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Alaska Afognak Beaches
Enjoying an afternoon at the Afognak Beach. Picture by: Kristen Kemmerling

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Featured Attractions



The Boardwalk...

Twelve blocks of boardwalk. Picture by: DeYoung



Kayaking in...

Enjoy kayaking in Halibut Cove. by:...

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The Harbor...

There are a few small logging ca

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Alaska Profile

The largest U.S. state, Alaska was nicknamed "Seward's Folly" because many believed the government paid too much when they purchased it from the Russians in 1867. However, the 1890s gold rush lured people into the state, as did the discovery of oil in the 1960s. With more acres of public land than any other state, there are plenty of places to fish, hike, and view wildlife. Alaska is divided into four main regions: the Northwest/North Slope Region, Interior Alaska, Southcentral, and Southeast. Each region features its own climate, cultural heritage, and historical importance.

Northwest/ North Slope Alaska is heavily influenced by the Inupiaq and Yupik cultures and, more recently, the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Though the Dalton Highway follows the pipeline to Prudhoe Bay, most of the major towns and cities are only accessible by cruise ship or plane. Caribou, arctic foxes, and grizzly bears live in the tundra while walruses, seals, and polar bears live on the northern coastline. Barrow holds the title of northernmost U.S. city. Here the community gathers every June to feast on whale meat as part of their annual Whale Festival. In the adjacent community of Bowerville, the Inupiat Heritage Center houses an extensive display of Native artifacts and cultural insights into the subsistence lifestyle of the Northwest/North Slope cultures. On the southern coastline Kotzebue is the hub for Arctic communities after serving as a Russian trading post in the 1800s. And every spring Nome hosts the "Mardi Gras of the North;" the finish line of the Iditarod Dog Sled Race that commemorates the 1925 trek to deliver Diphtheria serum.

Interior Alaska developed a rugged reputation formed by diehard prospectors who traveled severe terrain and extreme temperatures to make their fortune. Known as the "land of the midnight sun" in the summer, it can also be described as the "land of the noontime moon" in winter. Interior Alaska's cultural identity belongs to the Athabascans and is showcased at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center in Fairbanks. As the largest city in the Interior, Fairbanks is host to many Native Alaskan Events such as the Athabaskan Fiddler Festival, the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics (WEIO), the Festival of Native Arts, and the Midnight Sun Intertribal Powwow. Non-Native arts and culture have also flourished through the efforts of several galleries and performing arts organizations. Northeast of Fairbanks, Chena Hot Springs is a full resort area with season vacation packages that include soaking in the hot springs, dog sledding, flightseeing and touring the Aurora Ice Museum where adults can order a Appletini in an ice glass. Down the Parks Highway visitors can tour Denali National Park to view moose, brown and black bear, wolves, and birds in addition to flightseeing, rafting, and hiking tours.

Below the Interior, Southcentral forests grow lush and the climate is warm and moist. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline completes its journey in the Prince William Sound community of Valdez. Heli-skiing is a popular winter sport in the nearby Thompson pass, as is hiking Worthington Glacier off the Richardson Highway. Anchorage is the major hub of Southcentral Alaska with shopping centers, a weekly outdoor market, and roads connecting nearly every town. Its Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Unangax, and Alutiiq culture is displayed at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and the Alaska Museum. Devastation from the 9.2 magnitude Good Friday earthquake in 1964 is memorialized with interactive displays at Earthquake Park. Outside Anchorage, North America's longest highway railroad tunnel leads into Whittier where visitors can view sea otter, seal, whales, sea lion, and porpoise. In the Kenai Peninsula

Calendar of Events - Alaska

July 2011						
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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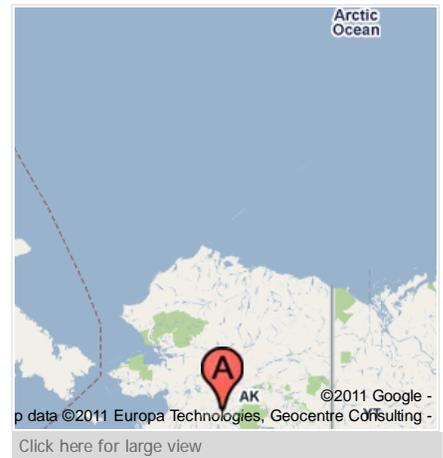
town of Homer, people can beach comb and clam dig or take a water taxi to Halibut Cove, an artist community in Kachemak Bay State Park. On the southeast side of the peninsula, Seward features access into the Kenai Fjords where sea mammals, fish, and birds thrive in the area carved out by the surrounding glaciers. Further south, Kodiak Island bear-viewing trips allow for safe treks into the habitat of the world's largest bears.

In Southeast Alaska climate and culture more resembles the Pacific Northwest. Influenced by the Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian totem poles are a regular feature in almost every town. The Alaska State Museum in Juneau features an extensive exhibit on all Native cultures. Juneau is also home to the state capital and extensive shops built near the coastline. Backpackers will enjoy hiking through the mountainous Tongass National Park just outside Juneau. Ketchikan, Sitka, and Wrangell provide additional hiking and backpacking adventures. Historians can also explore the history of the gold rush in Skagway.

- Rachael Kvapil, Travel Writer

List of Cities

- ▶ Afognak
- ▶ Barrow
- ▶ Cordova
- ▶ Denali
- ▶ Dutch Harbor
- ▶ Fairbanks
- ▶ Haines
- ▶ Halibut Cove
- ▶ Skagway



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