

Wildlife Viewing & Whale Watching Extravaganza

KENAI PENINSULA ITINERARY

Anchorage | Whittier | Portage | Seward | Homer

6 Nights, 7 Days Exploring The Kenai's
Fascinating Land & Marine Wildlife

DAY ONE: Anchorage

Arrive in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city and the launching point for your Kenai Peninsula Wildlife Viewing and Whale Watching Extravaganza. Pick up a rental vehicle from [Innoko Rentals, LLC](#) or [ABC Motorhome Rentals](#).

Optional Activities:

- Learn about Alaska's profound history, traditions and culture at the Anchorage Museum or the Alaska Native Heritage Center
- Explore nature and wildlife at the Alaska Zoo or the Alaska Botanical Garden
- Get above it all with a picturesque panoramic view over the city at Flattop Mountain
- Enjoy a scenic walk with fresh air and incredible views at the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Kincaid Park or the Delaney Park Strip

Overnight in Anchorage at the [Long House Alaskan Hotel](#) or the [Aspen Suites Hotel Anchorage](#). Yummy restaurants nearby include Moose's Tooth Pub & Pizzeria, Jen's Restaurant, Table 6, and Gwennie's Old Alaska Restaurant.

DAY TWO: Anchorage – Whittier (61 miles)

Get up early and grab breakfast in town before departing Anchorage and head towards the isolated and historic town of Whittier.

Take the scenic Seward Highway heading south towards the Kenai Peninsula. The Seward Highway was voted *America's Most Outstanding Scenic Byway* by Scenic America, and trust us – it's a phenomenal driving experience.

Hop in your rental car and follow the breathtakingly beautiful Turnagain Arm while enjoying many interpretative rest stops and viewpoints along the way. Depending on the season, it is not unusual to spot beluga whales or Dall sheep from your car window. You might even spot a bear munching on berries or roaming throughout the mountainside.

Stops Along The Way:

- McHugh Creek (Mile 111); enjoy a hike or picnic in the Anchorage foothills of the Chugach State Park
- Beluga Point (Mile 110.5); great opportunities for viewing beluga whales from mid-July through August
- Bird Creek (Mile 101); fisherman's paradise with observation platforms that photographers will love
- Bird Point (Mile 96); a scenic stop where you can enjoy a long hike or bike ride with spectacular views

Turn left onto Portage Glacier Road, approximately 50 miles away from Anchorage. Next, you'll drive through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel to access the charming coastal town of Whittier. Keep in mind that there is a small toll to pass through this historic tunnel. This is the longest combined road/rail tunnel in North America.

Once you arrive in town, hop on an award-winning [26 Glacier Cruise](#) by Phillips Cruises & Tours, LLC and experience the pristine beauty of Prince William Sound. On this trip you'll have the opportunity to enjoy a world-class experience where views of orca whales, humpback whales, stellar sea lions, harbor seals, sea otters, bald eagles, and a variety of other birds as you pass through the narrow, picturesque passage. This is truly an unforgettable excursion that will blow your mind.

Optional Activities:

- Go wildlife viewing and stroll the boardwalk through several ponds at the Moose Flats Wetland Trail
- Learn about the historic Portage Valley at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center
- Hike out around Portage Lake or through the valley to Byron Glacier
- Explore the glaciated waters of Prince William Sound via kayak or water taxi; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Learn about the local culture and explore all that there is to do in the area with a visit to the [local chamber](#)



© 2017 26 Glacier Cruise



© 2017 Luke Jones



KenaiPeninsula.org • 800-535-3624

02 | Wildlife Viewing & Whale Watching Extravaganza

For an unforgettable dining experience, try the popular Varly's Swiftwater Seafood Café in Whittier. For a convenient overnight stay in town, check out the Inn at Whittier, which also has a delicious restaurant. Or you can choose to spend the night in a remote paradise inside Prince William Sound, such as [Eshamy Bay Lodge](#), which is only accessible via boat or float plane. If you choose to stay remote, we recommend staying for a least two nights, to fully soak in the mesmerizing experience.

DAY THREE: Whittier – Portage – Seward (87 miles)

Depart Whittier on the Portage Glacier Road, back through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel. About 11 miles down the road, turn right and backtrack about a quarter of a mile on the Seward Highway before taking a sharp left turn into the [Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center](#).

