Say Hello to Your Alaska Getaway

The Day Tripper Adventure Guide

to McCarthy, Alaska
and Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve
Hi friend,

Alaska is just one of those places where—once you’re here, once you’ve experienced it—it sticks with you forever.

And why wouldn’t it? Nothing quite compares to moments like hearing the sounds a glacier makes with your hand pressed against the cold ice... or seeing a bear lumber across the horizon from the safety of your raft.

For a lot of people, this may be their only trip to Alaska so they can finally check it off their bucket list, and we take that seriously: we want to help make this a trip of a lifetime.

So! Are you ready to explore the final frontier?

Nik Merlino
Owner/Founder
IN THIS GUIDE....

1 Welcome to McCarthy Alaska and Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve........................................4

2 Frequently Asked Questions..............................................7

3 Day Trips to Fuel Your Adventurous Soul..................10

4 Being a Responsible Visitor...........................................11

5 What to Bring..................................................................14

6 Visitor Information..........................................................16
Welcome... To the Last Frontier

to McCarthy, Alaska and Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve
McCarthy, Alaska – Located in Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Rugged mountains, hanging glaciers, and abundant wildlife are all on display in what is the largest national park (and possibly the best-kept secret) in the United States: Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

At 13.2 million acres, the park is the same size as Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Switzerland combined—and is home to Mt. St. Elias, the second highest peak in the United States at 18,008 feet.

It’s hard to believe it’s just an 8-hour drive from Anchorage, isn’t it? But it is, and that makes immersing yourself in this wild, untouched land easier than ever.

QUICK FACTS

> Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve is a designated **World Heritage Site** with Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, Kluane National Park Reserve and Tatshenshini–Alsek National Park...

> Together, they make this the **world’s largest** international protected wilderness.

> Mt. St. Elias, at 18,008 feet, is the **second highest peak** in the United States.

> Mt. Wrangell, at 14,163 feet, is **one of the largest active volcanoes** in North America.

> The Nabelna Glacier, at approximately 80 miles, is the longest **non-polar valley glacier**.

> The Hubbard Glacier is one of the **largest and most active tidewater glaciers** in North America.

> The spectacularly scenic, 8-hour drive from Anchorage rivals the best drives in the world. Immersing yourself in this wild, untouched land is both the journey and the destination!
SHUTTLES

From Anchorage, Alaska:

Wrangell-St.Elias Tours offers van shuttles daily during the summer months from Anchorage.

Reeve Air & Copper Valley Air team up to offer a twice weekly flight (Mondays & Thursdays) from Anchorage to McCarthy on the mail plane.

From the Copper Basin, Alaska:

The Kennicott Shuttle offers a daily shuttle from Glennallen to McCarthy with stops in Copper Center, Kenny Lake & Chitina along the way.

Wrangell Mountain Air has a daily flight schedule between Chitina & McCarthy.

RENTAL CARS

Many rental car companies have restrictions on traveling the McCarthy Road. For an updated list of companies that allow travel, contact us.

CAR STORAGE

We offer free car storage to all Multi Day guided trips. If you are interested in storing your car while on your trip with us, let us know.

GETTING TO MCCARTHY, ALASKA

Watch this information-rich video to see how breathtakingly beautiful the drive is from Anchorage to McCarthy!

DRIVING DISTANCES

- Anchorage to McCarthy: 314 miles / 7.5 hours
- Fairbanks to McCarthy: 374 miles / 9.5 hours
- Valdez to McCarthy: 176 miles / 5.5 hours
- Glennallen to McCarthy: 125 miles / 4 hours
- Chitina to McCarthy: 60 miles / 2.5 hours
- Denali N.P. to McCarthy: 395 miles / 11 hours
ABOUT ADVENTURES
WEATHER & SEASONS

What's the weather like?
Alaska weather can be hard to predict, as it can change suddenly and dramatically. Generally, June tends to be the nicest month but also the buggiest. July is also warm and very busy, while August tends to be cooler and more likely to see some rain, but also the least buggy. The prepared traveler should plan for temperatures ranging from 40°F to 80°F. One of the best investments you can make is a comfortable, durable set of rain jacket and pants.

When is there a midnight sun?
McCarthy’s longest day of the year is the Summer Solstice, sometime between June 20th–22nd. The sun is up from 3AM until just before midnight and it does not get dark all night! By August we start getting dark nights again and stars begin to come back out; this is when we start seeing the occasional Aurora Borealis as well.

Is the park open year round?
The park is technically open year round, however, the seasonal window during which people visit is between May 15th and September 15th. Outside of that window, services can be VERY limited. We offer trips from the last weekend in May until the first weekend in September... otherwise, a custom booking is the perfect option.

