

Petersburg, Alaska Cruise Port Guide

Your Complete Guide to Alaska's "Little Norway" & Gateway to LeConte Glacier



Nestled on **Mitkof Island** in Southeast Alaska, Petersburg is one of the state's most charming and authentic coastal communities. Known as "**Little Norway**," the town was founded by Norwegian fisherman Peter Buschmann in the late 1800s and still proudly celebrates its Scandinavian heritage today.

Unlike many larger Alaska cruise ports, Petersburg remains a working commercial fishing town where visitors can experience everyday life in coastal Alaska. The harbor is filled with fishing boats, the downtown streets are lined with colorful flower baskets, and the surrounding wilderness offers spectacular wildlife, glaciers, and breathtaking scenery.

Petersburg is a favorite stop for small-ship and expedition cruises, and many travelers say it feels like discovering the Alaska that existed before mass tourism.

Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Cruise ships dock close to downtown, allowing visitors to easily explore the town on foot.

From the pier, you'll find:

- Restaurants
- Local shops
- Museums
- Harbor walkways
- Excursion meeting points

The entire downtown area is compact and very walkable.



Explore Downtown Petersburg



Petersburg's downtown reflects its strong Norwegian roots.

You'll enjoy:

- Scandinavian-inspired architecture
- Local boutiques
- Art galleries
- Coffee shops
- Seafood restaurants
- Colorful waterfront
- Public artwork

The town's welcoming atmosphere makes it easy to explore at a leisurely pace.

★ Top Things to Do

📦 LeConte Glacier Excursions



One of Petersburg's signature experiences.

LeConte Glacier is:

- The southernmost tidewater glacier in North America
- Accessible by boat
- Surrounded by spectacular icebergs
- Home to harbor seals and seabirds

Boat excursions offer incredible opportunities for photography and wildlife viewing.

🐋 Whale Watching



Nearby **Frederick Sound** is one of Alaska's premier whale watching destinations.

Depending on the season, visitors may see:

- Humpback whales
- Orcas
- Harbor porpoises

- Sea lions

Humpback whale sightings are especially common during the summer months.

Wildlife Viewing



Petersburg is an outstanding wildlife destination.

Watch for:

- Bald eagles
- Harbor seals
- Sea otters
- Humpback whales
- Black bears
- Deer

The surrounding waterways are full of life.

Clausen Memorial Museum



Learn about Petersburg's fascinating history.

Exhibits include:

- Norwegian settlement
- Commercial fishing
- Native culture
- Local artifacts
- Maritime history

A great stop for history lovers.



Explore the Harbor



Petersburg is home to one of Alaska's busiest commercial fishing fleets.

Walking along the harbor offers opportunities to see:

- Commercial fishing boats
- Floatplanes
- Working waterfront
- Beautiful mountain scenery

It's one of the best places to experience authentic coastal Alaska.



Wildlife



Common wildlife sightings include:

- Humpback whales
- Orcas
- Sea otters
- Harbor seals
- Bald eagles
- Black bears
- Sitka black-tailed deer

Bring binoculars—you'll use them often.



What to Eat

Don't miss:

- Fresh Alaska salmon
- Halibut
- Dungeness crab
- Fish & chips
- Seafood chowder
- Wild berry desserts

Because Petersburg is a working fishing town, seafood doesn't get much fresher than this.



Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Handmade jewelry
- Alaska Native artwork
- Scandinavian gifts
- Ulu knives
- Smoked salmon
- Local crafts
- Alaska apparel

Many shops feature products created by local artists and craftsmen.



Weather

Summer temperatures typically range from:

50–65°F (10–18°C)

Expect:

- Occasional rain
- Cool mornings
- Comfortable afternoons

Dress in layers and bring waterproof outerwear.



Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Walking
- Excursion transportation
- Taxi (limited)

Most visitors spend the day exploring on foot or through organized excursions.



What to Pack

Bring:

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

Don't overlook:

- Sons of Norway Hall
- Harbor observation areas
- Local bakeries
- Small waterfront parks
- Scenic walking trails

The town's slower pace is part of its charm.



Premium Travel Group Tip

Petersburg is one of those places where you don't need to rush from attraction to attraction. Spend time walking the harbor, chatting with locals, and soaking in the atmosphere of a real working Alaska fishing town.

If you have the opportunity to take a **LeConte Glacier** or **Frederick Sound whale watching** excursion, I highly recommend it. Both offer incredible scenery with fewer crowds than some of Alaska's larger ports.



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
 - Wrangell Cruise Port Guide
 - Ketchikan Cruise Port Guide
 - Sitka Cruise Port Guide
 - Juneau Cruise Port Guide
 - Glacier Bay National Park Guide
 - Kenai Fjords National Park Guide
 - LeConte Glacier Guide (*future guide*)
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Why Visit Petersburg?

Petersburg offers a refreshing glimpse into everyday life in coastal Alaska. Rich Norwegian traditions, a thriving fishing industry, incredible wildlife, and easy access to glaciers combine to create one of Southeast Alaska's most authentic destinations. Whether you're cruising toward LeConte Glacier, watching humpback whales in Frederick Sound, or simply strolling along the picturesque harbor, Petersburg captures the peaceful spirit of the Last Frontier.



Joe's Logbook

Petersburg is one of those ports that quietly wins people over. It doesn't rely on flashy attractions or crowded shopping districts. Instead, it offers something that's becoming harder to find—an authentic Alaska community that still revolves around the sea.

One of my favorite things about Petersburg is watching the fishing fleet in action. You quickly realize this isn't a town built for tourists—it's a town built on hard work, tradition, and a deep connection to the water. That authenticity is what makes it so memorable.

If you're fortunate enough to visit LeConte Glacier or spend time whale watching in Frederick Sound, you're in for a real treat. But even if you simply walk the harbor, enjoy a fresh seafood lunch, and take in the mountain views, you'll leave with a genuine appreciation for one of Alaska's most charming hidden gems.