

# PHOTO EXPEDITION ALASKA

06.09-15.09 2017



WILDPHOTO  
TRAVEL

# BEFORE THE EXPEDITION

Thank you for traveling with us to Alaska 2017. We look forward to see and photograph the amazing Grizzly bears and other wildlife along with you!

In this PDF we have some information that will help you preparing for this expedition.

## **Personal details**

To make sure you have the best trip possible to Alaska 2017, we ask you to fill in the information needed, about dietary allergies, health issues, flights and insurance. Most of this information can be added on the booking form.

## **Insurance**

You need to have a valid insurance covering medical conditions (illness, accidents, death) and evacuation during the period for this expedition. In case of any undesired event we need to have at least the insurance number and emergency telephone number to your insurance company. We also strongly recommend that you have cancellation insurance, but this is not mandatory.

## **Health and vaccination**

If you have had any major surgeries in the last two years or chronic illnesses that will affect your comfort during the trip, we should be made aware of it.

## **Passport and Visa**

Your passport must be valid at least 6 months following your travel dates (05.03 2018). Make sure you renew your passport if you need to.

## **Tourist Visa**

Most visitors to US do not need a tourist Visa (see info at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/visa-wizard.html>), but everyone need a ESTA approval prior to travel into US (<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/esta.html>). Everyone also need an e-passport. Let us know if you have any questions regarding passport / Visa / ESTA.

## **Currency**

The currency on this trip will be USD \$.

## **Climate**

We will visit Alaska in early / mid September so temperatures will most likely stay above zero, but it might get a few degree minus during the night or in the morning. Make sure you bring warm clothes.

## **Flights to/from Alaska and Kodiak**

Flights to Anchorage are operated by different airlines every day. If you are flying from Europe we recommend Icelandic air, who have some direct flights to Anchorage in September and

also good pricing.

#### Flights to Kodiak:

We recommend you to fly with Alaska Airlines (Boeing 737-400) 6/9 from Anchorage 3:30 PM (15:30), arriving Kodiak 4:30PM (16:30). Ravn Alaska is also operating this route, but with smaller planes.

#### Return flight from Kodiak:

Recommended flight with Alaska Airlines 15/9 from Kodiak 5:25 PM (17:25) arriving Anchorage 6:19 PM (18:19).

Overnight in Anchorage is recommended as a buffer, but not mandatory, before the international flight back home with Icelandic Air or some other Airline.

NB: Book your flights as early as possible!!

Let us know if you need more information about the flights.

#### **Checked luggage**

Allowed weight of checked luggage on Alaska Airlines is 2 x 22kg and you normally pay USD \$25 for each checked in bag. Make sure you don't have too much overweight. We recommend taking most of your photo equipment in your hand luggage (although it gets a bit heavy).

#### **Hand luggage**

One hand luggage + small bag is allowed with you inside the plane. The maximum measures of the hand luggage is 61 x 43 x 25 cm. The weight restrictions on hand luggage is usually 10 kg.

#### **Weight on the bush flights**

The weight you can bring on the last flight to Katmai, with the chartered small planes, is limited in terms of weight. You should consider wisely what equipment to bring on this trip. If there is something not needed in the field it is possible to leave it in Kodiak until our return. We try to limit the total weight per person to 35kg.

#### **Lost luggage**

Lost or delayed luggage is out of our control. Please pack a small bag with all your essentials, including medicine, and bring it in your carry-on luggage. The most important photographic equipment should also be carry-on luggage. See the checklist below for packing details.

#### **Transport from the airport to the hotel**

When you arrive in Kodiak we will organize transport to the hotel, also back to the airport for the return flight. At Anchorage airport there are hotel mini buses usually included in the hotel price with direct shuttle to / from the hotels.

#### **Accommodation in Anchorage**

During the test trip in September 2015 we used the hotel Homewood Suites close to the airport, but other hotels can also be good. Make sure to book a hotel close to Ted Stevens Anchorage airport, if you want fast access to the airport. Accommodation in Anchorage is not included in the trip price.

## **Tents**

We use quality Hilleberg expedition tents, which are the best in wet and windy conditions. We provide three "3-person" tents as single tents and two "4-person" tents as Twin tents. Make sure you book the desired tent you want.

## **Electricity**

There are no electrical power available in the wilderness, except battery power packs we bring on the airplane: Two Goal Zero power packs, Sherpa 100 Capacity: 98Wh and Yeti 150 Capacity: 150Wh, 14,000mAh. We will also bring a spare 12 volt battery, and use solar panels to try to recharge the battery packs.

## **Meals**

We have a meal tent 10 meter away from the tent camp, with seats for everyone. Our guide will prepare and serve the meals – wilderness style. We will also bring some food out in the field while we are photographing the bears. Let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.

## **Medical**

There are no doctors around, so you should be fit for 7 days in a wilderness camp. We have 2 satellite phones we can use in emergency situations.

## **Security**

We use electrical fencing around the tent camp and food tent, to keep the bears away from our tents when we need some rest. Both of our guides will have pepper spray and red flares to scare of a potential problem bear, if we should meet one.

