

BOOK #006

The Smart Traveler's Alaska Wildlife Guide

Chapter 2 — Bears of Alaska

Imagine rounding a bend on a quiet river excursion when your guide quietly points toward the shoreline. A massive brown bear is standing knee-deep in the water, patiently waiting for salmon. Everyone falls silent as the bear catches a fish with incredible speed. Moments like these are why seeing Alaska's bears is at the top of so many travelers' bucket lists.

Brown Bears

Brown bears, often called grizzlies in inland areas, are Alaska's largest land predators. Coastal brown bears grow especially large because of their rich diet of salmon and other marine foods. They are commonly seen in places such as Katmai National Park, Brooks Falls, and parts of Southeast Alaska.

Black Bears

Smaller than brown bears, black bears are excellent climbers and are found throughout much of Alaska's forests. Their color can range from black to cinnamon, and they are frequently spotted near wooded areas and quiet streams.

Polar Bears

Polar bears live primarily in Alaska's far northern Arctic regions. They are rarely seen by cruise travelers visiting Southeast Alaska but remain one of the state's most iconic animals.

Bear Safety

Always stay with your guide, follow instructions, and keep a respectful distance. Never approach, feed, or attempt to attract a bear for a better photograph. Remember, you are a visitor in their home.

Where to See Bears

Popular locations include Katmai National Park, Pack Creek, Anan Wildlife Observatory, and occasionally along the shorelines near Juneau, Sitka, and Icy Strait Point during salmon season.

Aimee's Insider Tip

Seeing a bear in the wild is unforgettable. Resist the urge to focus only on your camera. Take a few photos, then simply watch. Observing a bear's natural behavior is an experience you'll remember long after your Alaska vacation ends.