead of time and you’ll find plenty of themed items. Santa arrives at 10 a.m… kitsch or not, we’ll let you decide.

The route follows the meanders of the Tanana River.

Suggested lunch stop in Delta Junction. After that, there’s nothing until Tok!

Overnight in Tok.



Day 6

Today’s program: the famous Top of the World Highway (or Yukon Hwy 9 on the Canadian side), linking Alaska to Dawson City over about 100 km.

Some sections on the Yukon side are unpaved—take your time on this unique road. It reveals stunning scenery, especially at the highest point. This is the region that was once the epicentre of the gold rush.

Board a ferry to cross the Yukon River before arriving in Dawson City.

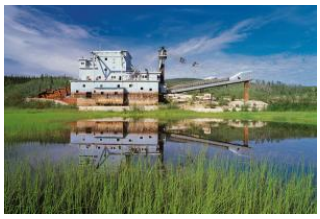
Welcome to the world of the Klondike gold fever at the end of the 19th century. At that time Dawson had up to 40,000 inhabitants, compared with just over a thousand today.

The town feels like a western set: dirt streets, wooden sidewalks, colourful houses, a general store and even a saloon!

Overnight in Dawson City.

Day 7

Free day in Dawson City. Travel back in time and relive the sulphurous atmosphere of the gold rush… At the peak of industrial mining, about a



dozen dredges scraped the beds of the Yukon River, the Klondike River and Bonanza Creek.

Built in 1912 and operating until 1959, Dredge No. 4 of the Canadian Klondike Mining Company is a National Historic Site that you can visit.

Dawson also hosted a number of activities that were illegal at the time—gambling and prostitution, of course. Downtown, the Diamond Tooth Gertie's cabaret recalls this much more frivolous side of the gold rush.

Three evenings a week in summer, an actress portrays Gertrude “Gertie” Lovejoy, a Klondike courtesan nicknamed “Diamond Tooth” after the diamond she set between her teeth to charm gold prospectors. Guaranteed showtime in what is said to be Canada’s oldest casino!

Overnight in Dawson City.



Day 8

Leave early today, as the road to Whitehorse is long.

Isolated on the Canadian Highway, far from everything, Whitehorse is a modest little capital in the heart of extraordinary nature. Like Dawson City, it owes its fame to the Klondike gold rush.

Take the historic tramway along the Yukon River. Along the same Yukon River, visit the SS Klondike National Historic Site: the last sternwheeler in Canada.

History lovers can visit the MacBride Museum of Yukon History. Nearby, check out the Copperbelt Railway & Mining Museum, or drive up to Long Lake for great views over the city. For a revitalising experience, head to Takhini Hot Springs for an outdoor soak.

In the evening, consider a cruise on the Yukon River.

Overnight in Whitehorse.



Day 9

A spectacular day… First Emerald Lake with its emerald-green waters, then the Carcross Desert, large sand dunes where you can enjoy sandboarding, hiking or 4x4 rides.

The highlight is White Pass at 873 m. Remember that hundreds of pioneers from Skagway climbed it hoping to reach the Klondike Eldorado. Many did not survive.

In Skagway, stroll along Broadway Street in the historic district.

Optional: excursion aboard the White Pass & Yukon Route Railway up to White Pass — a magnificent ride!

Overnight in Skagway.

Note: we suggest adding a second night in Skagway to take a cruise or the train excursion to White Pass (contact us).



Day 10

The road itinerary goes back up toward Whitehorse via White Pass, before turning toward Haines Junction.

The nicest option is to board the ferry linking Skagway to Haines. The crossing takes about 45 minutes and offers beautiful views. However, you have to hope that the Alaska Marine Highway System will not decide to change or cancel the crossing, which happens from time to time — or that a strike is not called by staff… Contact us.

Either way, you will approach the magnificent Kluane National Park in the Yukon. It is a land of high, rugged mountains with immense icefields and lush valleys rich in wildlife and flora. The park is home to Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak (5,959 m). Approaching does not mean crossing, as Kluane is not accessible by road, but the views from the highway are sublime. Scenic flights are possible from Haines Junction.

Overnight in Haines Junction.



Day 11

A long and beautiful driving day is on today's agenda.

Drive along the shores of Lake Kluane, the longest lake in the Yukon, then cross back into the United States toward the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge.

This is one of the largest protected wildlife areas in the United States, with forests, wetlands, tundra, lakes, mountains and glacial rivers flowing down from the Alaska Range.

It is also a migration and breeding area for many birds.

An observation platform is located along the Alaska Highway, with an information office open in summer. Besides birds, the refuge is home to bears, wolves, Dall sheep and moose. Return to Tok for the evening.

Overnight in Tok.



Day 12

Head to Glennallen through mountains and forests.

The Glenn Highway leads you to Palmer, where you can visit the Palmer Musk Ox Farm, home to the only domesticated musk oxen on the planet.

Native peoples use their wool to make traditional clothing (which you can of course purchase).

Drive up to Hatcher Pass in the heart of the Talkeetna Mountains. Known for cross-country skiing, the area also features Independence Mine, a historic gold mine active in the early 20th century.

The Matanuska-Susitna Valley, nicknamed “Mat-Su”, covers nearly 60,000 km² and shelters abundant wildlife: moose, black and brown bears, falcons, caribou… It is Alaska’s breadbasket.

Overnight in Palmer or Wasilla.



Day 13

Drive to Seward, south of Anchorage, on the Kenai Peninsula. En route, enjoy the scenic Turnagain Arm road, the gateway to the Portage and Exit glaciers.

As you reach Turnagain Pass, you enter the Chugach National Forest. Arrival in Seward on the bay. Seward was once Alaska’s largest port town.

Besides the history museum, you can rent kayaks or take a boat tour to spot whales. Another highlight is the Alaska SeaLife Center, a research centre dedicated to protecting threatened species and rehabilitating injured or stranded birds and marine mammals.

Overnight in Seward.

Note: we suggest adding a second night in Seward to enjoy the area (especially Kenai Fjords National Park). Cruise possible. Contact us.



Day 14

Before driving back north to Anchorage, the final stop of your trip, take time to stroll around Seward or take an excursion, for example in Kenai Fjords National Park. Its fjords and glaciers are truly spectacular — don’t

hesitate!

The park is also home to an impressive colony of porpoises, sea otters, sea lions, orcas, humpback whales, puffins, bald eagles, among many other species…

You can also take the ferry to Kodiak or Prince William Sound, or join a whale-watching cruise, unless you feel like going fishing…

Return to Anchorage for your last evening in Alaska.

Overnight in Anchorage.



Day 15

Drive to the airport, return your rental vehicle and board your flight back to Europe.

This fly & drive trip in Alaska and the Yukon can be combined with a cruise, or a stay to observe the grizzlies of Katmai National Park, Lake Clark or Kodiak, for example…

Contact us for any extension request or combined stay.

Accommodation