

Northern Passage & Glacier Bay: Whales, Puffins & More with Naturalist Journeys



July 8 – 15, 2023

866-900-1146 | 520-558-1146 | www.naturalistjourneys.com

Enjoy a fabulous week cruising through Southeast Alaska, immersed in splendid scenery where wildlife abounds. We invite you to join expert ship naturalists and our guide, Peg Abbott, as we take in this stunning Alaska cruise.

Indulge on the *Safari Explorer*, the smallest and most upscale member of our operator's fleet. Built for just 36 passengers, this cruise ship offers an intimate exploration of one of America's most revered landscapes—Alaska's Inside Passage. We decided on the smaller ship for 2022 after being with just that number of passengers on the larger ship last year ... it was SO nice to have this experience with a truly small group — for so many reasons, we feel it's worth the upgrade. Unpack once, and then simply enjoy ample time to explore, kayak, watch birds, and spot whales. This is a stunning cruise that can be as active (or not!) as you like. You will not forget your time among the fjords and glaciers.

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Enjoy a peaceful stay aboard the *Safari Explorer*, a premier 36-passenger ship with bar, hot tub, exercise equipment, and more
- ✓ Experience Alaska's rich abundance on long summer days, perfect for exploring
- ✓ Embark on a tour of Glacier Bay National Park guided by a National Park ranger; search for both Marbled and Kittlitz Murrelets, other wildlife and watch ice calving into the water
- ✓ Visit lush forests of Tongass National Forest as we cruise narrow passages through towering Hemlock and Spruce
- ✓ Spot Humpback, Orca, and Minke Whales on a whale watching cruise on Icy Strait ... marine mammals abound

Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Southeast Alaska Nature Cruise

Starting at \$7900, from Sitka, departing Juneau

Arrival airport is Sitka Rocky Gutierrez (SIT), Departure airport is Juneau International (JNU)

Day-to-Day Itinerary

Sat., July 8 Arrivals in Sitka | Embarkation from Baranof Island

Hello, historic Sitka! First settled by Tlingit Indians, then a Russian fur trading post, Sitka is not only picturesque, but also has a rich cultural heritage. We suggest you arrive early to explore ahead of the start of our voyage. Sitka has scenery, history, a raptor center, a National Historic Park, and a fine local museum. It is a small city and one that is easy to get around.

Today, it's all aboard! There is nothing like a hearty greeting from Peg and your crew, and some bon voyage bubbly as we start our adventures.

The *Safari Explorer's* sundeck, bar, and bridge areas allow us commanding views of lush forest and endless shorelines in the maze of islands we navigate. Whales may appear at anytime, often close enough to the ship that we can hear them breathe. Mainland Baranof is said to have a higher population of bears than humans, so we watch the shorelines for our first possible sightings. Birding is varied and fun, including regular sightings of several species of loons, Tufted Puffin and other seabirds, and ever present Bald Eagle. The scale of scenery in Alaska is profound, starting with Baranof's big and wild country; this island is almost as large as the state of Delaware.

Sun., July 9 Krestof & Nakwasina Sounds

Today brings a rich taste of Southeast Alaska's iconic beauty with secluded coves and lush, tree-covered islets. We are in the Alexander Archipelago of Alaska's long panhandle and you find that there aren't many straight lines along Baranof Island. Its western side is spattered with remote, uninhabited islands. In these quieter, protected from the wind waters, we explore via kayak, paddle board, or comfortable skiff. On the water we are on the level with curious sea lions and possibly whales. Ashore, rocky intertidal zones make good beach combing. Turn a stone or two to see what's underneath as we listen to the "chirp" of Bald Eagles overhead. There are no groomed trails here, but we can explore with our ship naturalists on guided hikes that John Muir would approve of. Skiffs are always at the ready to take us out to explore.

With luck today we may spot Harlequin Duck, three species of scoters (White-winged, Black, and Surf), Common Merganser perhaps with chicks, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, and while ashore, tiny and busy Golden-crowned Kinglet and with them, beautiful breeding plumage Townsend's Warbler.

