

Summer Guide

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Denali National Park and Preserve



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) Mount McKinley. Although the park is known for its highest peak, it was initially established to conserve wildlife.

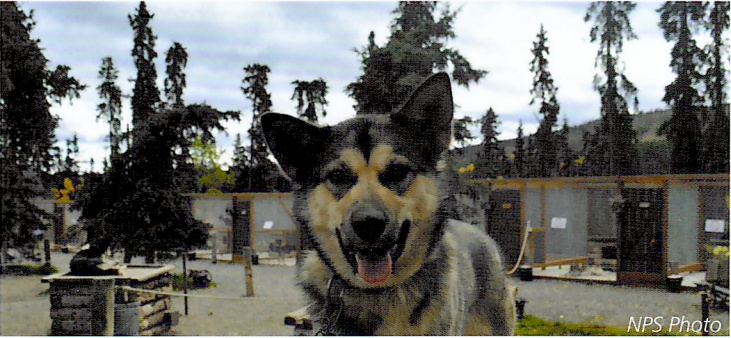
Charles Sheldon, an early conservationist and hunter, spent time in the area studying Dall sheep. After witnessing wide-scale market hunting, he lobbied Congress to create Mount McKinley National Park specifically to protect Dall sheep. In 1980, with the passing of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the park tripled in size and was 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. Use this guide to make the most of your time in Denali—discover activities, learn about bus rides into the park, and plan a hike.

Denali National Park and Preserve is located on the traditional homelands of the Dene’: the Benhti (Lower Tanana), Denaakk’e (Koyukon), Dena’ina, Dichinaneke’ Hwt’ana (Upper Kuskokwim), and Hwt’saay Hwt’aene (Western Ahtna) Peoples. They had cared for this land for thousands of years and have deep and ongoing relationships to this place. The National Park Service began its land stewardship role here only recently, in 1917. We seek to manage with respect and include our Tribal partners, their ancestors, and their descendants, and we thank them (Maasee’, Baasee’, Chin’an, Tsen’anh, Tsin’aen) for their enduring care of this land.

Make the Most of Your Time in Denali

Learn more at [go.nps.gov/VisitDenali](https://www.nps.gov/VisitDenali)



Two-Hour Suggestions

Explore the Denali Visitor Center Campus: Talk with a ranger, explore exhibits, and watch park films. Visit the Alaska Geographic Park Store and take a short walk on the Spruce Forest Loop to experience the boreal forest.

See the Sled Dog Kennels: Meet Denali’s canine rangers and learn about dog mushing. Open from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm daily (mid-May to mid-September). Limited parking available, no RV-sized parking spots. **Take a free shuttle from the Denali Visitor Center bus stop.**



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 a tour or transit bus. See 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](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliHiking)

Ranger Programs

Learn more at [go.nps.gov/DenaliCalendar](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliCalendar). Programs are free unless otherwise noted.

Discovery Hike (Daily, June 8 to September 1)
Description: Go on a challenging, off-trail hike with a park ranger.
Location: Varies daily.
Cost: Hike is free, but usually requires a Discovery Hike bus ticket (\$33.50)
Length: 6 to 10 hours (including bus ride)
Sign-up: Required at the Denali Visitor Center, no more than two days in advance. No same-day signups. All group members must be present to sign up.
Group Size: Limited to 11 participants per hike
Time: Varies

Sled Dog Demonstrations

Description: Visit the historic Sled Dog Kennels to meet and learn about Denali’s canine rangers.
10 am 5/20–9/11 **Location:** Buses to the kennels depart 40 minutes before the program (i.e., 9:20 am, 1:20 pm, 3:20 pm) from the Denali Visitor Center bus stop. Check the Courtesy Shuttle section of this guide for more information.
2 pm 5/15–9/14 Program takes place at the kennels, 1.5 miles from the visitor center.
4 pm 6/1–9/1 **Length:** 1.5 hrs (including bus travel, the ranger program, and time to meet the dogs)

Pop-up Programs

(Select days, all summer)
Description: Check at the visitor center or on campground bulletin boards for additional ranger chats, hikes, campground programs, and other programs that may be offered. **Location, length, and time vary.**



Half-Day Suggestions

Also consider suggestions listed under “Two Hours”

Enjoy Views from the Mountain Vista Area: Weather permitting, Mount McKinley can be seen from the park road between Miles 9 and 13. Take the free Savage River Shuttle from the Denali Visitor Center bus stop. 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. See the reverse side of this guide for a trail map and more information.



