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Alaska Skiing – First Descents

With the Eastern Chugach Mountains as our canvas, we'll attempt to paint new lines big and small in a region that can only be accessed by ski plane.

Long ridgelines, open bowls, big faces, rolling glaciers, and snake-like couloirs characterize this landscape of beautiful skiing terrain. Very few of these peaks have been skied, and many of them have never been climbed.



We'll fly in to the Bagley Icefield with plenty of food, fuel, and equipment and set up a base camp. From here we'll be able to make day and multi-day outings; selecting terrain to match individual desires as we make rewarding Alaskan ski descents, one after another.

Trip Highlights:

- Ski first descents in a wild and remote Alaskan mountain range.
- Explore the unexplored on a true expedition through world-class skiing terrain.
- Highly skilled professional ski mountaineering guides.
- 360-degree jaw dropping scenery.

First Descents Skiing – Detailed Itinerary

The following is a sample itinerary for this trip. Due to individual abilities and goals, as well as the demanding environment of Alaska, all of our trips are

customized as they unfold. The guide will constantly make decisions based on weather, logistics and group dynamics to maximize each day's experience. There can be quite a bit of variation, but we always strive to make every trip your best ever.



DAY "0" – Travel to Anchorage. In the afternoon you will meet your guide for introductions and a gear check (this will be an opportunity to pick up any last minute items), followed by a welcome dinner.

DAY 1 – Drive to McCarthy (about 8 hours). Discuss trip planning and packing for a remote expedition. Finalize preparations for the following day, review basic rope skills.

DAY 2 – Ski plane flight into the Eastern Chugach Range (weather permitting). This is an hour long flight of endless wild scenery! We land on the Bagley Icefield where we establish our base camp. The rest of day is spent learning, reviewing, and practicing avalanche rescue and glacier travel skills.

DAY 3 – Exploratory morning tour easing into the terrain, assessing the snowpack, and practicing techniques for traveling in this big mountain glaciated environment. We return to camp in the afternoon for a skills session: anchors, crevasse rescue, and self-extrication. We'll continue to cover ski mountaineering skills throughout the trip, but at this point we're up to par for serious ski exploration!



DAYS 4 to 6 – Day ski outings from our base camp, seeking aesthetic un-skied lines! We select our objectives based on individual abilities and desires – the options are endless, from fun mellow rolling terrain and casual open bowls to the steep chutes, couloirs, and spines the Chugach Range is famous for.

DAY 7 – Rest day. Packing and preparations for an extended tour, covering the art form of sled packing and rigging.



DAYS 8 to 10 – We embark on a multi-day tour in search of new terrain, new lines, and new peaks (potentially unclimbed) that have never before seen ski tracks. We'll travel to a new area on the first day, setting up an 'advanced base camp'. From here we can explore the

mountains around us with light packs, on morning, afternoon, and evening tours—returning to the comforts of our new camp and minimizing the time spent hauling heavy loads.

DAY 11 – Short morning tour close to camp. We pack up our home and the ski plane arrives to pick us up in the afternoon. It's another hour of spectacular scenery, and soon we are back in McCarthy enjoying a celebration dinner!

DAY 12 – Van trip back to Anchorage. Goodbye!

What's Included:

- Guiding and instruction from skilled professionals. Our guides have extensive experience, as well as medical, rescue, and avalanche training.
- Round trip transportation between Anchorage and McCarthy.
- Ski plane flights to and from the mountain range.
- Delicious breakfasts, lunches, and dinners while in the mountains.
- Group equipment: stoves, tents, ropes, fuel, etc.

What you're responsible for:

- Personal gear – check the gear list for this trip for a complete description.
- Lodging for the nights before and after your trip (see below).
- Food while not on the mountain.
- Guide gratuity – Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

If you would like us to arrange your transportation to/from McCarthy/Kennecott and/or lodging while in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, we offer this as a free service to our multi-day clients. Please email or give us a call to discuss the details.

SKILLS COVERED IN THIS PROGRAM:

- Avalanche rescue
- Snowpack, stability assessment, and decision-making
- Uphill movement: touring techniques, ski crampons, ice axe technique, steep snow climbing.
- Techniques for the descent: slough management, using safe zones, spotting.
- Ropes, knots & hitches, and harnesses
- Anchors, belaying, and rappelling
- Crevasse rescue systems, self-extrication
- Winter camping and expedition skill



SKILL LEVEL:

For this trip you should be an advanced skier (comfortable on black diamond resort terrain) in good physical condition. Some previous backcountry skiing, ski mountaineering, and/or avalanche training is recommended but not required. If you are unsure of your qualifications give us a call, we'd love to discuss this trip with you.