

Some of the Best Day Walks in **ALASKA** Wednesday 7 July – Wednesday 21 July 2027

Two memorable weeks exploring the best trails and scenic sights around the “Grand Circle” in the southern centre of the state.



Alaska is the largest U.S. state, covering roughly 1,723,337 km². Its sheer scale is difficult to grasp: it is more than twice the size of Texas and would stretch from coast to coast if superimposed on the lower 48 states.

There are hundreds of walks in this state, which would take several months to traverse, so inevitably one must concentrate on just one region. Focussing on the Southcentral region is highly recommended for most visitors because it serves as the state's primary travel hub, balancing rugged wilderness with modern accessibility.

Why Focus on Southcentral Alaska?

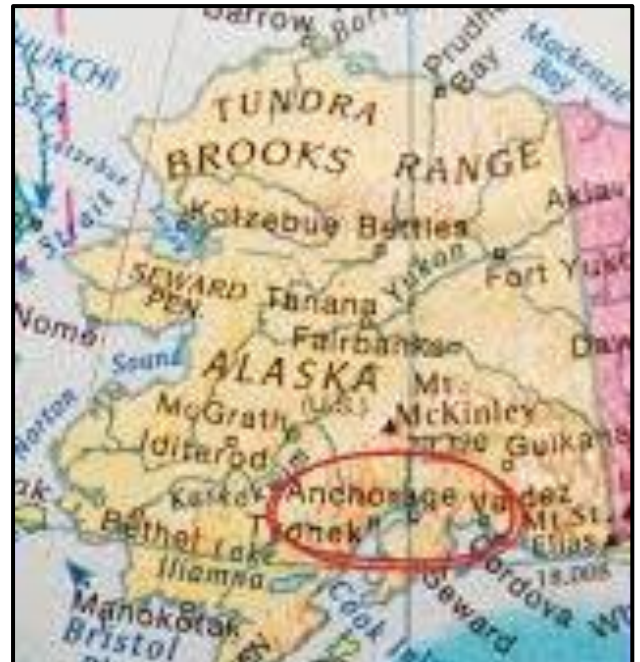
Superior Accessibility: It is the only region in Alaska with an extensive, interconnected highway system, making it ideal for road trips by car or RV. It also hosts the state's largest international airport in **Anchorage** and is a central part of the **Alaska Railroad** network.

Infrastructure & Amenities: Over half of Alaska's population lives here, meaning you have better access to services, lodging, diverse dining, and supplies than in more remote northern or western regions.

Condensed Iconic Landscapes: You can experience nearly every type of Alaskan environment—including glaciers, fjords, alpine meadows, and boreal forests—without traveling thousands of miles.

Wildlife Viewing: It is considered the best region to see "Alaska's Big Five": moose, bears, caribou, wolves, and Dall sheep.

Major Attractions: The region is home to iconic destinations like **Denali National Park**, Kenai Fjords National Park, and the massive **Wrangell-St. Elias National Park**.



GENERAL INFORMATION

- Led by Phillip Donnell.
- \$NZ8450pp Anchorage to Anchorage.
(based on a minimum of 10 participants and subject to currency fluctuations)
Prices is estimated at May 2026, so subject to change until fully paid.

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Accommodations in hotels, motels and lodges on a twin share basis.
- Transport by hired minivan or people mover.
- Breakfasts (continental).
- Experienced Kiwi trip leader throughout.
- Entry fees to sites and parks.

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- International travel.
- Lunches and dinners.
- Travel insurance,
- Personal expenses or any arrangements outside of the itinerary and its inclusions.

STRUCTURE OF THE TRIP

- **Transport**

A hired minivan. This is hands down the best for a small group and to access trail heads, giving total flexibility, and has been tested on our previous Footsteps overseas trips. While Phillip is the van hirer and main driver, we will need at least one support driver, so will look for volunteers within the group. This is not an onerous task, roads are of a good standard, all are sealed and of course, driving is on the left. A standard NZ car licence is all that is required. Luggage is carried within and will be limited – so only a moderate main bag and daypack please.

- **Accommodation**

This will be a mix of hotels, B & B's and may include a few hostels in remote locations if that is what is available. Our intention is for couples to have their own rooms and for solos of the same gender to twin share where possible. The final tally of participants will determine the outcomes and some flexibility will be needed. Facilities will be private, but could be shared on occasions.

The variety of accommodation will be considerable, and some may be quite atmospheric or located in very scenic locations in remote places. Generally we only spend one night in each place, but there are also some two nighters sprinkled through the itinerary, and clearly indicated.

