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Wrangell | Optional Shore Excursions

Alaska's majestic natural spectacles play out before you in Wrangell. The pure, gushing water is one of Alaska's most prized shows, and there are few better places to witness it than Wrangell - a town set amid the fractured lands of the legendary Inside Passage. Having experienced three gold rushes in its history, the immense scenery and thrilling wildlife is an enduring treasure for visitors. The mighty Stikine River has been the lifeblood to this region for centuries, cutting through pine-cloaked valleys for 400 miles before unloading into the frigid ocean. If the tides are friendly, why not explore via jet-boat and head out to the abundant waters of Anan Creek, an ancient fishing site of the Tlingit people. Visit waters thick with lithe salmon - a bounty that tempts much of the wildlife from the confines of their forest shelters. The Anan Wildlife Observatory provides the ultimate viewing point to watch the salmon leaping from the cascading water. Look out from the cover for bears, salmon and bald eagles. Try your own luck fishing in Wrangell's waters, which are teeming with a rich bounty. Clomp through rich forests - beside waterfalls and waterways - on hair-raising hikes, which open out to glorious waterfront vistas. The aptly named Petroglyph Beach is the place to see amazing petroglyph artworks carved into the rocks. Or tour Shakes Island's Tribal House, where you can see a replica of a Tlingit community house. The house is surrounded by fascinating, original totem poles, and a wooden footbridge conveniently links the island with Wrangell's harbour.

Wrangell Highlights Code: WRG-A

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Moderate | Duration: 2.5 hours

Discover the highlights of this truly Alaskan town and see its colorful history and native culture come to life while visiting the Wrangell Museum and Petroglyph Beach with Kiks Adi Totem Park and Alaskan Native interpretation.

Depart the pier by a vintage but comfortable and spacious school bus and meander downtown Wrangell to Kiks Adi Totem Park. Here listen to an interpretive narration provided by local natives. Then, learn about the Stikine River and its significant influence on the development of Wrangell. Pass through the town and see its historic churches, while on the way, catch a glimpse of a traditional Tlingit Tribal House.

Visit Wrangell's famous anthropological sight, Petroglyph Beach. See the carvings dated 6,000 years before the settlement by the Tlingit tribes. Enjoy a petroglyph rubbing demonstration before heading to the Wrangell Museum. The local museum houses a rich assortment of over 5,000 historic photos, native artifacts, a collection of Tlingit petroglyphs, and fishing, mining and logging displays. Afterwards, make your way back to the ship onboard the school bus, or you may choose to stay longer and do the short walk on your own.

Please note: this tour involves a minimum amount of walking for approximately 300 feet (90 meters). The visit to Petroglyph Beach involves several steps and walking on a natural beach with rocks, gravel, sand and logs, it can be slippery at low tide. This stop is not suitable for wheelchair, walker or cane users. Guest may choose to stay on the bus where the walking is too hard. The order of sites may vary.

Ancient Forest at Anan Creek | WRG-B

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Extensive | Duration: 5 hours

Discover the majestic scenery, Native culture and incredible wilderness of Alaska on this four-hour adventure. Learn from a Native local guide all about the unique culture of the Wrangell region as you make your way to the Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory, where (although your tour visits during nonpeak season) there is still a chance to see a Black or Brown Bear.

Board your jet boat and set out for a one-hour, scenic ride through the Back Channel towards your hiking destination, the renowned Anan Wildlife Observation area, known for being a prolific salmon spawning stream that attracts both black and brown bears. Your local naturalist guide provides expert commentary on the pristine wild scenery around you of coastline, forest and waterfalls. Keep an eye out for wildlife and marine mammals, with the assistance of your guide's trained eye and deep knowledge.

Disembark at Anan Creek, the site of the early summer salmon runs that attracts a striking number of bears. Hike for 45 minutes to the end of the trail and the site of the Anan Wildlife Observation Area, where you are greeted by your local Native cultural host. Your generous host provides fascinating historic details all about the Alaska Native people and the way they interacted and benefited from with the bountiful mid-summer fish runs at this historical fish camp.

