Discovering Our Planet Together



Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure

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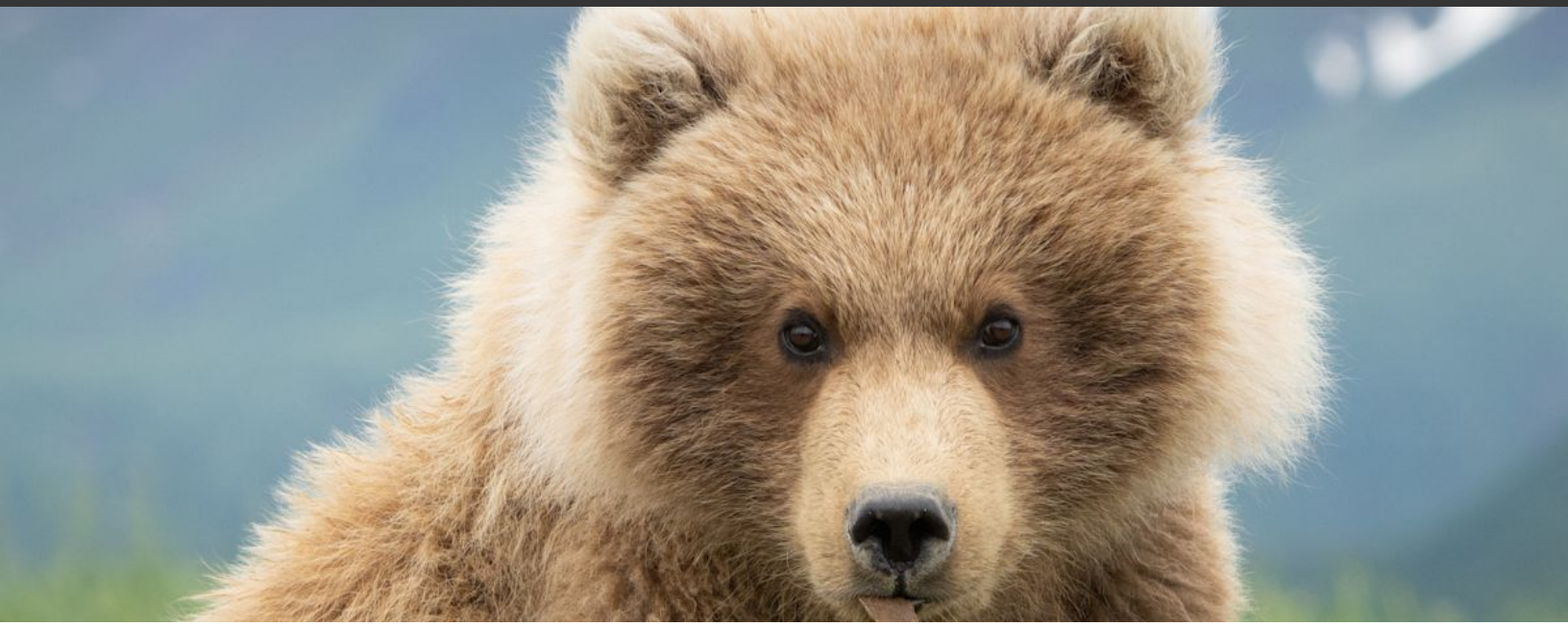


Trip Details:

Days
8 Days / Jul–Aug

Price
From $12795 (+Air)

Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure

We're not exaggerating when we say this is the ultimate bear photography safari! Alaskan brown bears—the world's largest coastal grizzlies—feast all summer on clams, mussels, sedges and spawning salmon, accessible to our cameras at close range. With seven nights aboard our private chartered ship, the *Natural Habitat Ursus*, photographers have an exclusive opportunity to capture countless images of brown bears on the wild beaches in this roadless sector of Katmai National Park. Go ashore with our expert naturalist guide—who is also a professional wildlife photographer—to capture images on foot from a careful distance. Your Expedition Leader is one of Alaska's top bear experts, coaching you on how to safely get incredible shots at close range. We may view lone males, mothers with playful cubs, or even a wolf interacting with bears along the river. Experience this rarest of encounters with *Ursus arctos* in all its untamed majesty!

