



SOUTH OF ANCHORAGE ITINERARY

The scenic Seward Highway winds to the south of Anchorage, and it's lined with opportunities to explore glaciers and mountains, enjoy Turnagain Arm trails, watch for wildlife, and learn about the history of gold mining in the region.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Bring the binoculars — you might see moose, migratory birds, Dall sheep, bald eagles, black bears, and beluga whales along the way.

Featuring

Wildlife
Scenic Drive
Historic Site

Average Duration:

Half to Full Day



Day 1— Start with a stop at Potter Marsh: Explore the southern end of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge via a 1,550-foot boardwalk, and enjoy abundant wildlife and panoramic views of the Chugach Mountains, Cook Inlet, and the distant peaks of the Kenai Peninsula. Approximately 7 miles south, stop at Beluga Point to watch for beluga whales in Turnagain Arm or Dall sheep scaling the cliffs across the highway. This scenic Seward Highway pullout is also one of the earliest archeological sites of the Upper Cook Inlet region, visited by Alaska Native people for thousands of years.

Another 6 miles to the south, find Indian Valley Mine National Historic Site, a picture-perfect picnic location whose two historic buildings provide a peek at life on an early Anchorage-area mining claim. Continue south on the highway to Bird Creek to watch anglers cast for silver salmon, or head up the Bird Ridge Trail (a moderately strenuous hike) for panoramic views of the surrounding inlet. Continue south on the highway and spend the night in Girdwood.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Girdwood is surrounded by glaciers, making it the perfect place to catch a snowmobile, dog sled, or flightseeing tour.

Featuring

Hike
Sightseeing Tours
Historic Site
Wildlife

Average Duration:

Full Day



Day 2 – Start the day with a cinnamon roll from a local bakery and a stroll on the Winner Creek Trail (or one of the other scenic paths winding through the valley). Visit the Crow Creek Mine, home to some of the older buildings in Anchorage and the most historically prolific mining operations in Southcentral Alaska. It's an ideal place to explore the area's gold rush history (and maybe try your luck with a pan). Go deeper into Chugach State Park and neighboring Chugach National Forest a sightseeing tour via air or snowmobile. Enjoy an elevated view of the valley with a ride on the Alyeska Aerial Tram. Spend the night in Girdwood.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Trail of Blue Ice is a mostly level 5-mile path through Portage Valley, great for biking or walking, surrounded by views of glaciers.

Featuring

Scenic Drive
Nature Center
Wildlife
Glacier Cruise

Average Duration:

Full Day

Day 3 – Sip coffee and savor breakfast in Girdwood, then head down the Seward Highway to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. See some of Alaska's most recognizable wildlife roam the 200-acre habitat near the eastern tip of Turnagain Arm, and get a close-up view of the resident bruins from the center's popular bear-viewing boardwalk.

Then head into Portage Valley for lunch, more wildlife viewing, and opportunities to get close to some of Chugach National Forest's most recognizable glaciers. Stretch your legs on the Williwaw Nature Trail, see salmon at the Williwaw Fish Viewing Platform, explore the Trail of Blue Ice, then stop by the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center to learn more about the natural history of the region. Lace up your boots for the short, level hike back to Byron Glacier, and sail iceberg-studded Portage Lake during an hour-long excursion with Portage Glacier Cruises (the mv Ptarmigan departs near the visitor center and takes guests to the towering face of Portage Glacier).

Soak up the sunset over Turnagain Arm on the 1.5-hour drive back to Anchorage.