

Alaska Glacier Trekking Guide

Walk on Ancient Ice and Experience Alaska Up Close



Walking across a glacier is one of the most unforgettable adventures Alaska has to offer. Unlike viewing glaciers from a cruise ship or scenic overlook, **glacier trekking** lets you step onto ancient ice, explore incredible formations, and experience one of nature's most powerful landscapes from ground level.

With the help of experienced guides and specialized equipment, you'll hike across ice that has formed over thousands of years, discovering brilliant blue crevasses, crystal-clear meltwater streams, towering ice formations, and breathtaking panoramic views.

For active travelers looking for a true bucket-list experience, glacier trekking delivers an adventure unlike any other.

What is Glacier Trekking?



Glacier trekking is a guided hike across the surface of a glacier.

Depending on the excursion, you may:

- Walk across ancient ice
- Explore ice formations

- See deep blue crevasses
- Learn about glacier formation
- Drink fresh glacier meltwater (when permitted by your guide)
- Discover how glaciers shape Alaska's landscape

No previous glacier hiking experience is required for most beginner-friendly tours.

Where Can You Go Glacier Trekking?



Some of Alaska's best glacier trekking locations include:

Mendenhall Glacier (Juneau)

One of the most popular choices for cruise travelers, often accessed by helicopter for guided glacier walks.

Exit Glacier (Near Seward)

Offers ranger programs and guided hiking opportunities.

Matanuska Glacier

One of the few road-accessible glaciers where visitors can walk directly onto the ice with a guide.

Root Glacier

Located in Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve, this glacier is a favorite for adventurous hikers.



Getting There



Many glacier trekking excursions begin with a scenic helicopter flight.

You'll enjoy:

- Aerial glacier views
- Mountain landscapes
- Glacier landing
- Guided walk across the ice

Other locations, such as Exit Glacier and Matanuska Glacier, are reached by road and short hikes.



What Equipment is Provided?



Most guided tours provide:

- Crampons (traction devices)
- Helmet
- Safety briefing
- Trekking poles (on some tours)

Professional guides will explain how to safely walk on glacier ice before your adventure begins.

❄ What Will You See?



Every glacier is unique, but you may encounter:

- Brilliant blue ice
- Deep crevasses
- Ice ridges
- Meltwater streams
- Glacial pools
- Ice caves (only when safe and accessible)
- Incredible mountain scenery

No two glacier hikes are ever exactly alike because glaciers are constantly changing.



Can Cruise Guests Go Glacier Trekking?



Absolutely!

Many cruise lines offer glacier trekking excursions from:

- Juneau
- Seward (pre- or post-cruise)
- Anchorage (land tours)

Juneau is the most popular port for helicopter-supported glacier hikes.

Photography Tips



For amazing photos:

- Include people to show the glacier's enormous scale.
- Capture the vibrant blue ice.
- Photograph interesting textures and cracks.
- Use a wide-angle lens or your phone's panoramic mode.
- Keep your camera secure with a wrist strap.

The changing light on glacier ice creates stunning images throughout the hike.

What Should You Wear?

Dress in layers.

Bring:

- ✓ Waterproof jacket
- ✓ Warm clothing
- ✓ Hiking pants
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Gloves

✓ Camera

Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes suitable for walking. Your guide will fit crampons over your footwear if needed.



Is Glacier Trekking Safe?

When done with a professional guide—yes.

Guides:

- Select safe routes.
- Monitor glacier conditions.
- Provide safety equipment.
- Explain proper walking techniques.
- Adjust the hike based on weather and ice conditions.

Always follow your guide's instructions and stay with the group.



Premium Travel Group Tip

If you're deciding between a glacier viewing excursion and a glacier trekking excursion, think about the kind of experience you want. Seeing a glacier from a distance is spectacular, but walking across one creates a memory that's hard to match. If you're comfortable with moderate activity, glacier trekking is one of Alaska's most rewarding adventures.



Continue Exploring Alaska

Continue planning your Alaska adventure with our other guides:

- Glacier Helicopter Experience Guide
 - Flightseeing Experience Guide
 - Dog Sledding Experience Guide
 - Mendenhall Glacier Guide
 - Exit Glacier Guide (*future guide*)
 - Kenai Fjords Guide
 - Juneau Cruise Port Guide
 - Alaska Planning Guide
 - Alaska Packing Guide
 - Best Time to Visit Alaska
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Fun Facts

- Glacier ice can be **thousands of years old**.
 - The striking blue color appears because dense glacier ice absorbs most colors of light while reflecting blue wavelengths.
 - Glaciers are constantly moving, although many move only a few inches to several feet each day.
 - Some glacier trekking tours include opportunities to safely taste fresh glacial meltwater.
 - Alaska is home to **more than 100,000 glaciers**, ranging from small alpine glaciers to massive icefields.
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Why Glacier Trekking is So Special

Standing on a glacier gives you a completely different appreciation for Alaska's natural beauty. Instead of simply admiring these rivers of ice from afar, you'll feel their immense scale beneath your feet and witness the intricate details that can only be experienced up close. Glacier trekking combines adventure, education, and breathtaking scenery into one unforgettable experience that few destinations in the world can offer.



Joe's Logbook

The first time you step onto a glacier, it's hard to believe what you're standing on. You're literally walking across ice that has been forming for centuries—sometimes even thousands of years.

What surprised me most wasn't just the scenery. It was the colors. Pictures never quite capture how vibrant the blue ice really is or how many textures and patterns you discover once you're standing on the glacier itself.

If you're an active traveler looking for something beyond the typical sightseeing excursion, glacier trekking is an experience I'd highly recommend. It's one thing to say you *saw* an Alaska glacier. It's something entirely different to say you *walked* on one.

It's one of those adventures that makes you appreciate just how incredible—and how wild—Alaska truly is.