Trip Highlights

No Better Bear Photography on the Planet!

It may be an audacious claim, but it's true—get closer than you can imagine, safely on foot with our expert bear guides who are also pro photographers

A Private Chartered Ship for Exclusive Access

Following the wild Katmai coast aboard the *Natural Habitat Ursus*, just eight guests have unparalleled access for bear photography in this roadless wilderness

Photograph Highlights of Kodiak Island

Rarely visited Kodiak is replete with Native and Russian heritage, lush mountains and rich marine life, which we photograph on an all-day private boat cruise

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai Itinerary

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Kodiak
Day 2	Kodiak
Day 3	Kodiak / Katmai National Park
Days 4–6	Katmai National Park
Day 7	Katmai National Park / Kodiak
Day 8	Kodiak



Day 1

Kodiak

Arrive on Kodiak, a vast island of mountains, forests and brown bear country

- Explore Kodiak’s walkable old town and its Alutiiq and Russian heritage
- Join your local guide for a welcome dinner and introduction to the photo expedition ahead

Welcome to Kodiak Island! At 3,670 square miles, Kodiak is the second-largest island in the United States. Defined by high mountains, lush forests and a crenellated coastline, much of the island's wild terrain lies within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, home to 3,500 brown bears and a multitude of other wildlife. On your arrival at the airport, our local guide meets you and transfers you to our hotel in town. Depending on your timing, you may be able to explore some of Kodiak's Russian and Native heritage on your own this afternoon. Our grizzly photo tour officially begins this evening with an informal welcome dinner and orientation hosted by our local guide.

Inhabited by Alutiiq natives for more than 7,000 years, Kodiak was colonized by Russian fur traders in 1792, whose harvest of sea otter pelts drove the species to near-extinction by the mid-19th century. As the first permanent Russian settlement in what would become Alaska, it served as the capital of Russian America until it was moved to Sitka in 1804. In 1794, the Russian Orthodox Church established its first North American mission in Kodiak. Reminders of this residency are on display at the Kodiak History Museum—formerly an 18th-century fur storehouse and one of Alaska’s oldest wooden structures—and Holy Resurrection Church, rebuilt in the 1940s after the original 1795 building was destroyed by a fire. Both are walking distance from our hotel. Other options for free time include the Alutiiq Museum, the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, and several galleries featuring the work of resident artists. All are centrally located in the compact town of Kodiak surrounding picturesque St. Paul's Harbor. Kodiak is also home to Alaska’s largest fishing fleet, bringing in a great haul of salmon, halibut and herring each season.

Day 2

Kodiak

Photograph whales, seabirds and sea otters along Kodiak’s secluded coast

- Cruise quiet bays and rocky shorelines aboard a private catamaran
- Capture sea otters, puffins, sea lions, bald eagles, humpback whales and fin whales
- Frame tidal pools, kittiwake rookeries and Kodiak’s rugged coastline

While Katmai's brown bears will be our main focus, Kodiak Island is an impressive wildlife destination in its own right, and today we explore a sampler of its coastal waters on a half-day private boat trip. A cruise among Kodiak’s secluded bays and rocky shorelines, past tidal pools and kittiwake rookeries, may reveal sea otters, puffins, bald eagles, sea lions and sometimes humpback and fin whales. Kodiak is remote, not often visited by travelers to Alaska, and our sense of an intimate encounter with nature is palpable as we glide among its rockbound coves and islands. Birdlife is impressive, with more than 240 species identified in the Kodiak archipelago.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 3

Kodiak / Katmai National Park

Fly across Shelikof Strait to board the Natural Habitat Ursus

- Visit a local photographer and gardener at her island home
- Travel by floatplane to the remote coast of Katmai National Park
- Settle aboard the *Natural Habitat Ursus*, your private expedition ship

Before we depart Kodiak today, we stop for a visit with locally acclaimed photographer, artist and gardener at her home. Get a personal perspective on life on this isolated island as we hear her stories, including her bear photography ventures, and learn what it's like to grow plants and flowers on Kodiak as we tour her garden to admire the fruits of her labor. After tea and treats, it's time to meet the bears! And we reach them via a classically Alaskan mode, a floatplane flight from Kodiak to Katmai National Park to meet our privately chartered ship, the *Natural Habitat Ursus.* Our plan is to fly out late morning, but timing is flexible in the event of weather delays—in which case we'll explore more of Kodiak as we wait for clouds to lift.