From the observation platform, make your return hike for 45 minutes (approximately half a mile in each direction) over a rustic trail as your naturalist and guide leads you through the beautifully scenic trail, sharing important detail about this special rainforest ecosystem. Much of the groomed trail is boardwalk, with several sets of narrow stairs and bridges over the waterways.

A snack and beverage are served when you're back on the boat after your hike.

Please note: This tour involves a moderate to extensive amount of walking of over a mile, including 300 stairs at Anan up and down narrow paths and a ramp that can be steep at low tide. Participants must be in good physical condition with no balance problems. Conditions change with the weather and the trail can be slippery. Depending upon tide, the ramp may be steep when loading off. There is also off-roading travel, making this tour not recommended for those with back or neck issues as well as pregnant women. This tour is not accessible to guests with limited mobility or wheelchairs. Guests must sign a waiver to participate. The minimum age to participate is 8 years old, provided the child can follow direction from guides. Guests are recommended to dress in layers and wear sturdy walking shoes, and bring rain gear and umbrella if appropriate to conditions. Space on this tour is somewhat limited; we suggest you book well in advance to avoid disappointment. Wildlife sightings not guaranteed.

Stikine River and Wilderness Glacier Lake | WRG-C

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Minimal | Duration: 3.5 hours

The Stikine River is considered one of the last truly wild rivers in North America, running directly through the nearly ½ million-acre Stikine LeConte' Wilderness area. Famed American naturalist, John Muir, described it as "a Yosemite 100 miles" (160 kilometers) long. The Stikine River has spectacular scenery with great photo opportunities.

Immerse yourself in the pristine wilderness of the world's largest temperate rain forest. This dense forest is home to a variety of wildlife species and though elusive, you may have a chance sighting. Experience the excitement of an exhilarating jet-boat ride, learn a bit of the area gold rush history, enjoy a snack at a wilderness riverside location or on board while floating peacefully, all in the company of the most experienced energetic captains.

Take a short walk from the ship to Wrangell city dock and embark the custom, purpose built, heated and covered, jet-boat. Traverse the ever-changing river delta, meander through side sloughs and explore the banks of the river. Seek out views of distant mountain peaks, spy on spawning salmon and listen to thundering waterfalls.

Your journey culminates at Shakes Lake with sparkling blue and crystal-clear icebergs. If accessible, venture in farther for a view of Shakes Glacier and the ancient ice from which it was created. Next, you may come ashore at a wilderness location on the banks of the Stikine and experience the wilderness up close and watch as the peaceful river rolls by. A snack of wine and cheese awaits you when you get back on the jet boat. All too soon it is time to return to your ship.

Please Notes: this tour involves a minimal amount of walking for approximately 300 feet (90 meters). Guests should be in good physical health with a full range of motion to get in and out of the vessel. This tour is not wheelchair accessible. The tour routing and sights offered may change due to weather, nature and water conditions. Due to the nature of boating in the wilderness on the Stikine River, which sometimes requires travel in shallow water, you may experience quick or sudden stops, starts and turns while underway. This tour departs and returns from the Wrangell city dock, which is a short walking distance (300 ft) from the ship. At certain tidal conditions the access ramp to the vessels can be very steep. Facilities are basic in the wilderness location and consist primarily of USFS outhouses. If inclement weather, or at captain discretion wine and cheese will be served on board the vessel rather than on land. Wildlife sights are common but cannot be guaranteed.

High Country Extreme Hike | WRG-D

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Physically fit | Duration: 5 hours

Enjoy fantastic views of the coastal rainforest, Stikine-LeConte ice cap and Outer Islands of coastal Alaska on this invigorating tour through the rain forest.

Meet your naturalist guide at the dock and receive raingear and hiking sticks. Then depart by van for a short ride through the town of Wrangell and onto a remote road enroute to the trailhead. The trail itself is a narrow wooden boardwalk with steps, designed to have minimal impact on the forest floor.

