

DREAMSCAPES

TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE

SPRING 2017

AMERICAN LEGENDS

HIT THE CANADIAN TRAILS

HAVANA HIGHLIGHTS

JOURNEY THROUGH ISRAEL



Luxe in JUNEAU

CRUISING ALASKA'S
WILDLIFE-LADEN WATERS
AND WITNESSING ICEBERG
CALVING COMMANDS A
"BUCKET LIST" RATING FROM
MANY SEASONED
TRAVELLERS.

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However, it's not just the waters that intrigue as land destinations equally deliver. Juneau is a hub of adventure and once-in-a-lifetime experiences that package adventure and luxury in a way that only Alaska can.

I came to Juneau by way of an eight-day cruise with AdventureSmith Explorations. My ship, the *Chichagof*, embarked in Sitka and took us places like Tracy Arm Fjord and Glacier Bay National Park, wondrous relics of the ice age. Juneau was our point of disembarkation, something only small ships can do. (Large ships can only visit Juneau for the day.)

It didn't take long before I discovered the luxe side of Juneau. From luxurious Pearson's Pond to a seaplane flight over four glaciers culminating in a salmon feast at

remote Taku Glacier Lodge, Juneau delivers many unforgettable memories with style and sophistication.

A FOUR-DIAMOND PROPERTY

Staying at Pearson's Pond, Alaska's only AAA Four Diamond property, is like coming home. The ambiance of the inn and charismatic personality of owner Maryann are a winning combination. Much like a luxurious secret hideaway, this place is perfect for garden and glacier weddings, honeymoons, anniversaries, birthdays, corporate retreats, luxury getaways, and as a home base for fishing, dog sledding, hiking and biking excursions. Amenities include adjustable sleep number beds, Jacuzzi soaker tubs, robes and slippers, fireplaces,

free Wi-Fi, a business centre, and a dedicated massage room. My suite had a full-sized refrigerator, stove, microwave and deck barbecue. Complimentary bikes and boats are also available.

Maryann's legendary Alaskan breakfasts are served every morning during the summer. Plus, there is a self-serve happy hour offering of wine and munchies. Rely on Maryann for expert insider advice on where to eat, what to do and where to play. She'll even make the arrangements for you.

Pearson's Pond was covered by the Mendenhall Glacier as recently as 220 years ago. Today, the glacier is within walking or biking distance from what some say is the best place to stay in Alaska.

WORLD'S MOST ACCESSIBLE GLACIER

Located in the Tongass National Forest, Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Viewing platforms from the Visitor Center provide breathtaking views of Mendenhall Glacier and Nugget Falls. From a nearby boardwalk you may spot salmon at the right time of year as well as black bears foraging for their next meal. Eagles and ravens stalk the skies. Head out early in the morning to avoid crowds and tour groups. After all, this is the world's most accessible glacier.

The Visitor Center is accessible by elevator at the lower level by the parking lot. A gently inclined paved trail also leads to the centre. Once inside you will find interactive exhibits, telescopes and an Alaska Geographic bookstore with quality items. Be sure to save time for the 15-minute film featuring stunning videography of the Alaskan environment.

TOUR A RAINFOREST

Forming part of the Tongass National Forest, the largest temperate rainforest in the world, the Glacier Gardens are unique and surprising, with abundant flowers,

waterfalls and inspiring views throughout. A guided vehicle takes you to the top and along the way you learn all about the flora and fauna found here. Hear the tale about Steve and how the upside-down flower trees were conceived. Save time for refreshments under the canopy of upside-down umbrellas at the mini-café.

GOLDBELT MOUNT ROBERTS TRAMWAY

Two aerial tramways whisk you on a six-minute ascent to the mountain top for stunning views of Juneau. Be forewarned that when several mega cruise lines are in dock, the number of people is a bit overwhelming. At the top I enjoyed a wonderful cultural movie about indigenous people and then survived the crowds through the over-sized gift shop. Time your trip before the ships arrive or after they have left for minimum waiting. Several hiking trails are available for further exploration.

