

Summer Guide



NPS Photo / Emily Mesner

Welcome to Denali National Park and Preserve

Welcome to six million acres of wild land. Travelers to Denali National Park will experience landscapes that vary from low-lying boreal forest to high alpine tundra and snowy mountains that culminate in North America’s tallest peak, 20,310’ (6,190 m) Denali. Although the park is named for its highest peak, it encompasses more than just a mountain.

Denali National Park was initially established to conserve wildlife. Charles Sheldon, an early conservationist and hunter, spent time in the area studying Dall sheep. While here, he witnessed wide-scale market hunting. Consequently, he lobbied Congress to create Mount McKinley National Park specifically to protect Dall sheep. In 1980, with the passing of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA), Mount McKinley National Park not only tripled in size but was also renamed Denali National Park and Preserve.

Known around the world for its fantastic scenery and wildlife, Denali is a place of inspiration, exploration, and reflection for travelers like you. Open year-round, activities at all levels of interests and abilities can be found. Use this guide to make the most of your time in Denali—discover activities, how to ride a bus into the park, and plan a hike.

Make the Most of Your Time in Denali

Learn more at go.nps.gov/VisitDenali



NPS Photo

Two-Hour Suggestions

- Explore the Denali Visitor Center Campus:**
An outdoor desk is open 9am to 5pm. Visitors can talk to a ranger, find out about ‘pop-up’ programs and activities, visit the Alaska Geographic Park Store and take a short walk on the Spruce Loop Trail to experience the boreal forest.
- See the Sled Dog Kennels (Mile 3.4):**
Meet Denali’s canine rangers, see exhibits about dog mushing and talk to a ranger. Open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm daily (mid-May to mid-September). Limited parking available, **no RV-sized parking spots**.



NPS Photo

Full-Day Suggestions

Also consider suggestions listed under “Two Hours” and “Half Day”

- Experience the Park by Bus:**
Get farther out in the park on either a tour or transit bus. Check the “Hop on a Bus” section of this guide for bus options and more information.
- Hike Off-Trail:**
If you want to get off the beaten path, consider hiking off-trail as part of your trip. Learn more about hiking off-trail at go.nps.gov/DenaliHiking

Camping

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliCampgrounds

Information and Safety

Check in—Check in after 11 am. Check out by 11 am.

Quiet Hours—10 pm to 6 am

Generators—Generators may be operated from 8 am to 10 am and 4 pm to 8 pm at Riley Creek Campground, Savage River Campground, and Teklanika River Campground.

Fires—Fires are allowed in established grates at Riley Creek Campground, Savage River Campground, and Teklanika River Campground. Firewood may be purchased at the Riley Creek Mercantile located at Mile 0.4 on the park road.

- Fires must not be left unattended.
- Cutting living vegetation or standing dead wood is prohibited.
- Do not cook directly on fire grates.
- Dispose of all garbage and foil in a trash can.



NPS Photo

Half-Day Suggestions

Also consider suggestions listed under “Two Hours”

- Look for Denali at Mountain Vista Rest Stop:**
Weather permitting, Denali can be seen from the park road between Miles 9 and 13. The drive there from the Denali Visitor Center takes about 20 minutes in your own vehicle. There are several short trails and picnic tables in the area.
- Hike a Trail:**
Enjoy a hike on a trail near the Denali Visitor Center. Check the trail map on the reverse side of this guide for trail options and more information.



NPS Photo

Multi-Day Suggestions

Also consider suggestions listed under “Two Hours”, “Half Day”, and “Full Day”

- Discover Ranger Led Programs:**
Check at the visitor centers for information on that day’s “pop-up” ranger programs. Programs may include guided walks, short talks, activities for kids or campground programs. Check the day of your visit for more information.
- Go Camping:**
Stay at a campground or in the backcountry. Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliCampgrounds

Wildlife Safety—Keeping a clean campsite is key to a safe campground experience. Follow these rules to avoid a wildlife encounter:

- Store and cook food away from sleeping areas.
- Keep a clean camp and wash dishes immediately in designated areas.
- Never leave food or garbage unattended, even for a few minutes. Dispose of garbage in bear-resistant trash containers.
- Store all food, garbage, containers, coolers, cooking utensils, toiletries, and scented items in a food locker.
- Do not feed any animal, including birds.

Pets—Pets may be walked on roadways, parking areas, campground loops, the Roadside Hiking Trail, or the Roadside Bike Path. Make sure to use a leash (6’ or shorter) and dispose of pet waste.

