

Gates of the Arctic

GATES OF THE ARCTIC
NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
ALASKA

This is one of the finest remaining wildernesses in the world. The park and preserve extends nearly 320 kilometers (200 miles) from east to west, including some 5.7 million hectares (8.1 million acres) in the central Brooks Range in north central Alaska. The entire park and preserve area

lies north of the Arctic Circle and is about 320 kilometers (200 miles) northwest of Fairbanks. It extends from the southern foothills of the Brooks Range across the range's ragged peaks and down onto the North Slope. Magnificent valleys dissect the range here, many containing

clearwater rivers and alpine lakes. A few alpine glaciers occupy the north sides of higher mountains. Most of the park and preserve area, lying north of the limit of trees, is vegetated with shrubs and tundra.



WHAT TO DO AND SEE

Gates of the Arctic is a vast wilderness containing no established National Park Service facilities or trails. Hiking its long valleys is the predominant recreation. Excellent hiking terrain is found in the higher elevations' open tundra or sparse shrubs and forest. Hikers and backpackers are generally dropped off and picked up by chartered aircraft. These aircraft, variously equipped, can land on

either lakes and rivers or river bars. "Floatable" rivers within the park and preserve are the Alatna, the John, the North Fork of the Koyukuk, the Tinaygak, the Killik, the Anaktuvuk, the Noatak, the Nigu-Itivilik, and the Kobuk. The Arrigetch Peaks area offers excellent rock and mountain climbing.

Bear (grizzlies throughout and black along the lowlands in

the south); wolves; wolverines; Dall sheep; moose; caribou; marmots; ground squirrels; eagles; and many migratory birds are found within the park and preserve. Fishing is generally good, with grayling in clear streams and lakes; lake trout in larger, deep lakes; char in streams on the North Slope; and Sheefish and dog salmon in the Kobuk and lower Alatna rivers.

ACCESS

Most people approach the central Brooks Range via scheduled flights from Fairbanks to Bettles, and then charter small aircraft in Bettles for flights into the park and preserve. Charter flights into the Brooks Range can also begin in Fairbanks. Air-time is generally paid to and from the destination. Additionally, scheduled flights from Bettles to Anaktuvuk Pass, in the center of the park and preserve, are available several times a week.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

There are no established campgrounds, but excellent camping sites are available throughout the park and preserve. Bettles has a lodge, general store, and canoe rentals.

Fairbanks has a complete range of retail merchandise and services. A number of guides lead trips through the Brooks Range in summer, and outfitters can supply an array of trip equipment, including boats.

WEATHER

Long, cold winters and short, mild summers are the rule. On the Brooks Range's south slopes, mid-summer temperatures in the lowlands may occasionally rise into the upper 20s°C (80s°F), rarely the 30s°C (90°F). Highlands temperatures are cooler, and on the range's northern flank are between minus 6°C (20°F) and 10°C (70°F); here freezing temperatures occur by early September, sometimes in mid-August. August is often rainy.

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CLOTHING, FOOD, & GEAR

If you plan to do extended backpacking be certain that your clothing, camping gear, and food are good quality and light weight. Clothing should include enough layers, even in summer, to provide warmth in subfreezing temperatures. Rain

gear is essential. Tents should be strong and light and have a rainfly. Food must primarily be dried and freeze-dried, and you must take more than you expect to consume during the planned trip. Be familiar with your gear before

you start a backpacking trip in this vast area. You should also be competent at hiking, camping, and survival skills. Winter travel, requiring special skills and hardiness, should be undertaken only after careful planning.



PRECAUTIONS AND COURTESIES

This is a vast and sometimes hostile region. Animals are wild and should be respected because they can kill or maim careless or naive people. For your safety, it is suggested that you leave your itinerary with someone and contact that person upon completion of your trip.

Local residents carry on their subsistence way of life within the national park and preserve. Their camps, fishnets, and other equipment are critical to their well-being. Please observe the usual courtesies respecting their property and their privacy.

Sport hunting is not allowed in the park.

For further information write:

Superintendent
Gates of the Arctic
National Park and Preserve
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Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

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