

PRIDE TRAVELERS



ALASKA

CRUISES

PACKING TIPS

The Ultimate Alaska Cruise Packing List

Everything you need to pack for a warm, dry, and unforgettable Alaskan adventure.

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On this page

- [Alaska Weather Explained: Why Layers are Key](#)
- [Best Waterproof Layers & Outerwear](#)
- [Gadgets & Wildlife Viewing Essentials](#)
- [Cruise Comfort & Health Must-Haves](#)
- [Port Planning & Navigation](#)
- [What NOT to Pack for Alaska](#)
- [Shop the Full Packing List](#)
- [Need help choosing the right Alaskan cruise?](#)
- [Alaska Cruise Packing List Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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Packing for an Alaskan cruise is completely different from preparing for a sunny Caribbean getaway. Instead of swimsuits, sundresses, and flip-flops, your suitcase needs to be ready for stunning glaciers, unpredictable weather, and rugged shore excursions.

To help you prepare for the Last Frontier, we've put together our ultimate packing list. Read on to learn exactly what to expect from the weather, what you should leave at home, and our absolute favorite travel essentials you shouldn't set sail without!

Alaska Weather Explained: Why Layers are Key

Why is packing for an Alaska cruise so tricky? Because the weather has a mind of its own. During the peak cruise season (May through September), daytime temperatures typically range from 50°F to 65°F. However, you can easily experience all four seasons in a single day.

You might start an early morning whale-watching excursion shivering in the misty rain in Juneau, only to be shedding layers under the bright afternoon sun while riding the White Pass Railway in Skagway.

The secret to staying comfortable in Alaska's changing climate is simple: **layers and waterproofing**. Furthermore, the dress code onboard Alaska sailings is widely known as "Alaska Casual." Think cozy sweaters, comfortable jeans, and practical footwear.

Best Waterproof Layers & Outerwear

Your outer layer is your first line of defense against the elements. A good jacket will make or break your shore excursions.



Columbia Men's Glennaker Lake II Rain Jacket

You absolutely need a lightweight, waterproof outer layer. This jacket is perfect for staying dry during rainy shore excursions and windy deck viewing. Because it is a shell, it doesn't add unnecessary bulk to your suitcase, allowing you to easily layer a warm fleece or sweater underneath.

- **MOERDENG Women's Rain Jacket**

For the ladies, this windproof and waterproof softshell jacket is a stylish and functional must-have. It features a great hood and seals out the damp, misty weather you are likely to encounter in ports like Ketchikan.

Gadgets & Wildlife Viewing Essentials

Alaska is all about the scenery and the wildlife, but animals like bald eagles, coastal brown bears, and humpback whales are often viewed from a distance.



Vortex Triumph HD 12x50 Binoculars

Do not rely on your smartphone zoom! High-definition, waterproof binoculars are an absolute necessity for spotting distant glaciers and breaching whales from the comfort of your ship's balcony or the top deck.

- **INIU 45W 10000mAh Portable Power Bank**

Between snapping hundreds of photos of icebergs, taking videos of wildlife, and using map apps in port, your phone battery will drain incredibly fast—especially since cold air naturally depletes batteries quicker. This compact, flight-safe fast charger will keep you powered up through your longest full-day excursions.

Cruise Comfort & Health Must-Haves

- **Dramamine Motion Sickness Less Drowsy**

While sailing the Inside Passage is generally very calm and smooth, ships occasionally have to cross open ocean stretches (like the Gulf of Alaska) which can get a bit rough. These fast-acting, less-drowsy chewables are a lifesaver to have packed in your toiletry bag just in case.

Port Planning & Navigation

Even if you have your cruise itinerary memorized, having a physical guide and maps while exploring ports is a game-changer—especially when cell service gets spotty in the Alaskan wilderness.

- **Alaska Travel Guide 2026 by Sophia Glacier**

This comprehensive guide is packed with step-by-step itineraries, cruise port recommendations, and physical maps. It is the perfect companion to keep in your day bag while navigating shore excursions or planning your next port day from the comfort of your ship's balcony.

