

Understanding the Port

For most northbound ships this is your first taste of Alaska: a cannery town on stilts wrapped inside America's largest national forest, where the salmon run under the sidewalk, the taxis have floats, and the rain is a point of civic pride.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Two different arrivals: downtown Berths 1–4 put you steps from Creek Street, while Norwegian ships dock at Ward Cove, about seven miles north, with a free 20–30 minute shuttle into town. Know which one you've got before you plan the day.

Money & Phones

US dollars, normal cards, and your phone works like it does at home. Spend the planning energy on your rain jacket instead — you'll get more out of it.

Getting Around

Downtown is compact and flat — billed as the most walkable port in Alaska. A free shuttle loops town on ship days. Cabs are few and rideshare is effectively absent; the totem parks north and south need wheels.

GOOD

Creek Street & the Boardwalk

Best for: Short stops, photographers, free-day fans

- ✓ Historic houses on stilts over Ketchikan Creek
- ✓ Late summer: salmon muscling upstream under your feet
- ✓ Married Man's Trail up to the fish ladder

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Totems & Town

Best for: Culture lovers, families, rainy days

- ✓ Some 80 standing poles around town, Saxman & Totem Bight
- ✓ Living Tlingit and Haida carving traditions
- ✓ The Lumberjack Show's covered, heated grandstand

Saxman is 10 minutes south, Totem Bight 25 north — tour or taxi.

BEST

Misty Fjords by Floatplane

Best for: Bucket lists, splurgers, camera rolls

- ✓ Three-thousand-foot granite walls straight out of the sea
- ✓ A window seat for every passenger; many tours land on the water
- ✓ About two hours dock to dock

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Creek Street

Once the town's rowdiest address — the old sign joked that both men and salmon came upstream to spawn. Today it's galleries and boardwalks, plus the best free wildlife show in Alaska every late summer.

BETTER

The Totem Parks

Home to what Smithsonian Magazine has called the world's largest collection of standing totem poles — carved history at Saxman, Totem Bight's waterfront clan house, and original 19th-century poles at the Heritage Center.

BEST

Misty Fjords

Pilots thread a national monument of glacier-carved granite and rainforest lakes. Low clouds ground the planes some days — the catamaran into Rudyerd Bay is the all-weather way in.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

The Crab Feast at George Inlet

All-you-can-eat Dungeness in a historic lodge — the rainy-day Best that eats like a celebration.

Watch the Ladder, Skip the Trinkets

In August the free show at the salmon ladder beats half the paid tours in Alaska. Spend the savings on the floatplane.



Creek Street's historic boardwalk, on stilts over Ketchikan Creek

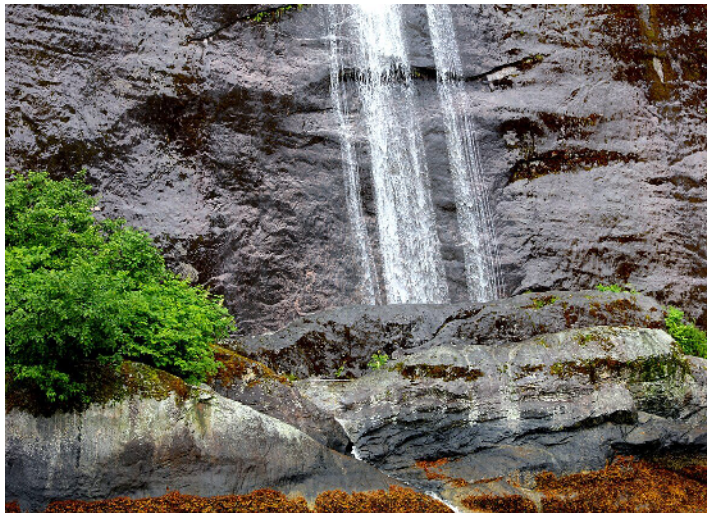


Ships on the downtown waterfront — most berths are steps from town

Key Considerations

Sailing Norwegian? Your ship docks at Ward Cove, not downtown. The free shuttle runs continuously and takes 20–30 minutes each way — build it into your timing, and plan to catch the last shuttle back with room to spare before all aboard.

This town measures rain in feet — roughly a dozen of them a year — and floatplanes scrub when the clouds sit low. Book the Misty Fjords flight with a plan B in your pocket: operators refund or rebook weather cancellations, and the boat tour delivers the same granite on any ceiling.



Misty Fjords National Monument — waterfalls pour off the granite around every bend



Floatplanes are Ketchikan's taxi service — and the classic way into the fjords



The Chief Johnson pole — one of some 80 standing totems around town

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Port Orientation

FROM THE DOWNTOWN BERTHS

● Welcome Arch & Rain Gauge	Keeping score at the dock
● Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show	One block up, covered & heated
5–10 min on foot	
● Creek Street	The boardwalk on stilts
● Salmon Ladder & Married Man's Trail	Late-summer spectacle
15–20 min on foot, or the free shuttle	
● Totem Heritage Center	Original 19th-century poles
By taxi or tour	
● Saxman Native Village	10 min south — living Tlingit culture
● Totem Bight State Park	25 min north — clan house on the water
By floatplane or boat	
● Misty Fjords National Monument	The signature splurge

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time before you leave the ship.
Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Ketchikan is Alaska in concentrate: rainforest, salmon, totems, and floatplanes, all within a mile of the gangway.

It will probably rain. Go anyway — this town has been thriving on it for a century.

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

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Did You Know?

Salmon Capital, Says the Sign. Ketchikan proudly bills itself the "Salmon Capital of the World" — all five Pacific salmon species run these waters, and the boast is spelled out on the downtown welcome arch.

Totem Country. Smithsonian Magazine has called this the world's largest collection of standing totem poles — some 80 rise around town, Saxman, and Totem Bight.

Twelve Feet of Liquid Sunshine. Roughly 12 to 13 feet of rain falls here each year — about four times what Seattle sees — and locals track it on a giant novelty rain gauge at the cruise dock.

Thundering Wings. The town's Tlingit name is most often translated as "thundering wings of an eagle" — though historians admit the exact meaning is still happily debated.

An Airport With a Ferry. Ketchikan's runway sits on its own island across the Narrows — every flight ends with a short ferry ride locals call the best runway view in Alaska.