Once our plane lifts off, exciting aerial photo opportunities await as we fly west over Kodiak's steep green mountains and across Shelikof Strait to the Katmai Peninsula, where the ice-crowned peaks of the Aleutian Range rise in a serrated spine behind the shoreline. The pilot is in radio contact with the *Ursus*, and soon we're taxiing on the water to pull up alongside the ship. Exiting the plane, we embark the vessel that will be our floating home for the next several days. The 73-foot *Ursus* was built as a deep-sea fishing boat called *Time Bandit,* which navigated the stormy Bering Sea in pursuit of the lucrative king crab catch. Its successor, the second *Time Bandit,* gained fame in the Discovery Channel TV series "Deadliest Catch." The original boat was later transitioned for research use by the National Park Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Since retrofitted for custom tourism charters, this sturdy veteran of wild Alaskan waters now offers our guests comfortable accommodations in this remote marine wilderness.

Bear photography begins in earnest as the *Ursus* (which means "bear" in Latin) cruises slowly along the coastline. In this area we commonly find giant Alaskan brown bears—the world's biggest coastal grizzlies—foraging for food, and the opportunities to capture impressive close-ups is simply remarkable. Since we are mobile, we can cruise to wherever the bears are, following them from bay to bay. Bring double the memory capacity you think you'll need, as you won't believe the shots you'll get!

Days 4–6

Katmai National Park

Photograph coastal grizzlies on foot along Katmai's wild shoreline

- Go ashore by skiff to photograph bears at close range with expert guides
- Capture grizzlies fishing for salmon, sparring or tending cubs
- Watch for wolves moving through the same remote coastal habitat

While we've all seen footage in nature documentaries of Alaskan brown bears in the wild, nothing prepares us for the drama of an actual encounter with these magnificent beasts. They are North America's largest land predators, and an adult male can weigh 900 pounds. As we cruise just off the coast, bears often dot the shoreline. We go ashore by skiff for a closer view, traversing tidal flats and gravel bars on foot, possibly fording a few streams to find the best vantage point for bear watching. It's not uncommon to find several massive grizzlies at once. And far from dozing lethargically, these bears may put on quite a show in their efforts to fill up on enough protein-rich food to prepare for a long winter in hibernation.

The bear activity we witness will vary according to the season, weather conditions, and timing of the salmon runs, but there's always something riveting to watch and photograph. We may see mothers with cubs gallivanting on the beach early in the season. Later on, bears fight to capture salmon in their jaws as the fish make their way up streams flowing over the intertidal area, swiping out at them with talons as long as man's fingers. As omnivores, the bears also dig for clams and mussels in the sand and browse on protein-rich sedge grass. Depending on the timing of our visit, we may see bears mating or males sparring over females.

On other Alaska trips, we typically watch grizzlies from viewing platforms or vehicles. Not here! In coastal Katmai we are on foot, carefully wandering the area in our small group under the cautious guidance of our expert naturalist guide, who offers thorough coaching in safe bear etiquette. Sometimes we see wolves, too, observing their interesting interactions with the bears. While occasionally there may be another boat in the region, we're usually alone in the wilderness, moved by a profound sense of solitude, peace and raw beauty. Suffice it to say this trip offers wildlife photo opportunities that will thrill you beyond expectation!

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 7

Katmai National Park / Kodiak

Capture images of Katmai's glacier-crowned coast

- Cruise the shoreline by skiff on a final morning in the wilderness
- Photograph bald eagles, kittiwakes and oystercatchers along the coast
- Return by chartered floatplane to Kodiak and explore the historic town

One last morning is set aside for photography in the wild environs around us before our planned return by floatplane to Kodiak later today, although weather will always dictate our timing. Cruising toward the shoreline in an open skiff, we look for a glimpse of the glaciers that crown the tall mountains behind Katmai's lonely coastline. Typically these peaks are cloaked in clouds while evocative mists weave in and out of the bays, providing the moisture that keeps Katmai so lush and green. Deep ash covered the region after the massive 1912 eruption of Mount Katmai and adjacent Novarupta, and revegetation in the century since has come mostly as a thick blanket of willow and alder bushes, though some stands of spruce thrive as well—keep an eye out for bald eagles in the treetops. Seabirds abound, too—look for kittiwakes, terns, mergansers, pigeon guillemots and black oystercatchers.

