



HOW TO PLAN AN RV TRIP IN ALASKA

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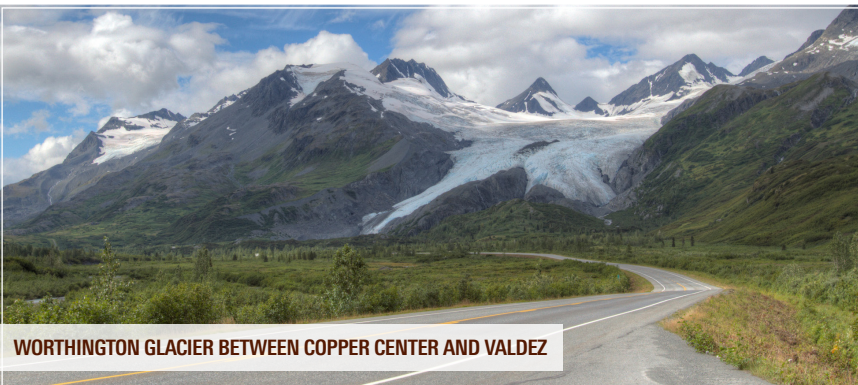
HOW ARE THE ROAD CONDITIONS IN ALASKA?

One of the biggest myths about Alaska is that our roads are remote and in terrible shape. Sure, we have a handful of gravel roads, but almost all the [highways](#) you'll want to travel are paved, well maintained, and safe. In the summer (mid-May to mid-September) they're free of snow.

You'll get cell phone coverage on just about every major road in Alaska. And if you do run into engine troubles while driving, there's an unwritten rule out here that you stop to help a motorist in distress.

A few roads, however, are gravel and have limited services; you'll need to take special care on them. (They're also not on most itineraries, so you won't end up on them if you stick to prescribed routes.) One important note: Many rental companies don't allow their vehicles on non-paved roads. While many people drive them anyway, you're responsible for any damage, and any insurance is voided if you break the contract.

If you're not bringing your own RV to Alaska, check with your rental company to make sure you can go on the following roads: [Denali Highway](#), [McCarthy Road](#), [Dalton Highway](#), [Top of the World Highway](#), [Steese Highway](#), [Elliott Highway](#), [Taylor Highway](#), [Nabesna Road](#).



WORTHINGTON GLACIER BETWEEN COPPER CENTER AND VALDEZ

COMMON QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE CAMPGROUND COST PER NIGHT?

Usually \$10–\$20 for a no-hookup site; \$35–\$80 a night with a hookup.

WHEN ARE CAMPGROUNDS OPEN FOR THE YEAR AND WHEN DO THEY CLOSE?

Most campgrounds open May 15, and close between September 1 and 15. Some private campgrounds may stay open longer. Almost all are closed by the end of September.

WHAT AMENITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

Most campgrounds in state and national parks, as well as BLM campgrounds, do not have showers or hookups, and many do not have dump sites. Most do have water, a picnic table, fire ring, and vault toilets (outhouses). For more information on state campgrounds, [see here](#).

Most privately run RV parks have the above plus hookups, showers, flush toilets, and laundry.

ARE ADVANCED RESERVATIONS REQUIRED?

No. But they're recommended for the campgrounds inside [Denali National Park](#) (only a few accept RVs and they book up far in advance), or if you want to guarantee a site with a hookup.

WHAT IF I'VE NEVER DRIVEN AN RV?

You don't need a special license for a typical RV, and today's vehicles come with automatic transmission, power brakes, and power steering. Still, you may have to get used to navigating such a long vehicle—and remembering that you may not be able to get through some areas with shorter clearances, like fast-food drive-throughs.

Modern RVs are pretty user-friendly: The push of a button will indicate what needs attention. Still, be sure that you have the owner's manual in hand before you head out, in case you need a cheat sheet on how to work the appliances, how to hook up the rig at a campsite, or how to fold out beds.