Where to Camp	Season	Sites	Water	Facilities	Cost
Riley Creek Campground Mile 0.4 on the Denali Park Road	Open year-round Fee charged from May 7 to Sep 21	RV and/or Tent Sites: 121 Tent Only Sites: 23 Group Sites: 1 (tent only)	Summer: Yes Winter: No	- Flush toilets - Camp Store - Food Lockers - Dump Station - Fire Rings	Tent: \$17 Small RV (30’): \$27 Large RV (40’): \$34 Group Site: \$49 Winter: Free
Savage River Campground Mile 13 on the Denali Park Road	May 20 to Sep 21	RV and/or Tent Sites: 32 Group Sites: 3 (tents only)	Yes	- Flush toilets - Vault Toilets - Food Lockers - Fire Rings	Tent: \$27 Small RV (30’): \$27 Large RV (40’): \$34 Group Site: \$49
Sanctuary Campground Mile 22.6 on the Denali Park Road	May 20 to Sep 15	Tent Only Sites: 7 No Vehicles	No	- Vault Toilets - Food Lockers	Tent: \$17
Teklanika River Campground Mile 29 on the Denali Park Road	May 20 to Sep 21	RV and/or Tent Sites: 53	Yes	- Vault Toilets - Food Lockers - Fire Rings	Tent or RV: \$29 * There is a 3-night minimum stay for visitors driving a personal vehicle
Igloo Creek Campground Mile 34 on the Denali Park Road	May 20 to Sep 15	Tent Only Sites: 7 No Vehicles	No	- Vault Toilets - Food Lockers	Tent: \$17
Wonder Lake Campground Mile 85 on the Denali Park Road	June 8 to Sep 15	Tent Only Sites: 14 No Vehicles	Yes	- Flush toilets - Vault Toilets - Food Lockers	Tent: \$16 * There is a \$6.50 one-time reservation fee for this campground. Park passes do not waive this fee.

Hop on a Bus

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliBuses

Information

Types of Buses:

- Tour Buses**—Tan-colored tour buses include a driver-naturalist who will provide a full narrated experience.
- Transit Buses**—Green-colored transit and camper buses are non-narrated and allow ticketed visitors to get on or off anywhere along the park road to explore.

Purchasing Tickets:

- Online or By Phone**—Reservations for all bus services and campsites can be made online at www.reservedenali.com or by phone at 800-622-7275 (nationwide) or 907-272-7275 (international). If you make ticket purchases online or by phone you can pick up your physical tickets at the Denali Bus Depot.
- In Person**—Bus and campground reservations can be made in person at the Denali Bus Depot or the Riley Creek Mercantile.
- Drivers do not sell tickets on their buses.

Refund Policy: There is a \$6.50 fee per tour ticket, transit bus ticket and campground reservation to change or cancel a reservation up to eight (8) days prior to departure. Purchases are nonrefundable within eight (8) days of arrival date or days of departure.

Call 800-622-7275, visit the Denali Bus Depot or Riley Creek Mercantile for more details.

Departures:

- Tour Buses**—Depart from area hotels and the Denali Bus Depot. Check the pick-up location on your bus ticket.
- Transit Buses**—Depart from Denali Bus Depot (except for the camper bus, which also picks up from the Riley Creek Campground bus stop and Denali Visitor Center).

Entrance Fees: The park’s entrance fee will be added to the cost of your bus ticket unless you present a national park pass or valid entrance receipt.

Tour and Transit Buses

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliBuses. **Costs listed below do not account for the \$15/adult park entrance fee.**

Bus	Type	Destination	Length	Cost	Narrated?	Rest Stops
Tundra Wilderness Tour (May 20 to September 17) — note, service is only to Toklat River (Mile 53) from May 20 to May 31	Tour	Stony Overlook (Mile 63)	7 to 8 hrs (Round-Trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$147.50 Youth (15 and younger): \$73.75 Includes a snack box	Yes	Teklanika River (Mile 30) Toklat River (Mile 53)
Toklat River (May 20 to September 16)	Transit	Toklat River (Mile 53)	6.5 hrs (Round-Trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$50.00 Youth (15 and younger): Free	No	Teklanika River (Mile 30) Toklat River (Mile 53)
Eielson Visitor Center (June 1 to September 16)	Transit	Eielson Visitor Center (Mile 66)	8 hrs (Round-Trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$60.00 Youth (15 and younger): Free	No	Teklanika River (Mile 30) Toklat River (Mile 53) Eielson Visitor Center (Mile 66)
Camper Bus (Mid-June to September 15)	Transit	Drops campers and backpackers off at a variety of locations in the park.	Varies	Adults (16 and older): \$60.00 Youth (15 and younger): Free	No	Teklanika River (Mile 30) Toklat River (Mile 53) Eielson Visitor Center (Mile 66) Wonder Lake CG (Mile 85)

