WILD ALASKA

AN EXPLORATION OF THE NATIONAL PARKS OF ALASKA ABOARD THE SAFARI ENDEAVOUR
22ND AUGUST TO 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015

NOBLE CALEDONIA
Few places left on earth offer the traveller as much untamed scenic grandeur as the great land of Alaska. Witnessing this vast landscape has a humbling effect on those who journey along its dramatic fjord and coastal scenery, past towering mountains, their foothills covered with never ending spruce forests. Discerning travellers will appreciate this rich itinerary that explores the many facets of Alaska; tidewater glaciers, hidden fjords, massive ice-fields and huge mountains. The Safari Endeavour will follow a flexible course avoiding the lanes frequented by the big resort ships. With only 80 or so like-minded souls onboard you will be able to appreciate the peace and beauty of Alaska, explore in small parties ashore and visit places which the passengers aboard the big ships will never be taken. Immerse yourself in this wilderness adventure, truly the best way to see and experience Alaska’s natural wonders.

EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Two days in Glacier Bay National Park accompanied by a Park Ranger throughout – something not offered on most Alaska cruises.
- Option to add two nights at Denali Backcountry Lodge in the heart of Denali National Park, a pure wilderness experience.
- Using the Safari Endeavour means we can operate in areas far away from the big ships and ensuring the presence of only 80 people does not change the atmosphere of the places we visit.
- Use of onboard kayaks and paddleboards to explore the waters independently and get closer to nature.
- Experienced onboard naturalists to ensure that every day is an educational experience.

OUR VIEW

“We have created this trip for those looking for an adventure into the heart of Alaska. In addition to seeing the imposing mountains, birdlife, sea life and wildlife that populates the area there will be the opportunity to use kayaks and paddleboards to achieve extra solitude whilst Zodiac excursions will take us close to the action. Our itinerary includes an overnight stay in Glacier Bay where the number of vessels with access is strictly limited. Our overnight stay will provide the opportunity to experience the solitude and grandeur of the Alaskan scenery with the only distraction being the wildlife. There is also the added advantage to combine our cruise with an exploration of the magnificent Denali National Park in the shadow of Mount McKinley.”

ICY STRAIT & CHICHAGOF ISLAND: Early this morning we entered the protected waters of the Inside Passage of Alaska. Misty mountainsides covered with spruce trees towered on both sides of the ship and the banks of mist hanging to the trees gave the environment a surreal aspect. Soon, we were off in our zodiacs in search of brown bears. The wildlife was spectacular: sea lions, sea otters, bald eagles and three humpback whales, which were resting on the surface, coming to breathe every few minutes. We were amazed to be able to watch and listen to these giants so peacefully swimming so close to our boats. The sea lion haul-out was also a favourite and bald eagles perched in the trees above provided some entertainment for our birders. Black guillemots and marble murrelets, as well as a few puffins, were also spotted on the water and some of us observed the antics of a single sea otter playing in the kelp.

TRACEY & ENDICOTT ARM: We all ventured out in the Zoelids together to explore Ford's Terror in Endicott Arm only to be jolted into action by the welcome cry of “orca”. Colin was in his element as our zoelids rounded a bend in the Arm and we saw those unmistakable, tall dorsal fins cruising along the shoreline – quite a crowd. They seemed completely unfazed by our presence and were quite content for us to enjoy their company, giving everyone a good viewing of the white patch and grey markings distinctive to these transient orca, who are sea mammal hunters. The scenery was stunning. Wherever the rocky fjord sides became too steep for greenery, waterfalls cascaded down the rock face – no two the same. We have arrived at prime snowmelt time and the sight of these masses of fast-flowing water was mesmerizing. Encountering a much bigger cruise ship, we settled back to enjoy our feeling of superiority at having chosen to explore Alaska aboard a small ship and spent the remainder of the morning gazing in some of the best views Alaska has to offer as we headed off up Tracey Arm.

