



Ketchikan, Alaska Cruise Port Guide

Your Complete Guide to Alaska's First Port of Call & Salmon Capital of the World



For many southbound Alaska cruises, Ketchikan is the **first taste of Alaska**, and it's an unforgettable introduction. Nestled between the Tongass National Forest and the Tongass Narrows, Ketchikan is known for its colorful waterfront, rich Native Alaska culture, incredible salmon fishing, and one of the world's largest collections of totem poles.

Often called the "**Salmon Capital of the World**," Ketchikan is a favorite among photographers, history lovers, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Whether you're strolling along historic Creek Street, watching floatplanes take off from the harbor, or exploring centuries-old Native traditions, Ketchikan offers an authentic glimpse into Southeast Alaska.

Despite being one of Alaska's smaller communities, Ketchikan consistently ranks as one of the most popular cruise ports in the state.



Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Ketchikan has multiple cruise berths located along the downtown waterfront.

Most ships dock within walking distance of:

- Creek Street
- Downtown shopping
- Restaurants
- Museums
- Excursion meeting points
- Visitor Center

The port is compact and very easy to explore on foot.



Explore Historic Downtown



Downtown Ketchikan is full of charm.

You'll discover:

- Local shops
- Seafood restaurants
- Art galleries
- Native cultural centers
- Historic buildings
- Waterfront boardwalks

The entire downtown area is easily walkable from the cruise docks.

★ Top Things to Do



Visit Creek Street



The most famous attraction in Ketchikan.

Originally a bustling red-light district during the Gold Rush, Creek Street has been transformed into one of Alaska's most photographed locations.

Today you'll find:

- Historic boardwalks
- Local shops
- Art galleries
- Dolly's House Museum
- Salmon viewing (late summer)

It's a must-see for first-time visitors.

Explore Alaska's Totem Poles



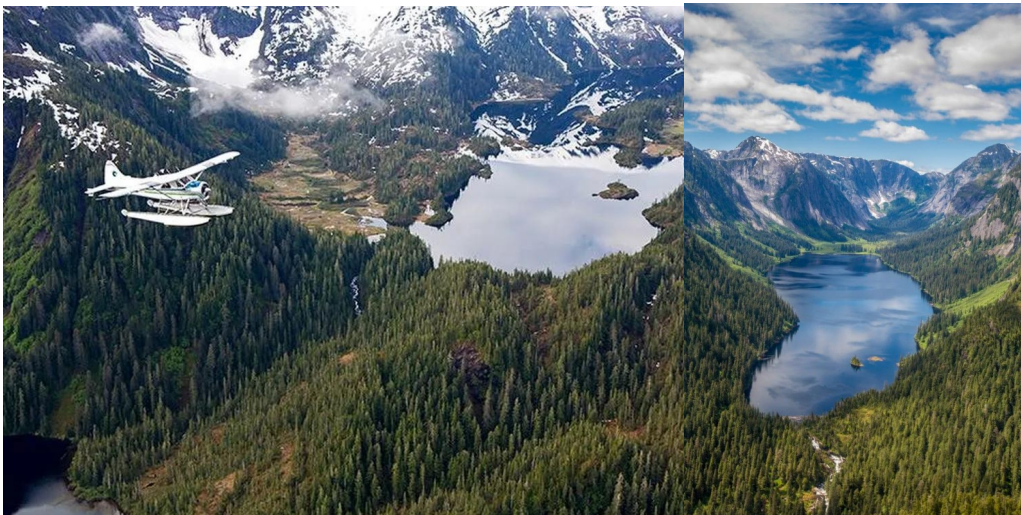
Ketchikan is home to one of the largest collections of standing totem poles in the world.

Popular locations include:

- Totem Bight State Historical Park
- Saxman Native Village
- Potlatch Totem Park

Learn about the traditions and artistry of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples.

Misty Fjords National Monument



One of Alaska's premier bucket-list excursions.

Most visitors reach Misty Fjords by:

- Floatplane
- Boat tour
- Combination excursions

Expect:

- Granite cliffs
- Waterfalls
- Crystal-clear lakes
- Untouched wilderness

Many travelers consider this one of the most spectacular excursions in Alaska.

Salmon Fishing



Ketchikan proudly lives up to its nickname.

Choose from:

- Salmon fishing charters
- Halibut fishing
- Combination fishing tours

Whether you're an experienced angler or trying it for the first time, Ketchikan offers world-class fishing opportunities.

Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show



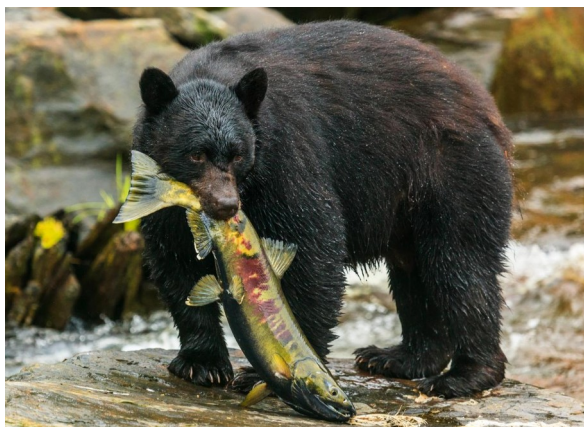
A fun, family-friendly attraction just steps from the cruise port.

Enjoy:

- Lumberjack competitions
- Axe throwing demonstrations
- Log rolling
- Audience participation
- Plenty of laughs

Perfect for families and first-time visitors.

Wildlife



Wildlife sightings are common throughout the area.

Watch for:

- Bald eagles
- Black bears
- Harbor seals
- Sea lions
- Humpback whales
- Salmon
- Deer

Late summer is one of the best times to observe salmon returning to local streams.



What to Eat

Don't miss:

- Fresh king crab
- Wild Alaska salmon
- Halibut
- Fish & chips
- Chowder
- Reindeer sausage
- Wild berry desserts

Ketchikan is known for some of the freshest seafood in Alaska.



Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Alaska Native artwork
- Totem carvings
- Ulu knives
- Jade jewelry
- Smoked salmon
- Local coffee
- Handmade crafts

Many stores feature work by local Alaska Native artists.



Weather

Summer temperatures typically range from:

50–65°F (10–18°C)

Ketchikan is one of the rainiest cities in North America.

Expect:

- Frequent rain showers
- Cool mornings
- Mild afternoons

A waterproof rain jacket is absolutely essential.



Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Walking
- Shuttle buses
- Taxi
- Excursion transportation
- Local buses

Most visitors can comfortably explore downtown on foot.



What to Pack

Bring:

- ✓ Waterproof rain jacket
 - ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
 - ✓ Binoculars
 - ✓ Camera
 - ✓ Small backpack
 - ✓ Layered clothing
 - ✓ Umbrella (optional)
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Hidden Gems

Take time to visit:

- Married Man's Trail
- Whale Park
- Creek Street during low tide to watch salmon
- Local coffee shops
- Small art galleries tucked away downtown

These quieter spots often become visitors' favorite memories.



Premium Travel Group Tip

If your budget allows, a **floatplane excursion to Misty Fjords National Monument** is one of the most spectacular experiences in Alaska. The aerial views of glaciers, fjords, waterfalls, and untouched wilderness are unforgettable.

If you're staying in town, Creek Street and the totem parks offer an excellent introduction to Alaska's history and Native cultures.



Continue Exploring Alaska

Continue planning your Alaska adventure with our other guides:

- Alaska Vacation Planning Guide
 - Alaska Packing Guide
 - Alaska Wildlife Guide
 - Alaska Inside Passage Guide
 - Juneau Cruise Port Guide
 - Skagway Cruise Port Guide
 - Sitka Cruise Port Guide
 - Icy Strait Point Cruise Port Guide
 - Glacier Bay National Park Guide
 - Misty Fjords Guide (*coming soon*)
 - Mendenhall Glacier Guide
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Why Visit Ketchikan?

Ketchikan blends natural beauty, rich Indigenous heritage, fascinating Gold Rush history, and world-class outdoor adventures into one unforgettable destination. Whether you're exploring historic Creek Street, admiring centuries-old totem poles, flying above Misty Fjords, or simply enjoying fresh seafood by the waterfront, Ketchikan offers a true taste of Southeast Alaska and serves as the perfect introduction to the Last Frontier.



Joe's Logbook

Ketchikan has a personality all its own. It's colorful, welcoming, and one of those places where it's easy to spend an entire day just wandering around without a plan.

One thing I always tell travelers is to **embrace the rain**. Ketchikan's lush forests and beautiful scenery exist because it rains—a lot! Don't let a little drizzle keep you from exploring. A good waterproof jacket will be one of the best investments you make for your Alaska trip.

If it's your first visit, make time for Creek Street and at least one totem park. They tell the story of Ketchikan better than any brochure ever could. And if you've dreamed about flying in a floatplane over Alaska's wilderness, this is one of the very best places to make that dream come true.