## **Communication**

There is no cell phone connection in this area so the only way to call in / out is by our 2 satellite phones.

# DAILY PROGRAM

This is an wilderness expedition and we never know the exact program in advance. Based on the weather conditions, we aim to maximize our photo opportunities during this expedition. Our planned program is:

**Day 0** International flight to Anchorage, Alaska

**Day 1** Flight from Anchorage to Kodiak, in the morning and transfer to our hotel. Recommended flight is 3:30 PM (15:30) with Alaskan Airlines from Anchorage. We have one overnight in the hotel and prepare for the expedition start next day. There are one good outdoor shop in Kodiak where you can buy some missing outdoor gear.

**Day 2** Transfer to the small air plane harbour and prepare our flights out to Katmai. If weather is good we fly out as soon as possible, but it has to be on high tide. Flight time is approx. 1,5 hour. After everyone are organized in the camp we will head out to the river (500 meter walk from the camp) and start photographing the Grizzly bears.

**Day 3-8** Enjoying the wilderness experience and photographing the Grizzly bears.

**Day 9** Prepare our flight back to Kodiak, which is weather dependent. Overnight at hotel in Kodiak.

**Day 10** Transfer to Kodiak airport and prepare our flight back to Anchorage. Recommended flight is 15.09 5:25PM (17:25) We recommend 1-2 days extra in Anchorage before your international flight home, in case we are delayed back from the "Grizzly River".



# ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is of course the main activity on this photo expedition. The level of interest, skills and equipment will differ from person to person, but the following may help you to prepare for your upcoming trip.

## CAMERA EQUIPMENT

- Camera: Whatever camera you use, be sure to check that it is working properly before you leave home, and perform sensor cleaning (by yourself or an expert). We recommend to bring 2 cameras so you have one back-up if something happens with your primary camera. It's also handy to have one camera with a telephoto lens and another with a wide-angle lens.
- Camera features: The most important is that it has good low-light capabilities (High-ISO). ISO 1600 (or more) will in many situations be your desired ISO setting.
- Lenses: We recommend a 400+ mm telephoto lens for photographing wildlife, even when the bears are not very shy. A 70-200 mm or wide angles (20 mm or wider) are also useful for landscape photography if you want to get close to animals with great surroundings.
- Batteries: Bring back-up batteries for your cameras.
- Memory cards: We recommend you to bring enough memory cards for the trip and not rely on a laptop (charging problems) with hard drive in the wilderness. Remember this is a real wilderness expedition.
- Weather: Your equipment should be "weatherproof", and you should also bring rain cover for your equipment.
- Tripods: Might be useful along the river, but it can also be nice to lay down in the water edge for some low level photos. Don't bring your heaviest tripod.
- Flash: No use of flash on the grizzly bears.
- Camera bag: bring a rainproof backpack, or put your camera bag or equipment into a Seal line drybag.

# EQUIPMENT LIST

Below is some recommended clothes and equipment to bring on this trip.

- Rain and windproof outerwear – jacket and pants. It may rain persistently why it is especially important with adequate water proof shell garments.
- The temperature in Katmai can be anything from zero (or below) degrees Celsius at night to 15 degrees during the day so you should bring clothes accordingly. It can be very windy and rainy at the location so even though the temperature is not that low the wind can cause a great chill factor. A good inner layer that keeps you warm and dry is essential. The best is to have several layers, one thinner inner layer and one thicker. Combined with good inner layer it is also recommend to bring a thick fleece and perhaps also a warm insulated jacket to have underneath a shell jacket. You will also need a warm hat and thin gloves that you can wear while handling a camera. The key is to wear clothing that dries fairly quickly and stays warm even if it would become a little damp, merino wool is very good as a inner layer. Remember to bring spare clothes if you get wet!
- You will borrow waders and wading boots that you will use all the time while in the field. It is however great to have a pair of comfortable boots to wear when you are in and around the tent camp.
- Bring plenty of extra socks, it can sometimes be difficult to keep them to dry.
- We recommend you to bring your own sleeping bag that can handle around -10 degrees Celsius. If you don't want to bring your own sleeping bag we can organize it for you in Alaska, but it's best to know in advance what kind of sleeping bag you are going to sleep in.
- Headlamp, for the late evenings and at night in the tent. It is enough to have a simple one.
- Mosquito nets to pull over your head, can be nice if mosquitoes becomes bad. In September this should not be a big problem, but you never know.
- Water bottle to bring during day trips in the field.
- The best way to pack your personal equipment is in a backpack or soft bag (duffle bag). Make sure your content is packed reasonably waterproof. You can also pack some directly in waterproof stuff sacks, such as Seal line, instead of a bag.
- For photo and video equipment you can have a hard case for transportation, but in the field it's much better to carry your equipment in a waterproof / rainproof backpack. Make sure you have weather protection for the gear while in the field.
- Bring as many batteries as you can! We have solar panels an battery power packs with us, but the system is weather dependent and if there is no sun the ability to charge would of course be limited. It is great if you have a 12 volt charger with you for charging the batteries. We do also have an inverter so you can use normal chargers but it will then takes a little bit more power to charge the batteries.