Multi-Day Suggestions

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

Discover Ranger-Led Programs: Ranger programs vary daily and may include guided walks, short talks, activities for kids, or campground programs. Check at the visitor center the day of your visit for details.

Go Camping: Stay at a campground or in the backcountry. Learn more at [go.nps.gov/DenaliCampgrounds](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliCampgrounds) and [go.nps.gov/DenaliBackcountry](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliBackcountry)



Accessibility

- Our goal is to provide American Sign Language interpretation, when requested in advance, for all ranger programs. Please contact the park as early as possible via email or phone so that we can accommodate your request.
- Sled dog demonstrations have limited seating; arrive early to ensure a seat.
- See trail descriptions on reverse side for wheelchair-accessible trails.



View the current program schedule at:
[go.nps.gov/DenaliCalendar](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliCalendar)

Hop on a Bus

Learn more at [go.nps.gov/DenaliBuses](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliBuses)

Information

Types of Buses:

- Tour Buses**—Tan-colored tour buses include a driver-naturalist who will provide a 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 most campsites can be made 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 \$8.50 fee per tour bus ticket, transit bus ticket, and campground reservation to change or cancel a reservation up to seven days prior to departure. Purchases are nonrefundable within seven days of arrival date or days of departure. Call 800-622-7275 or 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 your pick-up location through the link in your confirmation email, on www.reservedenali.com, or by calling 800-622-7275.
- Transit Buses**—Depart from the Denali Bus Depot (except for the camper bus, which also picks up from Riley Creek Campground).

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

Tour and Transit Buses

Learn more at [go.nps.gov/DenaliBuses](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliBuses). Tour bus tickets include the \$15/adult park entrance fee; transit bus tickets do not.

Bus	Type	Destination	Length	Cost	Narrated?	Rest Stops
Natural History Tour (May 14 to September 16)	Tour	Primrose Ridge (Mile 17)	4.5 to 5 hrs (Round-trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$116.75 Youth (15 and younger): \$51.00	Yes	Denali Bus Depot (Mile 0.75) Savage Cabin (Mile 13) Primrose Ridge (Mile 17)
Tundra Wilderness Tour (May 20 to September 11)	Tour	East Fork (Mile 43)	5 to 5.5 hrs (Round-trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$144.50 Youth (15 and younger): \$64.75 Includes a snack box	Yes	Teklanika River (Mile 30)
East Fork Transit (May 20 to September 11)	Transit	East Fork (Mile 43)	4.5 hrs (Round-trip)	Adults (16 and older): \$33.50 Youth (15 and younger): Free	No	Teklanika River (Mile 30) East Fork (Mile 43)
Camper Bus (June 1 to September 11)	Transit	Drops campers and backpackers off at a variety of locations up to Mile 43.	Varies	Adults (16 and older): \$33.50 Youth (15 and younger): Free	No	Teklanika River (Mile 30) East Fork (Mile 43)

Safety and Park Regulations

Learn more at [go.nps.gov/DenaliSafety](https://www.nps.gov/DenaliSafety)

Wildlife Safety

Black Bears and Grizzly Bears:

- Hike with a group.
- Stay at least 300 yards (275 m) away from bears and 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. Rentals are available at the Backcountry Information Center.
- 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 feet, 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. If the bear is not advancing, take the opportunity to slowly back away. If a defensive bear attacks, you should play dead. Do not move until you’re sure that the bear has left the area.

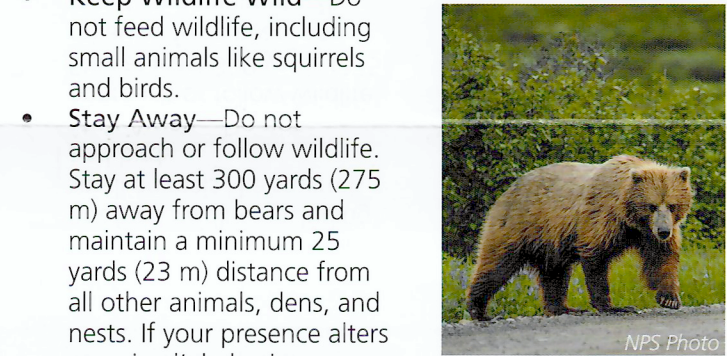
Moose:

- 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.
- Walking dogs near moose is especially dangerous as moose may react dramatically. Use extra caution and keep your pets away.



