



Alaska is home to 119 state parks covering 3.3 million acres of land, providing endless recreational opportunities 12 months a year. The Alaska State Park system has been around since Alaska became a state in 1959 and is currently divided into seven park management areas that include recreation sites, recreation areas, historical parks, historic sites, state trails, state parks, marine parks, a wilderness park, special management area and a preserve.

### **Cabins**

Alaska's state parks offer 60 year-round public-use cabins and eight ice huts for rent in 18 state park units. Cabin prices range from \$25 - \$65 per night. Rates change based on time of year and whether it is peak season or a holiday weekend. It is recommended to make reservations as early as seven months in advance for Alaska residents and six months in advance for non-residents. Only eight cabins are accessible by road with only six of them having year-round access. The rest of the cabins are accessible by hiking and ski trails, air, water or snowmobiles. This link provides a complete list of cabins and how and when they can be accessed: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/cabins/reserv.htm>.

### **Park Activities**

While it is a rare occasion that you can sunbathe on the beach in Alaska, you can definitely unearth some appetizers on the beach in Ninilchik while razor clam digging. Or visit the 49,000-acre [Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve](#) in Haines to see the world's largest concentration of bald eagles. Alaska's state parks likely have something to offer – if not right in a park then in close proximity to it. Hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, canoeing, guided hunting, bird watching, stargazing or berry picking - you name it, Alaska has it. Play in the snow in the backwoods of [Denali State Park](#), fly fish for salmon while wildlife viewing or berry pick through the temperate rainforests. These activities and others are what make the parks not just beautiful but a natural land of adventure.

[Chugach State Park](#) offers a bounty of hiking trails and is just minutes from urban life in Anchorage. Join locals on a sunny summer evening as they hike up to [Flat Top](#) - Alaska's most climbed mountain. A magnificent view of the city skyline, shimmering gold in the midnight sun as it sets over the Cook Inlet, is visible from the Glenn Alps parking lot itself in case walking uphill is not your thing.

If fishing is on your agenda, once you obtain a fishing license, take a trip down the Kenai River during the king and red salmon runs. There are more than 105 linear miles of

rivers and lakes, with 15 adjacent state parks in the Kenai River Special Management Area.

Other spectacular places to enjoy the pristine waters of Alaska are Prince William Sound and Resurrection Bay. Seward and Whittier provide access to the surrounding parks and offer boat cruises, sea kayaking, fishing charters and water taxis to remote cabins and hikes as well as various lodging and camping options. Whale-watching day cruises are a must for anyone visiting Alaska for the first time. Many of the tour companies guarantee a whale sighting on your way to a calving glacier. You will also come across sea lions, seals, sea otters, puffins and maybe black bear grazing along the beach. Dressing warm is recommended as most cruises take a break in a sea of icebergs for the perfect photo-op.

Spanning 1.6 million acres of pristine land and water, [Wood-Tikchik Park](#) is the largest state park in the nation and the only one in Southwest Alaska. Visit this park to learn about Alaska Native subsistence lifestyle. The closest city is Dillingham and transportation into the park is restricted to air and water. The entire park is open to camping with only a few areas requiring a permit; however low-impact, hike-in camping is encouraged as the park was created with nature and wildlife preservation in mind.

If culture and history are what you're after, consider adding [Totem Bight State Historical Park](#) in Ketchikan to your itinerary. The U.S. Forest Service began a project to restore this area in 1938. It had once served as a Native settlement before groups of Alaska Natives migrated to find work elsewhere. Part of the restoration process involved carving new and restoring old Totem Poles. The poles remain part of the park today, as well as an example of a Native clan house.

[Chena Hot Springs Resort](#) in the Chena River State Recreation Area near Fairbanks is a favorite destination for Alaskans and outside visitors alike. The natural mineral springs are heated by geothermal energy, which is also used to heat the resort facilities. Thousands flock to this resort in the winter months to soak in the hot, healing water as a magnificent display of aurora borealis (northern lights) flickers in the skies above. Once you've had your share of heat, cool off in the Aurora Ice Museum.

A trip to Alaska isn't complete without a visit to a historic gold mine. Gold was one of the leading factors that drove people to Alaska in 1897, with the Klondike Gold Rush. The remnants of this lifestyle can be observed through the state at [Independence Mine State Historical Park](#), where at the peak of the gold rush, in 1941, there were 204 miners employed. This park is located at the edge of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley area in Hatcher Pass.

## **Park Programs**

### ***Alaska State Trails***

There is still so much land in Alaska left unexplored. Alaska State Trails Program provides access to many of the state's areas while leaving the original beauty as untouched as possible. The program assists in trail construction projects, educating Alaskans and visitors about safely navigating trails, and working to develop and maintain existing and future trails. Trail guides can be very helpful when visiting Alaska's parks:  
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aktrails/>.

### ***Arts in the Parks***

This art-based program provides a way for families to enjoy Alaska's state parks on a deeper level through a series of events with a creative focus. Events are held in park units throughout the state with art-themed activities such as concerts, painting and photography workshops, kids arts and crafts workshops, guided nature hikes and more. For an updated list of these year-round activities, photos from past events and to learn more, visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/artsinparks.htm>.

### ***The Last Frontier***

The parks remain a symbol of the true Alaska lifestyle; proof is in the numbers. Alaskans participating in wilderness recreation are twice as high as the national average. Over two thirds of the 5.4 million annual visitors to Alaska's state parks are Alaskan residents, and visitors are invited to take part in some or any of the endless adventure to be found.

### **If You Go**

#### [Alaska State Parks](#)

#### ***Anchorage Area***

[Chugach State Park](#)

#### ***Interior Alaska***

[Birch Lake State Recreation Site](#)

[Chena River State Recreation Site](#)

[Chena River State Recreation Area](#)

[Delta Junction Area State Parks](#)

[Harding Lake State Recreation Area](#)

[North of Fairbanks](#)

[Salcha River State Recreation Site](#)

[Tok Area Parks](#)

#### ***Kenai Peninsula***

[Anchor River State Recreation Area and Stariski SRS](#)

[Caines Head State Recreation Area and Resurrection Bay State Marine Parks](#)

[Captain Cook State Recreation Area](#)

[Clam Gulch State Recreation Area](#)

[Deep Creek State Recreation Area](#)

[Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park](#)

[Kasilof Area State Parks](#)

[Kenai River Special Management Area](#)

[Ninilchik State Recreation Area](#)

#### ***Kodiak Islands***

[Kodiak Area State Parks](#)

#### ***Matanuska and Susitna Valleys***

[Denali State Park](#)

[Independence Mine State Historical Park](#)

[Nancy Lake State Recreation Area](#)

[Summit Lake State Recreation Site](#)

#### ***Prince William Sound***

[State Marine Parks in Prince William Sound and Resurrection Bay](#)

***Southeast Alaska***

[Channel Island State Marine Park](#)  
[Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve](#)  
[Eagle Beach State Recreation Area](#)  
[Haines Area State Parks](#)  
[Point Bridget State Park](#)

[Sitka Area State Parks](#)

[Totem Bight State Historical Park](#)  
[Wickersham State Historic Site](#)

***Southwest Alaska***

[Wood-Tikchik State Park](#)

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