GETTING THERE

What are the McCarthy Road and the Nabesna Road like?
The Nabesna Road is roughly a 50-mile stretch of dirt road with multiple creek crossings and a very quiet end-of-road. Meanwhile, the McCarthy Road has been vastly improved since 2006, with many of its stretches now straightened and widened, and creek crossings have been routed into culverts. That being said, it is still a 60-mile dirt road and you should expect to travel between 25 and 30 miles-an-hour with some occasional rough stretches.

Can I drive my rental car on park roads?
The McCarthy and Nabesna Roads are maintained by the State of Alaska as state right-of-ways. However, since they are dirt roads, many rental companies restrict travel on them; you will also encounter this if attempting to drive the Dalton or Denali
highways—also dirt roads—too. It is worth it to check with local car rental companies like Midnight Sun Car Rental in Anchorage about options for driving on dirt roads in Alaska.

**THINGS TO DO**

**What adventures are available for day trips?**
We offer a large variety of exciting day adventures. From paddling on a glacier lake and jumping off of icebergs, to rafting Class III whitewater and trekking on the white ice of the Root Glacier! Looking for adventure on your own? Rent a bike from us and explore the valley by pedal power!

**What adventures are available for multi-day trips?**
We offer world-class rafting trips all over Wrangell St. Elias National Park, with our most popular advertised trips originating out of McCarthy. We offer scenic rafting trips into some of North America’s deepest wilderness. Intensity levels range from large volume Class II scenic trips to some of the best undiscovered Class IV+ whitewater!

**What is there to do in the town of McCarthy?**
McCarthy was the vice town that sprang up next to the company town of Kennecott; it was where the miners came to blow off steam. Just like then, you can certainly blow off some steam in our local eateries, like the Roadside Potato, the Golden Saloon, and the McCarthy Lodge Bistro. And no trip to McCarthy is complete without visiting our local museum, featuring local artifacts and the best photo collection we have seen in the valley. They are also working on implementing a historical tour of McCarthy for coming seasons. In the mean time, you can grab one of their self-guided walking tour maps of McCarthy and explore on your own!
A JOB WILL FILL YOUR POCKETS—AN ADVENTURE WILL FILL YOUR SOUL.
Choose Your Style Of Adventure...

Kennicott Glacier Lake & River Rafting
Explore a glacial lake that has been formed in the last 20 years, float next to a 25-mile long glacier, jump from an iceberg into the glacial waters protected by a drysuit, learn about the natural and human history of the Kennicott Valley... And of course, raft class III whitewater!

Private & Group Glacier Hikes
Hikes include a walking tour through historic Kennicott, expert glacier crampon instruction, exploring the glacier, and more.

Custom Day Trips, Too!
From custom trip durations, to paddleboard or kayak trips, to bike rentals—we can help craft your perfect solo or group trip.
Be A Responsible Visitor to the Alaskan Wilderness...
EXPLORING & CAMPING

**Leave it as you found it:** If you get the feeling that you are the first person to ever set foot on the tundra... it is because those who came before respected the wilderness.

**Respect culture:** Respect the privacy and customs of people living along our routes. Before taking pictures of people or their property, please ask for their consent. Respect private property and cultural differences.

**Treasures:** Please resist taking natural objects like feathers, bones, arrowheads, and antlers. If these things seem plentiful, it may be because they have been left in place by other conscientious travelers.

**Tent sites:** When choosing a tent site, look for places that will not require moving rocks or uprooting bushes. When we leave a camp we try and put everything back just how we found it. Being sure to pick up any garbage, no matter how small.

**Campfires:** We carry a self-contained fire pan on every one of our trips; this allows us to have fires in almost any location, pack it up in the morning, and leave with hardly a trace of a fire left behind.

**NOTE:** Rocks are fair game! Our reasoning is that rock appeal is very subjective and, let’s be honest, they are indeed plentiful!
**WILDERNESS BATHING & BATHROOMS**

**Soap and washing:** We provide biodegradable soap and hand sanitizer, and ask that you always wash your hands after going to the bathroom, and prior to handling food.

**Bathroom:** With a little effort and planning, we can prevent fecal contamination and prevent others from seeing signs that we have traveled through. We use a specially designed River Toilet, lovingly referred to as the “Groover”, in a location designated by the guide, which ensures that the water stays clean.

**When/ if no latrine is available:** Dig a hole 6” deep with the trowel we provide, make your deposit, and cover it up again. Burn the toilet paper, completely, on site. Female menstrual supplies should be placed in a Ziplock and deposited in the “group garbage”.

McCarthy River Tours & Outfitters // 14
FOR ADVENTURES...
On the River

McCarthy River Tours is proud to be the first raft company in Wrangell St. Elias National Park to outfit our guests with drysuits for free.