Know Before You Go:

- Trip Duration**—Includes wildlife viewing and restroom stops. If you take medication, remember to bring it!
- Food and Water**—Bring plenty of food and water. No food is available for purchase beyond the park entrance.
- 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 4–7 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., while exploring and taking in the views at restroom stops).
- 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 (800-622-7275).



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 of delays.
- Warm Clothing**—Even in summer, Denali can be chilly. Bring layers so you can bundle up if weather cools.

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 feet (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](https://www.nps.gov/BikeDenali).
- Drones**—Unmanned aerial systems are prohibited.
- Firearms**—Firearms are not permitted in federal buildings; elsewhere, Alaska state laws apply.

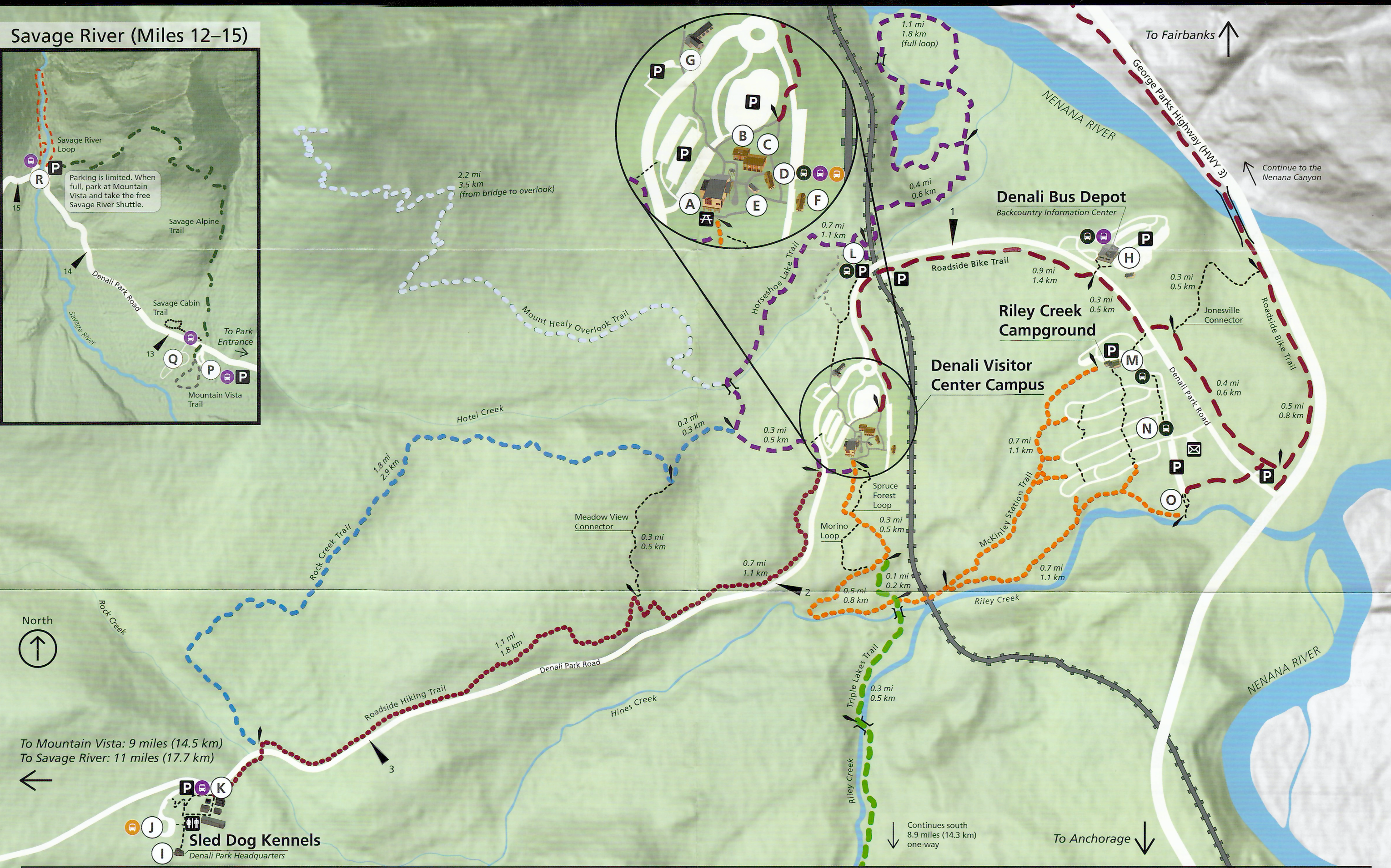
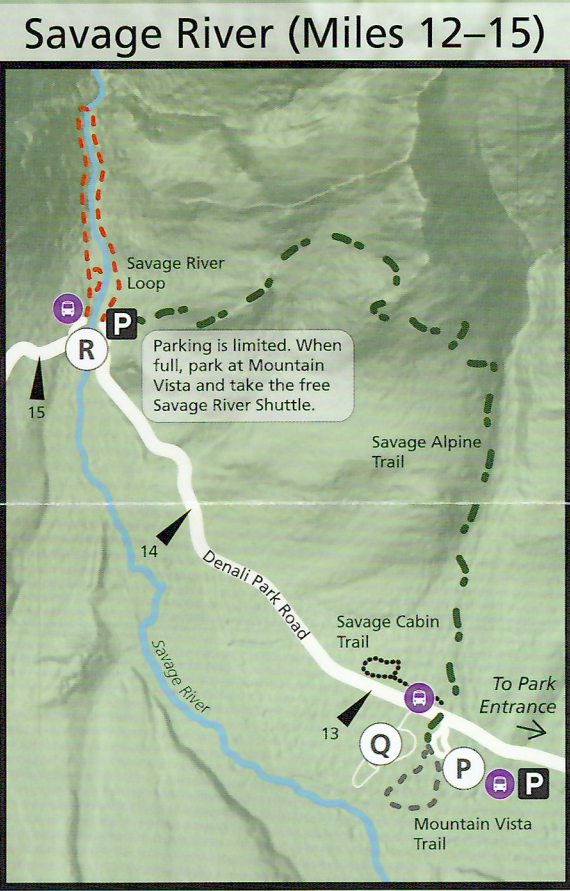
Information