ADVISOR TIP

Looking for the best excursions to experience on your Alaskan cruise? Check out our full [Alaska Cruise Ports & Destination Guide!](#)

What NOT to Pack for Alaska

Sometimes, knowing what *not* to bring is just as important for saving suitcase space! Leave these items at home:

- **Umbrellas:** They are virtually useless on the windy outer decks of a moving cruise ship or on fast-moving whale-watching boats. Stick to a rain jacket with a good hood.
- **Heavy Winter Parkas:** A massive snow coat takes up half your luggage. Instead, bring a waterproof shell and layer it over a warm fleece or merino wool sweater.
- **Excessive Formal Wear:** While some cruise lines have optional formal nights, Alaska cruises are famously relaxed. You will be much happier prioritizing comfortable, warm clothing over ballgowns and tuxedos.

Shop the Full Packing List

Ready to fill your suitcase? From merino wool socks and waterproof boots to fun magnetic cabin door decorations, we've rounded up all 27 of our favorite must-have items in one easy place.

[*Shop the complete Pride Travelers Alaska Cruise Packing List here!*](#)

Pack smart, layer up, and get ready for the adventure of a lifetime!

Need help choosing the right Alaskan cruise?

At [Pride Travelers](#), we specialize in helping LGBTQ+ travelers and allies find their perfect Alaska sailing. Whether you are looking for a hosted group experience or want to customize your own independent itinerary with private tours and luxe upgrades, our team handles every detail. From flights and pre-cruise hotels to booking the absolute best excursions, we ensure your trip is effortless and unforgettable..

[Book My Alaska Cruise Today](#) →

Alaska Cruise Packing List Frequently Asked Questions

What should I wear to dinner on an Alaska cruise? Are there formal nights?

The dress code on almost all Alaska sailings is widely known as "Alaska Casual." During the day, outdoor gear, jeans, and fleece jackets are perfectly acceptable everywhere. For dinner in the main dining rooms, opt for comfortable, dressy-casual attire—think dark jeans or slacks with a nice sweater, blouse, or button-down shirt. While some cruise lines host optional "formal" or "dress-to-impress" nights, they are much more relaxed than Caribbean sailings. You can safely leave the tuxedos and ballgowns at home!

What are the best shoes to pack for an Alaska cruise?

Footwear is critical for Alaska. You should plan to pack three specific types of shoes:

- **Waterproof hiking boots or trail shoes** with good traction for shore excursions and glacier walks.
- **Comfortable walking shoes or sneakers** for navigating the ship and exploring paved port towns.
- **One pair of dressier shoes** (like loafers or flats) for evenings in the dining room.

How cold does it actually get on an Alaska summer cruise?

During the peak sailing months of May through September, daytime temperatures in port generally range from 50°F to 65°F. However, when your ship is actively sailing near a glacier, the wind chill off the ice can make it feel significantly colder (closer to the 30s or 40s). This is why packing a windproof rain shell and a warm middle layer (like a fleece or merino wool sweater) is the secret to staying comfortable.

Do I really need to pack bug spray for Alaska?

Alaska is famous for its mosquitoes, but whether you need bug spray depends on your itinerary. If you are sticking to the coastal port towns (like Skagway, Juneau, and Ketchikan) or staying on the ship, the ocean breezes naturally keep the bugs away. However, if you are planning inland excursions—such as hiking in the dense woods, river rafting, or taking a cruise tour to Denali National Park—a travel-sized insect repellent is a must-pack item.

Can I do laundry on the ship so I don't have to overpack?

Yes! To save suitcase space and avoid airline baggage fees, many travelers pack lightly and plan to do laundry midway through the trip. Most major cruise lines sailing to Alaska (such as Princess and Holland America) offer self-service laundromats on various decks, complete with washers, dryers, and detergent for purchase. If your specific ship doesn't have a self-serve option, they will offer a "wash and fold" valet service for a fee.

Do I need a passport for an Alaska cruise?

While U.S. citizens taking a "closed-loop" cruise (a sailing that begins and ends in the same U.S. port, like Seattle) can legally travel with an original birth certificate and a government-issued photo ID, **a valid passport is highly recommended**. Almost all Alaska itineraries include a mandatory stop in Canada (such as Victoria or Vancouver). If you experience a medical emergency or miss the ship and need to fly home from Canada, a passport is required to board a flight.