

When Is the Best Time to Cruise in Alaska?

(Courtesy of Lacey Pflaz, TravelPulse)



Kayaking from Ocean Victory in Misty Fjords. (Photo courtesy of Michael Hicks) (Theresa Norton)

Alaska is a nature-filled wonderland and is known as an incredible cruise destination. While its cruise season spans from mid-May through September, each month offers something different, from great wildlife viewing opportunities to better weather and more.

If you're unsure when to travel to Alaska on a cruise, [American Queen Voyages](#) has some pointers.

Alaska in May

If you're cruising in May, you're likely one of the first cruisers to head to Alaska during its cruise season! Average temperatures during this month range from 39 to 54 degrees Fahrenheit. It's also a drier month than others, though the weather remains unpredictable.

The salmon run and Arctic char sightings begin in late May, which means you'll likely be able to spot bears taking advantage of the easy pickings.

It's also great for travelers wanting to enjoy Alaska without sharing it with as many tourists as later on in the summer. Since May is during the school year, you often won't find as many families with school-age children cruising.

Alaska in June and July

June and July are definitely the most popular months of the season for cruisers, and July is especially popular. Both offer warmer weather, great opportunities for wildlife viewing and longer daylight hours — up to 24 hours a day during the summer solstice!

In June, travelers can find temperatures ranging from 47-62 degrees Fahrenheit, more daylight hours, and plenty of blooming greenery just ready for a budding wildlife photographer to capture. June is also a great month to enjoy a full set of excursion opportunities.



Riding in a Zodiac motorized raft in Misty Fjords. (Photo by Theresa Norton)

July is a more unpredictable month, temperature-wise. Temps can range from 51 as high as the 80s, and while the weather is similarly unpredictable, that doesn't stop travelers from loving cruising in July. The salmon run and the whale migrations are at their highest during July, making it the best time to catch sightings of bears enjoying the freshest fish and whales sidling up to the cruise ship on their way to their breeding grounds.

Alaska in August

August is when autumn returns to Alaska, and it's during this month that the temperature once again falls to a range of 48-63 degrees Fahrenheit. Weather can be rainy, though the fall foliage still looks brilliant under the clouds.

The month offers less crowds, a delicious blueberry festival and plenty of opportunities for fishing and wildlife viewing. Schools are back in session across the nation, making this another great month for less tourists and school-age children.

Alaska in September

September, like August, is another cooler, wetter and less crowded month in which to cruise to Alaska, but it offers some specialties you won't find during the summer.

The first is a truly extraordinary experience: viewing the northern lights. Weather permitting, travelers will enjoy the shorter days and longer nights that give them great opportunities for viewing this life-changing natural phenomenon.

Travelers will also find it more common to find sightings of gray and beluga whales as they migrate along the coastline. Plus, fewer tourists means greater opportunities to explore nature parks and view wildlife without interruptions. Tours and excursions may also be cheaper during this month.

So When Should You Cruise to Alaska?

The answer? Whenever you feel called to do so. No matter which month you choose, you'll find ample opportunities to explore and connect with nature. It's up to you to choose what type of weather you'd rather avoid, and your comfort level when it comes to crowds.

Whichever month you choose, American Queen Voyages offers intimate expedition-style adventures to this beautiful state; check out some of the itineraries [here](#).