Inevitably, it's going to be hard to leave here. Most travelers never get such an immersion in genuine wilderness, let alone the chance for close-up photos of some of the world's most magnificent carnivores in their natural habitat. You're sure to come away awed by the way the bears allow us into their world, and inspired to protect their future from the very real threats of mining, oil and gas development, climate change and other forces that may impact the ecosystem that sustains them—especially the salmon runs on which they rely.

Our plan is to fly back to Kodiak at midday, where our local guide meets us on arrival and takes us to lunch. Afterward, photograph more of this historic town this afternoon. Depending on weather and timing, our activities may include a walk through the coastal rainforest at Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park where relics remain from a World War II coastal defense installation, a visit to the Kodiak Fisheries Research Center with aquarium and touch tank, and/or a drive up Pillar Mountain for sweeping views over the town and sea, when weather permits. This evening, gather for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Fresh seafood is always on the menu, along with other varied choices.

Day 8

Kodiak

Depart Kodiak after your Katmai grizzly photo expedition

- Transfer to the airport for homeward flights

Our Alaska bear photography adventure comes to a close today as we depart from Kodiak, with a transfer to the airport provided. We recommend guests book an afternoon flight out in case inclement weather prevents us from flying back to Kodiak on Day 7 as scheduled—occasionally, weather delays may require a morning flight today from the *Ursus* back to Kodiak.

Please note: *Most floatplane flights will depart Kodiak for the* Ursus *in late morning and return to Kodiak mid-afternoon. The exact times will vary according to weather and other logistical factors.*

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai Accommodations

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure



M/V Natural Habitat Ursus

A sturdy former crab fishing boat retrofitted for tourism, our privately chartered 73-foot ship offers exclusive access to the roadless coast of Katmai National Park without leaving a footprint, providing accommodations for just eight passengers.



Kodiak Compass Suites

Located in the heart of town, Kodiak''s newest hotel is an all-suite accommodation offering spacious rooms with harbor and mountain views, steps away from the town's main attractions including museums, galleries and shops.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/alaska-nature-tours/kodiak-katmai-grizzly-photo-expedition/accommodations.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

The Ultimate Bear Photography Safari

Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai

In the roadless wilderness of Katmai National Park, utterly removed from standard cruise ship and tour routes, a select few photographers spend a full week in the bears' midst, with unhurried hours to capture close-up images against a backdrop of ice-crowned peaks and saltwater inlets. **Click here** to read about the seasonal "ebbs and flows" of grizzly bear season, to determine what you're likely to see and experience in terms of the bears' behavior. Here's why this is the ultimate opportunity to photograph Alaska's fabled brown bears:

1 **The Most Immersive Bear Photography Adventure You'll Find**

Our itinerary—offered solely by Natural Habitat Adventures—is a singular opportunity to spend a full week in remote brown bear habitat, not available via any other operator we know of. This is an exclusive photo safari focused wholly on bears. In fact, you can't even get here by cruise ship or by road: We reach this isolated wilderness by float plane, then transfer to our small chartered ship to explore the uninhabited coastline with the flexibility to follow the bears' movements. It's a genuine, unparalleled wilderness immersion!

2 **A Maximum of Just 8 Guests**

Using a chartered small expedition ship for our exclusive access, with just eight photographer guests, we can comfortably approach bears safely without disturbing them. You won't find a more intimate setting in which to observe and photograph bears.

3 **Our Own Privately Chartered Ship**

The *Natural Habitat Ursus* offers the optimal way to explore the scenic coastal wilderness of Katmai National Park. Completely retrofitted to provide comfortable, compact accommodations, the *Ursus* is a converted research vessel with a shallow draft that allows us to cruise near the shoreline, watching bears forage in the meadows and dig clams on the tide flats. Since we sleep aboard, our route can be flexible—we follow the bears!