With a mission dedicated to providing refuge for orphaned, injured and ill animals who cannot survive in the wild – you'll feel good about the small \$10 - \$15 fee it costs to get in. Throw on a good pair of walking shoes and get ready to experience this 200-acre animal paradise filled with moose, bears, caribou, elk, deer, wolves, wood bison, birds and more. We guarantee that won't be able to contain your excitement when you see all of these adorable, majestic critters up-close-and-personal. We recommend spending at least 3-5 hours here in order to really experience all that there is to offer.

For the next 30 miles, you'll wind through the mountainous Turnagain Pass (mile 68.3) passing by the gorgeous east fork of Sixmile Creek (mile 61.7) before crossing the gold-bearing Canyon Creek (mile 56.7). Stop along the way and enjoy the scenic pullouts that your heart desires.

Continue going straight past the Sterling Highway turn-off and continuing south. Directly after this point, turn right and enjoy a scenic stop at Tern Lake. Here you can enjoy a plethora of wildlife viewing opportunities as you snap photos of the majestic mountains reflecting like a mirror into the waters below. Wildlife viewing includes beavers, river otters, muskrats, and salmon. In the distance you might even be able to spot moose and Dall sheep.

Make your way eight miles down the road where you'll drive through the picturesque town of Moose Pass. Stop for lunch and a peaceful stroll on the shores of [Trail Lake Lodge](#).

Look for trumpeter swans enjoying an afternoon swim out on the lake or moose munching along the shoreline before continuing on to Seward.

Once you arrive in Seward, head over to the [Alaska Sealife Center](#). This gorgeous public aquarium is Alaska's only permanent marine mammal rehabilitation facility, located on the picturesque shores of Resurrection Bay. Spend the afternoon exploring all the exhibits and educational information, along with the most incredible marine life.

Optional Activities:

- Soak up the sunshine with a hike up to the easily-accessible Exit Glacier, guided excursions available [HERE](#)
- Get elevated on a flightseeing, helicopter or glacier landing adventure; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Go ziplining and enjoy traversing through a beautiful Pacific Temperate Rainforest; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Go sea-kayaking or stand-up paddle boarding around Resurrection Bay and Kenai Fjords; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Submerge yourself in the local culture with the remarkable experience of a dog sled tour; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Learn about the local culture and explore all that there is to do in the area with a visit to the [local chamber](#)

Stay overnight in Seward for two nights; view a list of hotels and motels [HERE](#) and a list of resort properties and cabins [HERE](#). If you prefer to stay in a cozy bed and breakfast, view options [HERE](#). If you want to get away from it all, consider staying at the remote [Kenai Fjords Wilderness Lodge](#) on Fox Island, just a short 45 minute boat ride from Seward. For delicious dining recommendations, click [HERE](#).



03 | Wildlife Viewing & Whale Watching Extravaganza

DAY FOUR: Seward – Explore Inside Kenai Fjords National Park

Even though whale watching is what you came for, prepare to have your expectations blown way out of the water (literally). Hop on a [Kenai Fjords Tour](#) and experience Alaska's #1 rated wildlife and glacier cruise. Enjoy a half day or full day excursion through the shores of Resurrection Bay taking you deep into the waters of Kenai Fjords National Park. Experience enchanting views of towering glaciers and abundant sealife onboard a luxury cruise. Wildlife viewing opportunities include orca whales, humpback whales, gray whales, Dall's porpoises, stellar sea lions, puffins, eagles and so much more. For a complete list of day cruise options, click [HERE](#).

In addition to the above adventure outfit, Seward has a lot of other excellent options to enjoy a scenic whale watching excursion in Kenai Fjords National Park. For a complete list of vendors, choose from this exceptional list [HERE](#).



© 2017 Lisa Matlock

DAY FIVE: Seward – Homer (168 miles)

Depart Seward and head towards Homer. You'll need to backtrack on the Seward Highway for about 36 miles before turning left onto the Sterling Highway (at Tern Lake) where you'll then follow that same road all the way down south to Homer.

Along the way you'll drive through some of The Kenai's most scenic small towns including Cooper Landing, Sterling, Soldotna, Kasilof, Clam Gulch, Ninilchik and Anchor Point. Throughout every town there are a tremendous amount of scenic pullouts along the way.