Drysuits are required and INCLUDED in all trip packages. This ensures your safety should you end up in the water—and helps protect you against wind and bugs!

FOR ADVENTURES...
Off the River

- Waterproof Jacket
- Warm Jacket
- Hiking/Camp Shoes
- A Change of Socks
- Long Underwear
- Brimmed Hat
- Sunglasses with Strap
- Field Guides
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Small Camp Towel
- Gore-Tex/Waterproof Socks
Wander Often, Wonder Always.
Go Ahead... Leave The Rest of the World Behind
LIMITED CONNECTIVITY
Alaska says... unplug when you’re here!
We don’t have the greatest cellphone reception, or the strongest internet signals.
So go ahead and disconnect from the outside world. Enjoy the wilderness and the connection you make with the people around you!

RESTAURANTS & CAFES
The Roadside Potatohead
Known locally as “The Potato”. From the famous potatohead burrito to their rotating dinner entrees, they do their best to use local produce and made-from-scratch ingredients. Don’t forget their locally famous curly fries!

Golden Saloon
The Golden Saloon is not only a great local staple... it has a collection of artifacts from the town that you won’t want to miss. Have a drink and swap a story with new friends... and jump in on one of their open mic nights!

McCarthy Lodge Bistro
Experience the stories of the town’s history, along with great food and wine. This Bistro’s approach is all local, from their own greenhouse and gardens to family farms and community vendors.

The Meatza Wagon
This is a small, family-friendly spot that isn’t owned by a local serving food, but by a Chef who also happens to be local! Enjoy their covered seating area overlooking the Kennicott Glacier & Mt. Blackburn!

Glacier View Campground
Enjoy a panoramic view of The Root Glacier and surrounding Wrangell Mountains from the comfort of an Outdoor Cafe that’s famous for their “Glacier Burger”.

Shuttle Stop Cafe
Espresso and baked goods with some great Alaska gifts!
WHERE THE ROAD ENDS, THE ADVENTURE BEGINS!

LODGING & CAMPING

**Kennicott River Lodge & Hostel**
Offers both shared hostel rooms and private cabins and rooms in the main lodge. With a full kitchen in the main lodge, a sauna, horseshoe pits, and a fire pit, it’s a great place for anyone visiting the Kennicott Valley.

**Currant Ridge Cabins**
Fully equipped cabins with kitchen, bedroom, bath, and view. These cabins are a great choice for families, groups, and anyone looking for the comforts of home while on vacation.

**Aspen Meadows Bed & Breakfast**
Offers cabins and a shower house with a light breakfast in the morning. A great place for people looking for a relaxing setting here in McCarthy.

**McCarthy Lodge, Ma Johnson Hotel & Lancaster Backpacker’s Hotel**
A great place to stay in downtown McCarthy. Beautiful restored rooms in Ma Johnson Hotel and dining in the old Lodge building.

**Blackburn Cabins**
Conveniently located on the wagon road between McCarthy and Kennicott, your home away from home in the Wrangell Mountains!

**Kennicott Glacier Lodge**
Located in the historic town of Kennicott. Offers great views of the Kennicott and Root Glaciers. Quiet and comfortable setting for a relaxing stay. Don’t forget the great food and casual atmosphere, too!

As for onsite camping...
We offer onsite, affordable, and private camping at our daily Take-Out for our guests a few miles outside of town. There are also a few public campgrounds close to the end of the road if you are interested in a more rustic experience!
LOCAL SHOPS

The Copper Ore in Kennicott, and The Copper Nugget in McCarthy

Larry Hoare has been creating handmade jewelry from locally sourced rocks and minerals from the Wrangell Mountains since 1979. You'll find these treasures at both shops, along with paintings done by his equally talented wife, Rita.

McCarthy Center Store

The McCarthy Center Store is a local grocery store that features fresh produce, baked goods, prepared foods, and a wide selection of organic, gluten free items. Be sure to visit the Center for fresh baked goods, your supplies for a back-country trip, or a an ice cream cone on a hot summer day!

Nugget Liquors

For a wide selection of beer, wine and spirits at the local liquor store—Nugget Liquors. It’s located in downtown McCarthy.

Mountain Arts Gift Shop

Tucked into the same location as the Shuttle Stop Cafe, the Mountain Arts Gift Shop is the perfect place to find unique gifts from Eyak, Athabascan, Tlingit, and other native artists in this area. You'll also enjoy the diverse range of Alaskan herbal products, photography, maps, handmade knives, ulus, gems, cards... and more.
WE’RE READY TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE TO ALASKA

Give us a call and we’ll help you check Alaska off your bucket list!

907-302-0688
Or visit our website for further details!
RaftTheWrangells.com

READY FOR THIS?