



## **Itinerary for SE Alaska's Western Passages On the MV *Westward***

*Itineraries are dependent on weather and tides and may change at the captain's discretion*

On this 8-day/7-night tour we visit the most beautiful locations along the western passages. Traveling through canyons and fjords, stopping at anchorages at Admiralty, Baranof, and Kupreanof islands, observing bears, whales, eagles, and more along the way. Hiking or kayaking, accompanied by the on-board naturalist, we will learn about the fauna and flora of the area.

### **Juneau-Sitka Day 1**

*Westward* will be moored in downtown Juneau in the vicinity of the Mount Roberts Tram base station. Departing at 12:30 pm, we will head south down Gastineau Channel and enter Stephens Passage. Reaching Holcomb Bay at around 6:00 pm, we enter the glacial fjord of Endicott Arm, where we will find an anchorage in time for a quiet first night aboard. Humpback whales are often found feeding in the area around the entrance to Endicott Arm, and both bears and wolves have been seen foraging along the shores at our night's anchorage.

### **Sitka-Juneau Day 1/Sitka-Petersburg Day 1**

*Westward* will be moored in Sitka Harbor, where we will meet you at noon. To confirm our location, please call the harbor master at 907.747.3439. Sitka was first settled by Tlingit ancestors about 10,000 years ago, and later by Russian fur traders in 1799. There are several historic sites of significance here. Take the time to visit a few of them during a walk through the town. Board *Westward* in time for a late lunch, while we cast off for the 9-mile run to Krestof Sound, where *Westward* will anchor in time for our first kayak paddle before dinner.

### **Petersburg-Sitka Day 1**

*Westward* will be moored in either Petersburg's North or South Harbor. Please call the harbor master at 907.650.7078 to confirm our location. After coming aboard at noon, we drop our lines shortly after and travel south to Le Conte Bay. Le Conte glacier, at the head of the bay, is the southernmost saltwater calving glacier in North America. If ice conditions permit access, we will cruise all the way to within a quarter mile of the calving glacier face. Working our way through the ice flows, we will anchor in Ideal Cove at about 5:00 pm, which allows time to walk the boardwalk Ideal Lake trail, a roughly 2-mile round trip.

### **Days 2-7**

We will travel through canyons and fjords, stopping at beautiful anchorages at Admiralty, Baranof and Kupreanof islands, observing bears, whales, eagles and more along the way. Hiking or kayaking, accompanied by the on-board naturalist, we will learn about the fauna and flora of the area. Each trip varies depending on the weather; some highlights may include:

*Stephens Passage:* Sailing through waters frequented by humpback whales and orca, we will be on the lookout for their tell-tale blows. Finding our night's anchorage among the small bays and inlets that indent Admiralty Island, we will launch our kayaks and search for brown bears foraging along the shore.

*Warm Springs Bay:* Anchored for a few hours, we hike the trail up to the lake that feeds the magnificent waterfall that drops into the head of the bay. On our way back from the lake, we can stop and soak in the natural hot pools overlooking the head of the falls. After taking our fill of the restorative waters, we return to *Westward* and resume our journey.

*Freshwater Bay:* *Westward* will be anchoring in a small cove in front of an estuary system that supports a large population of brown bears. During fish runs, bears congregate near the entrance of a fish ladder that allows returning salmon access to their spawning streams, bypassing the dam that was built decades ago to support logging operations. We will explore the bay by kayak and then anchor our skiff in the stream at the foot of the falls where we may have an opportunity to watch and photograph brown bears sharing (not something bears often do) the bountiful returning salmon. From this stable base we can sit quietly, watch and photograph the gorging bears.

*Baird, Le Conte and Dawes Glaciers:* Each trip includes a visit to one or two glaciers. Each adventure is different, exploring the newly foliated outwash plain exposed by Baird Glacier's retreating ice, and cruising as close as a quarter mile of Le Conte's or Dawes' calving glacier face.

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*Hidden Falls Hatchery:* When the salmon begin returning in late July, brown bears also visit the stream near the hatchery to re-stock their fat reserves for the coming winter. This is a perfect time to tour the hatchery. Moving on, we reach Baranof Hot Springs before lunch, with plenty of time to hike to Baranof Lake (approx. 1-mile round trip). A post-hike soak in the hot spring pools will help soothe our sore feet. By mid-afternoon we will have had our fill of crowded docks and hot water (well, the crowded docks at least). Departing Warm Springs Bay, we will once again cross Chatham Strait, this time rounding Admiralty Island's southern tip and entering Stephens Passage. We will anchor tonight in one of several deep bays that serrate Admiralty's southeast shoreline in time to launch our kayaks and poke along the edges of the cove.

### **Juneau-Sitka Day 8/Petersburg-Sitka Day 8**

From our last anchorage, it is only a couple of hours travel into Sitka, but we will still start right after breakfast so that there is plenty of time to visit several historic sites of significance here.

### **Sitka-Juneau Day 8**

Sailing from our last anchorage in time to reach Juneau by 10:00 am, we will complete our voyage along the length of Stephens Passage before entering Gastineau Channel and the final eight miles to Juneau. We will arrive in time for our guests to catch the early afternoon south-bound flights.

### **Sitka-Petersburg Day 8**

We will leave Ideal Cove in time to reach Petersburg by 9:30 am. This makes it possible to catch the morning flight to Juneau. Or plan on spending a day or two in Petersburg, a working fishing town that has yet to be heavily impacted by industrial tourism.

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