SHIP'S LOG

We have operated many similar voyages and here are some extracts from past ship logs which should provide you with an insight into what you can expect from our Alaskan expedition...
**THE ITINERARY**

**Day 1 London to Seattle.** Fly by scheduled flight arriving in Seattle this afternoon. On arrival transfer to our central hotel for an overnight stay. The afternoon and evening is free to explore at leisure or relax.

**Day 2 Seattle to Juneau.** After a relaxing morning we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to Juneau. On arrival transfer to the Safari Endeavour and embark. Enjoy a welcome briefing and dinner onboard this evening.

**Days 3 & 4 Glacier Bay National Park.** Declared by many to be the most extraordinary and untouched place in the world, Glacier Bay was first established as a National Monument in 1925 and has since enjoyed the highly protected status of National Park, Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site. Glacier Bay National Park shows you the earth in transition. The glaciers here are receding rapidly, leaving in their wake scoured cliffs and deep fjords. For our two day exploration of the area, a National Park Service Ranger will join us onboard to help us spot the abundant wildlife such as mountain goats, whales and brown and black bears. We will travel nearly 60 miles cruising up-bay to the tidewater glaciers of Grand Pacific and Margerie, which are very lucky. Join the Captain on the bridge or go on deck with your Expedition Leader. Late this afternoon, we will drop the skiffs and kayaks for closer inspection of the remote coastline with eyes set on shore for possible bear sightings. This evening, take in the solitude while relaxing in the upper deck hot tub or enjoy a nightcap with your fellow guests in the salon.

**Day 5 Icy Strait.** Today will be the ultimate day of exploration. Set your course for arguably the richest whale waters in Southeast Alaska. We will keep watch for the tell-tale blow of the humpbacks as we scour the nutrient-rich waters in search of whales, porpoise, sea lions, and other wildlife. Watch for gentle humpbacks as they feast on small fish and tiny krill churned up by upwelling currents from the Pacific Ocean. Watch for behaviours such as spouting, sounding, breaching, lobtailing, flipper-slapping and lunge feeding. You may see rare bubble feeding if you are very lucky. Join the Captain on the bridge or go on deck with your Expedition Leader. Late this afternoon, we will drop the skiffs and kayaks for closer inspection of the remote coastline with eyes set on shore for possible bear sightings. This evening, take in the solitude while relaxing in the upper deck hot tub or enjoy a nightcap with your fellow guests in the salon.

**Day 6 Chichagof Island & Baranof Island.** Today we cruise the waterfall coast of Chichagof Island. Here we will marvel at the grand scenery of Alaska’s wilderness as the crew expertly guides you through those “not in the guidebook” places known only to the locals. This evening, perhaps tucking away in a waterfall-laced fjord, there will be time for a skiff excursion, beachcombing or treks ashore and kayaking to look for sea otters and bears before finishing the day near Baranof Island.

**Day 7 Frederick Sound.** Frederick Sound teems with the humpback whale’s favourite food - and the whales take full advantage, feeding as they prepare for their long migration south. Discover the joys of wilderness exploration. The Captain and Expedition Leader know these waters intimately and we will spend the day exploring in Frederick Sound and Stephen’s Passage. We will also pass by Five Fingers Lighthouse and watch for playful antics at a large sea lion haul out made from dozens of rocky islets. Later, cruise picturesque bays, where evergreen forests crowd the shores.

**Day 8 Ford’s Terror & Endicott Arm.** Cliff-walled fjords sliced into the mountainous mainland will be seen in abundance today as we slowly slip into an area widely acclaimed as the most beautiful in Alaska. With more designated Wilderness Areas than any state in the nation, the finest include Endicott Arm and Fords Terror, a pristine tidal inlet and fjord. Explore this majestic fjord by kayak or skiff, a unique opportunity indeed. View rugged ice-covered mountains gleaming high overhead and a glacier that actively calves into the ice-filled fjord of Endicott Arm. Toast your voyage with a festive Farewell Dinner, and before turning in, your Expedition Leaders will share a photo journal of your trip together.

