



ALASKA KAYAKING BY JASON AND KRIS CARTER

# ALASKA

## Cordova: Exploring Alaska's Hidden Gem

**9 DAYS** | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **APR - SEP**

*Embark on an adventure to experience the natural wonders and scenic beauty of Alaska! Perhaps no place fills the senses more than Cordova, Alaska's hidden treasure. Cordova is a small, coastal town surrounded by glacier-carved mountains and nestled at the head of Orca Inlet in Eastern Prince William Sound. The area will dazzle you with wildlife, rich wetlands, lush forests, and countless waterways. Explore the natural grandeur with exciting activities such as hiking, kayaking, wildlife photography, boating, flightseeing, and more. Each day you'll enjoy hearty meals – home-cooked with local ingredients and plenty of fresh seafood – and stay in a cozy ecolodge.*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike through three complete ecosystems on the Heney Ridge Trail, where birds and wildlife can be spotted.
- Take a boat trip to the panoramic Orca Inlet to see the world's largest population of sea otters.
- Travel the old railroad bed of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad, stopping for exploration and wildlife viewing.
- Participate in a discussion on the effect of climate change on Alaska's fragile ecosystem.
- Kayak the tranquil waters of Orca Inlet, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and home to sea otters and seals.
- Take in dramatic views of Sheridan Glacier on a short hike and kayak excursion, with a picnic lunch.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



HIKING BY DEBBIE JORDAN



VISTAS IN DENALI NATIONAL PARK BY DEBBIE JORDAN

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

### DAY 1 - ANCHORAGE

Upon arrival in Anchorage, travel on your own by shuttle to the hotel. Meals are not included on your arrival day. *Overnight at Comfort Inn Ship Creek.*

### DAY 2 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, have some time to explore Anchorage. Alaska's most populated city began as a tent settlement. Then in 1915, a government land auction jump-started development into a town. The historic downtown, site of the 1915 auction, is approximately a 15-minute walk from the hotel. In the afternoon, take the shuttle to the airport for the quick afternoon flight to Cordova. Cordova is inaccessible by road from any other Alaskan town, so flight or ferry is the only way to travel there. Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to the lodge, enjoying some initial sights along the way, including swan nests on the delta and Cordova's town center. \*All activities are subject to accessibility, road conditions, and weather. A suitable alternative will be arranged if any activities are canceled for reasons outside our control. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BD)*

### DAY 3 - CORDOVA

Today, enjoy a scenic hike through the Heney Ridge Trail for excellent birdwatching, wildlife spotting, and temperate rainforest exploration. Hike through three complete ecosystems on the trail's seven-mile route, including spruce-

hemlock forest and muskeg areas. The hike culminates on the Heney Ridge itself, with gorgeous views of the Copper River Delta, Prince William Sound, and Kayak Delta below. As this activity is the most strenuous of the program, there will be additional guides to accommodate different levels of hikers in the group. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

### DAY 4 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, take a boat trip to the panoramic Orca Inlet for the opportunity to see the world's largest population of sea otters and observe their interactions within the pod. Your guide for the day has been involved in sea otter studies for 15 years. Afterward, stop at a remote beach for a short hike to explore tide pools. Then head to Hinchinbrook Island for lunch at another beautiful



SEA OTTER BY JERRY GOFFE, NATUREPHOTOWORKS.COM

secluded beach. After lunch, visit a kittiwake colony to observe these nesting sea birds. In the late afternoon, return to town and visit the Cordova Historical Museum and Eyak Museum and Cultural Center. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

## DAY 5 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, depart for a full-day tour of the Copper River Delta, the highlight being a float down the Alaganik Slough. As you travel the historic Copper River Highway—built on the old railroad bed of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad—take in expansive views of marsh and wetland while watching for moose, eagles, beavers, and the occasional bear. See examples of two geological phenomena, uplift and subsidence, that resulted from the 1964 earthquake as your guide explains how it affected this area. Search for wildlife on your hike to view the mighty Copper River at Mile 27. After a brief break to explore the dunes of the Copper River and a discussion about the salmon habitat and commercial fishing seasons, travel back to Mile 22 and the site of the sacred Eyak village of Alaganik. Here, you can imagine the activity around the old trading post, longhouses, and Shaman's Cave that once stood on this spot. After a quick introduction to some medicinal uses for local plants, with handouts provided to identify plants on your own, launch canoes with your guide. Float from Mile 22 to Mile 17 on the Alaganik Slough, keeping your eyes open for wildlife along the way. See areas where the US Forest Service attempted to help restore Dusky Canada Goose and Tundra Swan populations by anchoring nest islands in the ponds. Experience the dynamic delta ecosystem up close from your vantage point at water level. Finally, disembark at the Mile 17 ramp and hike the boardwalk birding path. Stay alert for more wildlife viewing opportunities on the return trip to the lodge. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