- **Meals**

All breakfasts are included. For dinners, it is anticipated that the group will either self-cater or go out together somewhere, which at times may be at the accommodation. Leaving lunches to your own choice gives plenty of freedom. There may be accommodations that can provide a picnic lunch, or items can be bought at local stores or enroute when travelling. Note: not all accommodation units have kitchens or kitchenettes, but most have electric jug, refrigerator and microwave.

- **Walking programme**

We have offered a wide range of options in the daily itinerary along with distances and anticipated times. These will all give a great representation of the areas visited. If you have a medium grade of fitness and tramp regularly then this holiday is for you! All options are day or part day trips.

You need to be comfortable with a day pack for carrying gear, clothes, perhaps your lunch, snacks, drink bottle, first aid kit and valuables, not much different to what most people should be used to on day tramps at home. Logistics, the interests of the party and of course weather will dictate the outcomes, but Phillip will brief everyone each day.

Pre-trip newsletters will provide further information and details that cannot be included in this dossier., including recommended gear list, accommodation schedule and anything else relevant. This is normally assembled after final payments have been made, supplier invoices cleared and all inclusions finalised.

To secure your place, you need to:

1. Read the Booking Conditions at the end of this dossier.
2. Fill in the Registration and Waiver forms. Return these (along with a copy of your passport) to Footsteps (by scan or post).
3. Pay your deposit.

ITINERARY: ALASKA 2027

This is a 15-day loop through the "Grand Circle" (Anchorage – Denali – Valdez – Seward), which is the most efficient route for a 12-seater 2WD van. This route stays on well-maintained, paved highways while providing access to premier alpine and coastal walking trails. The group will select walks from those listed for each day along with any others that we find out about along the way...

Participants need to reach Anchorage in time for the initial briefing on Wednesday 7 July at 8 a.m.

THE MOUNTAIN INTERIOR (DAYS 1-4)

**Day 1
Wednesday
7 July**

Anchorage

- **Short (Easy): Tony Knowles Coastal Trail** (1–3 hours (flexible distance). Paved and flat with views of Cook Inlet and potential moose sightings.
- **Moderate/Hard Walk: Flattop Mountain** (5km, 2.5–4 hours). A round trip with a steep rocky summit and city views.
- **Moderate Walk: Eklutna Lakeside Trail** (2–6 hours). Multi-use trail along the lake. Easy flat terrain. Choose your distance.
- **Easy Short Walk: Potter Marsh Boardwalk** (1.6km). A flat wetland walk.

Overnight: Anchorage

**Day 2
Thursday
8 July**

Anchorage to Talkeetna

- **Drive:** 2.5 hours.
- **Easy Short Walk: Talkeetna River Trail** (1–2 hrs). Forested path to the river confluence with Denali views.
- **Easy Short Walk: Talkeetna Lakes Trail** (10.5km, 2 hrs). A scenic loop through the boreal forest.



- **Moderate: Curry Ridge Trail** (11.2km, 3.5–5 hours) (located in Denali State Park on the drive up).

Overnight: Talkeetna

Days 3-5
Friday 9 July
Sat 10 July
Sun 11 July

Denali National Park

- **Drive:** 2.5 hours to Denali.

Short & Easy Walks (1 km – 4 km)

- **Mountain Vista Loop (1.0 km):** A flat, gravel trail at Mile 13 with great views of Denali on clear days.
- **Savage River Loop (3.4 km):** A relatively flat, scenic trail that follows the river at the end of the 2WD-accessible road.
- **Horseshoe Lake Trail (3.4 km):** A popular loop that descends to a picturesque lake with a high chance of spotting beavers and moose.
- **McKinley Station Trail (2.6 km):** Connects the Visitor Centre to the Riley Creek Campground, featuring historic sites and forest scenery.

Moderate & Longer Hikes (4 km – 15 km)

- **Rock Creek Trail (3.9 km one way / 7.8 km return):** As discussed, this connects the Visitor Center and Sled Dog Kennels.
- **Mount Healy Overlook (8.7 km return):** A steep climb offering panoramic views of the park entrance and the Alaska Range.
- **Savage Alpine Trail (6.4 km point-to-point):** A strenuous hike between Savage River and Savage Campground with massive mountain vistas.
- **Triple Lakes Trail (14.5 km one way):** The longest maintained trail in the park. You can hike a portion of it from the trailhead near the Visitor Centre or the Nenana River bridge for a round trip within your 15 km limit

Overnight: Denali National Park



Denali (Mount McKinley) – the highest peak in North America (6190m)

THE HIGH FRONTIER (DAYS 6-8)

**Day 6
Monday
12 July**

Denali to Glennallen

- **Drive:** 4 hours via the paved Richardson Highway (avoiding the gravel Denali Highway).
- **Easy Short Walk: Copper River Bluff Trail** (1 hr). Overlooks the massive river and volcanic peaks.
- **Moderate Walk:** Maclaren Summit Trail (2-3 hours) for views of the Maclaren Glacier.
- **Moderate Walk:** Tangle Ridge (3km). Ridge walk with expansive views.
- **Stenuous Walk: Willow Mountain** (9km, 5-7 hours). High elevation gain (635m), spectacular views.

