

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in
Alaska

Alaska Highway approach, summer-only window, bear protocol, Dalton fuel gaps,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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RV travel in Alaska

Alaska is a category of RV trip unto itself. The drive from the Lower 48 is 2,000+ miles through British Columbia and the Yukon before you even cross the Alaska border -- the Alaska Highway (Alcan) is 1,387 miles of mostly two-lane road with serious distances between fuel. Once in Alaska the season is short (mid-May through mid-September is the realistic RV window) and the geography is structured around four corridor highways: the Glenn (Anchorage-Tok), the Parks (Anchorage-Fairbanks via Denali), the Richardson (Valdez-Fairbanks), and the unpaved Dalton (Fairbanks-Prudhoe Bay). The Top of the World and the McCarthy Road are summer-only gravel routes for the adventurous. Plan around the season, the bears, the mosquitoes, and the propane sparseness on the gravel routes, and Alaska is the trip of a lifetime. Plan badly and it becomes a 12,000-mile rescue mission.

Alaska by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	811
Established campgrounds	289
Dump stations	56
Propane refills	45
Potable water fill-ups	78
Laundromats	59
RV showers	58
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	42

Source: iOverlander community database (80% of Alaska spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	65 mph (Alaska has very few miles of interstate-standard road; most posted 55-65)
State highway (cars)	55-65 mph (posted)
State highway (towing)	55 mph
Built-up areas	25-45 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
RV passenger seatbelts	Required for all front-seat occupants; under-16s in all seats

Cell phone use while driving	Texting banned statewide; Anchorage city bans hand-held use; cell coverage is spotty to nonexistent outside the corridor highways -- carry a satellite communicator (Garmin inReach, Zoleo, or similar) for the Dalton, McCarthy Road, and Top of the World.
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Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
Alaska Highway (AK-2) Tok to Delta Junction	The Alaska side of the Alcan; paved, two-lane, decent shoulders. Frost heaves common -- slow down.
Glenn Highway (AK-1) Anchorage to Tok	Spectacular Matanuska Glacier views. Paved, two-lane, well-maintained. Heavy summer RV traffic.
Richardson Highway (AK-4 to Valdez; AK-2 north to Delta)	Valdez to Fairbanks via Thompson Pass. Steep grades approaching Valdez.
Parks Highway (AK-3) Anchorage to Fairbanks	Main Denali NP access. Paved, busy in summer.
Seward Highway (AK-1 / AK-9) Anchorage to Seward/Homer	Turnagain Arm scenic drive; well-paved, very heavy summer weekend traffic.
Sterling Highway (AK-1) toward Homer/Kenai	Kenai Peninsula RV corridor; full of campgrounds and dipnet-fishery access in July.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
Dalton Highway (AK-11 / Haul Road) Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay	414 miles of mostly gravel. Pipeline-construction road; trucks have right-of-way. RVs are legal but most rental contracts prohibit it. Three fuel stops the whole way: Yukon River Camp, Coldfoot, Deadhorse. Carry a spare tire and two cans of fuel. Calcium chloride dust is corrosive -- wash undercarriage after.
Top of the World Highway (Yukon TOW / AK-9 from Tetlin Junction)	Mostly unpaved, Canada-side; closes Sep-May with the Eagle Plains ferry. Stunning ridge-top driving. Length-restricted at the Poker Creek/Little Gold border crossing -- check current dimensions.
McCarthy Road (AK-10 to Wrangell-St. Elias)	60 miles unpaved, follows old railroad bed with iron spikes occasionally surfacing. Most rentals prohibit. Footbridge at McCarthy -- you walk from the road end, no driving into McCarthy or Kennecott.
Denali Park Road inside Denali NP	Private vehicles allowed only to Mile 15 (Savage River). Past that, NPS shuttle bus only -- and even the bus has been restricted since the 2021 Pretty Rocks landslide cut the road at Mile 43. Check current park-road status.

Hatcher Pass Road (Palmer to Willow)	Mostly unpaved over the pass; closed in winter. Doable in small RVs in summer; tough for big rigs.
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Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Thompson Pass (Richardson Hwy)	2678 ft	Steepest paved Alaska road into Valdez; gets the most snow in North America (>500 inches some winters).
Atigun Pass (Dalton Hwy)	4739 ft	Only highway through the Brooks Range; gravel, steep, avalanche-prone. Trucks have right-of-way.
Eagle Summit (Steese Hwy)	3624 ft	Gravel road north of Fairbanks; closes in winter.
Hatcher Pass (Hatcher Pass Rd)	3886 ft	Mostly gravel; closed in winter.
Isabel Pass (Richardson Hwy)	3000 ft	Paved; open year-round but white-out prone.
Mentasta Pass (Tok Cutoff)	2434 ft	Open year-round.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Denali NP & Preserve	\$15/person (7 days), \$80 America the Beautiful annual	Riley Creek Campground (entrance area) reservable via recreation.gov; RVs to 40 ft, no hookups. Savage River Campground (Mile 13, reservable) the only RV site past the entrance. Teklanika reservable but requires a 3-night minimum and you must shuttle past from there. The Park Road past Mile 43 has been closed since 2021 -- check nps.gov/dena for current status.
Wrangell-St. Elias NP & Preserve	Free entry	Largest NP in the US (13.2 million acres). No NPS campgrounds; commercial/state options outside the park. McCarthy Road access only, see restriction above.
Glacier Bay NP & Preserve	Free entry	Boat or floatplane access only from Juneau (no road access). RV travel doesn't reach Glacier Bay; visit via cruise or fly-in.
Katmai NP & Preserve	Free entry	Floatplane access only from King Salmon; famous for the Brooks Falls bear-viewing platform. No RV access.
Kenai Fjords NP	Free entry	Exit Glacier (drivable from Seward) is the only road-accessible portion. RVs to 40 ft at the visitor center lot.