Most [rental companies](#) will give you a thorough orientation before you drive off the lot, but make sure there's someone you can call if you run into a problem.

TOP RV ITINERARIES

6 DAYS - DENALI & KENAI FJORDS

Camp in Seward, Talkeetna, & Denali



DAY 1 ANCHORAGE TO SEWARD

Pick up your RV in Anchorage and enjoy the [scenic drive to Seward](#). You'll find several campgrounds in the [Seward area](#). With one close to town, like [Seward Waterfront Park](#), you'll be able to walk to most tours and attractions. For more seclusion, choose a site a little further out (though you'll have to drive to town) and then pay to park near the Seward Harbor for a small fee. Once you're settled, head over to the [Seward SeaLife Center](#) to see Alaska's marine wildlife up close!

DAY 2 KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Take a half- or full-day cruise into Kenai Fjords National Park for wildlife and glacier viewing. [Overnight at a campsite in Seward](#).

DAY 3 SEWARD TO TALKEETNA

Take down camp and depart Seward. Make a detour 20 minutes north of town and stop at [Exit Glacier](#) (RV parking is available). Spend up to a few hours here walking the short trail to the glacier's face, or taking the longer trail to the Harding Ice Field. Then drive 4 hours and [camp in Talkeetna](#).



DAY 4 TALKEETNA TO DENALI

Spend the morning doing a [day tour in Talkeetna](#): fishing, flightseeing, rafting, jet boating, or guided hiking. In the afternoon, make the 2.5-hour drive to Denali, and stop by the [Visitors Center](#) there to orient yourself with the park. You may have enough daylight left to take an [evening tour](#) like rafting, ziplining, or riding an ATV. Of course, you'll want to [grab a campsite](#). Camp just outside the park and use the [shuttles or park road tours](#) to explore the park itself. You can also camp inside the park; just be sure to reserve your site well in advance.

DAY 5 DENALI NATIONAL PARK

Even if you're camping inside Denali National Park, you'll still want to take the shuttle to explore the rest of the park road, since private vehicles aren't allowed to drive the entire park road. Enjoy the sights from the bus, or get dropped off along the road and go for a hike.

