



Whittier, Alaska Cruise Port Guide

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



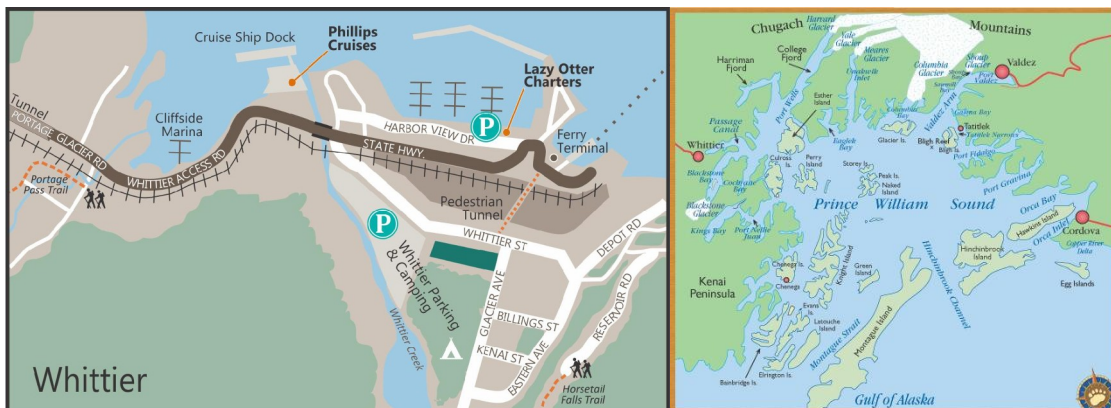
Whittier may be one of the smallest cruise ports in Alaska, but it plays a huge role in many Alaska vacations. Located at the head of **Prince William Sound**, Whittier serves as a major embarkation and disembarkation port for many one-way Alaska cruises and CruiseTours.

Surrounded by towering mountains, waterfalls, glaciers, and pristine waters, Whittier is unlike anywhere else in Alaska. The town is famous for its remarkable setting, its unique history as a military community, and the **Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel**—the longest combined highway and railroad tunnel in North America.

Many travelers only pass through Whittier on their way to or from a cruise ship, but those who take time to explore discover one of Alaska's most scenic and fascinating coastal communities.



Where is Whittier?



Whittier is located on the western side of **Prince William Sound**, approximately:

- **60 miles southeast of Anchorage**
- About **1½ hours by car or motorcoach** from Anchorage

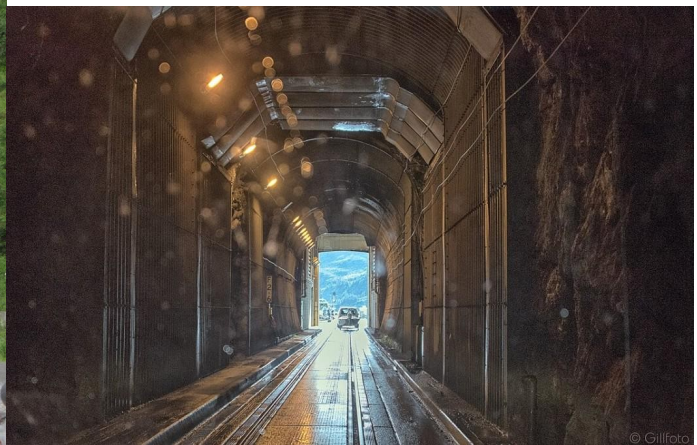
Whittier is accessible only by:

- The Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel
- Boat
- Alaska Railroad

The drive through the mountains is an adventure all by itself.



The Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel



One of Whittier's most famous attractions is the tunnel leading into town.

Highlights:

- 2.5 miles long
- Longest combined highway and railroad tunnel in North America
- Shared by trains and vehicles
- Traffic travels in one direction at scheduled times

For many visitors, driving through the tunnel is an unforgettable experience before they even reach town.



Why Cruise Travelers Visit Whittier

Many cruise lines use Whittier as either:

- An embarkation port
- A disembarkation port

It's a popular starting or ending point for one-way cruises that travel between Southcentral Alaska and the Inside Passage.

Many travelers combine Whittier with:

- Anchorage
- Denali National Park
- Talkeetna
- Seward

As part of a CruiseTour.