Clondike Gold Rush NHP	Free entry	Skagway, AK -- accessed via the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry from Bellingham/Prince Rupert or drive via the Klondike Highway from the Yukon.
Sitka NHP	Free entry	Sitka, Baranof Island -- ferry or air access only. No RVs.
Aniakchak / Bering Land Bridge / Cape Krusenstern / Gates of the Arctic / Kobuk Valley / Lake Clark / Noatak	All free; all wilderness	No road access. Bush plane / boat only. Not RV destinations.

State parks

Alaska has 130+ state park units; many have RV-accessible campgrounds without hookups. Standouts for RVs: Denali State Park (along Parks Hwy, separate from the NP), Chena River SRA, Chugach State Park (Anchorage area), Captain Cook SRA, Kenai River Special Management Area. Reservable for many sites via reserveamerica.com; Alaska state parks \$15-30/night for primitive RV. No annual non-resident discount.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Alaska BLM exists but is mostly remote and trail-accessed. The Steese Highway (north of Fairbanks) has BLM dispersed camping at the Davidson Ditch and around the White Mountains NRA. Free 14-day dispersed limit is the standard. Most Alaskan boondocking happens on state land (DNR), Forest Service in the SE Panhandle, or at the many highway pullouts -- legal in most cases unless posted.

National Forest: Tongass NF (SE Panhandle) and Chugach NF (south-central) are the two Alaska National Forests. Tongass is mostly accessed by ferry and floatplane; Chugach is reachable from the Seward, Sterling, and Glenn Highways. Free dispersed camping on forest roads where present; 14-day limits. Many developed Chugach campgrounds reservable via recreation.gov; bears are routine campsite visitors -- bear-safe food storage required.

Stay limit: 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

Tribal lands

Alaska has 229 federally-recognized tribes -- more than any other state. Land status is unusual: ANCSA (1971) replaced reservations with for-profit Native corporations holding most surface and subsurface rights. Many villages are sovereign and accessed only by air or boat. The Metlakatla Indian Community (Annette Island) is the only true reservation in Alaska. Respect village rules; many require permission for photography, alcohol bans are common, and dispersed camping near villages is generally not appropriate. Subsistence fishing/hunting takes priority on Native-corporation lands.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Reliable in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Palmer, Soldotna, Homer, Seward, Valdez, Tok, and Delta Junction. SPARSE everywhere else. On the Dalton Highway you have effectively no propane after Fairbanks -- carry full tanks. Top of the World and McCarthy roads: same. The Alaska Highway between Tok and Whitehorse (YT) has several seasonal stops but plan for none and you'll be fine. Most full-service

truck stops at major junctions handle refills; small village stores rarely do.

Dump stations: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Soldotna, and most Kenai Peninsula RV parks have dumps. State campground dumps free for paid guests at many parks. Long gaps on the Dalton (Coldfoot has the only dump for 240 miles each way). Mosquitoes congregate around grey-water dumps in summer -- be quick.

Fuel: Diesel widely available in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Soldotna, Homer, Seward, Valdez, Tok, and Delta. SERIOUS gaps elsewhere. Dalton Highway has only Yukon River Camp (Mile 56), Coldfoot (Mile 175), and Deadhorse (Mile 414) -- diesel mostly available but expect \$7-9/gallon and Coldfoot may close briefly between truck shifts. Top of the World: Chicken (AK) and the Canadian Poker Creek border-crossing-area have limited supply Jun-Sep only. McCarthy Road: no fuel between Chitina and McCarthy (60 miles). On the Alaska Highway approach, plan stops at Tok, Beaver Creek (YT, just over the border), Burwash Landing, Haines Junction, Whitehorse. Carry one or two 5-gallon cans for any non-major-route travel.

Weather windows

Best months: Mid-June through mid-August for the interior and Denali. Late May and early September are shoulder windows -- colder, less daylight, but far fewer mosquitoes and lower campground prices. Daytime highs 60-80 F in the interior summer; 50-65 F in coastal SE; below freezing at night above 3,000 ft most months.

Avoid: October through April for road-trip RVing. Most state and federal campgrounds are closed; the Dalton becomes the realm of ice-road truckers; daylight reduces to 4-5 hours in Fairbanks in December. RV-rentals don't operate. The Alaska Highway is technically drivable in winter but emergency response is hours away and propane heater + fuel sourcing become critical.

Climate caution

Mosquitoes in Alaska are not a joke. Late May through early August they hatch in clouds across the interior -- swarms of hundreds when you open the door. Bring DEET-strength repellent, head nets, screened doors, and stop-thru-the-screen-with-window-closed habits. Smoke deters them in camp; campfires + a citronella coil help. The state's unofficial bird is the mosquito for a reason.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial 911 for emergencies; (907) 269-5511 for Alaska State Troopers non-emergency (Anchorage post). Coverage gaps on Dalton and McCarthy Roads -- carry satellite messenger.
Road conditions	https://511.alaska.gov

How RV TripGen helps

Alcan approach and fuel-spacing

RV TripGen calculates fuel-stop spacing for the entire Alaska Highway approach from the Lower 48 plus the Dalton, Top of the World, and McCarthy gravel routes, and warns when summer rental contracts exclude unpaved roads.

Bear-safe food and grizzly-aware itineraries

RV TripGen flags overnight stops in known grizzly and brown-bear corridors (Brooks Range approaches, Chugach trailheads, Katmai-adjacent Kenai) and packs a bear-safe checklist into the agenda.