4 **Photograph Bears at Incredibly Close Range**

It's hard to fathom that we can stand safely on the ground with Alaska's mighty brown bears. Yet that's exactly the amazing photo opportunity this rare adventure affords, in a wild realm where bears have never regarded humans as a threat. With expert coaching from our guide, we remain unobtrusively in the bears' presence, immersed in solitude. You simply won't find such an experience anywhere else.

5 **Your Outstanding Naturalist Guide is a Bear Photography Pro**

Our Expedition Leaders are not only accomplished professional wildlife photographers, they are also trained naturalists who are seasoned experts on bears and bear behavior. In their company, you'll get insight and access to bears you could never get otherwise. We take pride in employing the most qualified, dedicated and passionate photo safari guides, who also receive natural history training from leading WWF scientists. Our Expedition Leaders will facilitate an outstanding photography experience while ensuring your safety and comfort. **See Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

6 **Perfect Your Shots through Workshops & Editing Sessions**

Each evening, once we have spent a full day in the field photographing grizzlies and other wildlife, return to the *Ursus* for a hearty home-cooked gourmet dinner followed by an extended workshop session to review, share and edit your images from the day. Gain insight from our Photo Pro Expedition Leader and your fellow photographers as we explore best practices together.

7 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Bear Photography Adventure**

Natural Habitat Adventures offers an exclusive guarantee, which clearly states that we will meet the lofty expectations established in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise.**

8 **Feel Good About the Way You Travel**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100-percent offset—Natural Habitat Adventures is the world's first carbon-neutral travel company.

9 **Natural Habitat is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our adventures. World Wildlife Fund— the planet's leading environmental conservation organization—has named Natural Habitat as its worldwide travel partner, a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $12795 (+Air)

Group Size
Limited to 8 Travelers

Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai Dates, Pricing & Info

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure

2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jul 5 - Jul 12, 2027	**$12795** +internal air	
Jul 9 - Jul 16, 2027	**$12795** +internal air	
Aug 23 - Aug 30, 2027	**$12795** +internal air	
Aug 27 - Sep 3, 2027	**$12795** +internal air	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Jul 12 - Jul 19, 2028	**From $12495** +internal air	
Jul 16 - Jul 23, 2028	**From $12495** +internal air	

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Aug 26 - Sep 2, 2028	**From $12495** +internal air	
Aug 30 - Sep 6, 2028	**From $12495** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/alaska-nature-tours/kodiak-katmai-grizzly-photo-expedition/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Trip price includes: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), boat crew and local staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, beer and wine on board the Ursus, some gratuities, airport transfers upon arrival and on the final day, bear viewing gear (chest waders and boots, Gore-Tex rain jackets, waterproof gloves, mosquito head nets, binoculars, and monopods), all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Internal air: All float plane flights within the itinerary (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Important Information About This Trip

This trip involves watching grizzlies on foot in unprotected open areas. While bears are unpredictable and sighting them can never be guaranteed, our groups have never missed seeing them. The unpredictability of bears can also lead to dangerous situations. They are wild animals, and we ask travelers to heed the rules set by our staff and to understand that this trip can, potentially, present harmful situations. We ask that all travelers take their own safety into consideration when signing onto this (and any) adventure. On this rare adventure, we encounter giant Alaskan brown bears from an uncommon and fascinating perspective, at eye level! Very few people in the world have an opportunity to see these powerful and beautiful creatures in such an intimate context, and we are very proud that our guests are among the select few who do.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

