



ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES, LLC
Copper River
Canyon Through the Chugach - 6 days

ITINERARY

Day One

We begin our journey near the confluence of the Chitina and Copper Rivers and the tiny town of Chitina. The joining of these two enormous, glacial rivers forms the truly impressive waterway that we will be following for the next week. We will meet at the river and you will transfer your luggage into drybags and participate in a thorough safety presentation. Soon after launching we enter Woods Canyon, where the huge river is tightly squeezed between towering cliffs. We may stop in the canyon for lunch or just to climb out on a point and watch the surging water. Tonight, like each night on this trip, we choose a camp that appeals to us, either beside a stream or on a beach or low bluff overlooking the river. Tonight, for the first time, we will be lulled to sleep by the sound of the river sliding by.

Days Two – Four

Each morning we will wake to a delicious breakfast and load the boats for another day on the water. We will spend anywhere from four to eight hours on the water each day, depending on water level, wind, weather and opportunities for short hikes. As we move through the Chugach Mountains more and more glaciers hang out of the peaks all around, created by the giant annual snowfall dumped on these mountains each year. We might stop to hike up rocky Dewey Creek, explore an old railroad tunnel hidden in the alders, or check out bear and moose tracks on a sandbar. We will take small side channels and float underneath bald eagles perched on cliffs and trees. Other times we will follow the main current into the middle of the huge, broad river-bar. Each day we will stop for lunch and to take short hikes or explore the beaches and streams. We will enter float past vast sand dunes between the Bremner and Copper Rivers and alongside silent, steep bluffs. We will set camp each evening and you will have time to wander or rest while your guides prepare a delicious dinner.

Day Five

Today we pass through the narrow Baird Canyon and across a wide, still stretch of river to Abercrombie Rapids. Here grizzly bears often line the banks to fish for the infamous Copper River Red Salmon that must travel through this narrow passage on their way upstream to spawn. We will ride the huge wave train into Miles Lake, where seals surround the boat in their curiosity and icebergs tower above us as they slowly move away from the face of Miles Glacier towards the Child's Glacier and the Copper River Delta. After spending a night with the sound of calving ice and a magnificent view of the lake, we will follow in their tracks.

Day Six

Today we row across Miles Lake to where the current picks up again and the river sweeps us towards the towering face of the Child's Glacier. We will make our way swiftly past the imposing ice, watching as it calves into the river and dodging icebergs as we continue down stream. From here, the river begins to spread into the lush delta. We will follow the eastern channel for the next few hours, keeping our eyes peeled for the abundant wildlife that inhabits the delta.

We will end our river journey where the Copper River Highway (Alaska-speak for gravel road) crosses the river. Here our van will be waiting. You will repack your personal items into your own luggage while your guides dismantle the boats other gear. We will then drive 25 miles into the small fishing town of Cordova for showers and dinner and a gradual re-entry into the world of other humans.

At the end of this trip, guests have the option of spending one or more nights in Cordova or flying directly to Anchorage this evening. We are happy to arrange accommodation for you in Cordova. The Alaska Marine Highway ferry system has daily sailings from Cordova to Valdez and Whittier, for a marvelous alternative to flying. There are no roads to Cordova from the rest of the state. Please contact us to discuss the options: info@steliasguides.com.

Like all of our rafting adventures, the Copper River Trip features professional, experienced guides with a wealth of local knowledge and all necessary rafting gear including dry-bags, raingear, life jackets, rubber boots and tents (you provide sleeping bags and pads). Traveling by raft also enables us to carry excellent, fresh food, including fruits and vegetable, meats and cheeses, and many other items that are truly a luxury in this wilderness environment.