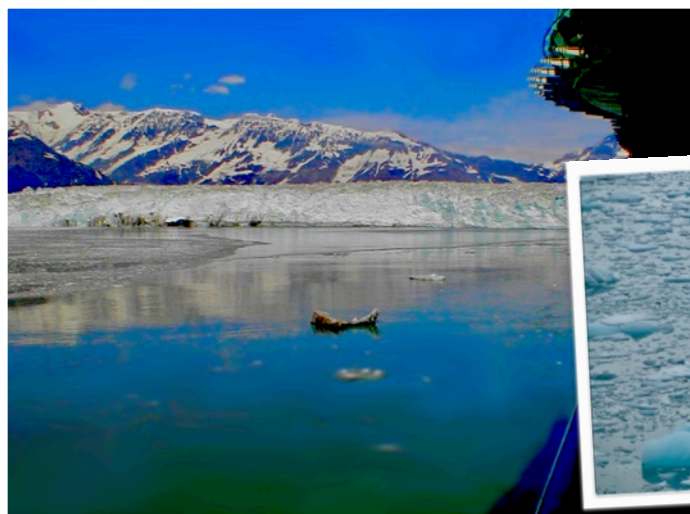


# The Intentional Traveler's Guide To Cruising

Get The Most Out Of  
Cruising With Great Tips  
And Money Saving Ideas



THE INTENTIONAL TRAVELER • INTEND2TRAVEL.COM • UPDATED NOV 2019



A cruise ship approaches  
Hubbard Glacier.

Icy in the Misty Fiord.

## Cruising And The Alaska Glaciers

Everybody wants to cruise Alaska. Cruising Alaska is one of the most popular itineraries with all the major cruise lines offer these cruises along with a number of the lesser known smaller cruise lines.

We often get asked what Alaska cruise we would recommend and we do have some very specific ideas on what to look for when making your plans. Alaska has a lot to see and almost any cruise will be a memorable experience but there are a number of differences that can be important.

If you're thinking about an Alaska cruise it's helpful to get a full picture of the general environment. First there are a lot of cruise ships

cruising in the summer season all looking for places to go and sights to see. Because coastal Alaska has such a limited number of ports of call and specific locations to visit, there are a lot of similarities between cruises. The major Alaska

cruise ports are Skagway, Juneau, and Ketchikan and each has a lot to offer and these are popular with passengers. There are also several less visited stops with the most common being Haines, Icy Strait Point and Seward. Haines and Icy Strait Point are smaller ports that primarily offer opportunities to take nature tours. Seward is a port included on many one-way Alaska cruises.



Mendenhall Glacier

In addition to ports of call there are also a couple of possible "cruise only" attractions on most Alaska cruise itineraries. The first is the Misty Fiord which is usually a half day of cruising up through the narrow Misty Fiord where steep terrain rises quickly from the water offering frequent views of waterfalls and craggy mountain tops. Fog frequently drifts over the landscape and it is not uncommon to spot wildlife along the shore as well as in the water. The other is Hubbard Glacier where the ships cruise up relatively close to the face of the glacier.

In our opinion the most spectacular sights on an Alaska cruise are the glaciers and that should be a prime consideration when it comes to selecting a cruise line and a specific itinerary. Because the number of ships allowed to go up near Hubbard Glacier are very limited we recommend that a high priority would be to select a cruise that includes this glacier. Hubbard

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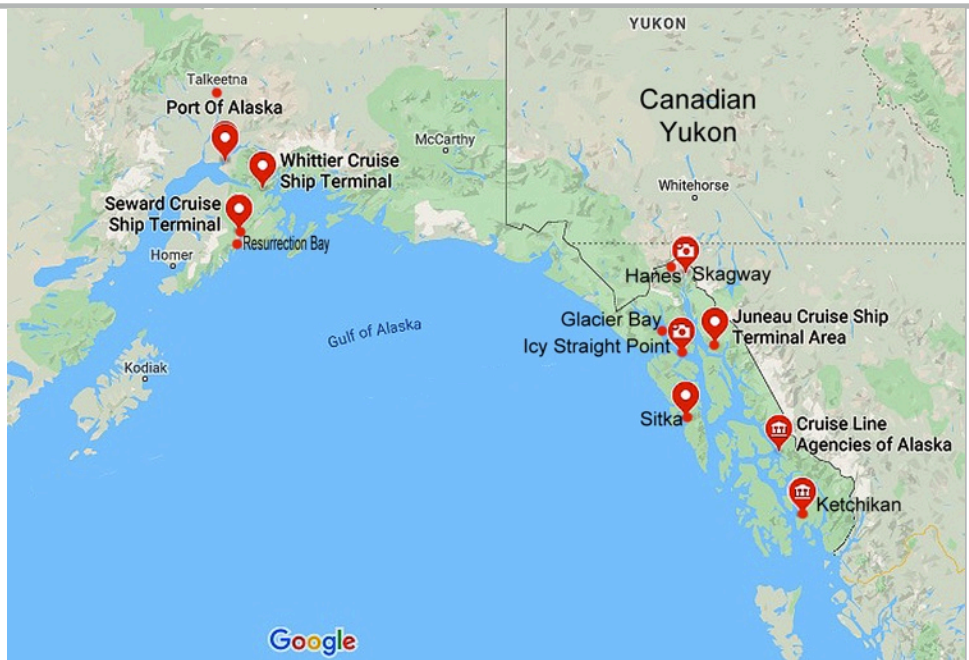
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is a huge glacier that terminates at a bay and it is “calving” huge chunks into the water constantly putting on a spectacular show. In addition the bay is filled with icebergs in all shapes and sizes with flowing chunks of ice and seals being a common sight.

Mendenhall Glacier is another popular destination and usually all you need is a bus ticket while in Juneau to visit. The glacier is a National Park with a good visitor center, great hiking trails and it really is only a half hour bus ride from town. Almost all Alaska cruise passengers have an opportunity to visit this glacier.

A third glacier of particular note is Dawes Glacier located at the end of Tracy Arm Fjord. It also terminates into water with calving a frequent event. Unfortunately it is not on many ship itineraries probably because there is also a limit on the number of ships allowed all the way up the fjord. Tracy Arm Fjord is a branch off of the Misty Fjord and while cruise ships often include Misty Fjord, only a few make it up all the way up to Dawes Glacier.



A fourth frequent opportunity to visit a glacier is a helicopter tour up on the Juneau Ice Field. These tours will fly you up onto a major glacier and let you off for a guided walk across a section of the glacier. The helicopter tours are available through your cruise ship usually from Juneau as well as Skagway. One tip that can save you a lot of money is to book the tour on your own rather than through the ship. You can call using U.S. cell service when you're picking up local cell service near the popular towns and you can often book a spot at the last minute. The helicopter tours originate

only a short distance from the cruise piers and only take a couple of hours so it is easy to fit into a port of call day as well.



The port of call of Seward is available on a number of Alaska cruises and it is the most northern port on almost all one-way itineraries. Many one-way cruises go up to Seward as this is a jumping off point for land tours to Denali. Seward is the beginning of the Alaska Train routes that go through Anchorage, Fairbanks and Talkeetna to reach Denali Park.

Seward is also located on Resurrection Bay and we would highly recommend a boat tour out to view wildlife if you make it up to this port, a really worthwhile experience.

Regardless of which cruise line you prefer you should make an effort to include a glacier visit as part of the experience. Pay attention to the available itineraries and try to get a cruise that includes either Dawes or Hubbard glaciers. Most cruise will list Hubbard on the cruise itinerary but you will probably have to make some inquiries regarding which cruises visit Dawes.

