

Frequently Asked Questions



Activities

How often do we get off the boat?

We expect to get off the boat at least once a day and up to 2 – 3 times to walk ashore and explore in the small boats, depending on the trip. For example, some trips are advertised as hiking trips where we spend 2- 4 hours a day hiking; others that spend more time watching whales will spend less time exploring ashore.

Will we see whales, bears, birds.....?

We expect to see a variety of wildlife on all our trips. However, wildlife is wild life and have their own agenda. It is only luck that determines how close wildlife comes to us or how spectacular their behavior is. Our crew is very good at spotting animals; so along with enthusiastic guests, we spend a great deal of time looking. Bring your binoculars. We take a cautious approach when observing wildlife. We do not want to apply any pressure to animals that could result in a change in their behavior.

Do I need kayaking experience?

Our crew will be happy to give you instruction and get you started. We have 6 double kayaks and one single. The distance you kayak is up to you. Our new boats are of modern construction and glide though the water effortlessly. Some may enjoy a solo paddle in a quiet cove while others may want to paddle for longer distances with a guide. Our kayaking portion is diverse and is catered to individual interest.

Do I need boating experience?

You do not need boating experience to enjoy traveling on the Snow Goose. If you were interested in learning about boat operations our crew would be happy to involve you in navigation or helping on deck.

How fit do I have to be?

You need a certain amount of strength and agility climb in and out of small boats, and walk over uneven terrain. You should be able to climb a small stepladder with little assistance. Age is usually not a factor. There is always the option to go with the group or to stay behind.

What is the hiking like? Too strenuous? Too easy?

We offer a variety of walks and hikes on our trips depending on the focus of the trip and interest of the individual. Walks on the beaches are often easier than on the trails, and often there is more than one option at a stop.

Will there be anything to buy? Do I need money during the trip?

On some of our trips, we may stop in small communities where local crafts are available, and credit cards may not be accepted.

What kind of equipment is good for photographing wildlife?

If you are intent on getting good wildlife pictures, you should contemplate bringing a long lens. A lens of 300 mm seems ideal, while lenses with lengths of 180 – 300 mm generally give good results. Consider bringing fairly fast film to capture whales breaching and other action photos, and to allow photography in the low light of morning or evening. A computer is aboard to burn onto a CD if your memory runs out, but you need to bring your camera's cable to link to the laptop.

Will I be able to fish?

Our trips focus mainly on wildlife and native culture. Sometimes a small number of our guests are interested in fishing with the hope of providing dinner. If time and energy allows, fishing may be possible, however, our days are so full of other activities there is often little time left to fish. We have some fishing gear on board. If you wish to try fishing you will need to purchase a fishing license before you join the trip. Licenses can be purchased upon arrival or prior to your trip through [Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#).

Onboard the Snow Goose

How safe is the boat?

Our boat is one of the few Inspected Smaller Vessels operating in Alaska that carry passengers. This means we are Coast Guard certified and carry safety/rescue equipment above traditional vessel requirements. We have recently undergone a hull inspection and 5 year Certificate of Inspection and passed with high marks.

What are the cabins like?

Cabins on the Snow Goose are irregular sizes to fit the contours of the ship. All our cabins have accommodation for two people in single bunks, mostly an upper and lower style. You will find that you don't spend much time in your cabin, as there is always something to do or see on deck.

How much storage is there in the cabins?

There is limited but adequate storage for the amount of gear you will need on our trips. Soft luggage, like a duffel bag, is most easily stowed, as it is compressible.

Do you serve alcoholic beverages?

We serve a modest amount of beer and wine during dinner. If you wish, you may bring your own before-dinner drinks. We do not carry soft drinks or soda, however juice is always available. We do have an anchor down policy (no drinking during the day).

How crowded is the boat?

The boat is well designed for our purpose. Guests comment that there is more room than they expected and that they don't feel crowded.

Can I have my own cabin? Is there a single supplement?

On most trips we are not able to offer a private cabin to one person. We do not have a single supplement policy that can penalize single travelers unless a single cabin is requested. Single travelers will be paired with guests of the same sex. Guests are welcome to make special requests in advance, and we will try to fulfill them if possible.

Do you take children on your trips? Is there a discount for children?

We will consider taking children. It depends on the age and the maturity level of the child. Most of our trips are adult oriented so if children are planning on joining a trip we inform the other passengers in advance. Some of our trips are not open to children. We have a limited number of spaces.

Can I bring my hairdryer, electric shaver? Can I recharge my video batteries?

Hairdryers and other appliances that require a lot of energy exceed the capacity of the Snow Goose and should be left at home. Cameras and small drawing energy sources are acceptable. It is a good idea to bring an extra video battery.

Can I use my cellular phone?

Cellular coverage is poor to non-existent in the areas we travel. Our guests comment on how much they enjoy the simplicity of ship life and a break from technological demands.

How often can I shower?

We carry a good supply of water, and make water with an on board reverse osmosis system, but it is important to remember that a boat is totally self-contained system. We ask everyone to conserve whenever possible, and to not take showers everyday to help conserve water.

The Crew

What qualifications does the crew have?

Our skippers are all Coast Guard and Ministry of Transport licensed Captains and our crew is all highly qualified with experience and training in emergency procedures, boat handling and first aid.

Is it appropriate to tip the crew? How much?

If you feel that the crew have made your trip special and wish to show your appreciation, a tip is accepted. How much? ... around 10-15% to be divided among the four crew.

Typical Weather

What will the weather be like?

Usually on the Pacific Coast we have a good variety of constantly changing weather. Expect a mixture of sunshine, rain and wind on most trips. On Southeast Alaska trips near glaciers, expect cool temperatures where wearing a hat, gloves and warm jacket is appropriate.

How rough will the water be?

We travel in protected areas most of the time, where there are small waves and little boat motion. Sometimes we cross into open water for short periods of time, or encounter weather that may cause greater motion.

Do I need to bring sea sickness medication?

If you are prone to motion sickness it is a good idea to bring sea sickness medication.

Clothing & Equipment

What kind of rain gear do I need?

Your rain gear needs to be completely waterproof and strong enough to stand up to wear and wind. You will need rain pants and a rain jacket (with a hood or rain hat).

Do I really need to bring rubber boots?

Yes, rubber boots are a necessity. They should be knee height and comfortable for walking. There are very few places that we travel where there are docks so to get ashore you will be stepping into the water to get onto the beach. Your boots will be very useful for walking in

west coast rainforest as well. If you are not comfortable hiking in your boots you can change into other footwear once you're on shore.

Do I need to bring a sleeping bag?

No, a comforter, pillow, bottom sheet, and blanket are provided. We also provide one towel per guest.

Additional Curiosities

Will there be any hidden costs once I arrive?

Once you arrive to the Snow Goose there are no additional fees.

What else does the Snow Goose do?

The Snow Goose is also an education vessel that teaches Marine Science Education in the spring and fall. During this time the Alaska equipment is removed and science equipment comes aboard. Fourth through eighth grade students combine their classroom science with the Snow Goose program and learn to become stewards of our local waters through hands on experiences. Beyond school programs and Alaska, the Snow Goose works with colleges, universities, and local non-profits in fields such as geology, environmental education, science education, Native cultures, and conservation groups.

Where do my booking funds go?

Most of your booking dollars go toward the operation of school programs. Without the Alaska trips, the Snow Goose could not afford to provide a platform for the numerous school kids in need of hands on science education.

If you need further information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by [email](#) or give us a call at 360-393-6657.