This hike winds through the Tongass National Forest through both trees and muskeg to the destination; a series of ponds in the high meadows. Depending on weather, there are spectacular vistas of the islands of the Inside Passage from the trail at higher elevations.

Along the way, your naturalist guide will touch on a variety of topics such as botany, natural history, and rain forest ecology. Enjoy a healthy snack and needed break on the spine of Wrangell Island high above, as eagles soar by at eye level before making your way back down the trail and returning to the ship.

Please note: This tour is designed for athletic, energetic and physically fit adventurers. Approximate walking distance is 4 miles (6.4 Kilometres) with many steps throughout. Due to the nature of the wilderness trail you may encounter mud and slick trail conditions. We suggest you dress in layers and wear waterproof hiking boots. There are no toilet facilities during the on-site portion of the tour, therefore we recommend guests use the facilities on the ship prior to departure. Guests are requested to sign a waiver.

Premium Glacier Discovery | WRG-F

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Moderate | Duration: 4 hours

Enjoy the severe beauty of the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness area surrounded by the comfort of a jetboat with a heated cabin on this four-hour tour that features a boat ride through the waterways of the Stikine River.

Enjoy an approximately 1-hour scenic jet boat ride through the pristine wilderness area as you make your way to the glacier. Waterfalls can be seen thundering down mountainsides that rise to heights of 3,000+ feet. Step onto the back deck to breathe in the crisp glacial air and immerse yourself in the nature that surrounds you. Step inside to warm up and indulge in hors d'oeuvres featuring Alaskan wild smoked salmon and wine as you cruise through the iceberg fields on your way to the face of the glacier. Your Alaskan guide will share information on the geology and natural history of the area while ensuring your comfort each step of the way.

As you depart the glacier area, make the scenic 1-hour boat journey back to the pier, making stops for photography or wildlife spotting along the way.

Please note: This tour involves moderate activity, including 200 feet of walking and a ramp that may be steep at low tide. The jet boats are boarded from the dock where some large steps are required to get into the vessel. This tour is not wheelchair accessible. The boat ride may be bumpy and is not recommended for those prone to motion sickness or those with back or neck issues. Guests must sign a waiver to participate on this tour. Depending on weather conditions, guests are recommended to wear warm wool or fleece layers, a waterproof jacket, hat, gloves and comfortable shoes for walking and standing. Space on this tour is limited; you may need to book well in advance to avoid disappointment. Calving may be seen but is not guaranteed. Wildlife sightings are likely but not guaranteed. This tour operates in a remote wilderness area, where weather and ice conditions can alter both the duration and route of the journey, including shipside embarkation/disembarkation areas.

Stikine River Jet Boat | WRG-K

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Minimal | Duration: 3.5 hours

Explore the Stikine River, or Stik-Heen in Tlingit meaning "Great River." Referred to as the fastest navigable, free-flowing river in North America, this impressive waterway travels 400 miles, with its originating headwaters in British Columbia and its mouth near Wrangell. This river's delta flats cover over 27,000 acres and are home to 120 species of migrating birds. The river has been carving glaciers for tens of thousands of years and roars amidst beautiful waterfalls, massive walls of granite and snowtopped mountains.

Take a two-hour boat ride navigating the Stikine River with a capable captain and crew. Prepare to be astounded at the stark beauty found in the contrast of the bright white of the glaciers against the deep green of the surrounding forests. In addition to thousands of migratory birds, the river is also where moose, deer, brown and black bears, beavers and hundreds of bald eagles can be spotted. This diverse wildlife and scenery inspired John Muir, a famous 19th century North American naturalist, to compare the Stikine to a "Yosemite 100 miles long."

Make the 30-minute transfer to meet your guides, the captain and crew of your jet boat. Receive a safety briefing and tour of the vessel and then zip your way along the Stikine, enjoying the comfort of a covered, heated cabin. Your route includes crossing an important Pacific Migratory Route which maximizes your chances of spotting a bald eagle amidst the river delta.

Travel amidst rainforest-enclosed channels where moose, deer and wolf live. Conditions permitting, enter into the Shales Lake area to move amidst the icebergs, glaciers and stunning waterfalls amidst gigantic mountains. All the while, your crew is available to educate you on the plant and animal life and natural history of this spectacular wilderness land and riverscape.