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



Denali Visitor Center Campus - A Denali Visitor Center - B Alaska Geographic Park Store - C The Morino Grill - D Bus Stop and Baggage Claim - E Restrooms - F Alaska Railroad Depot - G Murie Science and Learning Center	Denali Bus Depot - H Denali Bus Depot & Backcountry Information Center Sled Dog Kennels - I Sled Dog Kennels - J Sled Dog Kennels Bus Stop Other Bus Stops - K Park Headquarters Bus Stop - L Horseshoe Lake Trailhead and Bus Stop	Riley Creek Campground - M Riley Creek Mercantile and Campground - N Riley Creek Campground Bus Stop - O Riley Creek Day Use Area Savage River Area (Miles 12–15) - P Mountain Vista - Q Savage River Campground - R Savage River	Legend - Bus Depot - Campground - Fee Collection - Footbridge - Gifts - Parking - Picnic Area - Post Office - Railroad Depot - Restaurant - Restrooms - RV Dump Station - Store - Visitor Information - Riley Creek Loop Shuttle Bus Stop - Savage River Shuttle Bus Stop - Sled Dog Demonstration Bus Stop - Distance between points on trail - Park Road Mile Marker
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Trails

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliHiking



Trail	Difficulty	Elevation	Distance*
Roadside Bike Trail	Easy	150 ft (45 m)	1.7 miles (2.7 km) One-way
Spruce Forest Loop	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.

Trail	Difficulty	Elevation	Distance
Mountain Vista Trail	Easy	50 ft (15m)	0.6 miles (1 km) Round-trip
Savage Cabin Trail	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

** Access Savage River Area Trails by using the Savage River Shuttle from the Denali Visitor Center.

Visitor Services

Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliVisitorCenters

Denali Visitor Center Campus
Mile 1.5 on the Denali Park Road

Denali Visitor Center (mid-May to late September)
Hours: 9:30 am to 5 pm daily (hours are expanded June through August)
Phone: 907-683-9532 (phone staffed 9 am to 4 pm)
Services: Information, entrance fees and park passes (credit cards only), ranger programs, exhibits, films