Back aboard ship there are always treats; you can watch our progress with charts from the bridge, spot wildlife, sip your favorite beverage, and celebrate that you are here in the long days of sunlight. In the evenings naturalist guides offer presentations.

Mon., July 10 Sergius Narrows | Neva Strait

Listen to calls of Swainson's and Varied Thrushes as we cruise within the eerie, enigmatic feeling of these mature northwest woods. Morning fog catches like cotton balls on trees. The aptly named narrows we navigate today squeeze to only 300 feet wide in one spot and are a shallow 24 feet deep.

The shorelines are close and it's good territory to go ashore—to walk, play, or study the region's intriguing natural history. The forest floor is an elfin realm of fascination with mosses, liverworts, lichen, and wildflowers. As we skiff ashore, we pass Sea Otters, floating on their backs as they crack snacks rested on their bellies. Marbled Murrelet feed close to shore, while Glaucous-winged Gull swirl overhead.

Opening at Hoonah Sound, the squeeze is back on. We wind into Neva Strait, watching for Pelagic Cormorant, Pigeon Guillemot, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Red-necked Grebe. Watch the scenery change in the late fading light, perhaps from your perch in the hot tub!

And meal time each day is a special treat, with big windows so we can watch wildlife and scenery while sampling fresh local seafood, a variety of international dishes, homemade pastries, and other treats. This is an all-inclusive

voyage so drinks are on us— enjoy!

Tues., July 11 Peril Strait | Chichagof Island

If you like, kick off the morning by joining your ship guides on-deck for some yoga stretches. Today we follow a twisting channel known for dramatic currents. Peril Strait runs 50 miles to Salisbury Sound. It holds sublime beauty and some tricky navigation. We should see working fisherman, and perhaps flocks of Brant Geese, Long-tailed Duck, Horned Grebe, and the ever-present Mew Gull are joined by Black-legged Kittiwake and Bonaparte's Gull.

Meander through glacier-carved fjords along the Chichagof coast. Then stop. It's a prime time to lower the kayaks and skiffs. Along the beaches we may spy Black Turnstone, Rock Sandpiper, or at a stream crossing, American Dipper. In the woods, listen for the call of tiny but vocal Pacific Wren. Offshore, watch for both Pacific and Common Loon.

Binoculars and cameras in hand, we set off on land and sea explorations, searching for giant trees and tidal pools. Closer inspection by skiff, moss-dripping trees run right down to the water and we scan the shorelines for birds. Any bears in there? Salmon streams dot the coastline—and where there are salmon, there are bears—both black and grizzly, which grow huge on this rich and abundant diet. With one of the world's largest populations of these coastal grizzlies, also known as brown bears, it's quite possible to see them. Experienced guides give safety guidelines as they explore and observe with us.

Wed., July 12 Icy Strait

Nearly to the open waters of the Pacific Ocean, Icy Strait is remote and wild. Welcome the morning with a hot cup of coffee as you take in the grand views from the deck.

The plan today? Whales, seabirds, and marine mammals—Icy Strait, with its rich ocean upwelling, is a wildlife admirer's dream. Alaska is known for whale viewing, and Icy Strait is the best of the best! Enjoy magnificent scenery as we watch for pods of Humpback that have swum back from Hawaii (and farther!) to feed in these nutrient-rich waters.

Spouts and fin slaps are certain giveaways and where whales feed there are often dense feeding flocks of kittiwakes, gulls, and alcids. We have excellent opportunity here, and in Glacier Bay tomorrow, to view Horned and Tufted Puffins, Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklets, Common Murre, Ancient Murrelet, and Red-necked Phalarope in good numbers.

We look for Orca, Minke Whale, and Dall and Harbor Porpoises, as well as Steller Sea Lion and Sea Otter. As we see the whales, we interpret their behaviors. We have great hopes of seeing them bubble-feed—grouping up under a school of fish, diving down, and rising to surround them while making a “net” of bubbles. Our ship's naturalists are versed in everything Alaska—marine biology, plants, and even geology—a perfect topic today with such grand views.