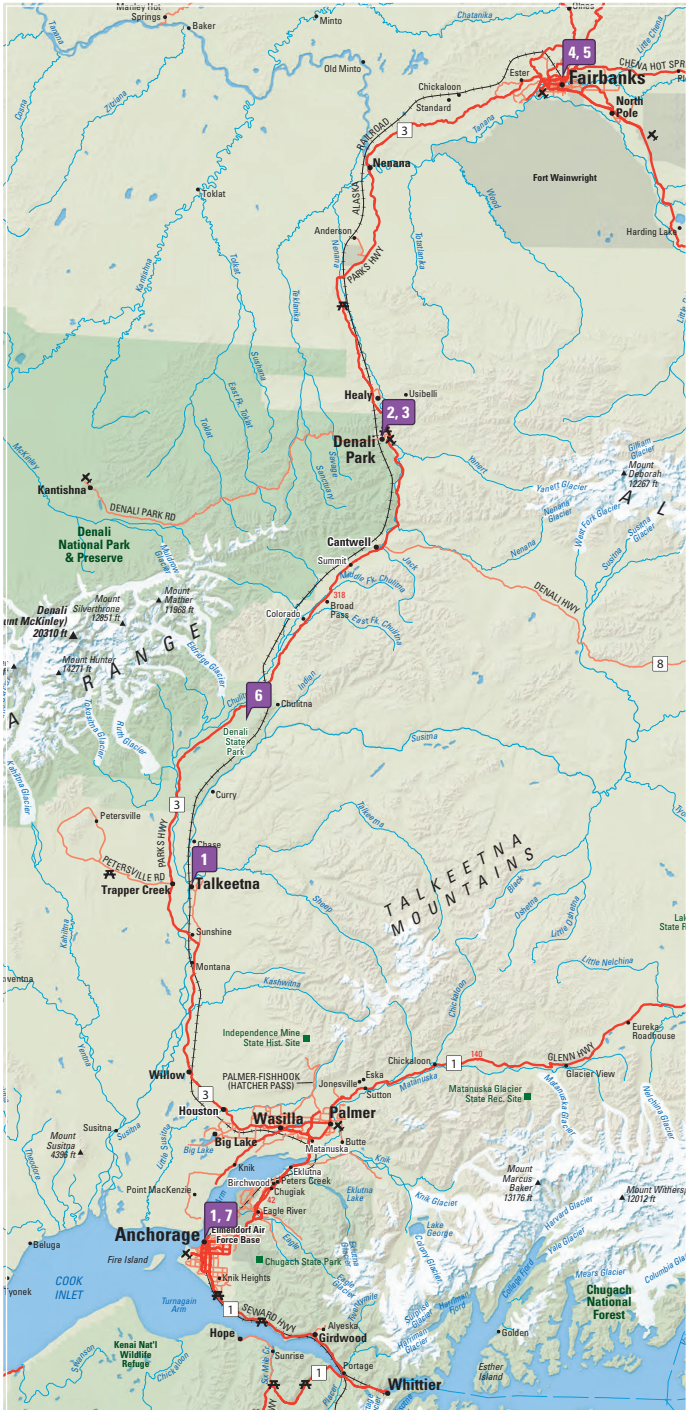
DAY 6 RETURN TO ANCHORAGE

If you have time, squeeze in an extra morning tour before driving 5 hours back to Anchorage. If you're flying out that night, return the RV. If your flight is the following day, you'll find [campgrounds around Anchorage](#) to stay the night. Or return the RV and spend your final night in an [Anchorage hotel](#).

TOP RV ITINERARIES

7 DAYS - ALASKA'S INTERIOR

Camp in Talkeetna, Denali, Fairbanks, & Denali State Park



DAY 1 ANCHORAGE TO TALKEETNA

Pick up your RV in Anchorage and drive 2.5 hours to [Talkeetna](#). Park the RV, then fill the afternoon with activities. [Day tours](#) include fishing, flightseeing, rafting, jet boating, or guided hiking. [Camp in Talkeetna](#).

DAY 2 DENALI NATIONAL PARK

In the afternoon, make the 2.5-hour drive to [Denali](#), and stop by the [Visitors Center](#) there to orient yourself with the park. You may have enough daylight left to take an [evening tour](#) like rafting, ziplining, or riding an ATV. Of course, you'll want to grab a [campsite](#). Camp just outside the park and use the [shuttles or park road tours](#) to explore the park itself. You can also camp inside the park; just be sure to reserve your site well in advance.

DAY 3 DENALI NATIONAL PARK

Even if you're camping inside Denali National Park, you'll still want to take the [shuttle](#) to explore the rest of the park, since private vehicles aren't allowed to drive the entire park road. Enjoy the sights from the bus, or get dropped off along the road and go for a hike. Or, [book a tour](#) and enjoy a narrated ride from the park Entrance.



DAY 4 FAIRBANKS

If you have time, squeeze in an extra morning tour before driving 2.5 hours north to Fairbanks. Stop at [UA Museum of the North](#) or view the [Alyeska Pipeline](#). [Camp in Fairbanks](#).

DAY 5 FAIRBANKS

Take a historic [riverboat tour](#) in the morning and [pan for gold](#) in the afternoon. Or take a [day trip to the Arctic](#) by small plane. [Camp in Fairbanks](#).

DAY 6 BYER'S LAKE

Drive 4.5 hours to Denali State Park (just north of Talkeetna) and camp at [Byer's Lake](#). Rent a kayak, hike the [Byer's Lake Trail](#), or just relax.

