



St. Elias Alpine Guides & Copper Oar
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Alaska Adventure Trip: Nizina River Wild!

This is a unique and remote wilderness adventure, as we will be dropped off and picked up by a bush plane that lands on the river bar. Our flight in takes us to the lake at the toe of the Nizina Glacier, surrounded by ice-capped peaks and rocky crags. The lake itself is full of icebergs, some as large as a house. We will spend the first day hiking and rowing around the lake and exploring the wonders of ice and rock. From here we head downriver for four more days of hiking and rafting. After floating the spectacular Nizina Canyon on the last day, we pull out, pack up, and a bush plane carries us back to McCarthy.



The towering Chugach, Wrangell, and St. Elias mountain ranges are all found in this largest national park and they serve as the backdrop to this classic Alaska expedition. In addition, sparkling side rivers, rare and fascinating geology, good wildlife viewing opportunities, idyllic riverside camp sites and classic natural history will fill your senses. Those seeking a medium length Alaska white water rafting trip into a place less traveled should consider this trip!

Trip Highlights:

- Bush plane flight deep into the park
- Glacial lake with giant icebergs
- Mile-high cliffs with waterfalls
- Moderate to strenuous hiking opportunities
- Class III Nizina Canyon

NIZINA RIVER RAFT, HIKE & FLY: DETAILED ITINERARY

This 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 1 - This first morning you will meet one of your guides at our base, the historic Motherlode Powerhouse. You will pack your clothing and other gear into waterproof dry-bags and store your luggage and any other items you will not need for the next five days. Then we will board a bushplane and fly up the Nizina Valley, getting a birds-eye view of the river we will float in the days to come. We pass under the Mile-High cliffs and circle over the moraine striped Nizina Glacier before landing at its

terminus. Our lakeside camp will be waiting for us, along with a delicious lunch. This afternoon we will explore the iceberg filled lake by raft, stopping once or twice to take short hikes along the gravel-bar or up the rocky drainage of Amphitheater Creek. We will spend our first night beside the lake, enjoying a fine dinner and alpine glow on the mountains all around.

DAY 2 - This morning we eat breakfast, load the rafts, and, after a thorough safety presentation, row across the lake to where the current slowly increases and then pulls us into the splashy rapids of the newly formed Nizina River. We will float its entire forty miles over the next four days. This second day we will likely stop for lunch near one of several waterfalls that pour off the cliffs on the east side of the river. We will camp tonight at the base of the Mile-High Cliffs, where the rock has been folded over billions of years to form remarkable patterns. The sun sets early behind the cliffs, but we will stay warm by the fire and get a good night of sleep in preparation for a day of hiking tomorrow.

DAY 3 - This morning will eat a hearty breakfast and don our daypacks for a trek up the mighty Chitistone Valley. We will cut through the open woods for half an hour and emerge on a vast floodplain. We can hike up this valley as far as we like, stop for lunch alongside the muddy Chitistone River and scramble up the steep valley wall for a look down at where we have been or a close-up view of a hidden waterfall. We will return to camp in time for another great meal (this one well earned) and a second evening beneath the towering cliffs...





DAY 4 - Today we will continue down stream as the Nizina river becomes braided, forming dozens of channels across a mile-wide floodplain as it sweeps around Sourdough Mountain and heads west. We will negotiate the channels and try to avoid getting the rafts lodge on gravel bars. Trees and other debris are thick along the river in this section because the fast-moving water is eating away at the northern bank. We will pass by a historic bridge that has been mostly washed into the river and, if the weather cooperates, get a view of the peak of Mt. Blackburn, at the head of the

Kennicott Valley. As the day draws to a close, the river narrows into a canyon where we will spend our last night with the sound of flowing water.

DAY 5 - Although our trip is almost over, this last day contains the most exciting whitewater of the trip and some of the best scenery as well. Soon after leaving camp in the morning, the small canyon opens into a wider area as the Kennicott River adds its flow to the Nizina. An hour later, the walls close in again, this time forming tight turns where the water boils and surges as it is forced around the corners. The limestone cliffs are spectacular and you will watch for peregrine falcons that sometimes make this their home. As we emerge from the canyon the wide Chitina Valley opens before us and here we will end our journey. We will arrive in time to unload the rafts, deflate them and be ready when the bush plane lands to fly us back to McCarthy.

We suggest that you spend some time in the Kennicott Valley either before or after this trip. We are happy to arrange a glacier hike or ice-climbing trip on the Root Glacier, a tour of the historic buildings in Kennecott and/or a day hike to one of the mine entrances as well as a night or more in local accommodations. Please contact us for details!



What's Included?

Like all of our adventures, the Nizina River Raft, Hike & Fly 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.