Perched above around the bend, watch for mountain goats, and lower along shore, foraging bears. Up bay, glacial silt turns the water a milky white. Lounging Harbor Seal laze on bits of bergs. And if time allows, we tuck up in Tidal Inlet. End this very full day with your feet up, taking in the enormity of it all.

Thurs., July 13 Glacier Bay National Park

Today we're in for a real treat. What a privilege. At 3.3 million acres, this UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve is massive. At Bartlett Cove, a national park ranger comes aboard to share expert insight as we explore Glacier Bay National Park. The park service describes Glacier Bay National Park as a "land reborn, a living lesson in resilience." And who wouldn't be inspired by this stunning park? From ground-hugging plants that began on land scraped bare by glaciers, to roaring blocks of ice calving from tidewater glaciers and crashing into the sea, a day on the water in Glacier Bay is a thrill. For birders it's also a great chance to see Kittlitz Murrelet, rare to see but much at home in this glacial realm where they breed high up on mountain hillsides. We often find them where glacial streams meet the fjord and we get fantastic views.

Have your binoculars handy: Bald Eagle patrol the skies, and smaller seabirds like Pigeon Guillemot are ever watchful. Throughout the day we may spy Orca, Minke, and even Humpback Whales. On land we look for Mountain Goat—one year we were incredibly lucky to spy a pack of wolves down on the distant beach stones. We cruise by South Marble Island, a birder's slice of heaven. See Tufted and Horned Puffins, Common Murre, Pelagic Cormorant, and Black-legged Kittiwake. The sights and sounds (and smells) are amazing! Over 300 Steller Sea Lion use the island to haul out and pup—you can hear and smell them before you see them!

We cruise to the far end of John Hopkins or Tarr Inlet where glaciers calve into the water. Compare Margerie to Grand Pacific Glacier—one holding steady, the other retreating. Back at Bartlett Cove, if time and daylight allow, we may opt to take a forest hike around the park's headquarters; and take a peek at some of the new cultural demonstrations as we say farewell to our ranger.

Fri., July 14 Chatham Strait or Lynn Canal—Captain's Choice

In this intricate part of the Inside Passage, long navigable passages stretch between island reaches of the Tongass National Forest. Chatham Strait and Lynn Canal both offer adventure aplenty and we go with our captain's choice today. In deep, rugged fjords, we anchor on remote beaches to hike through moss-covered trees and rain-fed waterfalls. Or, some may stick to the water on a kayak excursion—don't forget to look above and below the surface. A nosy seal could be watching your every stroke. Some may simply choose to birdwatch or beachcomb along the rocky shores—a final day to savor the splendor of Southeast Alaska. Black Oystercatcher may put on a show along the shoreline, in forests we look for Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Fox Sparrow, and possible White-winged Crossbill.

Tonight, we toast another grand day in Alaska. Then, we celebrate with a festive farewell dinner and "photo journal" from our expedition team. You Naturalist Journeys guide helps tally up the final bird and wildlife list for our voyage.

Sat., July 15 Juneau | Disembarkation

We enjoy a final breakfast of fresh baked pastries before disembarking and saying a goodbye to the crew and friends, old and new. This morning, you transfer to the Juneau Airport, or alternately you may wish to stay on and explore a bit, take in local sites and Juneau's excellent museum. Note that several flights back to "mainland" USA do not leave until midnight, giving you much of the day to explore. There is a nice waterfront area to stroll, and a tram that takes you up to tree line.

Ship Details

The Safari Explorer

This high-end SUV of a ship is nimble, strong, and loving. The *Safari Explorer* has what mariners call “feet” that take her into wild areas most other ships aren’t certified to visit. But it’s what’s on the inside that makes this yacht the prize of the fleet. And with only 36 guests on board, the feel is decidedly exclusive. Lovingly called “the Bulldog,” she’s poised, her interior is a pearl, and the general mood is down-to-earth. For about half the year, she bops around the islands of Hawaii soaking up the laid-back aloha spirit. The other half she spends in Alaska sowing her wild oats with inevitable fun and folly.

