



L-R: Jock Bradley, Brian Stevenson, Robert Zaleski

## JUNEAU, ALASKA

CAPITAL PADDLING AWAITS IN THE 49TH STATE

THE GATEWAY TO GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK AND OTHER POINTS NORTH, Juneau and its 704 square miles of water are often overlooked as prime paddling territory. But whether you're in town for business or for play, there's no shortage of ways to get wet (not counting the rainy, misty climate). Visit on June 21, the longest day of the year, and enjoy 18 hours of daylight; or come in spring or fall to see the Northern Lights. — *Kate Stepan*

### KAYAK FISHING:

Five species of salmon—king, pink, coho, sockeye and chum—inhabit the waters of the Alaskan Panhandle, along with Pacific halibut that can weigh over 100 pounds. Fish alongside bald eagles in the rainforest islands just north of Ketchikan, about 200 miles south of Juneau, for a few hours or more with Ketchikan Kayak Company, which rents out sit-on-top kayaks and fishing gear (907-225-1272, [KETCHIKAN-KAYAK.CO.COM](http://KETCHIKAN-KAYAK.CO.COM)). Or book one of their five-day trips to the remote, floating Rocky Bay Lodge near the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island, a 100-mile seaplane ride away, which owner Howard McKim calls the “best fishing imaginable,” with good shrimping nearby to boot. No luck? Sit down to fresh-caught Dungeness crab, king salmon, and locally harvested oysters at the lodge, bed down in a cozy bunk, and try again tomorrow.

### RAFTING:

Take the ferry (find schedules at [akmhs.com](http://akmhs.com)) 75 miles north to Haines, then drive to the Alsek River section through the St. Elias Mountains of the Yukon Territory. Float amid an Ice Age-esque landscape of craggy peaks and blue glaciers with beaches inhabited by bear, mountain goats, moose, and wolves. The action builds about halfway down the 172-mile stretch, which can take 12 to 27 days, with the roiling waves of Class IV Lava North. Then, the famous helicopter portage around Turnback Canyon provides a bird's-eye view of glacial ice pinching the massive river into a 50-foot-wide slice of whitewater unrunnable by raft. Nearing the takeout at Dry Bay, the river widens and braids its way through Glacier Bay National Park (permit required). Avoid the logistical headaches by booking a guided trip with Alaska Discovery (800-586-1911, [MTOBEK.COM](http://MTOBEK.COM)).

### SEA KAYAKING:

Put in on the beach at Mendenhall Lake and paddle about two miles across to get as close as you dare to the azure-fissured face of Mendenhall Glacier, 13 miles from downtown. What you see is literally the tip of a 1,500-square-mile iceberg. The Juneau Ice Field, which feeds the Mendenhall, stretches 85 barren miles north to south. Paddling past smaller bergs, watch arctic terns dive from nests on nearby cliffs or stop to stretch your legs on the beach at the base of 300-foot Nugget Falls. Alaska Boat and Kayak Center (907-364-2333, [JUNEAUKAYAK.COM](http://JUNEAUKAYAK.COM)) offers equipment rentals and transportation from town. For a longer trip, try the 15-mile paddle from Echo Cove to Berners Bay, about 40 miles north of town, or a guided five-day tour around Shelter or Admiralty Islands to spot whales and brown bear.

**\*DOWNTIME:** Pre-paddle, fuel up with a cup of locally roasted Heritage Coffee, available at most downtown cafes. After a day on the water, learn the secret to the award-winning Alaskan Amber recipe by quaffing free samples at the Alaskan Brewing Company. Then head into town and through the wooden saloon doors of the 96-year-old Alaskan Hotel, which boasts the cheapest rates in Juneau. For stylistic digs, check in to the Goldbelt Hotel across the street. For the non-paddlers in tow, take a dry day soaring among the old-growth canopy of the Eaglecrest Ski Area with Alaska Zipline Adventures (907-321-0947, [alaskazip.com](http://alaskazip.com)) or an open-air tour and hike with Juneau Jeep Adventures (907-988-JEEP, [juneaujeep.com](http://juneaujeep.com)).