Overnight: Copper Centre

**Day 7
Tuesday
13 July**

Wrangell-St. Elias (via Paved Access)

Wrangell-St. Elias is America's largest national park.

- **Moderate Long Walk: Liberty Falls Trail** (4km, 3-4 hrs). Located on the paved Edgerton Highway; offers ridgeline views of the park's interior.
- **Easy Boreal Forest Loop.** Short walk near the Visitor Centre.

Overnight: Copper Centre

**Day 8
Wednesday
14 July**

Drive to Valdez



- **Drive:** 2 hours through Thompson Pass.
- **Easy Short Walk: Worthington Glacier Ridge** (1.5 hrs). Paved access to the edge of one of the world's most accessible glaciers.
- **Moderate Short Walk: Keystone Canyon Pack Trail** (2 hrs). Historic trail passing Bridal Veil and Horsetail Falls.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard: Shoup Bay Trail (Section A) (10.5km, 5–6 hours). Round trip through meadows and flats. • Moderate/Hard: Mineral Creek Trail (20km, 6 hours). Wide gravel path that climbs to an old stamp mill. <p>Overnight: Valdez.</p>
THE GLACIAL COAST (DAYS 9-14)	
<p>Day 9 Thursday 15 July</p>	<p>Valdez Coastline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Short Walk: Dock Point Trail (1 hr). Forested loop overlooking the harbor. • Easy Short Walk: Old Valdez Townsite (1.5 hrs). Interpretive walk through the remains of the town destroyed in the 1964 earthquake. • Easy Short Walk: Dock Point Trail (1.6km, 1h). Forested loop near the harbour. Known for being one of the best "bang for your buck" hikes in the area. <p>Overnight: Valdez.</p>
<p>Day 10 Friday 16 July</p>	<p>Valdez to Palmer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive: 5.5 hours via the scenic Glenn Highway. • Easy Short Walk: Thunderbird Falls (3.2km, 1.5 hrs). A well-maintained path to a 70m waterfall. <p>Government Peak Recreation Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPRA Trail Loops (Lower Level): 1–2 hours. These are wide, well-maintained loops near the Chalet totalling several km They are mostly flat or have moderate hills. • Blueberry Knoll Trail: 2.5–3 hours (round trip). This is a 5km out-and-back trail. While relatively short, it is steep, gaining about 450m to reach a scenic overlook. • Government Peak Race Trail (Summit): 4–6 hours (round trip). This is the direct route to the summit. It is "relentlessly steep" and covers roughly 10km with nearly 1200m feet of elevation gain. • Government Peak Loop: 6–6.5 hours. A popular choice for those wanting to see everything, this combines several trails into a challenging 10km loop <p>Overnight: Valdez.</p>
<p>Day 11 Saturday 17 July</p>	<p>Hatcher Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Short Walk: Independence Mine State Park (1–2 hrs). Self-guided tour through historic mining ruins. • Moderate Short Walk: April Bowl Trail (2 hrs). Steep but short climb to turquoise alpine tarns.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strenuous Walk: Reed Lakes Trail (14.5km, 6–8 hours). “Brutal” trek which includes boulder scrambling). • Moderate Walk: Bodenbug Butte (5 km, 1.5 hours) For a view of the Matanuska Valley. <p>Overnight: Palmer</p>
Day 12 Sunday 18 July	<p>Palmer to Seward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive: 3.5 hours. • Easy Short Walk: Byron Glacier Trail (2.2km, 1 hr). Flat forest walk to a hanging glacier and snowfields. • Moderate Short Walk: Winner Creek to Hand Tram (7km return, 3 hrs). Lush rainforest trail with a unique river crossing. <p>Overnight: Seward</p>
Day 13 Monday 19 July	<p>Kenai Fjords National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate Long Walk: Exit Glacier / Harding Icefield (Lower) (4–5 hrs). Hike to the "Marmot Meadows" for incredible views of the icefield without the strenuous final ascent. • Strenuous Walk: Harding Icefield Trail (12km, 6 hours) A challenging trek gaining 1100m. • Easy Short Walk: Exit Glacier Overlook (1.5 hrs). Paved and gravel paths to the glacier's edge. • Easy Short Walk: Two Lakes Trail: (1.5km). A wooded loop within Seward town. <p>Overnight: Seward</p>
Day 14 Tuesday 20 July	<p>Homer to Anchorage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive: 4.5–5 hours. • Moderate Walk: Portage Pass (Whittier) (6.5km, 2-3 hours). A hike with incredible views of Portage Glacier. Can just go to the Pass. • Easy Short Walk: Potter Marsh Boardwalk (1 hr). A final flat walk over wetlands for birdwatching before arriving back in Anchorage. <p>Overnight: Anchorage</p>
Day 15 Wednesday 21 July	<p>Trip ends after breakfast. Own arrangements.</p>