DAY 7 RETURN TO ANCHORAGE

Drive 3 hours back to Anchorage. Return RV and fly home.

Alternatives: Start this tour in Fairbanks and do it in reverse. Or get a one-way rental between Fairbanks and Anchorage.

TOP RV ITINERARIES

7 DAYS - KENAI PENINSULA

Camp in Seward, Cooper Landing & Homer



DAY 1 ANCHORAGE TO SEWARD

Pick up your RV in Anchorage and enjoy the [scenic drive](#) to [Seward](#). You'll find several campgrounds in the [Seward area](#). With one close to town, like [Seward Waterfront Park](#), you'll be able to walk to most tours and attractions. For more seclusion, choose a site a little further out (though you'll have to drive to town). For more seclusion, choose a site a little further out (though you'll have to drive to town) and then pay to park near the Seward Harbor for a small fee. Once you're settled, head over to the [Seward Sealife Center](#) to see Alaska's marine wildlife up close!

DAY 2 KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Take a half- or full-day cruise into Kenai Fjords National Park for wildlife and glacier viewing. [Overnight at a campsite in Seward](#).

DAY 3 SEWARD TO COOPER LANDING

Take down camp and depart Seward. Make a detour 20 minutes north of town and stop at [Exit Glacier](#) (RV parking is available). Spend up to a few hours here walking the short trail to the glacier's face, or taking the longer trail to the Harding Ice Field. Then drive 2 hours to [Cooper Landing](#), on the shores of Kenai Lake. Do a [day tour](#) in Cooper Landing, like a float trip down the Kenai River and go mountain biking or standup paddleboarding. [Camp in Cooper Landing](#).

DAY 4 COOPER LANDING

Wake up early and enjoy a day of [guided fishing](#) on the famous Kenai River. [Camp in Cooper Landing](#).

DAY 5 HOMER

Drive 3 hours to [Homer](#) and [grab a campsite](#) in the bluffs above town or on The Homer Spit (where you can camp right on the water). While the Spit is quite exposed, the view is generally worth dealing with any wind or rain. Spend the day walking the [Homer Spit](#) and searching for shells, watching the fishermen at [the snag hole](#), [looking for eagles](#), and [tidepooling](#).

DAY 6 HOMER

Go on a morning [halibut fishing charter](#), go [bear viewing](#), take a water taxi across Kachemak Bay to [hike in Kachemak Bay State Park](#), or take a trip across the bay to [Seldovia](#). [Return to your Homer campsite](#).

DAY 7 RETURN TO ANCHORAGE

Drive 5 hours back to Anchorage. Return RV.



TOP RV ITINERARIES

15 DAYS - ALASKA'S GRAND LOOP

Camp in Talkeetna, Denali, Fairbanks, Copper Center, Valdez, Seward, Cooper Landing, Homer



DAY 1 ANCHORAGE TO TALKEETNA

Pick up your RV in Anchorage and drive 2.5 hours to [Talkeetna](#). Park the RV, then fill the afternoon with activities. [Day tours](#) include fishing, flightseeing, rafting, jet boating, or guided hiking. [Camp in Talkeetna](#).

DAY 2 DENALI NATIONAL PARK

In the afternoon, make the 2.5-hour drive to [Denali](#), and stop by the [Visitors Center](#) there to orient yourself with the park. You may have enough daylight left to take an [evening tour](#) like rafting, ziplining, or riding an ATV. Of course, you'll want to grab a [campsite](#). Camp just outside the park and use the [shuttles or park road tours](#) to explore the park itself. You can also camp inside the park; just be sure to reserve your site well in advance.

DAY 3 DENALI NATIONAL PARK

Even if you're camping inside Denali National Park, you'll still want to take the [shuttle](#) to explore the rest of the park, since private vehicles aren't allowed to drive the entire park road. Enjoy the sights from the bus, or get dropped off along the road and go for a hike. Or, [book a tour](#) and enjoy a narrated ride from the park Entrance.