## DAY 6 - CORDOVA

This morning, take a 10-minute flight, traveling Alaskan-style, to explore Egg Island. This barrier island hosts a wide variety of bird species, including the largest population of Glaucous-winged Gulls found anywhere. During your exploration and short hike of the island, participate in an ongoing study or gather data for a local biologist. After lunch, take a short hike along the beach. Return to the lodge in the early afternoon for a kayaking adventure in

Prince William Sound. As you paddle through Orca Inlet, take in majestic views of snow-capped peaks and be on the lookout for eagles, sea otters, and seals. In the late afternoon, attend a discussion on the life cycle of salmon and their importance to the Cordova economy. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

## DAY 7 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, your guide will give a talk on plate tectonics and the geological characteristics of the region. The Prince William Sound area has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades, largely due to the Great Alaskan Earthquake that struck in 1964. Lasting four minutes and 38 seconds, the 9.2-magnitude earthquake ruptured 600 miles of fault line in an instant, and ultimately gave conclusive evidence to seismologists about the existence and behavior of plate tectonics. Look at specific, unique geological formations and rock samples, then engage in a discussion on climate change before heading to Sheridan Glacier for an ice-trekking excursion. Sheridan Glacier is one of the most accessible glaciers in Alaska, and after a short hike through the moraine, you'll be standing on ancient ice. After a brief orientation on kayaking, hit the waters to view crystal-blue caves, jagged crevasses, and an ever-changing terrain, then assist the Prince William Sound Science Center by placing monitoring stations on the ice to help collect data on glacial melt rates and movement. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*



## DAY 8 - ANCHORAGE/DEPART

Enjoy the morning at leisure before transferring to the airport. Fly back to Anchorage, where you will be met and taken to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) in Portage. Dedicated to conservation, research, and education, the AWCC is a wildlife sanctuary that takes in and rehabilitates injured animals on 200 acres of natural habitat. Most cannot be fully released into the wild, and thus serve as ambassadors for the preservation of their species. Return to Anchorage to explore the historical downtown, including the Museum of History and Art. You will have time for dinner on own before transferring to the airport for your flight home. *(BL)*

## DAY 9 - ARRIVE HOME

Arrive home following your overnight flight.

## PROGRAM PRICING

**\$2,695** (15 participants + 1 leader)

**\$2,895** (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

Airfare to and from Alaska, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

## THE FINE PRINT

*A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.*

## TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

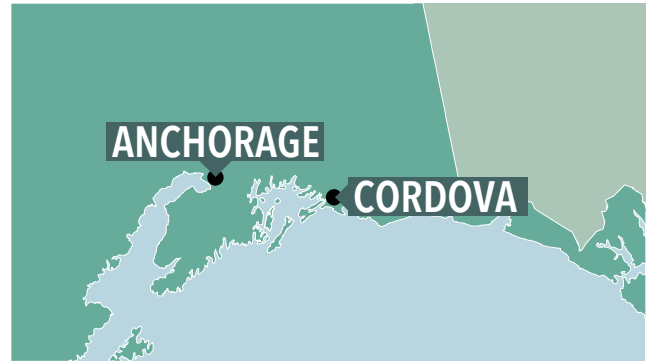
Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at [holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe](https://holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe)



PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND BY JIUGUANG WANG



ACTIVITY LEVEL

2

EASY-MODERATE

## WHAT TO EXPECT

This light adventure showcases Cordova's remarkable biodiversity and geology, but also includes cultural exploration plus urban discovery in Anchorage. The leisurely pace begins with an overnight stay in Anchorage, followed by six nights in Cordova, plus a final day back in Anchorage. You'll explore several ecosystems, with daily hikes over variable terrain, including a Sheridan Glacier ice-trek. The most strenuous hike is 6.1 miles (roundtrip) on Heney Ridge, along boardwalks and trails that are occasionally muddy or rocky. It features one steep uphill climb with an elevation gain of 1333 feet. For this, you'll break into small groups based on level of intensity. Other activities include wildlife viewing and birdwatching; kayaking on Prince William Sound; a five-mile Alaganik Slough canoe trip; and an Orca Inlet boat trip. The highest altitude reached is 1349 feet. May through August is the best time to travel, with average highs between 52.5–61.3°F, and the least precipitation. Besides your roundtrip air transfer to Cordova, there is one flightseeing tour, plus overland travel via private minivans.



GRIZZLY BEAR PLAYTIME

