

Fairbanks Visitor's Information

Fairbanks is the second-largest city located in Alaska, with the largest being Anchorage. It is located 370 road miles north of Anchorage, taking about eight hours by car. There are more than 80,000 residents in the greater Fairbanks area, and it is home to the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the oldest college in Alaska. Located near the confluence of the Tanana and Chena Rivers, the town was originally founded in the 1901 by Captain E.T. Barnette as a trading post serving stern-wheeler riverboats and early gold prospectors. The city is named after Charles Fairbanks, who served as the 26th vice president during Theodore Roosevelt's second term. Located in close proximity to the Arctic region and North Slope oil fields, the town still plays an important supply role in Alaska.

What about the weather?

Fairbanks typically enjoys long sunny days during the summer months, with an average of 20.9 daylight hours in June. The June average high temperature 70 degrees, and the average low is 50 degrees. The average precipitation at that time of year is only 1.4 inches, making it an ideal time to visit.

How do I get there?

Fairbanks has an international airport, and major carriers offer service from the continental United States. Alaska Airlines also offers a number of convenient flights each day between Fairbanks and Anchorage. Be aware that late June is a peak time to travel to Alaska, and many flights will be sold out 9 to 12 months in advance, so make your travel plans early.

Or, see the best of both worlds. Fly into Anchorage, and then take the Alaska Railroad north to Denali National Park and Fairbanks. You will cross some of the most spectacular scenery in North America—scenery that is otherwise inaccessible. Special railroad rates will allow you to stop over at Denali National Park. A wildlife tour of the Park is one of several types of activities available in the area. Denali is famous for its large bear population as well as moose, caribou, fox, dall sheep and a variety of birds and other creatures. For best viewing, you should rise early because the early morning is the time when animals are most active. When your tour is over, raft the white waters of the Nenana River. Then, return to the Railroad for the final leg of your trip to Fairbanks. When the ANREP meeting is over, you can fly back to Anchorage in only 45 minutes. Special rates for ANREP will be available on this site by July 2009.

Or, you might want to start your Alaska trip in Fairbanks, then tour south to Anchorage and fly home or depart by cruise ship from nearby Seward.

What should I do while in Fairbanks?

Start by requesting a free Visitor's Guide from the Convention and Visitor's Bureau or viewing the electronic version at info@explorefairbanks.com. For a State Visitor's Guide, go to www.alaskatia.org.

There is an endless variety of activities for people visiting Fairbanks, but each can usually be divided into one of three categories: natural, cultural and unique.

- **Natural:** Here is where people visiting Fairbanks find the beauty of the natural world in full panoramic vision. Some visitors choose the simple path — hiking a trail at Creamer's Field, canoeing or fishing the Chena River, or picking berries. Others go for a more dramatic approach to the Alaskan experience with a visit to a hot spring resort, or a day trip to the Denali National Park to see the tallest mountain in the country in person.
- **Cultural:** The center of town offers visitors a chance to explore the history of Fairbanks. So do the downtown museums. But for those who want the total cultural experience all in one place, Pioneer Park is the place to be. Visitors can experience the rush of gold mining, an authentic

Eskimo village, and a Pioneer Village filled with historical artifacts and voices of the past. Best of all, Pioneer Village is free and open year-round.

- **Unique:** Fairbanks has plenty of unique experiences. Just ask anyone who has lived there long enough. In March, tourists may get lucky enough to watch an ice sculpture contest first hand. Other times of the year they can still see the ice sculptures at the Ice Museum. How about mushing? Practically a state sport here, visitors are welcome to visit a dog lot in winter or summer, and even ride in a real dog sled.

While we're offering pre- and post-conference tours, you may want to consider augmenting them with some of these more unusual, off-the-beaten-path activities:

- Some of the **best fishing** in the state can be experienced in Interior Alaska. Only have half-a-day to spare but would love to try fishing while you're in Alaska? Try fly-fishing for Arctic Grayling, a great fighter characterized by its beautiful, long dorsal fin. It's not uncommon to catch trophy-sized 18-inchers. Or if you have a full day or several days, you can fly-in or do a float trip for salmon, trout, pike and many other species of fish.
- A **wildlife tour** of Denali National Park is one of several types of activities available in the Denali area. Denali is famous for its large bear population as well as moose, caribou, fox, dall sheep and a variety of birds and other creatures. For best viewing, you should rise early because the early morning is the time when animals are most active. Expert guides will help them spot the wildlife.
- A **nature walk** through the boreal forests is a good way to get acquainted with the unique environment in this land of contrasts. Take a nature walk with a ranger in Denali or make arrangements for a local naturalist to show your group the mysteries of the northern forest.
- The **Alaska Public Lands Information Center (APLIC)** is a must-do for anyone planning to experience nature in Alaska. Nearly 90 percent of the state of Alaska is publicly owned and the APLIC has information, slide shows, films and exhibits about those publicly owned lands across the state. It is in the new Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center on the banks of the Chena River. While there tour the exhibits that track the seasons in rural Alaska, speak to an Alaska Native Elder about his life, take part in a beadwork or skin sewing class. Then stroll along the river walking/biking path and cross the William Ransom Wood Memorial Bridge to the Doyon Building to visit their Chiefs' Court where traditional and modern Interior Alaska Native art lines the walls and hangs from the ceiling.
- **Arctic Circle trips** are increasingly popular. If you are interested in a full day trip and would like the opportunity to take a boat ride on the Yukon River, visit a homestead and have a chance to see some wildlife, you may be interested in a trip up the Dalton Highway. Several tour companies in the Fairbanks area offer excursions up the Dalton to the Arctic Circle and beyond. If you would like to include an Arctic Circle program in your tour but don't have a full day, consider a flightseeing trip to one of the remote bush villages north of the Arctic Circle. Many of the air services in Fairbanks offer evening or part-day trips to the northern reaches of the state. Aside from the beautiful views, some companies offer guided tours of the host villages, as well as Arctic Circle certificates for having crossed into the "Arctic."
- A **raft trip** on whitewater near Denali can be a great way to spice up a trip with an afternoon of thrills, but a peaceful float trip on the Chena or Chatanika Rivers near Fairbanks can give your clients a quiet, relaxing break from the road. A float trip of either kind can be expected to take a half to a full day. Some float-trip outfitters provide food on the trip and most are willing to make special arrangements for your group.
- **Hot springs resorts** in Interior Alaska are an ideal place to overnight, dine and swim. Particularly during the late summer when the nights are dark, the hot springs are a great place to view the northern lights. A visit to the hot springs is easily paired with a river float trip.

- **Flightseeing** to Denali is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. At 20,320 feet, Mt. McKinley is the tallest mountain in North America. A number of regional carriers offer flightseeing trips to the mountain. Some include glacier landings; others fly in pressurized airplanes, which allow you to circle the peak. If you're lucky, you can see climbers on the mountain!

For more ideas and a summer 2-5 day itinerary, go to
<http://www.explorefairbanks.com/static/index.cfm?action=group&contentID=198>

Special rates and tours for ANREP will be available on this site by July 2009.

Websites to visit:

Alaska Tour & Travel <http://www.alaskatravel.com/index.html>

Fairbanks Convention and Visitor's Bureau <http://www.explorefairbanks.com/>
Request a visitor's guide <http://www.explorefairbanks.com/request/>

Fairbanks Travel Guide (Wikitravel) <http://wikitravel.org/en/Fairbanks>

Come to Fairbanks <http://www.cometofairbanks.com/travel.php>