**Day 9 Juneau to Seattle.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to Seattle. On arrival transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

**Day 10 Seattle to London.** Enjoy a morning at leisure before transferring to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

**Day 11 London.** Arrive this morning. 

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**PRICES PER PERSON**

Based on double occupancy

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Price Includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, seven nights aboard the Safari Endeavour on a full board basis including all wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks onboard, two nights hotel accommodation in Seattle on a bed and breakfast basis, shore excursions, transfers, port taxes, airport taxes, National Park entry fees, complimentary massage onboard Safari Endeavour.

Not Included: Travel Insurance, visas, gratuities. NB. Ports subject to change. Wildlife sightings are not guaranteed.
DENALI NATIONAL PARK
18th to 23rd August 2015

Before cruising the Alaskan coastline we are offering the opportunity to take a journey into the interior and the Denali National Park. The park is over six million acres in size and is home to Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America. We will spend two nights in the heart of the park staying at the Denali Backcountry Lodge situated at the end of the 92 mile road that enters the park. Wildlife abounds at the park including grizzly bears, caribou and moose. A range of experiences from guided hikes, natural history and gold panning will be offered or alternatively just relax at the lodge and enjoy the wilderness. Our extension also includes time to visit the Iditarod Headquarters, home to the famous dog sled race, and the towns of Anchorage and Fairbanks where we will learn more about local customs and history.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London Heathrow to Fairbanks. Fly by scheduled flight via Seattle. On arrival in Anchorage this evening transfer to our hotel for a two night stay.

Day 2 Fairbanks. Enjoy a relaxing day to acclimatise in Fairbanks. Recognised as the “gateway to the Arctic” Fairbanks has a colourful history dating back to the late 1800s gold rush. On a morning tour we will discover the old downtown area and wander amongst the historic buildings. On a visit to the University of Alaska’s Museum of the North we will be introduced to stories of Alaska’s people, places and wildlife. We discover Alaska’s largest gold display, extensive displays of Alaskan artifacts and displays of Alaska art ranging from ancient Eskimo ivory carvings to contemporary sculpture. This afternoon is free to relax at the hotel or you may prefer to visit Pioneer Park or one of the gold mines on the edge of the city.

Day 3 Fairbanks to Denali National Park. After breakfast in the hotel we will transfer to the station and board the Alaskan Railroad railroad on our journey to Denali National Park. The conductor will call out points of interest as we enjoy the breath-taking views, landscapes, wildlife and looming mountains along the way. We will have use of the dome cars offering full picture windows and even an outdoor viewing deck. On arrival at the park we will join our coach to travel the scenic 95 mile road to Denali Backcountry Lodge. Your driver-guide will provide narration giving you key information about the history and development of Denali National Park. As you make your way further and further into the park you will get a chance to see the Denali “Big 5” consisting of bears, moose, caribou, dall sheep, and wolves. This evening you will arrive at the all-inclusive Denali Backcountry Lodge located in the heart of Denali National Park. Dinner is served family style in the Main Lodge upon arrival. During dinner one of the many Naturalist Guides will come around to go over some of the many included tours that you may partake in the following day such as guided hikes, biking, or, for an additional charge, flightseeing.

Day 4 Denali National Park. Enjoy breakfast served family style in the main lodge. Today you will depart on your scheduled tour that you had arranged the night before with one of the Naturalist Guides, or if you decided to rest and relax at the lodge you can visit the exclusive spa, The Nest. Lunch is served family style in the main lodge, and if you chose one of the full day tours a lunch will be provided for you. Hors d’oeuvres are served in the early evening in the main lodge, followed by dinner.

Day 5 Denali to Talkeetna. After breakfast in the lodge we will board the bus and return through the park, keeping an eye out for wildlife along the way. Although it is the same road you travelled on your way to the lodge, the experience will be a chance to see the breath taking landscape as the sun rises as well as another opportunity to spot the Denali “Big 5”. Upon arrival at the Denali Park Entrance there will be time for an independent lunch before we continue our journey to Talkeetna arriving in the early evening. Established in 1919 the downtown area is a National Historic Site and you can enjoy time walking through the streets or maybe join an optional guided hike or jet boat tour.