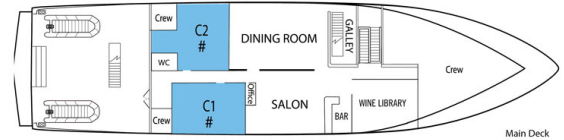
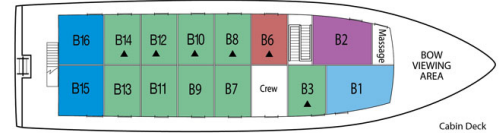
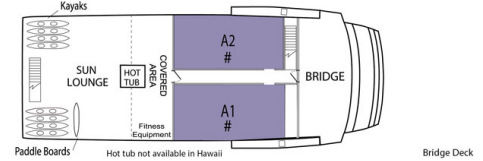
Onboard Features: Full-beam swim step; kayaks, paddle boards, inflatable skiffs, hiking poles, snorkel gear/wetsuits (Hawaii only); on-deck hot tub (Alaska only); fitness equipment and yoga mats; DVD and book library; wine library.

Cabin Features: TV/DVD player; Tempur-Pedic mattresses; heated tile floor in all bathrooms; hair dryer, bathrobes, conditioning shampoo, body wash; binoculars; reusable water bottles

- ✓ 36 guests (up to 40 w/ triples)
- ✓ 18 cabins
- ✓ 14-15 crew members
- ✓ 145 feet in length
- ✓ 36 feet wide
- ✓ Cruising speed of 10 knots
- ✓ Built in 1998 by Freeport Shipbuilding; renovated in 2008
- ✓ Registered in United States
- ✓ 2:1 Guest-to-crew ratio

Our Cabins

We have reserved **Admiral** (\$10,300 DBL / \$18,100 SGL), **Trailblazer** (\$8700 DBL / \$15,300 SGL) and **Master** (\$7900 DBL / \$13,900 SGL) cabins based on double or single occupancy.



All cabins are above deck with view windows. Diagram not to scale.
Double or Triple Accommodation ▲ Fixed Queen Bed



Tour Details

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

Costs are as follows: For this cruise, Naturalist Journeys has reserved an upscale smaller ship this year based on our experience with a small group in 2021. We feel it is well worth some added cost for a very personal experience, flexible to your interests, pace, and style. This is the trip of a lifetime and we want it to be the best possible for you. We have reserved **Admiral (\$10,300 DBL / \$18,100 SGL), Trailblazer (\$8700 DBL / \$15,300 SGL) and Master (\$7900 DBL / \$13,900 SGL)** and **one single Master cabin at \$11,100**, cabins based on double or single occupancy, plus a \$375 port tax/fee per person. The tour cost includes 7 nights aboard the *Safari Explorer*, all meals onboard the voyage including alcoholic beverages, all excursions with professional guides, and miscellaneous program expenses, transfers and baggage handling between airport/vessel on embark/disembark days; entry fees to national parks/preserves; all from-the-ship adventure activities and equipment; wellness amenities: fitness equipment, and yoga mats. A photo slide show will be provided with images from your trip as a voyage keepsake.

Not included is the flight into Sitka and out of Juneau. The tour cost also does not include items of a personal nature such as telephone charges or optional activities.

We highly recommend a gratuity for local guides and the ship crew, which is left to the discretion of each participant; guidelines will be provided.

Travel Information

For the cruise, plan to arrive July 8 into Sitka Rocky Gutierrez Airport (SIT) no later than 2:30 PM. Please plan flights out after 11:30 AM on July 15 from Juneau International (JNU). We STRONGLY recommend you arrive the night before—you don't want to miss the boat!

Naturalist Journeys, LLC is an equal opportunity service provider and committed to the goal of ensuring equal opportunity for all in employment and program delivery.