Make the return trip to the ship.

Please note: This tour involves a small amount of walking (500 meters) over a ramp to the jet boat dock, although depending on the tie the ramp may be rather steep, making this tour is not suitable for guests who utilise walkers or a wheelchair. Guests must sign a waiver to participate on this tour. Guests with a fear of water should not participate on this tour. The weight limit is 300lbs for this tour. The minimum age to participate is 5 years old, provided the child can follow directions and is accompanied by a guardian. If guides or other guests find any children to be disruptive or jeopardize the safety of the group, they and their guardians will be escorted back to the trailhead and still charged for the tour. Guests are recommended to dress warmly in layers, prepared for Alaska's changeable weather and wear comfortable shoes, and bring a camera, binoculars and an extra layer. Space on this tour is limited; we suggest you book well in advance to avoid disappointment. Wildlife sightings are likely but not guaranteed. Please note that entering Shakes Lake depends on the river level.

John Muir Hike | WRG-L

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Extensive | Duration: 1.75 hours

Walk in the footsteps of John Muir up the Mount Dewey trail, which is dedicated to one of the most renowned naturalists of the last two centuries. It was on this trail in 1879 that Muir built a fire so large that the people of Wrangell thought it was St. Elmo's Fire, as its light reflected on the clouds above it and created an eerie effect for all to see.

Set out on your short excursion (only 2.25 hours) and travel 30 minutes via coach to meet your guides and sign a waiver before making your way to the trailhead. Make a short 20-minute hike to the Mt. Dewey trail, which in part was constructed by local high school students participating in a hands-on educational program.

Enjoy a moderate hike of 1.5 miles (described as challenging for those in normal physical condition but still "doable"), listening to your local guide as they share the colourful history of Wrangell and point out species of flora and fauna along the way. The trail gains over 500 feet of elevation in just over half a mile, but there is time to rest at viewpoints along the way, with the best vantage point at the top, overlooking Wrangell and the scenic Zimovia Strait.

From the top of the trail it is easy to see the fascinating horseshoe shape of Wrangell and witness its bustling activity, all in sight of the awe-inspiring, far-off mountains that were just as beautiful when John Muir was here. As you step, enjoy the peaceful quiet of the trail, with the forest floor dampening sound, making it easier to hear birdsong and detect hidden wildlife rustling amidst the trees.

After some time at the scenic overlook to take in the beauty of the view and forest, it is time to make the return hike down and transfer back to the ship.

Please note: This tour involves a moderate amount of walking, approximately 1.5 miles total, including walking uphill 700 meters to a trailhead with a mix of stairs and fairly even trail. It does include a 300m total elevation gain. Much of the walking is a forest trail with natural surfaces and exposed roots; this trail is not suitable for those with mobility or serious vision issues and cannot accommodate wheelchairs. Guests should be in adequate physical shape; this tour is not recommended for those who are knee replacement candidates. Guests must sign a waiver to participate. The minimum age to participate is 6 years old, provided the child can follow directions. If guides or other guests find children to be disruptive or jeopardize the safety of the group, they and their guardians will be escorted back to the trailhead and still charged for the tour. Guests are recommended to dress in layers and wear sturdy walking shoes; open-toed shoes are not acceptable as trails are muddy. Space on this tour is limited; we suggest you book well in advance to avoid disappointment. Wildlife sightings likely but not guaranteed. Snack or meal not included on this 1.75-hour tour; we suggest you bring a small snack if needed.

Shakes Canoe | WRG-M

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Moderate | Duration: 2.5 h

Discover Tlingit culture and take an enjoyable paddle by 17-foot canoe to Shakes Island to visit the Shakes Tribal House. This excursion is geared to the novice, but those with more experience will also enjoy the destination as much as the short journey. Shakes Island is on the National Historic Register and receives over 10,000 visitors a year. This island was listed as a historic site for being one of the view living examples of the Alaska Native population of the Southeast, and for their legendary totem art.