JUNEAU'S NEWEST MUSEUM

The Alaska State Museum in Juneau underwent a US\$139-million renovation over the last couple of years, joining together the museum, library, and archives into one contemporary facility. Opening on June 6, 2016, the museum was immediately hit with state budget cuts. Despite the financial setback, the museum is an outstanding timeline of the early First Nations up to World War II and of the current fishing industry. Widely known for its collection of cultural artifacts from Alaska's native peoples, they include peoples from the Northwest Coast, Inupiaq and Yup'ik, Athabaskan and Aleut and Alutiiq cultures.

I loved the longhouse, totems and totem masks but also enjoyed viewing the Russian colonial artifacts and the exhibits on World War II and early aviation in Alaska. This is a compact gem, with an amazing collection exquisitely narrated on all things Alaskan.

OPPOSITE: Take in the magnificent ice-age scenery on the way to Taku Glacier Lodge.

BELOW: The outdoor gardens at Pearson's Pond are a welcoming haven.

CENTRE: Scallop treat at SALT.

BOTTOM: Ride the Goldbelt Mount Roberts Tramway for spectacular views.



RIGHT: The Mendenhall Glacier and Nugget Falls are located in the Tongass National Forest.
BELOW: A floral-framed statue at Glacier Gardens.



BEST FOOD TOUR

The best way to cover Juneau's burgeoning culinary scene is on a walking tour led by Juneau Food Tours. Owner Midgi Moore has already tasted and researched the locality, saving the best of Juneau for her clients. She shortcuts the crowds at Tracy's King Crab Shack for a sizable sampling of their famous crab bisque and crab cake for group members. Deckhand Dave's has absolutely the best fried salmon sticks in town and he is known for tasty cabbage slaw and handmade tartar sauce. Taste smoked salmon spread and caviar with bull kelp marmalade at Alaska Knife-works then house-made charcuterie and

imported cheeses at the newest darling on the culinary scene—Panhandle Provisions.

On to SALT for the most scrumptious rockfish tacos and white wine pairing. Making quite a splash, SALT is the best fine dining in town with extremely talented chef Lionel Uddipa heading up their kitchen. The tour ends with a beer tasting flight of three local brews at the historic Alaskan Hotel & Bar.

Juneau Food Tours provides every member with a "goodie" bag containing almond toffee from chef Stef and famous ginger snap cookies from Taku Glacier Lodge. Lots of coupons too. Along the way, Midgi and her guides share the history of this bustling capital of Alaska. Be sure to treat yourself to this narrated tasting of the culinary stars of Juneau. It's a great way to scope out places you might want to revisit later.

GLACIER FLIGHT AND FEAST

My seaplane flight to Taku Glacier Lodge aboard Wings Airways was so exhilarating that I clung to my window the entire 25 minutes while taking loads of photos en route. We flew over five massive glaciers and some of the purest raw wilderness I have ever experienced. Once at Taku Glacier Lodge we leisurely dined on freshly grilled salmon steaks with a cabbage slaw, beans, herb-infused bread and their famous ginger cookies. Wine and beer are available for purchase. Or drink the purest glacier water for free.

Black bears are frequently seen around the premises, sometimes during a guided nature walk after dinner.

Our flight back was just as exhilarating as coming over. Didn't matter which seat you had because the pilot banked for both sides of the plane to view the ice age scenery. Personally, this was a trip of a lifetime. DS



TRAVEL PLANNER

For more information, visit:

AdventureSmith Explorations: adventuresmithexplorations.com

Alaska State Museum: museums.alaska.gov

Glacier Gardens: glaciorgardens.com

Goldbelt Mount Roberts Tramway: mountrobertstramway.com

Juneau Food Tours: juneaufoodtours.com

Mendenhall Glacier: fs.usda.gov

Pearson's Pond: pearsonspond.com

SALT: saltalaska.com

Wings Airways & Taku Glacier Lodge: wingsairways.com