



# Valdez, Alaska Cruise Port Guide

## Your Complete Guide to Alaska's Gateway to Prince William Sound



Tucked away at the head of **Prince William Sound**, Valdez is one of Alaska's most scenic and adventurous coastal communities. While it isn't visited by many large cruise ships, it has become a favorite stop for expedition cruises and travelers exploring Alaska by land.

Surrounded by towering peaks, waterfalls, glaciers, and pristine wilderness, Valdez offers a more intimate Alaska experience. Often called the "**Little Switzerland of Alaska**" because of its dramatic mountain scenery, the town is known for world-class wildlife viewing, glacier cruises, fishing, and fascinating history.

If you're looking for an authentic Alaska destination away from the larger crowds, Valdez delivers unforgettable scenery and outdoor adventure.

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## Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Cruise ships dock near the **Valdez Small Boat Harbor**, just a short walk from downtown.

From the pier, visitors can easily reach:

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

Valdez is compact and easy to explore on foot.



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## Explore Downtown Valdez



Downtown Valdez offers the charm of a true Alaska community.

You'll find:

- Local gift shops
- Coffee shops
- Art galleries
- Seafood restaurants
- Museums

- Harbor views

The relaxed pace makes it easy to explore without feeling rushed.

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## ★ Top Things to Do

### 📦 Columbia Glacier Cruise



One of Alaska's premier glacier excursions.

Highlights include:

- Massive tidewater glacier
- Floating icebergs
- Harbor seals
- Sea otters
- Whales
- Spectacular scenery

Columbia Glacier is one of the largest tidewater glaciers in Alaska.

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### 🌊 Prince William Sound Wildlife Cruises





Explore one of Alaska's richest marine ecosystems.

Wildlife often includes:

- Humpback whales
- Orcas
- Sea otters
- Harbor seals
- Steller sea lions
- Puffins
- Bald eagles

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

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## **Keystone Canyon**



A short drive from town leads to one of Alaska's most scenic canyons.

Don't miss:

- Bridal Veil Falls
- Horsetail Falls
- Towering cliffs
- Excellent photo opportunities

This is one of Valdez's signature attractions.

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## Valdez Museum



Learn about the fascinating story of Valdez.

Exhibits cover:

- Native history
- Gold Rush
- The 1964 Good Friday Earthquake
- Construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline
- Maritime history

A great stop for history enthusiasts.

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## Fishing



Valdez is one of Alaska's top fishing destinations.

Popular catches include:

- Salmon
- Halibut
- Rockfish

Both experienced anglers and beginners will find excellent charter options.

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## **Wildlife**



Valdez offers excellent wildlife viewing.

Common sightings include:

- Sea otters
- Harbor seals
- Humpback whales
- Orcas
- Bald eagles
- Brown bears
- Black bears
- Mountain goats
- Puffins

Wildlife cruises provide the best opportunities for close-up encounters.

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## **What to Eat**

Don't miss:

- Fresh halibut
- Wild Alaska salmon
- Fish & chips
- Seafood chowder
- King crab (seasonal)

- Wild berry desserts

Valdez's restaurants specialize in locally caught seafood.

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## Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Alaska Native artwork
- Handmade jewelry
- Ulu knives
- Smoked salmon
- Local crafts
- Alaska apparel
- Photography books

Many shops feature products made by local artisans.

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## Weather

Summer temperatures typically range from:

**50–65°F (10–18°C)**

Expect:

- Frequent rain
- Cool mornings
- Comfortable afternoons

Dress in layers and pack a waterproof jacket.

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## Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Walking
- Excursion transportation
- Taxi
- Rental car (limited)

Most downtown attractions are easily accessible on foot.

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## What to Pack

Bring:

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

Take time to explore:

- Valdez Harbor
- Dock Point Trail
- Local coffee shops
- Small waterfront parks
- Scenic mountain viewpoints

Sometimes simply sitting by the harbor and watching fishing boats return is a memorable Alaska experience.

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## Premium Travel Group Tip

Valdez is a destination where the journey is just as impressive as the attractions. If you have the opportunity to take a glacier and wildlife cruise through Prince William Sound, don't hesitate. You'll experience incredible scenery, abundant wildlife, and glaciers that rival some of Alaska's most famous attractions—all with fewer crowds than many better-known destinations.

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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
- Whittier Cruise Port Guide

- Seward Cruise Port Guide
  - Kenai Fjords National Park Guide
  - Glacier Bay National Park Guide
  - Hubbard Glacier Guide
  - Alaska Railroad Guide
  - Anchorage Guide
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## Why Visit Valdez?

Valdez offers everything travelers dream about when they imagine Alaska: towering mountains, massive glaciers, abundant wildlife, rich history, and spectacular coastal scenery. Whether you're cruising among icebergs in Prince William Sound, standing beneath waterfalls in Keystone Canyon, or enjoying fresh seafood along the harbor, Valdez provides an authentic Alaska experience that feels both peaceful and adventurous.

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## Joe's Logbook

Valdez may not be as famous as Juneau or Skagway, but that's part of its appeal. It feels like you've discovered a corner of Alaska that's still wonderfully authentic.

If I could recommend one experience, it would be getting out on the water. Prince William Sound is simply breathtaking, and seeing glaciers, sea otters, whales, and waterfalls all in one excursion is something that's hard to match anywhere else in the state.

One thing I've learned about Alaska is that some of the smaller towns leave the biggest impression. Valdez is definitely one of those places. It's peaceful, incredibly scenic, and gives you a chance to experience the Last Frontier at a slower pace. If your itinerary includes Valdez, consider yourself fortunate—you're visiting one of Alaska's true hidden gems.