



"Into the Wild" (and back again safely)

On September 21, the dramatic story of Christopher McCandless' journey into the Alaska wilderness will unfold on the big screen, and millions of viewers will leave the theater prepared to pack their bags for a glimpse of that same inspiring scenery. Only three lodges are grandfathered to operate within Denali National Park, where McCandless spent his final days. Each is located at the end of the only road through the park, allowing access to unlimited adventures (www.nps.gov/dena). If you want edge-of-your-seat adventure with the assurance of survival, check out some of these other remote wilderness experiences:

-Fly into King Salmon in Southwest Alaska and then hop aboard a floatplane for a scenic one-hour flight to the heart of Katmai National Park and the Brooks Lodge. The lodge, originally conceived as a fishing camp, is known for its world famous bear viewing at Brooks Falls. (www.katmailand.com/lodging/brooks.html)

-Drive east out of Anchorage into Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, America's largest national park. The park has nine of North America's 16 tallest peaks, four major mountain ranges, more mountain peaks than any other location on earth, over 150 glaciers and the largest glacier outside of the polar caps. Visitors can go glacier trekking with St. Elias Alpine Guides (www.steliasguides.com) and stay at Ma Johnson's Historic Lodge (www.mccarthylodge.com).

-The 11-million-acre Gates of the Arctic National Park averages less than 5,000 visitors per year. Clear, free-flowing rivers, majestic peaks, endless vistas and undisturbed wildlife characterize the remote park, which is only accessible by air from the small communities of Bettles, Coldfoot and Anaktuvuk Pass. Arctic Wild escorts small groups in the region with a Gates of the Arctic Base Camp trip-providing everything from meals, guides and boating equipment. (www.arcticwild.com)

-Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, near the Southeast Alaska communities of Juneau, Haines, Skagway and Gustavus, can be reached only by boat or plane. The marine wilderness of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve includes tidewater glaciers, snow-capped mountain ranges, ocean coastlines, deep fjords, and freshwater rivers and lakes. Visitors can go flightseeing, bird watching, kayaking, hiking, fishing, or on National Parks Ranger-led activities. (www.nps.gov/glba)

To plan a trip to Alaska, visit www.TravelAlaska.com.

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