

# Tracy Arm Fjord Guide

## Your Complete Guide to Alaska's Spectacular Granite Fjord & Twin Glaciers



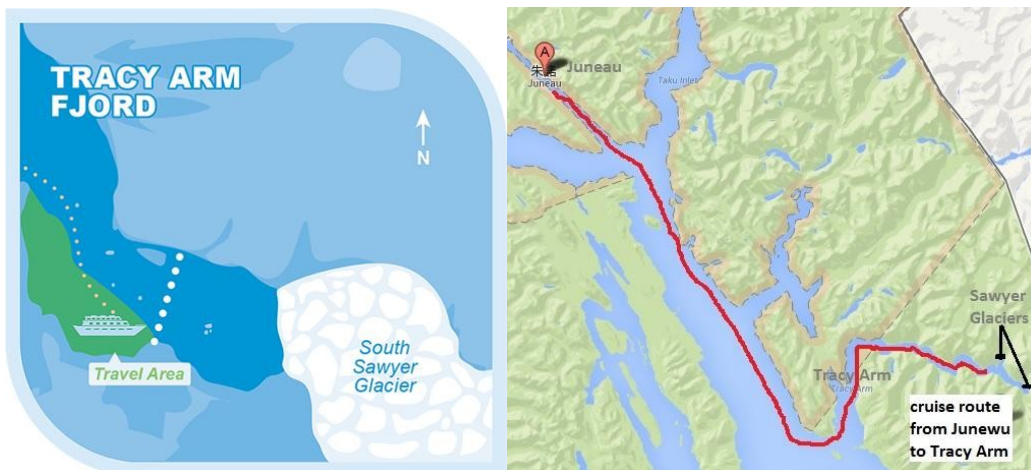
Tracy Arm Fjord is one of Southeast Alaska's most breathtaking natural wonders. Located approximately **45 miles south of Juneau**, this narrow, glacier-carved fjord stretches more than **30 miles** into the heart of the **Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness**, one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the United States.

Towering granite cliffs rise thousands of feet above the water while countless waterfalls cascade down the mountainsides. Floating icebergs drift silently through the fjord, seals rest on glacial ice, and mountain goats cling to seemingly impossible cliffs.

For many Alaska cruisers, Tracy Arm is one of the most memorable scenic cruising experiences of the entire voyage.

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## Where is Tracy Arm?



Tracy Arm is located in Southeast Alaska within the protected **Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness**.

The fjord is:

- Over **30 miles long**
- Less than one mile wide in many locations
- Surrounded by cliffs rising over **3,000 feet**
- Accessible only by boat or aircraft

Unlike a traditional cruise port, Tracy Arm is a scenic cruising destination where the journey itself is the attraction.

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## Meet the Sawyer Glaciers



At the end of Tracy Arm lie two magnificent tidewater glaciers.

### South Sawyer Glacier

The glacier most frequently visited by cruise ships.

Known for:

- Brilliant blue ice
- Dramatic calving
- Floating icebergs
- Excellent wildlife viewing

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### North Sawyer Glacier

Less frequently visited because of changing ice conditions.

Offers:

- Massive ice cliffs
- Spectacular scenery
- Incredible wilderness

Whether your ship reaches one or both glaciers depends on ice conditions and your captain's route.



## What Makes Tracy Arm Special?



Unlike open bays, Tracy Arm offers an intimate scenic experience.

Highlights include:

- Towering granite cliffs
- Hundreds of waterfalls
- Floating blue icebergs
- Narrow winding passages
- Dense temperate rainforest
- Crystal-clear glacial water

Every turn reveals another incredible view.

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# Wildlife Along Tracy Arm



Wildlife is abundant throughout the fjord.

Keep your camera ready for:

## **Harbor Seals**

Frequently seen resting on floating ice.

Many seal pups are born here each spring.

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## **Mountain Goats**

Look high along the cliffs.

They're surprisingly common despite the rugged terrain.

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## **Bald Eagles**

Often soar overhead or perch along the shoreline.

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## **Humpback Whales**

Most commonly seen near the entrance to Tracy Arm.

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## **Sea Otters**

Occasionally spotted floating in calm waters.

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## What to Expect on Cruise Day

Most cruise ships:

- Enter Tracy Arm early in the morning
- Cruise slowly through the fjord
- Spend time near the glaciers
- Rotate the ship for viewing
- Provide commentary about the area

Ice conditions determine how close ships can safely approach the glaciers.