Safety and Park Regulations

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliSafety

Wildlife Safety

Black Bears and Grizzly Bears:

General Information

- Hike with a group.
- Never move closer to a bear.
- Avoid surprising bears, which could elicit a defensive reaction. Frequently make loud “people sounds,” such as talking loudly, singing, or yelling.
- Bear Spray**—Carry bear spray and know how to use it. Bear spray should be easily accessible when hiking. While on a bus, bear spray should be in a plastic bag and stowed inside your backpack or another bag.
- Report any bear encounter to a ranger.

Bear Encounters

- Gather your hiking group close together.
- Remove your bear spray from the holster.
- Never run from a bear.**
- Never drop your pack.
- If a bear gets within range of bear spray (20’, 6 m), spray the bear. Aim low—the cloud of bear spray should hit the bear’s head.
- If a bear approaches you and acts “sneaky,” it is likely displaying **curious behavior**. When encountering a curious bear, you should stand your ground (**don’t back away**), yell at the bear, and try to look large and intimidating. Be aggressive with your voice and movements. If a curious bear attacks, fight back.
- If a bear moves toward you quickly and looks aggressive it is likely displaying **defensive behavior**. When encountering a defensive bear, you should appear large but non-threatening. Your movements and voice should be slow and soft. Given the opportunity, you should slowly back away from the bear. If a defensive bear attacks, you should play dead and don’t move until you’re sure that the bear has left the area.

Moose:

- Stay Away**—Moose look docile but may charge unexpectedly and try to kick or trample a perceived threat. Stay at least two bus-lengths (25 yards, 23 m) away from moose.
- Run Away**—If a moose charges you, it is because you are in its space. Get away as fast as you can, zigzagging and putting obstacles between you and the moose.



NPS Photo

Know Before You Go:

- Trip Duration**—Includes wildlife viewing and restroom stops. If you take medication, remember to bring it!
- Covid-19 Safety**—Visitors are required to wear face coverings aboard all buses. Bring your own supplies for adequate hand sanitation. Masks are required outdoors when 6’ distancing cannot be maintained.
- Food and Water**—Bring plenty of food and water. No food is available for purchase beyond the park entrance. A water filling station is available at Eielson Visitor Center.
- Car Seats**—Alaska State Law requires children younger than one year of age or under 20lbs (9 kg) to be in a rear-facing infant seat. Children aged 1-4 and at least 20lbs (9 kg) must be in a child restraint. Children aged 4 to 7 who are under 57 in (1.4 m) tall or 65 lbs (30 kg) must be in a booster seat. Parents are responsible for providing the appropriate car seat. Some infant and toddler seats are available free of charge at the Denali Bus Depot.
- Firearms**—Firearms are not allowed on tour buses. Passengers may transport a firearm on transit buses but it must be unloaded and stored in a locked container.
- Dress Warmly**—Bring plenty of warm and weather-proof layers for time spent off of the bus (e.g., at restroom stops). In particular, transit buses have a longer layover at Eielson Visitor Center for visitors to explore the grounds and take in the views. Due to the pandemic, the building’s interior exhibit space will be closed.
- Accessibility**—Wheelchair-accessible buses are available on all bus systems. American Sign Language interpretation is available with advance request. Please advise the bus company of your needs as you make reservations.



NPS Photo

All Wildlife:

- Keep Wildlife Wild**—Do not feed wildlife, including small animals like squirrels and birds.
- Stay Away**—Do not approach or follow wildlife. Stay at least 300 yards (275 m) away from bears and maintain a minimum 25 yards (23 m) distance from all other animals, dens, and nests. If your presence alters an animal’s behavior you are too close.

Other Safety Tips

- Medicine**—If you take prescribed medication, remember to bring it with you into the park. Always bring extra doses, in case something truly unexpected happens, like a weather-related delay.
- Warm Clothing**—Even in summer, Denali can be chilly. Bring layers, so you can bundle up if you are cold.

