

Alaska: Alaskan Dream Cruises

Tracy Provest

Type of tour

This is a small group tour with maximum ship occupancy 36. It's a local company and you can book online from Australia but all payments are in US\$. All shore excursions, activities and great meals are included. There's a 10% discount if you pay early.

Brief outline of tour



Alaskan Dream offers many different itineraries. We travelled for 12 nights from Sitka to Ketchikan at the beginning of the season. We would choose this time again – seals are calving in Tracy Arm Fjord.

After a couple of days in Ketchikan you can head north to Anchorage and Denali National Park, catching the season opening there. It's quieter and there are lots of moose.

As a local catamaran this cruise visits many ports not on the normal itinerary, as well as the classics.

Lunches in local cabins, a s'more (fire-roasted marshmallow with chocolate on a cracker biscuit) and king crab BBQ (Alaskan style), zodiacs to the ice sheets, watching the newborn seals, canoeing to follow moose trails, stopping when bears or orcas are spotted – and you can spend as much time on the bridge as you like!

Major highlights

Where to start? Even in **Sitka** they include a walking tour, museum visit and local cultural dance performance while your ship is being prepared. It's a nice way to get introduced to fellow passengers and crew and understand local customs.

Glacier Bay proved an interesting introduction to Alaskan life. There were lots of sea life and seals as we cruised past.

The Skagway Train trip was well worth it! Up by train, back by bus. We had our own carriage, complete with local historian, and we thoroughly enjoyed the scenery and the wood stove!

Haines included a tour of the town with a local whose stories of the 'good old days' astounded. We spent a pleasant afternoon lying on the grass sun-soaking and listening to him after visiting the gin distillery.



Auke Bay, not far from Juneau, included a walk on the **Mendenhall Glacier**, which is receding at a rapid rate! It's not to be missed, even if it's a bit touristy.



We spent a night at **Orca Point Lodge** for a local feast on salmon, king crab and s'mores. There was a bonfire on the beach, a scavenger hunt and more.

Tracy Arm Fjord was on display in all her glory – 4,000 feet high walls of icy granite, icebergs, waterfalls and seals – wow! Here the zodiacs were used to get us even closer to wildlife.

Hobart Bay was our next stop – kayaking, campfires for cooking lunch, moose and bear spotting.

Participating in the Norwegian Festival in **Petersburg** was a bonus. Food, dancing, costumes and stories added to the experience. A very multicultural part of Alaska!

Wrangell was a surprise. It's full of history with a bush walk and mountain to climb for special views.

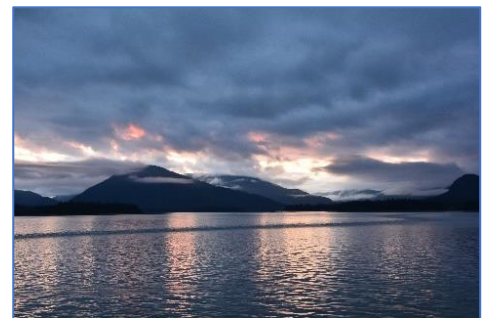
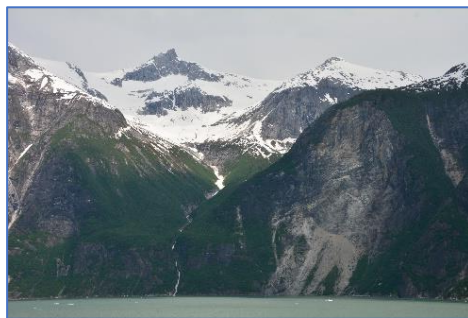
Thorne Bay saw us pull up in a quiet artisan community. A guided walking tour to meet the local artisans practising their craft added another layer to our experience. Thorne Bay settlement, once the largest logging camp in the world, has recreated itself.

At **Kasaan** we walked through the forest to the Chief Son-I-Hat Whale House, the only remaining Haida clan house in North America complete with original totem poles from 1880. New totem poles are erected in the forest, most with stories attached making the walk quite eerie.

Misty Fjord has 3,000-foot glacier-sculpted cliffs, and we felt the mist from the glistening waterfalls before visiting an indigenous village, one of the last.



Ketchikan is worth a day or two. The salmon run up-stream here and can be seen from many bridges and overpasses in season.



Hint: We went to Alaska via a repositioning cruise from Australia and came home from Anchorage via Hawaii (the flight was inexpensive). All round it was a great experience.

Contributor details



Tracy Provost (Ph. 0490 029 003 or email tracyp@internode.on.net) 8/11/18

Tracy was Principal of Ulladulla High School from 2003-2013. Since retiring from the Department she has been involved in a variety of activities including developing a wellbeing student diary, NSW SES leadership and travel off the beaten track. Tracy is a Life Member of the NSWSPC and continues her interest in learning.