



A COMPLETE GUIDE TO YOUR DISNEY CRUISE



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ALASKA FROM ABOVE

Discover the Last Frontier
from the most awe-inspiring vantage point.

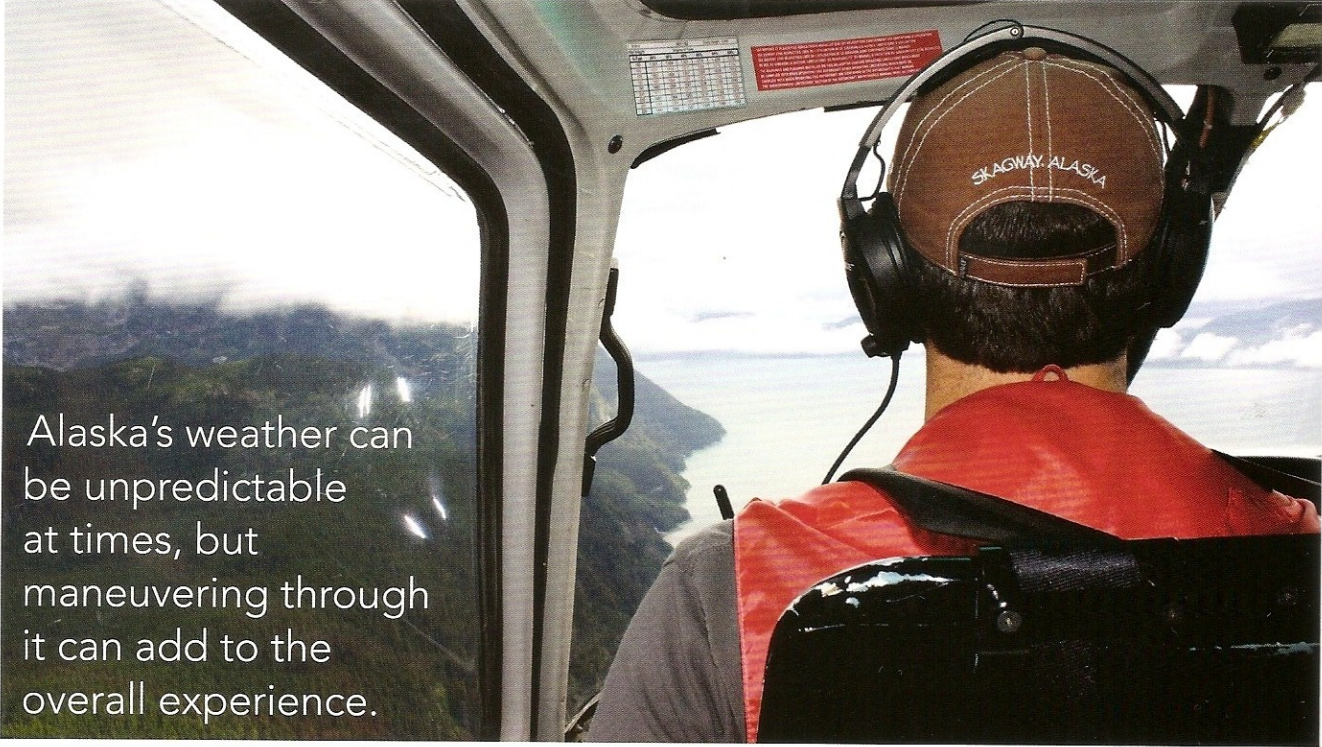
By Richard Varr

A stiff wind howls along Skagway's scenic waterfront. It's August, but it feels more like November or December — overcast and cold — as I'm about to embark on an adventure I won't soon forget. "Wear these boots on the glacier," commands our instructor, as we suit up with spiked boots and orange safety vests. The helicopter revs up, its blades slicing the thick air. I'm about to step aboard for one of Alaska's most exciting activities — a flightseeing adventure.

Despite the blustery winds, our chopper smoothly glides above narrow waterways and through mountainous valleys, where waterfalls' icy fingers stream down heavily forested mountainsides. Puffy clouds smother the mountain peaks as we approach the Meade Glacier, first flying over its terminal lake where icebergs bob in chalky waters. A short time later I can see the elongated 15-mile glacier through the valley, looking like a massive superhighway from the air.







Alaska's weather can be unpredictable at times, but maneuvering through it can add to the overall experience.

Upon landing, my studded boots grip the icy surface strewn with boulders and gritty gravel that, from above, give it an appearance of just a dirt-filled valley. But a closer look on the surface reveals the age-old glacial ice tinted with blue neon-like iridescent hues. "From the helicopters you can see the glaciers very well, looking like roadways or highways," says tour guide David Kramer.

Because of Alaska's sheer size and dramatic topography, a flightseeing trip should be included in every visitor's itinerary — whether by small plane, floatplane or helicopter. "Alaska has a lot of open country and very few roads, and if you really want to see what's out there, you have to do it by air," says small plane pilot Dan McGregor. "You get a bird's eye perspective of big country. It's an ideal way to cover a lot of area in a small amount of time."

Alaska's weather can be unpredictable at times, but maneuvering through it can add to the overall experience. "We get lightning coming through, rainbows and accentuated colors from rocks

and geological features that help build suspense and make the flight even more mystic," McGregor continues. "The thrill is being taken out of your normal comfort zone."