Park Regulations

- In an emergency, call 911.** There is no cell phone service past Mile 3 on the park road. Flag down a bus driver or park ranger if cell service is unavailable.
- Leave No Trace**—Do not collect items including natural specimens (rocks, plants) or artifacts. Leave items where you find them. If you are hiking on a trail, do not stray off the established path.
- Pets**—Pets may be walked on roadways, parking areas, campground loops, the Roadside Hiking Trail, or the Roadside Bike Trail. Make sure to use a leash, 6’ (2 m) or shorter, and dispose of pet waste.
- Cycling**—Cyclists may ride on roadways, parking areas, campground loops, and the designated Roadside Bike Trail. Do not ride bikes on other trails in the park. Learn more about cycling at go.nps.gov/BikeDenali.
- Drones**—Unmanned aerial systems are prohibited.
- Firearms**—Firearms are not permitted in federal buildings; elsewhere, Alaska state laws apply.

Information

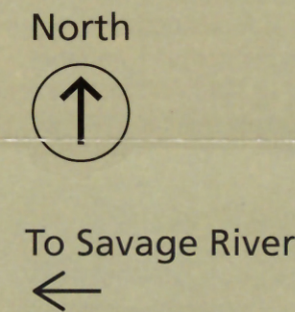
Denali National Park and Preserve
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, AK 99755

Phone
Emergency—911
Information—(907) 683-9532

Online
denali_info@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/denali

Getting Around Denali

Savage River (Miles 12—15)



Sled Dog Kennels

Denali Park Headquarters

Denali Visitor Center Campus

- 1 Denali Visitor Center
- 2 Alaska Geographic Park Store
- 3 The Morino Grill (Closed in 2021)
- 4 Bus Stop
- 5 Restrooms
- 6 Alaska Railroad Depot
- 7 Murie Science and Learning Center (Closed in 2021)

Denali Bus Depot

- 8 Denali Bus Depot & Backcountry Information Center

Sled Dog Kennels

- 9 Sled Dog Kennels
- 10 Additional Parking

Other Bus Stops

- 11 Horseshoe Lake Trailhead and Bus Stop
- 12 Park Headquarters Bus Stop

Riley Creek Campground

- 13 Riley Creek Mercantile and Campground
- 14 Additional Parking
- 15 Riley Creek Day Use Area

Savage River Area (Miles 12—15)

- 16 Mountain Vista Trailhead
- 17 Savage River Campground
- 18 Savage River

Legend

- Visitor Information
- Bus Depot
- Restrooms
- Store
- Gifts
- Bookstore
- Picnic Area
- Campground
- RV Dump Station

Trails

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliHiking



Frontcountry Trails

Trail	Difficulty	Elevation	Distance*
Roadside Bike Trail	Easy	150 ft (45 m)	1.7 miles (2.7 km) One-way
Spruce Forest Trail	Easy	Negligible	0.1 miles (.16 km) One-way
Horseshoe Lake Trail	Moderate	250 ft (76 m)	4 miles (6.4 km) Round-trip
McKinley Station Trail	Moderate	100 ft (30 m)	1.6 miles (2.6 km) One-way
Rock Creek Trail	Moderate	400 ft (122 m)	2.4 miles (3.8 km) One-way
Roadside Hiking Trail	Moderate	350 ft (106 m)	1.8 miles (2.9 km) One-way
Mt. Healy Overlook Trail	Strenuous	1,700 ft (518 m)	2.7 miles (4.3 km) One-way
Triple Lakes Trail	Strenuous	1,000 ft (305 m)	9.5 miles (15.3 km) One-way

*All distances are measured from the Denali Visitor Center (DVC). Hiking the Horseshoe Lake Trail from the Horseshoe Lake Trailhead reduces the distance to 2 miles round-trip.

Savage River Area Trails (Miles 12—15)

Trail	Difficulty	Elevation	Distance
Mountain Vista Trail	Easy	50 ft (15m)	0.6 miles (1 km) Round-trip
Savage Cabin Loop	Easy	50 ft (15 m)	0.8 mile (1.3 km) Round-trip
Savage River Loop	Moderate	Negligible	2 miles (3.2 km) Round-trip
Savage Alpine Trail	Strenuous	1,500 ft (457m)	4 miles (6.4 km) One-way

Visitor Services

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliVisitorCenters

Denali Visitor Center Campus

Mile 1.5 on the Denali Park Road

Denali Visitor Center (May 15 to Late September)
Hours: 9 am to 5 pm daily—Outdoor desk only
Phone: 907-683-9532
Services: Information, park passes, and ranger programs

Morino Grill

Hours: Closed in 2021. Food and beverages may be purchased outside the park.

