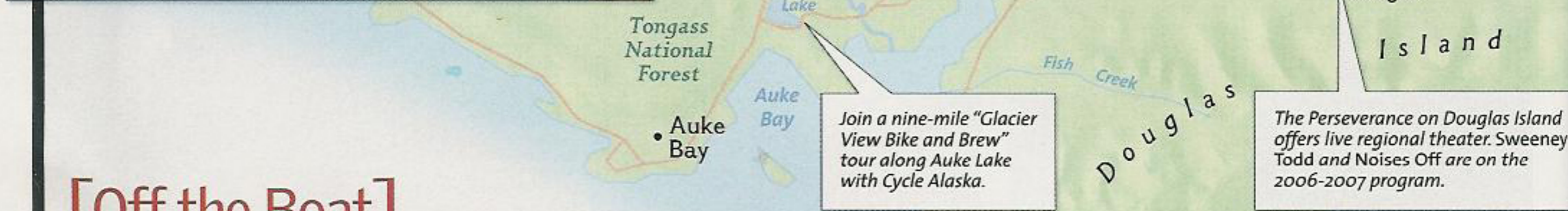


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## [Off the Boat]

# Small Town, Big Alaska

Excursions, eats, music, shops: What's great in and near Juneau. **By Everett Potter**

**M**any newcomers, or cheechakos (as the locals like to say), typically experience Alaska's capital from the deck of a cruise ship, sailing up the Gastineau Channel. It's an arresting image: Hemmed in by the Tongass National Forest and snowcapped mountains, with the mile-and-a-half-wide, ten-story-tall Mendenhall Glacier at its back door, this fiercely independent enclave of 31,000 is arguably the most dramatically sited capital in the United States. • Juneau's diminutive downtown is a maze of hilly streets that are vaguely reminiscent of San Francisco's. Ships dock right at the edge of downtown. But when up to five cruise behemoths holding as many as 2,000 passengers each have pulled in for the day, visitors wanting an authentic Alaskan experience had better avoid the hordes, and quickly. Ships usually call on Juneau for just 8 to 10 hours before departing.

**Walking Tour** **TOTAL TIME:** 5 HOURS Grab a table at the locals' favorite, **1 Costa's Diner** (2 Marine Way), which serves breakfast or lunch but has no menu or prices. Write down your order on a sticky note, hand it to owner Collette Costa, and she'll cook it for you. When it comes time to settle up, she'll suggest a price, but you pay what you think it's worth. Walk to the tram that ascends **2 Mount**