DAY 4 FAIRBANKS

If you have time, squeeze in an extra morning tour before driving 2.5 hours north to [Fairbanks](#). Stop at [UA Museum of the North](#) or [view the Alyeska Pipeline](#). [Camp in Fairbanks](#).

DAY 5 FAIRBANKS

Take a historic [riverboat tour](#) in the morning and [pan for gold](#) in the afternoon. Or take a [day trip to the Arctic](#) by small plane. [Camp in Fairbanks](#).

DAY 6 FAIRBANKS TO COPPER CENTER

Drive south from Fairbanks to [Copper Center](#), situated where the Copper and Klutina rivers meet. [Go rafting or fish for red \(Sockeye\) salmon](#). [Camp in Copper Center](#).

TOP RV ITINERARIES

15 DAYS - ALASKA'S GRAND LOOP

Camp in Talkeetna, Denali, Fairbanks, Copper Center, Valdez, Seward, Cooper Landing, Homer

DAY 7 TALKEETNA TO VALDEZ

Drive to [Valdez](#), on the shores of Prince William Sound. On the way, make stops at [Worthington Glacier](#) and [Bridal Veil Falls](#). [Camp in Valdez](#).

DAY 8 VALDEZ

Take a [day cruise](#) to view glaciers and wildlife, or go [sea kayaking](#). [Camp in Valdez](#).

DAY 9 VALDEZ TO SEWARD

In the morning, drive your RV onto [The Alaska Marine Highway](#) to Whittier. Then, enjoy the 1.5-hour [scenic drive](#) to [Seward](#). You'll find several campgrounds in the [Seward area](#). With one close to town, like [Seward Waterfront Park](#), you'll be able to walk to most tours and attractions. For more seclusion, choose a site a little further out (though you'll have to drive to town). RV onto The Alaska Marine Highway to Whittier. Then, enjoy the 1.5-hour scenic drive to Seward. Once you're settled, head over to the [Seward SeaLife Center](#) to see Alaska's marine wildlife up close!

DAY 10 KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Take a half- or full-day cruise into Kenai Fjords National Park for wildlife and glacier viewing. [Overnight at a campsite in Seward](#).

DAY 11 SEWARD TO COOPER LANDING

Take down camp and depart Seward. Make a detour 20 minutes north of town and stop at [Exit Glacier](#) (RV parking is available). Spend up to a few hours here walking the short trail to the glacier's face, or taking the longer trail to the Harding Ice Field. Then drive 2 hours to [Cooper Landing](#), on the shores of Kenai Lake. Do a [day tour](#) in Cooper Landing, like a float trip down the Kenai River and go mountain biking or standup paddleboarding. [Camp in Cooper Landing](#).

DAY 12 COOPER LANDING

Wake up early and enjoy a day of [guided fishing](#) on the famous Kenai River. [Camp in Cooper Landing](#).

DAY 13 HOMER

Drive 3 hours to [Homer](#) and [grab a campsite](#) in the bluffs above town or on The Homer Spit (where you can camp right on the water). While the Spit is quite exposed, the view is generally worth dealing with any wind or rain. Spend the day walking the [Homer Spit](#) and searching for shells, watching the fishermen at the [snag hole](#), [looking for eagles](#), and [tidepooling](#).

DAY 14 HOMER

Go on a morning [halibut fishing charter](#), go [bear viewing](#), take a water taxi across Kachemak Bay to [hike in Kachemak Bay State Park](#), or take a trip across the bay to [Seldovia](#). [Return to your Homer campsite](#).

DAY 15 RETURN TO ANCHORAGE

Drive 5 hours back to Anchorage. Return RV.