Flightseeing itineraries include many glaciers within the fjords of Southeast Alaska's Inside Passage, with trips often combining aerial sightseeing and ground activities. From Juneau, floatplanes land on rivers and lakes for lunch stops at lodges, while helicopters are used to whisk passengers to the Mendenhall and Norris glaciers for hiking, ice wall climbing and dog-sledding adventures. Aerial tours also include flying over five glaciers comprising the 1,500-square mile Juneau Icefield as well as the treed landscapes and torrent waterfalls of Tongass National Forest.

Although used as a means to travel to glaciers, helicopter rides are both an added bonus and integral part of the experience. Along with the Meade Glacier, helicopters departing Skagway also land on the Chilkat and Ferebee glaciers for hikes on some of the world's most impressive icefields. Dog sleds pulled by eager Alaskan

Huskies await those who land on the Denver Glacier.

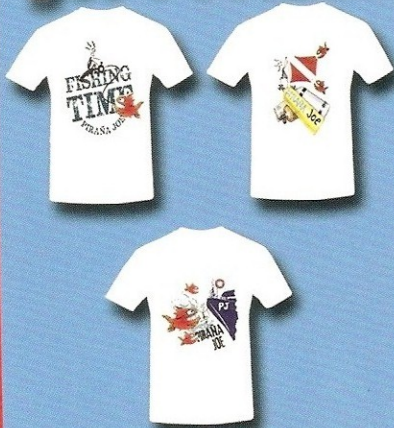
Floatplane and seaplane trips are popular in Ketchikan, departing to surrounding areas including the Tongass National Forest, which includes Prince of Wales Island and nearby islets, and the turbulent waterfalls, snowcapped peaks and alpine lakes of Misty Fjords National Monument. Misty Fjords, one of the nation's largest wilderness areas, spans more than two million acres and skirts the Canadian border. One key feature is the 237-foot-tall basalt island tower known as New Eddystone Rock, formed from ancient volcanic eruptions. For some of these trips, floatplanes take passengers to an awaiting high-speed catamaran for a tour of Rudyerd Bay at the entrance to Misty Fjords.

Ketchikan floatplane adventures also include landing near a salmon spawning stream often frequented by black bears feeding on coho or pink salmon, with opportunities to observe other forest wildlife including bald eagles, mink and black-tailed deer. Naturalist guides point out and explain some of the topographical

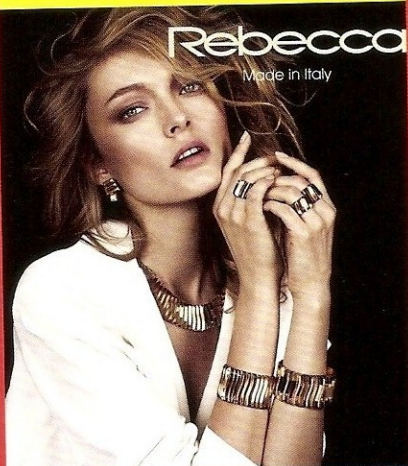


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Helicopters whisk passengers to the Mendenhall and Norris glaciers for hiking, ice wall climbing and dog-sledding adventures.

features formed from glacial activity, including waterfalls and granite cliffs.

In other parts of Alaska, floatplanes are chartered for flights into the bush with its thick forests and lakes adjacent to some of the state's estimated 100,000 glaciers. The single and twin-engine aircraft can be seen seemingly along every edge of Anchorage's Lake Hood, the busiest and largest floatplane base in the United States. Anchorage's Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum showcases historic planes, including a 1928 Stearman that was one of the first to land on Mount McKinley in 1932.

Farther north in Fairbanks, flightseeing involves journeys beyond the Arctic Circle. And in central Alaska, Denali National Park and Preserve's six million acres offer some of the state's most dramatic scenery with flightseeing trips available to the Yanert Glacier at the base of Mount Deborah, and to Mount McKinley for a summit flyover and glacial landings.

ALASKA FAMILY VACATIONS

Disney's cruise ships can only go so many places, and with so much Alaska to explore beyond its coasts, fortunately there's a way that families can experience the more in-land Alaskan highlights as well. Adventures by Disney®, a leader in family-guided group travel, gives travelers the full stunning spectrum of the 49th State, from the splendor of the Denali National Park to the tradition of Native Alaskan customs. You can bike wildlife-laden trails, ride jet boats along glacier-fed rivers, hop aboard a train for a scenic Alaska Railroad tour, and even capture the thrill of the Iditarod — the world's most famous sled race — and meet some of the racing dogs! For more information, visit AdventuresByDisney.com.

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Denali small plane tours can span 200-mile round trips, passing over the Eldridge Glacier that winds like a superhighway along the mountains. Denali flightseeing also gives visitors an often once in a lifetime chance to see Mount McKinley's 20,320-foot South Peak — North America's highest point — shooting through the cloud tops.

I'm still in awe of my flightseeing adventure from Skagway, a highpoint of my Alaska travels. "The feeling is

hard to describe other than to say words like awesome or spectacular or breathtaking or bucket list," says small plane pilot Bob Edison. "And we know that and want to make sure we get the best possible views that we can for the current weather conditions."

"You'll see people getting off the airplane crying because it's so beautiful," Edison continues. "And we're misty-eyed as well, even though we do it hundreds and hundreds of times."

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