Meet your guide at the pier, a Tlingit retired school teacher who can tell you all you need to know about the canoe, as he once paddled from Seattle all the way to Wrangell in his younger days and continues to take annual adventures in Southeast Alaska and Canada. Once you receive your safety gear and get a safety briefing, embark on your 30-minute canoe ride to Shakes Island.

The primary landmark of Shakes Island is its replica 19th century tribal house of the Tlingit Nation. Receive a window onto Tlingit culture at Chief Shakes' Tribal House, where you are an invited guest. You are greeted by local tribe members as you land at the boat ramp. Once you are granted passage to Shakes Tribal House, enjoy a presentation on the history and cultural attributes of the Wrangell Tlingit. Learn of the Tlingit way of life and hear stories that have been passed down generation to generation. Please bring a curious mind as you are encouraged to ask questions.

After your visit to Shakes Island, hop back into your canoe and paddle back to the pier.

Please note: This tour involves moderate activity and the physical ability to enter and exit the canoe and 100 meters walking to the canoes on a ramp that can be steep at lower tide. Assistance is available, but guests should be able to have some maneuverability and the ability to help with self-rescue in case of an incident. This tour is not wheelchair accessible or recommended for those with limited mobility. Guests must sign a waiver to participate on this tour. Children under 9 that can listen to direction may participate if they are accompanied by an adult guardian. Depending on weather conditions, guests are recommended to wear warm wool or fleece layers, a waterproof jacket, hat, gloves, scarf and rain gear, as well as comfortable shoes for walking and standing. Space on this tour is extremely limited; to avoid disappointment you are recommended to book early.

Wildlife Discovery | WRG-N

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Minimal | Duration: 6 hours

Discover the wildlife of the Tongass National Forest, accompanied by knowledgeable biologist guides on this memorable excursion. Stretching over 16.7 million acres, the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska is the largest national forest in the United States, containing multiple ecosystems (primarily Pacific temperate rain forest) and is where many endangered plant and animal species can be found. The forest was declared a national reserve by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907.

Your biologist guides are knowledgeable about this region's animal behavior, migratory patterns, feeding rhythms and other habits, which maximises your chances of some spectacular wildlife sightings. Late summer is when animals feed intensely in water and in the woods here, so while specific wildlife appearances cannot be predicted, some likely animals you may spot include Whales (which feed on

Herring and Sand Lance abundant nearby), Eagles (feeding with their baby fledglings on salmon), Sea Otters and many others.

Arrive to meet your guides, sign a waiver and get a safety briefing on your jet boat. Then enjoy a 5.5hour tour of the Tongass National Forest wildlife. Depending upon the day's conditions with respect to weather, temperature and other factors - even time of day - your guides may take you to observe any number of animal behaviors. You might see Sea Otters frolicking amidst the kelp, bears feeding on fish in a stream, Harbor Seals nursing their pups amidst ice floes, or any other magical sights such as these.

Your tour includes a short hike, and may include bird watching, whale watching, or a search for bears. Return to the ship after your day of wildlife discovery.

Please note: This tour involves a small amount of walking (50 meters) over a ramp to the jet boat dock, although depending on the tie the ramp may be rather steep, making this tour is not suitable for guests who utilise walkers or a wheelchair. Guests must sign a waiver to participate on this tour. The weight limit is 300lbs for this tour. The minimum age to participate is 5 years old, provided the child can follow directions and is accompanied by a guardian. If guides or other guests find any children to be disruptive or jeopardize the safety of the group, they and their guardians will be escorted back to the ship and still charged for the tour. Guests are recommended to dress warmly in layers, prepared for Alaska's changeable weather (waterproof outer layer recommended) and wear comfortable shoes. Bring a camera, binoculars and an extra layer. Space on this tour is limited; we suggest you book well in advance to avoid disappointment. Wildlife sightings are likely but not guaranteed.

OPTIONAL Shore Excursions.

Tours and Itineraries are subject to change and availability. Contact Cruise Connections for details and pricing.

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