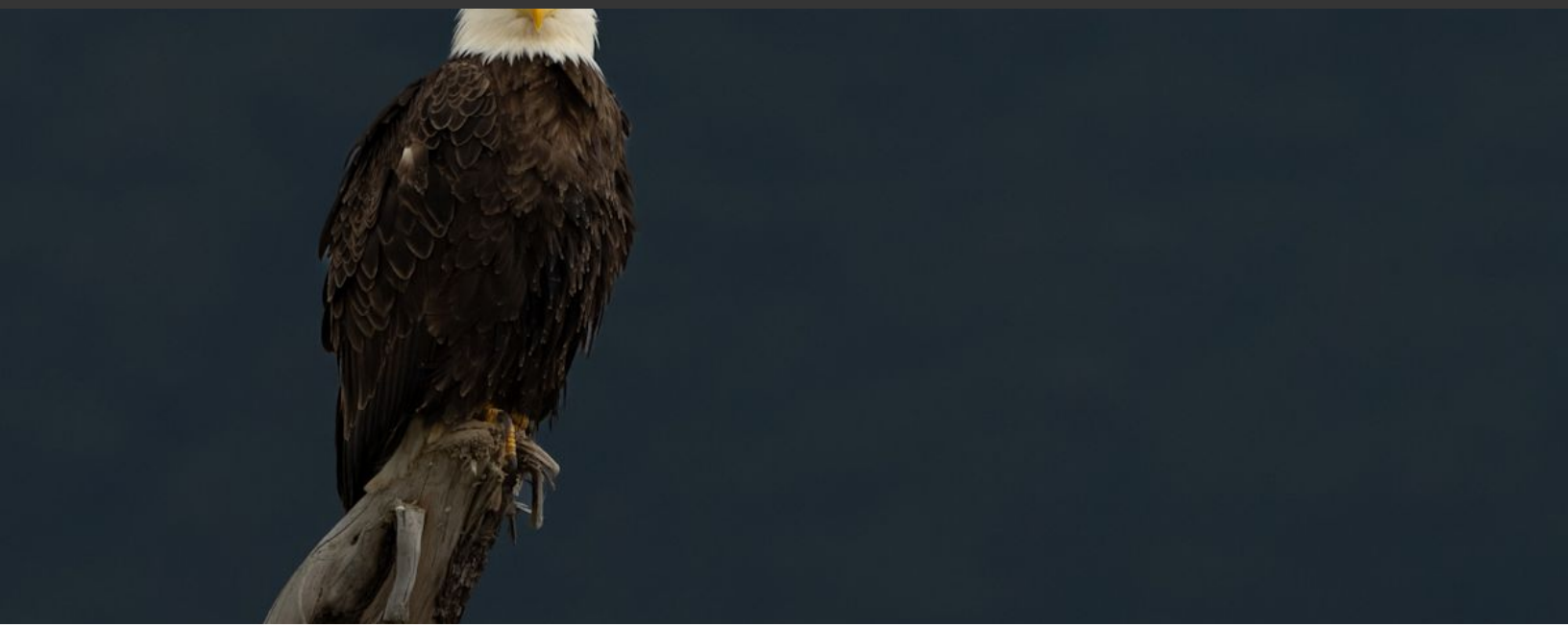
Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Kodiak, Alaska. **You must arrive in Kodiak in time for a 6:30 pm welcome dinner and orientation on Day 1**. Flights between Kodiak and the *Natural Habitat Ursus* vary according to weather and other logistical factors, and timing is often adjusted to take advantage of safe flying conditions. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

We are scheduled to return to Kodiak on Day 7, and **you may depart from Kodiak anytime on Day 8**. However, we strongly recommend choosing an afternoon departure in case poor weather delays our return by float plane. If inclement weather requires you to remain in Kodiak longer than anticipated, any additional expenses will be your responsibility.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



Grizzly Ship Photo Expedition: Kodiak to Katmai Extensions

Photograph the Bears of Katmai National Park on a Chartered Small-Ship Adventure



Ultimate Alaska Photo Expedition

A truly epic photography adventure! Alongside expert guides, get aerial shots of Denali from deep within the park, capture brown bear portraits at close range, and shoot glaciers, whales, puffins and more in Kenai Fjords.

$19995 (+air)



Ultimate Alaska Wildlife Safari

See more of wild Alaska on this wide-ranging, small-group adventure including Alaskan brown bears, a fly-in backcountry lodge in Denali National Park, marine life of Kenai Fjords, and the scenic Alaska Railroad to Seward.

$18995 (+air)



Alaska Bear Camp Photo Expedition

A secluded immersion with brown bears in the wilderness of Lake Clark National Park. Enjoy total privacy and comfort at our deluxe fly-in wilderness camp accessed via chartered bush plane from Homer.

$10695 (+air)

Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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WWF's membership travel program is operated by Natural Habitat Adventures (Nat Hab). To date, Nat Hab has provided more than $6 million in support of WWF's mission and will continue to give 1% of gross sales plus $175,000 annually through 2028. WWF® and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF. All rights reserved.