★ Top Things to Do

Prince William Sound Glacier Cruises



One of Alaska's premier excursions.

Many tours include:

- Tidewater glaciers
- Waterfalls
- Sea otters
- Harbor seals
- Bald eagles
- Whales (seasonal)

Some cruises also visit **College Fjord** or **Blackstone Bay**, where multiple glaciers flow into the sound.

Wildlife Cruises



Prince William Sound is home to incredible marine wildlife.

Common sightings include:

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

Bring your camera and binoculars.

Explore Whittier Harbor



Take time to stroll along the waterfront.

You'll enjoy:

- Marina views
- Fishing boats
- Mountain scenery
- Local shops
- Fresh seafood

It's a peaceful place to relax before or after your cruise.



Learn About Whittier's History



Whittier began as a military community during World War II.

One of its most famous landmarks is **Begich Towers**, where a large percentage of the town's residents still live under one roof.

The town's unique history makes it one of Alaska's most interesting communities.



Nearby Adventures

Popular day trips include:

- Portage Glacier
- Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Girdwood
- Alyeska Resort
- Anchorage

Many travelers visit these attractions while transferring between Whittier and Anchorage.



Wildlife



Wildlife commonly seen around Whittier includes:

- Sea otters
- Harbor seals
- Humpback whales
- Orcas
- Bald eagles
- Puffins
- Black bears (occasionally)

Marine wildlife is especially abundant in Prince William Sound.



What to Eat

Don't miss:

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

Whittier's small restaurants specialize in locally caught seafood.



Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Alaska apparel
- Local artwork

- Handmade crafts
- Smoked salmon
- Ulu knives
- Photography books

Shopping is limited but offers authentic Alaska products.



Weather

Summer temperatures generally range from:

45–60°F (7–16°C)

Expect:

- Frequent rain
- Cool temperatures
- Wind along the waterfront

Dress in layers and bring waterproof clothing.



Getting Around

Whittier is a very walkable town.

Transportation options include:

- Walking
- Shuttle buses
- Alaska Railroad
- Motorcoach transfers
- Rental car

Most attractions are within easy walking distance.



What to Pack

Bring:

- ✓ Waterproof rain jacket
- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
- ✓ Binoculars
- ✓ Camera

- ✓ Layered clothing
 - ✓ Small backpack
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Hidden Gems

Don't overlook:

- Harbor observation areas
- Scenic walking paths
- Small local cafés
- Mountain viewpoints
- Watching trains and vehicles travel through the tunnel

Sometimes simply enjoying the scenery is the highlight of visiting Whittier.



Premium Travel Group Tip

If you're beginning or ending your Alaska cruise in Whittier, I highly recommend adding at least a day before or after your sailing. Too many travelers simply transfer through town without realizing they're passing one of Alaska's most beautiful regions.

If time allows, consider a glacier cruise in Prince William Sound or stop at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center on your drive between Whittier and Anchorage. Both experiences are well worth the extra time.



Continue Exploring Alaska

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 - Seward Guide
 - Kenai Fjords National Park Guide
 - Glacier Bay National Park Guide
 - Hubbard Glacier Guide
 - Alaska Railroad Guide
 - Denali National Park Guide
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Why Visit Whittier?

Whittier may be small, but it serves as the gateway to some of Alaska's most spectacular scenery. Whether you're cruising through Prince William Sound, exploring glacier-filled fjords, driving through the famous one-lane tunnel, or simply admiring the towering mountains surrounding the harbor, Whittier offers a memorable introduction—or farewell—to the Last Frontier.



Joe's Logbook

Most travelers know Whittier as the place where they board or leave their cruise ship, but I think it's worth much more than a quick transfer.

The first thing you'll remember is driving through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel. It's such a unique experience that it almost feels like you've entered another world when you emerge on the other side. Suddenly you're surrounded by towering mountains, waterfalls, and one of the most beautiful harbors in Alaska.

If your schedule allows, don't rush straight to Anchorage. Spend a little time exploring Whittier or, even better, take a glacier cruise through Prince William Sound. It's a completely different experience from what you'll see on your cruise ship and gives you an even greater appreciation for Alaska's rugged coastline.

Sometimes the places we think of as "just a starting point" end up becoming one of the highlights of the trip. Whittier has a way of doing exactly that.