

Midnight Sun Road Rally (MSR²)



Parkwest just can't get enough of Alaska! Together with many adventurous pilots over the years, we've enjoyed the Last Frontier by airplane, Alaska Railroad, dogsled, riverboat, snow coach, and more. This time we've put together a road rally: rent the vehicle of your choice in Anchorage, and join in for two weeks of fun under the Midnight Sun. You'll see mountains, glaciers, raging rivers, endless beauty, continuous daylight and, hopefully, some exciting wildlife here and there. The driving is easy, and you will get a sense of this vast and remote land containing few cities and just a handful of roadways. The group will be in contact via two-way radios to share the sights along the way. No need for a super-duper SUV; any decent-sized passenger car can make this journey. Part of the trip requires one-way ferry travel from Whittier to Valdez via the Alaska Marine Highway System. Participants will need to advance-book once your vehicle is selected and its dimensions are known. (Please note this itinerary was constructed using historical ferry schedule data; should anything change for 2018, we will make the trip to Valdez by road.)

June 1-13, 2018

Highlights:

- **Tour Length:** 12 nights
- **Trip Start:** Anchorage, AK
- **Driving Distance:** approx. 1200 sm
- **Tour Highlights:**
 - ✚ Girdwood and Alyeska Mountain
 - ✚ Scenic drive around Turnagain Arm to Hope on the Kenai Peninsula
 - ✚ Ferry trip across Prince William Sound
 - ✚ 18,000' Peaks in America's largest National Park: Wrangell-St. Elias
 - ✚ The infamous McCarthy Road
 - ✚ Historic McCarthy and Kennicott
 - ✚ Various Fairbanks activities
 - ✚ *Kantishna Experience* tour of Denali
 - ✚ Final farewell in quaint Talkeetna
 - ✚ Free days at Valdez and Kennicott to enjoy at your leisure
 - ✚ Variety of uniquely Alaskan lodging
 - ✚ All vehicles provided with two-way radios and *Milepost*® guidebooks
 - ✚ Travel via Seward, Alyeska, Hope, Richardson, Edgerton and Parks Highways, plus Talkeetna Spur Road

Itinerary

Friday 6/1

Arrive at the Carriage House in Girdwood by check-in time at 4:00 p.m. This is approximately 45 minutes driving from the Anchorage Ted Stevens International Airport. Enjoy scenic tram ride up Alyeska Mountain for views and Welcome Dinner at Seven Glaciers Restaurant. D

Saturday 6/2

We'll have a morning tour briefing after breakfast at the hotel, followed by a scenic "test drive" around the Turnagain Arm to the village of Hope, where we'll have lunch and explore this mining town dating to the 1890's. B/L

Sunday 6/3

After breakfast we will set out for Whittier and our ferry ride via the Alaska Marine Highway across Prince William. It's a short 28-mile drive to Whittier, but involves coordinated schedules and lane-sharing with the Alaska Railroad through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel. There will be time to explore Whittier before loading our vehicles and ourselves onto the ferry bound for Valdez. B

Monday 6/4

Breakfast included at hotel. Free day to explore the Valdez area by foot, kayak, car, fishing boat, etc. B/D

continued...

FEATURED HOTELS:

CARRIAGE HOUSE INN, GIRDWOOD
BEST WESTERN VALDEZ HARBOR INN, VALDEZ
KENNICOTT GLACIER LODGE, KENNICOTT
SPRINGHILL SUITES BY MARRIOTT, FAIRBANKS
CROW'S NEST CABINS, DENALI
SWISS ALASKA INN, TALKEETNA



MSR² Itinerary – cont.

Tuesday 6/5

Today we leave the sea behind and head for the mountains of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It's about 4 hours by car, broken up by a lunch stop in the village of Chitina, the epicenter of dip-net salmon fishing along the Copper River. After lunch we'll continue on to the end of the road in McCarthy. There will be time to explore this bustling village (population 51) before heading to Kennicott for two nights inside Wrangell-St. Elias National Park at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge. All meals provided by the lodge. B/L/D

Wednesday 6/6

Free day to enjoy the surroundings. Options include glacier walks, hiking, river rafting, National Park Service programs, and tours through the historic and nearly-dilapidated mining structures dating back to Kennicott's copper heyday at the turn of the last century. B/L/D