No two visits are ever exactly alike.

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## Small Boat Adventure Excursions

One of Alaska's most highly rated excursions allows guests to leave their cruise ship and board a smaller expedition vessel.

These excursions often include:

- Closer glacier views
- Navigating among icebergs
- Better wildlife viewing
- More photography opportunities
- A closer look at waterfalls and cliffs

These tours frequently sell out well before sailing.

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## Photography Tips



Bring:

- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Zoom lens
- ✓ Binoculars
- ✓ Extra batteries
- ✓ Extra memory cards

For the best experience:

- Spend time on open decks.
  - Use burst mode for glacier calving.
  - Watch for wildlife between scenic viewpoints.
  - Capture both wide landscapes and close-up glacier details.
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## Weather

Temperatures typically range from:

**40–60°F (4–16°C)**

Expect:

- Cool breezes
- Rain showers
- Wind near the glaciers

Dress in layers and bring a waterproof jacket.

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## Why Every Cruise is Different

Tracy Arm changes daily.

Your experience depends on:

- Ice conditions
- Weather
- Glacier activity
- Wildlife
- Tides

Some cruises reach very close to South Sawyer Glacier.

Other days heavy ice may require turning around earlier.

The scenery, however, is always spectacular.

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## Premium Travel Group Tip

Don't be disappointed if your captain can't reach the very end of Tracy Arm. Ice conditions change constantly, and safety always comes first.

The true beauty of Tracy Arm isn't just the glacier—it's the entire journey through one of Alaska's most dramatic fjords. Spend time outside, enjoy the waterfalls, watch for wildlife, and appreciate one of the most pristine wilderness areas in North America.

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## Continue Exploring Alaska

Continue planning your Alaska adventure with our other guides:

- Alaska Vacation Planning Guide
  - Alaska Packing Guide
  - Alaska Wildlife Guide
  - Best Time to Visit Alaska
  - Glacier Bay National Park Guide
  - Endicott Arm & Dawes Glacier Guide
  - Hubbard Glacier Guide
  - Juneau Cruise Port Guide
  - Alaska Railroad Guide
  - Denali National Park Guide
  - Kenai Fjords National Park Guide
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## Tracy Arm vs. Endicott Arm

Many travelers confuse Tracy Arm and Endicott Arm because both are part of the **Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness** and offer spectacular scenic cruising. While they share many similarities, they are two distinct fjords with different glaciers.

### Tracy Arm

Home to **North Sawyer Glacier** and **South Sawyer Glacier**

Narrow fjord with dramatic granite cliffs

Often features numerous waterfalls

Harbor seals and mountain goats are common

Both are unforgettable, and whichever one your cruise visits, you're in for an incredible experience.

### Endicott Arm

Home to **Dawes Glacier**

Slightly wider in places with abundant floating ice

Known for dramatic iceberg fields and Dawes Glacier

Harbor seals, mountain goats, and excellent glacier viewing

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# Why Visit Tracy Arm Fjord?

Tracy Arm offers one of the most intimate and dramatic scenic cruising experiences in Alaska. The towering cliffs, crystal-clear glacial waters, floating icebergs, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife combine to create a journey that feels almost untouched by time. Whether your ship reaches the Sawyer Glaciers or spends the day winding through the fjord, Tracy Arm delivers an unforgettable look at Alaska's wild beauty.

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## Joe's Logbook

One of the things I love about Tracy Arm is how quickly the outside world seems to disappear. As your ship enters the fjord, the scenery becomes more dramatic with every mile. The cliffs get taller, the waterfalls seem to appear around every corner, and before long you're surrounded by floating ice that reminds you just how close you are to these incredible glaciers.

My biggest advice is simple: be flexible. Alaska doesn't follow a schedule. Sometimes Mother Nature lets your ship get close to the Sawyer Glaciers, and sometimes the ice says, "Not today." Either way, don't focus only on the destination. Some of the most beautiful moments happen long before you ever reach the glacier.

Keep your binoculars handy, your camera charged, and your eyes open. You never know when you'll spot a harbor seal on an iceberg, a mountain goat high above the fjord, or hear the unmistakable crack of a glacier echoing through the wilderness. That's the magic of Tracy Arm.