Alaska 2027: Booking Conditions

1. Participants agree to all terms and conditions by signing the Registration Form.
2. All prospective participants on this trip must abide by the Footsteps Covid policy (see below)
3. Phillip Donnell and *Footsteps Walking and Travel Club* are not responsible or liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may arise from weather, pandemic, defect in any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, or through the acts or default of any person or company engaged in carrying out any of the arrangements of the trip. Everyone participates entirely at their own risk. The separate waiver form must be completed.
4. We reserve the right to cancel the trip if minimum numbers don't eventuate. In such an event, all monies paid will be refunded. The minimum number for this trip is ten.
5. *Footsteps* reserves the right to make any modifications to the trip that may be necessary. The walks undertaken each day are determined by group consensus, but as far as possible we endeavour to meet your personal preferences.
6. The trip fee includes subsidisation of the leader/driver administrative and travel expenses, as well as a gift of appreciation/gratuity.
7. Registrations close on **1 April 2027** or earlier if all the spaces are filled. The trip is currently viable in terms of minimum numbers and will proceed.
8. Registrations are accepted in good faith on a first comer's basis on receipt of the Registration Form and passport scan. A deposit of \$500 per person is paid at the time of registration. The balance of the trip fee is due to be paid by **1 June 2027**.
9. Our preferred method of payment is internet banking to Footsteps P J Donnell/Katrina Tulip, Kiwibank 38-9002-0435674-03. Please write your surname and the name of the trip ("Alaska") in the reference box.
10. Cancellations: If you need to cancel your registration for any reason, you must advise *Footsteps* in writing as soon as possible. An email is acceptable, a phone call alone is not. In the event of cancellation by *Footsteps*, you will receive a full refund. Under *normal* circumstance, cancellations up to 60 days prior incur a 10% cancellation fee. For 60-30 days prior, 30% is deducted. For 30-15 days prior, 60% is deducted. After 14 days prior, there is no refund. If you find a suitable replacement person, the above cancellation fees MAY be waived.
11. Personal travel insurance is compulsory. It is recommended that this includes cover for travel plans being disrupted by Covid-19.

Registration and Waiver forms are below...

FOOTSTEPS WALKING AND TRAVEL CLUB OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Alaska 2027: Registration Form

Complete and send this (along with a passport scan and the waiver form) to our postal address (see base of page) or scan and email. The deposit required is \$500 per person. Our preferred payment method is internet banking into Kiwibank 38-9002-0435674-03 P J Donnell/Katrina Tulip (with covering email please, or your surname/name of trip in reference column).

Your full name(s) and please underline or highlight your preferred first name(s)

Postal Address:

Day/Night phone:

Mobile”

Email:

Date(s) of birth:

Are you comfortable in close contact with like-minded travellers with all the give and take needed for harmony? Please extend your answers overleaf or on separate paper, or by email.

Specify any dietary requirements, allergies or medical conditions:

Contact person in NZ for any emergencies : name, address, contact phone numbers, email and the relationship to you. In the event of any emergency, this is the sole person you are authorizing us to liaise with

I/We have read the trip information and booking conditions. I / We enclose the deposit of \$500pp. I / We agree to pay the remainder of trip costs by the due date (signed and dated by each person registering):

Send (with passport scan and waiver form) to : Footsteps, 3/B Te Arawa Place, Welcome Bay, Tauranga 3112. Email: footstepsanz@gmail.com

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM

PROVIDER: Footsteps Walking and Travel Club (Phillip John Donnell)(“Footsteps”)

PARTICIPANT:

(“the Participant”)

I, the Participant, release and forever discharge and hold harmless Footsteps from all and any liability, claims, demands and damages, of whatsoever kind or nature, whether foreseeable or otherwise, either at law or in equity, which arise or may arise from the services and activities provided and arranged by Footsteps.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Waiver discharges Footsteps from any liability or claim that I may have against Footsteps in respect of personal injury, illness, medical treatment, death, property loss or damage, and otherwise howsoever, resulting from the services and activities provided and arranged by Footsteps. I hereby waive all such rights and remedies.

I accept that I participate in the services and activities entirely at my own risk.

I acknowledge and accept that this Release and Waiver:

- (a) Extends to and covers all contractors, agents, volunteers and employees of Footsteps; and
- (b) Binds the executors, administrators, successors, attorneys and assigns of both parties.

Signed by the Participant:

Date: _____