Thursday, 6/7

We'll be in the first shuttle (after breakfast, of course!) to our vehicles back in McCarthy to start our long day's drive to Fairbanks. The lodge will have packed us a picnic lunch to take along, so we'll make stops at our leisure for photos, wildlife, bathroom breaks and fuel. Arrive Fairbanks and check into SpringHill Suites, in the historic center of the Golden Heart City. B/L

Friday 6/8

We will set out mid-morning for University of Alaska - Fairbanks where we will tour the "GI" or Geophysical Institute, where all sorts of cool science is studied, plus the Museum of the North, where you will learn more about the area's history and culture. Free time in the afternoon, then we will get back together for our evening at Pioneer Park for some walking history, dinner at the Salmon Bake, then on to the Palace Theatre for the Golden Heart Review, a fun musical show about life in the Alaskan Frontier. B/D

Saturday 6/9

Following breakfast, we'll head down to Discovery Landing for our 3-hour tour on the Riverboat Discovery, a sternwheeler designed to navigate the Chena River and showcase Fairbanks history. You'll see a bush pilot demonstration, sled dog kennels, a replica of a Native Alaska village, and more. There will be free time to explore the many museums, shops and other Fairbanks hotspots before re-grouping for a catered dinner. B/D

Sunday 6/10

This morning we will turn south, beginning our slow return towards Anchorage, with two nights at the Number 1 destination statewide: Denali National Park. It's just a couple hours down the road from Fairbanks, but we'll include a stop or two along the way. Lunch will be at the 49th State Brewing Company where, in addition to enjoying fine food and brew, one can visit the movie replica of Fairbanks Bus 142, used by Hollywood when filming "Into the Wild." Check in to the cabins at the Raven's Roost, and enjoy free time to wander the shops outside the Park, re-stock provisions, grab a bite for dinner, etc. B/L

Monday 6/11

Today we'll leave the driving to the professionals and board our bus for the *Kantishna Experience* tour, an all-day adventure going the full distance of the 92-mile road into Denali National Park. Passenger cars are not allowed beyond Mile 15, so the only way to get into the heart of the Park is by a bumpy hiker bus or the comfortable, narrated tour bus that you'll be enjoying. There are several stops along the way and endless opportunities to see wildlife. Lunch and snacks included. L

Tuesday 6/12

We'll make a leisurely drive down the Parks Highway to the Talkeetna Spur Road, and the 14-mile detour that takes us to the community of Talkeetna, dubbed "A Quaint Little Drinking Village With a Climbing Problem." We'll check into the Swiss Alaska Lodge, and have time to explore the various shops and visitor sites around town. Tonight will be our Farewell Dinner, and we'll relive all the fun and adventure we've had along the way. D

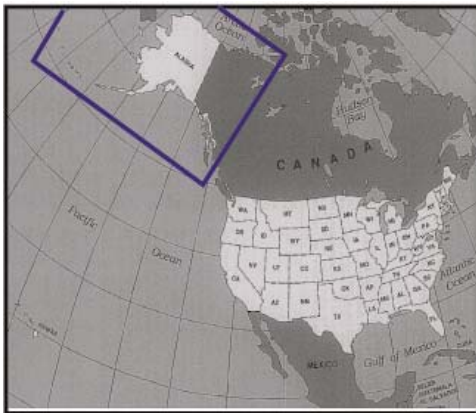
Wednesday 6/13

Breakfast and departures at your leisure. Guides will be returning to Anchorage for airline departures later in the day.

**Note: While much of this itinerary has been confirmed, it should be considered subject to change.*



Tour Map:



Tour Details:

Route	Distance (miles)	ETE (hours)	Comments
Anchorage - Girdwood	40	¾	Destination: Carriage House, 388 Cow Creek Road, Girdwood, AK
Girdwood – Hope - Girdwood	112	2½	Scenic drive to Kenai Peninsula
Girdwood - Whittier	28	1	Requires coordinated passage thru tunnel and toll
Whittier – Valdez Car Ferry	90	6	Alternate would be traveling by road, approx. 260 miles
Valdez - McCarthy	179	4	Last 58 miles on well-graded gravel road
McCarthy - Fairbanks	372	8	Longest day
Fairbanks – Denali Area	125	2	Stops in Nenana and Healy
<i>Denali NP Bus Tour</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>All Day</i>	<i>Kantishna Experience Tour</i>
Denali – Talkeetna	153	2½	Weather permitting, numerous Denali views
Talkeetna - Anchorage	113	2	At leisure, as schedule requires