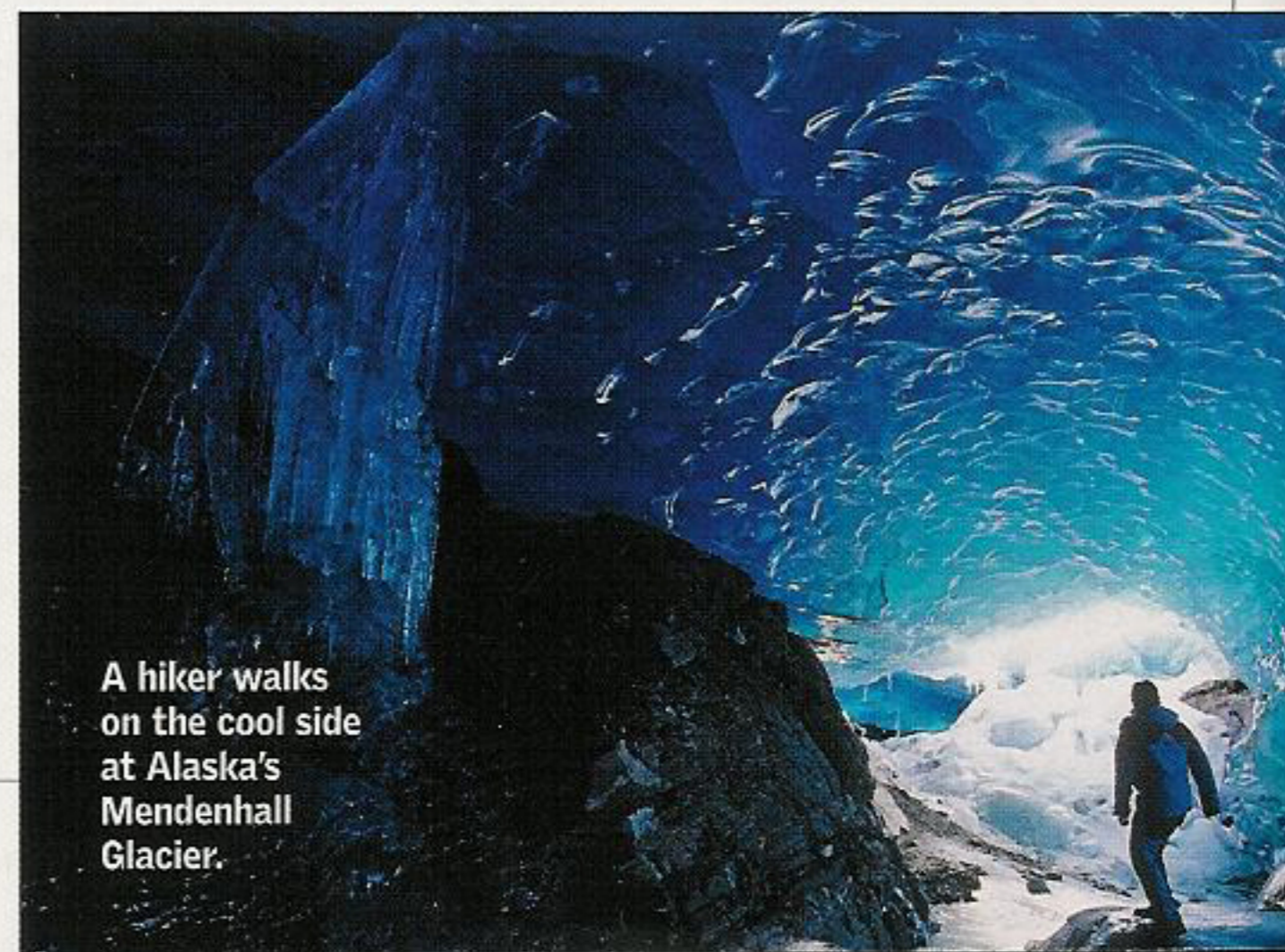
**Roberts** (490 S. Franklin St.) to get a bird's-eye view of the only mainland capital in the U.S. that can't be accessed by road. Then, head to the **3 Alaska State Museum** (395 Whittier St.) for some historical perspective. As you pass the **4 Federal Building** (709 W. 9th St.), note the bronze statue of pelicans. There are no pelicans in Alaska, and the statue was said to have been destined for Florida but wound up

here; that it remains is testimony to the Alaskan sense of humor. Step into the **5 St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church** (326 5th St.), which provides a window onto Alaska's Russian settlement. Then stroll along Harris and Aurora harbors to see fishing boats at anchor. Stop at the **6 Juneau Public Library** (292 Marine Way), overlooking the waterfront. It's a good place to catch up on newspapers and check e-mail. Finally, find a seat at **7 Hangar on the Wharf** (2 Marine Way), order a microbrew, and watch the seaplanes land until it's time to go.

**Real Shopping** **TOTAL TIME:** 2 HOURS Avoid the main shop-

ping drag of South Franklin Street by simply walking uphill in any direction. **8 Annie Kaill's** (244 Front St.) offers a well-chosen collection of pottery and stoneware, glass, and jewelry. For vintage books, maps, and prints, such as an 1897 guide to the Alaska goldfields or a yellowing map of the Inside Passage, head to the **9 Observatory** (200 N. Franklin St.). And take the worthwhile ten-minute cab ride to the **10 Rie Muñoz Gallery** (2101 N. Jordan Ave.), near the airport. Here you'll find the work of Alaska's most famous living artist, whose fishing and folkloric scenes depict an idealized view of Alaskan life.

(continued on page 48)



A hiker walks on the cool side at Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier.