Morino Grill (May 15 to September 14)
Hours: 8 am to 6 pm (hours may vary in spring and fall)
Services: Grill, coffee, grab & go food (credit cards only)

Alaska Geographic Park Store (May 10 to mid-September)
Hours: 8 am to 6 pm daily
Phone: 907-683-1272
Services: Souvenirs, gifts, books, clothing

Baggage Claim and Bus Stop (May 15 to September 14)
Hours: 8:30 am to 6 pm daily
Bus schedules posted at bus stop
Phone: 907-683-9275
Services: Bag storage, lost and found, bus stop

Alaska Railroad Depot (mid-May to mid-September)
Hours: 10 am to 5 pm daily
Phone: 907-265-2494 or 800-544-0552
Services: Ticket sales

Denali Bus Depot
Mile 0.75 on the Denali Park Road

Denali Bus Depot (May 20 to September 11)
Hours: 5 am to 7 pm daily
Services: Bus tickets and departures, campground check-in, coffee, grab & go food, gift shop (credit cards only)
Bus & campground reservations: www.reservedenali.com or 800-622-7275

Backcountry Information Center (mid-May to late September)
Hours: 9 am to 6 pm daily
Location: Adjacent to the Denali Bus Depot
Phone: 907-683-9590
Services: Backcountry information and permits, bear-resistant food containers, maps, bear spray rentals
Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliBackcountry

Riley Creek Mercantile
Mile 0.4 on the Denali Park Road

Riley Creek Mercantile and Campground (May 20 to September 14)
Hours: 7 am to 11 pm daily (may vary in spring and fall)
Services: Check-in for campgrounds and bus tickets, convenience groceries, firewood, showers, laundry, dump station (credit cards only)

Park Headquarters
Mile 3.4 on the Denali Park Road

Sled Dog Kennels (May 15 to late September)
Hours: 9:30 am to 4:30 pm daily
Services: Information and ranger programs

Talkeetna
Mile 99 on Highway 3 (2 hours south of the park entrance)

Walter Harper Talkeetna Ranger Station (April 14 to September 19)
Hours: 9 am to 4 pm daily (Sept. 22–30: weekdays 10–4)
Location: From Mile 99 on Hwy 3, travel 14 miles on Talkeetna Spur Rd. to B Street.
Phone: 907-733-2231
Services: Information, mountaineering, entrance fees and park passes, Alaska Geographic Park Store

Entrance Fees

All visitors 16 years and up are required to pay an entrance fee (15 and under are free). Only credit cards accepted at NPS locations. Learn more at go.nps.gov/DenaliFees

- Denali Weekly Pass – \$15/person
- Denali Annual Pass* – \$45/year
- America the Beautiful National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Passes (Interagency Passes)*: prices vary

*Covers the passholder and up to three companions, ages 16 and up.



The Denali Visitor Center

Courtesy Shuttle Buses

Download detailed bus schedules at go.nps.gov/DenaliShuttles

Savage River Shuttle	Westbound	Eastbound
Denali Bus Depot*	●	●
Denali Visitor Center	●	●
Park Headquarters	●	●
Mountain Vista	●	●
Savage River Campground	●	●
Savage River Trailhead	●	●

Offered May 15 to September 14 every 30 minutes. Shuttles operate May 15–22 from 8:20 am to 8:10 pm, May 23 to September 1 from 6:20 am to 10:10 pm, and September 2–14 from 8:20 am to 8:10 pm.

Riley Creek Loop Shuttle	Westbound	Eastbound
Riley Creek Mercantile	●	●
Riley Creek Campground	●	●
Denali Bus Depot	●	●
Horseshoe Lake Trailhead**	●	●
Denali Visitor Center	●	●

Offered May 15 to September 14 every 30 minutes. During peak season, June 5 to August 27, the shuttle runs from 5 am to 7 pm.

Sled Dog Demonstration Bus	Depart DVC	Arrive Kennels	Depart Kennels	Arrive back at DVC
10:00 am (Offered 5/20 - 9/11)	9:20	9:40	10:40	Approximately 11:00 am
2:00 pm (Offered 5/15 - 9/14)	1:20	1:40	2:40	Approximately 3:00 pm
4:00 pm (Offered 6/1 - 9/1)	3:20	3:40	4:30	Approximately 4:50 pm

Check out the Ranger Programs section of this guide for more information on Sled Dog Demonstrations.