Alaska Geographic Park Store

(May 15 to September 22)
Hours: 9 am to 6 pm
Hours may vary during spring and fall seasons
Phone: 907-683-1272
Services: Souvenirs/gifts, books, clothing

Alaska Railroad Depot

(Mid-May to Mid-September)
Hours: 10 am to 5 pm
Phone: 907-265-2494 or 800-544-0552
Services: Ticket sales



The Denali Visitor Center (NPS Photo)

Cycling

Learn more at go.nps.gov/BikeDenali



Denali Bus Depot

Mile 0.75 on the Denali Park Road

Denali Bus Depot (May 15 to September 17)
Hours: 5:30 am to 2 pm daily (varies during spring and fall)
Phone: 907-683-9274
Services: Bus tickets and departures, campground check-in and reservations, coffee, grab & go food, gift shop
Bus & campground reservations: www.reservedenali.com

Backcountry Information Center

(Mid-May to Mid-September)
Hours: 9 am to 5 pm daily
Location: Adjacent to the Denali Bus Depot
Phone: 907-683-9590
Services: Backcountry information and permits, bear-resistant food containers, maps
Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliBackcountry

Headquarters

Mile 3.4 on the Denali Park Road

Sled Dog Kennels (May 15 to September 21)
Hours: 10 am to 4 pm daily
Location: Mile 3 on the Denali Park Road
Services: Information and charming sled dogs

Visitor Centers Accessible by Bus Only

Toklat Rest Stop (May 20 to September 21)
Hours: TBD
Location: Mile 53 on the Denali Park Road
Services: Alaska Geographic Bookstore
Eielson Visitor Center (June 1 to September 21)
Hours: 9:30 am to 5 pm daily—Outdoor desk only
Location: Mile 66 on the Denali Park Road
Services: Information, ranger programs

Riley Creek Mercantile

Mile 0.4 on the Denali Park Road

Riley Creek Mercantile and Campground
(May 8 to September 23)
Hours: 1 pm to 10 pm daily (varies during spring and fall)
Phone: 907-683-9246
Services: Check-in for campgrounds and bus tickets, convenience groceries, firewood, dump station

Talkeetna

Mile 99 on Highway 3, about 2 hours south of the park entrance

Walter Harper Talkeetna Ranger Station

Hours: 10 am to 4 pm—Outdoor desk only, days may vary
Location: From Mile 99 on Hwy 3, travel 14 miles on Talkeetna Spur Rd. to B Street.
Phone: 907-733-2231
Services: Information, exhibits, mountaineering, park film, information, Alaska Geographic Bookstore

Entrance Fees

\$15 entrance fee and national park passes may be purchased at the Denali Visitor Center located at mile 1.5 on the Denali Park Road. Learn more at <https://go.nps.gov/DenaliFees>

Information and Safety

Where to Ride—Cyclists may ride on roadways, parking areas, campground loops, and the designated Roadside Bike Trail.

Traffic—Travel single file, keep to the right, and comply with traffic regulations.

Transporting Your Bike—Bicycles can be transported on all transit buses. Limit 2 per bus. Westbound reservations are encouraged: www.reservedenali.com. Eastbound travel is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fat tire, recumbent, tandem and motorized bikes will not fit the standard-sized racks on buses.

Bike Camping—Bike Camping is shorthand for backpacking and cycling in one adventure. Bike campers must obtain a free backcountry permit. If you're leaving your bike overnight, you must tag it with contact information and carry it off the road.

Where to Store Your Bike—Bike racks are available at campgrounds (except Wonder Lake Campground), rest areas, and visitor centers. If you go day hiking along the park road or bike camping, carry your bike 25 yards (23 m) from the roadway and hide it from view.

Wildlife Safety While Biking

- Food and Scented Items: Do not leave food or scented items unattended on your bicycle.
- Don't Try to Out-ride a Bear: If a bear or wolf is on your route, do not try to out-ride it. Stop and dismount. Keep all your gear with you and back away slowly. Wait for the animal to move away. If there is a vehicle nearby, use it as a barrier between the animal and yourself. Carry bear spray and keep it accessible and ready to use.