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On everyone's bucket list – Alaska

ARLENE GOLDBERG

Holland American Line was born to voyage. For nearly 145 years, they have been introducing guests to new places and new cultures, and witnessed firsthand the transformative power of travel, balance, depth and authenticity. These are the elements that bring Holland America Line to more than 500 itineraries, stopping in 100 countries the world



Goldberg

over with more than 473 ports. With unmatched experience and insider knowledge, Holland America Line are the Alaska experts. Its deep history and roots in the Great Land means you will discover the iconic and authentic Alaska. Imagine majestic tidewater glaciers, iconic animals roaming freely, breaching whales, colorful Klondike Gold Rush history and wide-open spaces of incomparable beauty. The following are the many ports and sites that are available to visit on Holland America Line cruise!

JUNEAU

Juneau may well be the most remote, most beautiful and strangest state capital in the United States. The sleepy, misty city of about 32,000, mostly fishermen and small business owners, has a frontier town vibe, but welcomes more than a million visitors each summer to its natural attractions, cementing Juneau as Alaska's No. 1 tourist destination.

KETCHIKAN

Alaska's first city of Ketchikan is so named because it's the first major landfall for most cruisers as they enter the picturesque fjords of the Inside Passage, where the town clings to the banks of the Tongass Narrows, flanked by green forests nurtured by abundant rain.

It is also one of the best spots along the Inside Passage to explore the rich cultural sights of native Alaskan nations like the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian. You can see intricately carved totem poles at the Totem Heritage Center and Totem Bight State Park

GLACIER BAY

Holland America Line has more licenses to Glacier Bay than any cruise line. It also brings on a park ranger to spend the day on board narrating as you navigate for a full day

You will view frosted crags descend into mossy forests and a 1,500-foot-deep fjord at this World Heritage Site, which is also one

of the planet's largest biosphere reserves. There will be stone, ice and water continue to collide, sculpting a dramatic landscape that is the crown jewel of southeastern Alaska's natural wonders. A spruce-hemlock rain forest has sprouted near the mouth of Glacier Bay. Farther north, the more recently exposed land shows sharper edges and thinner vegetation. Still, it's enough to encourage the return of wildlife, from bald eagles to bears, moose and humpback whales.

SITKA

You'll witness a unique slice of Alaskan history not found anywhere else in Sitka. Russia controlled Alaska from the mid-1700s until the United States purchased it in 1867. Sailing into Sitka today, you'll still see vestiges of Russia's influence, including the unmistakable onion dome of St. Michael's Cathedral and the Russian Bishop's House, both National Historic Landmarks. Stop by the visitor center of the Sitka National Historical Park to peruse its interesting collections of Russian and Native Alaskan artifacts.

SCENIC CRUISING TRACY ARM

Even more glorious than nearby Glacier Bay Tracy Arm is part of the 5.7 million acres of pure wilderness sheltered by the Tongass National Forest (America's biggest). Visitors often see bears, whales and mountain goats roaming across various corners of this pristine area, not to mention chubby baby seals resting on the ice floes.

SKAGWAY

At the height of the Klondike Gold Rush, the port town of Skagway served as the primary gateway to the legendary gold fields, and quickly grew into Alaska's largest settlement. It was then a raucous frontier hub packed with trading posts, saloons and guesthouses.

As the gold rush faded into the 1900s, so did Skagway, but today it has been reinvigorated as a gateway for a new kind of visitor; those looking to explore Alaska's colorful history, pristine wildlife.

VANCOUVER

Once a trading post and a rough-and-tumble sawmilling settlement, today modern Vancouver, Canada, is many things. It's a bustling seaport, a hub for outdoor enthusiasts looking for active things to do in Vancouver; an ethnically diverse metropolis and Hollywood of the North.

Hemmed in by mountains and sea, Vancouver seduces visitors with its combination of urban sophistication and laid-back attitude against a backdrop of glass towers and modern sights and plentiful green spaces. Beyond the

downtown attractions in Vancouver; days of exploration and sightseeing await among the colorful suburbs, unspoiled islands and the vast, rugged wilderness.

ANCHORAGE

After long and dark winters, Alaskans love their summers and the residents of Anchorage, Alaska are no exception. The city plants thousands of flowers to celebrate the arrival of warmer months and days that last as long as 19 hours from dawn to dusk.

About 40 percent of Alaska's population lives in Anchorage. This diverse city of 300,000 includes a large military population, native Alaskans, individuals who work for the oil industry and adventure-seeking types who want to get away from "the Lower 48."

VICTORIA

Of all the cities in Canada, Victoria may be the furthest from Great Britain, but it has the most British vibe. Between sipping afternoon tea, visiting flower gardens and castles and stopping in at pubs, one could easily forget about the Pacific Ocean lapping at the other side of Vancouver Island.

Extensive galleries are devoted to the history of the first people at the Royal




Glacier Bay, Alaska. | Photo / Holland American Line

British Columbia Museum, one of Victoria's top tourist attractions. Canada's oldest Chinatown is here and famous Butchart Gardens, a truly stunning show garden developed on the site of a depleted quarry. Victoria, the city's civilized delights will charm you.

Arlene Goldberg is president and owner of Action Travel Center in Solon. You can watch her Thursdays at 11 a.m. on WKYC's Live on Lakeside with the "Hot Travel Deal."

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