Optional Activities:

- Enjoy the piercing blue waters of Kenai Lake and Kenai River from Cooper Landing
- Watch crowds of combat fisherman reeling in massive salmon at the Russian River Confluence
- Check out a variety of fun local events, great fishing and scenic boardwalk sights at [Soldotna Creek Park](#)
- Go beach combing and watch surfcasters in the distance at Kasilof Beach
- Scenic pullouts at Falls Creek, Ninilchik River, Deep Creek, Stariski Creek, Whiskey Gulch or the Anchor River

Arrive in Homer, Alaska! This cosmic oasis by the sea is known as the 'halibut fishing capital of the world' and has been voted as the Happiest Seaside Town in America by [Coastal Magazine](#).

Once you pull over than final hill leading you into Homer you'll be greeted by majestic mountains, and spectacular ocean and glacier views as far as the eyes can see. Located right off the Sterling Highway is the [Islands & Ocean Visitor Center](#).



© 2017 Kenai Fjords Tours

04 | Wildlife Viewing & Whale Watching Extravaganza

Explore fascinating exhibits, artifacts, and educational programs brought to you by the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Then get outdoors and enjoy spectacular birding and wildlife viewing as you hop on the Beluga Slough Trail which winds down to the beach. You're sure to never forget a hike through the wetlands down to Bishop's Beach, where you can put your toes in the sand and enjoy looking for wildlife in the distance. Keep your eyes peeled because you just might spot a whale, otter, or sea lion!

Drive all the way down to the 4.5 mile stretch of land jutting out into the renowned Kachemak Bay, known as the Homer Spit. Spend the afternoon beach combing, wildlife viewing on the harbor docks, shopping on the boardwalks and trying out the local cuisine.

Stay overnight in Homer for two nights. Click [HERE](#) for a great list of local resorts, lodges, and cabin properties. Click [HERE](#) for a great list of local hotels. Click [HERE](#) for a great list of local bed and breakfast options.

Enjoyable restaurants in Homer include [AJ's Old Town Steakhouse](#), [Chart Room](#) at Land's End Resort, Captain Pattie's, Fat Olives, Wasabi's Bistro, Little Mermaid Café, Café Cups, Cosmic Kitchen and Two Sisters Bakery.



© 2017 readistendream - Flickr

DAY SIX: Homer – Explore Inside Kachemak Bay State Park

The beautiful thing about Kachemak Bay is that you don't have to go far to experience larger-than-life wildlife viewing opportunities. Even on many of the fishing charters that you can book, you'll have opportunities to view whales breaching close by as you reel in a massive halibut.

[Alaska Coastal Marine Tours](#) offer birding and wildlife viewing tours that go through the waters of Kachemak Bay into Sadie Cove, Tutka Bay, and Seldovia. Visitors that embark on this excursion can enjoy exceptional wildlife viewing while also learning about the cultural and natural history of the areas that they discover.

The [Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies](#) offers daily guided natural history tours across Kachemak Bay where visitors will view a seabird rookery. You'll also have the opportunity to enjoy hiking on forest trails and visiting secluded remote beaches. A kayaking tour combination is also a possibility if you prefer to paddle your way through this wildlife viewing paradise.

Optional Activities:

- Go bear viewing across the bay for a once-in-a-lifetime experience; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Take a walk in the idyllic downtown district, also known as the arts capital of Alaska
- Enjoy a guided wildlife viewing or birding tour while hearing the waves crash around you; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Flightseeing with incredible aerial perspectives from Katmai to Lake Clark National Park; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Reel in massive fish from halibut to salmon on a guided saltwater trip; book a tour [HERE](#)
- Learn about the local culture and explore all that there is to do in the area with a visit to the [local chamber](#)



© 2017 Alaska Coastal Marine Tours

DAY SEVEN: Return to Anchorage (221 miles)

Don't leave town without experiencing one of the best breakfasts of your life at Duncan House Diner.

With so much to do in Homer, we wouldn't be surprised if you decided to stay a few extra days. But when it's time to wrap up your vacation, backtrack north on the Sterling Highway. Make your way to the Seward Highway junction where you'll turn left and continue all the way into the city of Anchorage.