

Understanding the Port

ICY Strait Point isn't a town that happens to get ships — it's billed as Alaska's first Native-owned cruise destination: a restored 1912 salmon cannery on Chichagof Island, owned and run by the Huna Tlingit people of Hoonah, with the state's most dependable whale waters just offshore.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Two piers, both true docks — tendering is rare. The free green Transporter gondola links them in about five minutes, and a flat shore path does it on foot. The whole place runs on your ship's clock: it opens when you arrive, winds down when you sail.

Money & Phones

US dollars and cards work everywhere at the port — but this is a remote village, so carry a little cash for the Hoonah shuttle and small vendors. Cell service is thin and slows when ships are in; the port's free Wi-Fi spots help.

Getting Around

The port is compact and billed as accessible throughout. Hoonah village is 1.5 miles away: a flat, scenic 30-minute shoreline walk — whales are sometimes spotted from the path — or a small-fee shuttle, sold round-trip only.

GOOD

The Cannery, Free & On Foot

Best for: Wanderers, history lovers, no-budget days

- ✓ Free museum inside the restored 1912 cannery
- ✓ Shore trails, beachcombing, whale-spotting from land
- ✓ Fire pits and boardwalks over Port Frederick

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Culture & the Mountain

Best for: Families, culture lovers, view chasers

- ✓ Huna Tlingit dance and legends at the Native Theater
- ✓ SkyGlider gondola to Sky Peak — about 1,500 feet up
- ✓ The walk or shuttle into real-village Hoonah

Show times follow the ship's schedule — book through your line.

BEST

Whales, Bears & the Big Zip

Best for: Bucket lists, wildlife lovers, adrenaline

- ✓ The port's own whale cruise guarantees a humpback
- ✓ Wild brown bears at Spasski River — a search, not a promise
- ✓ The ZipRider — 90 seconds, up to 60 mph

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

The Free Day Done Right

One of Alaska's best no-excursion ports: the cannery museum's 1930s canning line, a mile of shoreline trail, and a beach made for wandering. The polish is real — and so is the place.

BETTER

The Huna Tlingit Story

This is the community's own port — the dance performance, the carvers, and Hoonah itself, billed as the world's largest Tlingit village, are the genuine article, not a show shipped in for cruise day.

BEST

Point Adolphus Whales

Tide-stirred currents pile krill against Point Adolphus all summer. The boats leave right from the dock — no bus transfer — and the port's own cruise puts a guarantee on seeing a humpback.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

The Whale-and-Bear Combo

One outing, both icons — the Point Adolphus cruise plus the Spasski platforms. Book it the day the cruise planner opens.

Crab at The Crab House

Dockside king and snow crab — and a Bloody Mary stacked with crab meat that's become the port's calling card.



The old cannery pier — the whole port grew out of a restored 1912 salmon cannery



Riding the gondola down to the ships — our own photo

Key Considerations

Know which gondola is which: the green **Transporter** between the piers is free; the red **SkyGlider** up the mountain is a paid all-day pass — and it's included when you book the ZipRider. The zip itself has rider limits (roughly 75 to 275 pounds), and it sells out alongside the whale boats weeks ahead in summer.

Bear honesty: Spasski is a *search* for wild bears, best mid-July through September when the salmon run — spring sailings should temper expectations (eagles and deer are the reliable extras). The whales, by contrast, are practically the house specialty from May on.



One ship, one pier, a whole lot of Alaska — our own photo from above the port



Humpbacks feed all summer in these inside waters — Point Adolphus is the dependable ground



Hoonah from above — a shoreline walk or shuttle from the pier

Photos: two are Ernst Travel Agency originals. Via Wikimedia Commons: Bernard Spragg (public domain), USDA Forest Service / Harvey Hergett (public domain), Joseph — The Cabin On The Road (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Port Orientation

FROM THE PIERS

● The Cannery & Free Museum	Shops, restaurants, history
● Crab House & Duck Point Smokehouse	Fire pits over Port Frederick
Free gondola, ~5 min	
● Between the two piers	The green Transporter
~30 min shore walk, or small-fee shuttle	
● Hoonah Village	The real thing — watch the clock
Paid gondola	
● Sky Peak & ZipRider launch	About 1,500 feet up
By boat, right from the dock	
● Point Adolphus	The guaranteed humpbacks
By tour	
● Spasski River bear platforms	Wild bears, salmon season best

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time — and the last tender back, if your ship anchors — before you leave the ship.

Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Icy Strait Point is what happens when the village owns the port instead of the other way around: the profits stay in Hoonah, the culture comes first-person, and the whales practically punch a clock.

Zip, feast, search for bears, or just walk the shore — this is the day Alaska feels personal.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

The Glacier Bay Homecoming. Hoonah's people trace their homeland to Glacier Bay itself — oral tradition tells of a glacier advancing "faster than a dog could run" over their villages in the 1700s. In 2016, Huna carvers raised the first clan house to stand in Glacier Bay in more than 250 years.

A Port That Pays Dividends. Billed as Alaska's first Native-owned cruise destination, Icy Strait Point returns its profits to Huna Totem Corporation's Tlingit shareholders — and it's the village's largest employer.

Why "Icy" Strait. When Vancouver's expedition sailed through in 1794, glacier ice choked these waters — Glacier Bay itself was still buried behind a wall of ice two miles wide.

Shelter From the North Wind. Hoonah's Tlingit name, Xunaa, roughly translates to "lee of the north wind" — exactly what this snug harbor offered.

Bears Outnumber People. Chichagof Island is often cited among the highest brown-bear densities on Earth — its bears comfortably outnumber its human neighbors.