BRIDAL VEIL FALLS, VALDEZ



PIPELINE, FAIRBANKS

GREAT CAMPGROUNDS FOR HIKING & FISHING

HIKING

ANCHORAGE AREA



Eklutna Lake Campground (above) You'll find several trails to explore at this spot 45 minutes north of Anchorage; the most popular are the Twin Peaks and Lakeside trails. Twin Peaks is a steep hike with rewarding views of the actual peaks as well as Eklutna Lake. The Lakeside Trail extends 10 miles to the back of the lake. Take a leisurely walk for as long as you like, or rent a bike from the stand near the trailhead.

KENAI PENINSULA

Quartz Creek This campground is 2 hours south of Anchorage in Cooper Landing, on the shores of Kenai Lake, where a short drive will take you to several trails.



Ptarmigan Creek (above) 30 minutes north of Seward, this is a great spot if you want to visit Seward during the day and have a woody experience at night. The 7-mile out-and-back Ptarmigan Creek Trail leaves from the campground and climbs to a wildflower-filled mountainside before descending to beautiful Ptarmigan Lake.

Homer Spit Any campground on the Homer Spit puts you just a water taxi ride away from the trails in Kachemak Bay State Park.

INTERIOR

Byers Lake 30 minutes north of Talkeetna, in Denali State Park, Byers Lake Trail is a gentle stroll with big views. You can also drive to a trailhead for a challenging day hike up to Kesugi Ridge. Take a guided hike with Alaska Nature Guides.

Tors Trail Campground Near Fairbanks along Chena Hot Springs Road. The trail departs from the campground and provides views of tors, unusually shaped outcroppings formed 70–90 million years ago when molten rock pushed upward and cooled before reaching the surface. The entire loop is 15 miles.

Tangle Lakes Campground At Mile 21 on the Denali Highway. This campground lies in the Tangle Lakes Archeological District, an area with more than 600 archeological sites dating back 10,000 years. Hike any of the 8 trails within the district.

Savage River Campground At Mile 13 on the Denali Park Road. Camp and hike inside Denali National Park, and take a tundra walk on a developed trail that follows the river. It's a good hike for kids, with the possibility of seeing Dall sheep, marmots, and caribou. Advanced reservations highly recommended!

SOUTHEAST

Dyea Campground 9 miles outside of Skagway, Dyea Campground is situated in the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. It's also the trailhead for the famous Chilkoot Trail. The entire trail runs 33 miles, but many just do a day hike on the first part of the trail. (Note: you can reach Skagway via the Alaska Marine Highway or by driving through Canada).

FISHING



Homer Spit There are several campgrounds located on the Homer Spit. Take a deep-sea charter for halibut, or fish at the Nick Dudiak Fishing Hole.

Centennial Campground In Soldotna, right on the Kenai River, this spot offers 250+ campsites and 650 feet of elevated boardwalk along the river to fish for salmon.

Deep Creek North & South Campgrounds In Ninilchik, right off the Sterling Highway. Both campgrounds offer access to Deep Creek, a well-known spot to fish for king salmon.

Montana Creek State Recreation Site Located off the Parks Highway, just south of Talkeetna. You'll find a wide variety of species available throughout the year; grayling, rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, king salmon, silver and pink salmon. Due to popularity, this area's prone to "combat" fishing when the silvers are running, with fishermen lined up shoulder-to-shoulder along the creek. Alternative private campground.



Bird Creek Campground (above) Just south of Anchorage, along the Seward Highway. Silver salmon run July through September.

Klutina River Copper Center. Access public fishing areas near the bridge along the Richardson and Old Richardson Highways. Overnight camping isn't allowed, but you'll find several private campgrounds in the area (**King for a Day**, Klutina Salmon Charters & Campground, Salmon Grove Campground & Charter). If you don't want to fish by yourself, book a charter through them or through Alaska River Wranglers. Don't miss this [great video](#) on how to catch red (sockeye) salmon on the Klutina.



NEED TO RENT GEAR?

At [Alaska Outdoor Gear Rental](#) in Anchorage, you can rent fishing rods, waders, tackle boxes, and more.