Day 6 Talkeetna to Juneau. After breakfast in the hotel we will continue our journey to Anchorage airport for our scheduled flight to Juneau. On arrival we will transfer to the Safari Endeavour and start our cruising adventure. Enjoy a welcome briefing and dinner onboard.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: £1495  Single: £1825

Price includes: Scheduled flight from Anchorage to Juneau, two nights accommodation in Fairbanks and overnight accommodation in Talkeetna on a bed and breakfast basis, two night’s accommodation at Denali Backcountry Lodge on a full board basis, tours as per itinerary, Alaskan Railroad travel from Fairbanks to Denali, transfers.

Not Included: Travel Insurance, US Visa, optional excursions at Denali Lodge.
Built in 1983 and refurbished in 2012, the 84-passenger Safari Endeavour at 232 feet in length and 37 feet wide is the perfect size for our exploration of Alaska offering breathtaking views from the four public decks. Passengers with a sense of adventure and a desire to escape to unknown harbours and regions will feel at home aboard the Safari Endeavour.

Your Cabin/Suite
There are five categories of cabin onboard ranging from the compact staterooms to the spacious suites. The 42 cabins are spread over three decks and feature individually controlled air conditioning, iPod docking station, flat screen TV/DVD, generous storage and closet space, desk with chair as well as private en-suite facilities with shower. With wide panoramic windows, all staterooms offer superb views. The Commodore Suites feature French doors with balcony and a Jacuzzi bath tub.

Your Space
The window-lined lounge offers an uncompromising 270 degree view with comfortable seating for all guests. There is also a spacious and elegant dining room that seats passengers in a single sitting, a small wine bar and a library. The main feature of the vessel are the extensive viewing areas allowing you to never miss such events as spotting a whale breaching or a pod of dolphins swimming alongside the vessel. There is also a a spa area including two hot tubs, sauna, fitness equipment, yoga mats; hydrophone for listening to below-surface sounds; and a bow-mounted underwater camera pipes the action to the lounge and to your cabin TV. Depending on the schedule for the day, there will be presentations pertaining to the wildlife, history or culture of the region. Whether relaxing onboard, taking out one of the ship’s kayaks or paddle boards, enjoying a walk ashore, whale watching or snorkelling, you can be assured that your day to day activities are in the safe and capable hands of an expert team. There is also a varied collection of board games, books, and DVDs onboard.

Your Dining
Onboard the Executive Chefs create delicious meals using locally sourced fresh ingredients. Each day includes an early-riser breakfast of fresh fruit, baked-onboard pastries and breads and a full breakfast complete with specialty items. Lunches range from pasta salads and sandwiches to homemade soups and ethnic dishes. Dinners offer a choice of entrées, including fresh seafood and meats. Vegetarian dishes are available and special dietary needs can be met with advance notice. Hors d’oeuvres for the cocktail hour feature a variety of appetizers and desserts are varied and plentiful.

Life Onboard
The atmosphere onboard is casual and relaxed and the high ratio of passengers to crew ensures service is attentive and personal. There is an open bridge policy onboard so you are welcome to visit and discuss navigation with the Captain. The EZ Dock launch platform makes launching a kayak or stand-up paddle board and boarding a skiff easy. Onboard adventure equipment includes kayaks and stand-up paddle boards; inflatable skiffs; hiking poles; yoga mats; hydrophone for listening to below-surface sounds; and a bow-mounted underwater camera pipes the action to the lounge and to your cabin TV. Depending on the schedule for the day, there will be presentations pertaining to the wildlife, history or culture of the region. Whether relaxing onboard, taking out one of the ship’s kayaks or paddle boards, enjoying a walk ashore, whale watching or snorkelling, you can be assured that your day to day activities are in the safe and capable hands of an expert team. There is also a varied collection of board games, books, and DVDs onboard.

For your Comfort, Safety & Security
The Captain, officers, expedition team and hotel staff are individually selected not only for their outstanding knowledge, customer service and safety skills, but also for their genuinely welcoming and enthusiastic personalities. All key crew are fully trained wilderness and first responders.

This cruise visits out of the way destinations. You will be accompanied by an expedition team and most landings ashore will be made by Zodiac landing craft. Cruises such as this will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.