



Haines, Alaska Cruise Port Guide

Your Complete Guide to Alaska's Adventure Capital & Eagle Watching Destination



Haines may not receive as many cruise ships as Juneau or Skagway, but many experienced Alaska travelers consider it one of the state's hidden gems. Nestled between the towering peaks of the Chilkat Mountains and the waters of Lynn Canal, Haines offers breathtaking scenery, rich Alaska Native heritage, Gold Rush history, and some of the best wildlife viewing in Southeast Alaska.

Unlike some of Alaska's busier ports, Haines has maintained its authentic small-town charm. Visitors will find fewer crowds, friendly locals, and an abundance of outdoor adventures, making it an excellent destination for travelers looking to experience the real Alaska.

Whether you're interested in bald eagles, scenic drives, hiking, kayaking, or simply exploring a peaceful Alaska community, Haines delivers an unforgettable experience.



Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Cruise ships dock at the **Port Chilkoot Dock**, located just outside downtown Haines.

From the pier:

- Complimentary shuttle service is often available.
- Downtown is approximately 1 mile away.
- Many attractions are within a short drive.

The port is easy to navigate and never feels overcrowded.



Explore Downtown Haines



Downtown Haines offers a relaxed atmosphere with locally owned businesses.

You'll find:

- Art galleries
- Gift shops
- Local cafés
- Breweries
- Alaska Native artwork
- Outdoor outfitters

It's the perfect place to enjoy a slower pace than many larger cruise ports.

★ Top Things to Do

🦅 Alaska Bald Eagle Preserve



Haines is world-famous for its bald eagles.

The **Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve** protects over 48,000 acres of wilderness and is home to one of the world's largest gatherings of bald eagles during the fall salmon run.

Even during the cruise season, eagle sightings are common.

🚗 Scenic Drive Along the Haines Highway



One of North America's most scenic highways.

Expect to see:

- Mountain vistas
- Rivers
- Waterfalls
- Wildlife
- Alpine scenery

Many shore excursions travel portions of this incredible route.

Chilkoot Lake



One of the area's most beautiful natural settings.

Activities include:

- Wildlife viewing
- Kayaking
- Photography
- Scenic walks

During salmon season, bears are often spotted fishing nearby.

Fort William H. Seward



Built in 1902, this historic military post is now home to:

- Museums
- Art galleries
- Restaurants
- Historic buildings
- Beautiful harbor views

It's one of Alaska's best-preserved historic forts.



Outdoor Adventures

Haines is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise.

Popular excursions include:

- River rafting
- Sea kayaking
- Hiking
- ATV tours
- Mountain biking
- Fly fishing

Adventure seekers will find plenty to choose from.



Wildlife



Wildlife is one of Haines' biggest attractions.

Common sightings include:

- Bald eagles
- Brown bears
- Black bears
- Moose
- Mountain goats
- Harbor seals
- Humpback whales (seasonal)

Bring binoculars—you'll likely use them throughout the day.



Local Food

Don't miss:

- Fresh halibut
- Wild Alaska salmon
- King crab (seasonal)
- Fish & chips
- Reindeer sausage
- Wild berry desserts
- Locally brewed craft beer

Haines is known for fresh seafood and welcoming local restaurants.



Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Alaska Native carvings
- Handmade jewelry
- Ulu knives
- Local artwork
- Smoked salmon
- Wild berry jams
- Alaska apparel

Many shops feature locally made products.



Weather

Summer temperatures typically range from:

50–65°F (10–18°C)

Expect:

- Cool mornings
- Comfortable afternoons
- Occasional rain

Layered clothing and a waterproof jacket are recommended.



Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Walking downtown
- Cruise line excursions
- Shuttle service
- Taxi
- Rental car (limited availability)

Many visitors choose organized excursions to explore beyond town.



What to Pack

Bring:

- ✓ Waterproof rain jacket
 - ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
 - ✓ Binoculars
 - ✓ Camera
 - ✓ Small backpack
 - ✓ Layered clothing
 - ✓ Sunglasses
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Hidden Gems

One of Haines' greatest strengths is simply slowing down and enjoying the scenery.

Don't overlook:

- Small waterfront parks
- Quiet walking trails
- Local coffee shops
- Harbor viewpoints
- Conversations with local residents

Sometimes the simplest moments become the most memorable.

Premium Travel Group Tip

If you've already visited Juneau or Skagway on previous Alaska cruises, Haines offers a refreshing change of pace. Instead of rushing from attraction to attraction, take time to appreciate the town's authentic atmosphere and incredible scenery.

If wildlife is high on your bucket list, consider a guided excursion into the Chilkat Valley. The combination of mountain scenery, rivers, and abundant wildlife makes it one of Southeast Alaska's hidden treasures.

Continue Exploring Alaska

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 - Alaska Wildlife Guide
 - Alaska Inside Passage Guide
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 - Skagway Cruise Port Guide
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Why Visit Haines?

Haines offers a side of Alaska that many visitors never experience. Free from large crowds and commercialized attractions, it provides a genuine connection to the state's incredible landscapes, rich history, and remarkable wildlife. Whether you're watching a bald eagle soar overhead, exploring historic Fort William H. Seward, or driving through the stunning Chilkat Valley, Haines reminds you that some of Alaska's greatest treasures are found off the beaten path.



Joe's Logbook

Haines is one of those ports that tends to surprise people. It doesn't have the crowds of Juneau or the Gold Rush feel of Skagway, and that's exactly what makes it special.

If you're looking for an authentic Alaska experience, this is the place to slow down. Spend some time talking with locals, enjoy the scenery, and keep your camera and binoculars close by because wildlife can appear almost anywhere. The drive through the Chilkat Valley is one of the most beautiful in Southeast Alaska, and if you're lucky, you'll spot bald eagles, bears, or even a moose along the way.

One thing I've learned is that not every memorable port needs flashy attractions. Sometimes the quiet beauty of a place like Haines becomes the part of your Alaska cruise you remember most long after you've returned home.