WHAT’S NEW IN ALASKA

Alaska recognises 2016 centenary of the US National Park Service
Ahead of the 2016 centenary of the US National Park Service, America is inviting the world to discover the meaning of the great national parks and with more than half of the US parklands found in Alaska, the state is embracing the anniversary with a range of specially planned events and park developments:

- **New Huna Tribal House for Glacier Bay National Park**
  Set to open in 2016 is a new traditional Huna Tribal House in Glacier Bay National Park. Designed to commemorate ancestral clan houses as a place where tribal members can reconnect with cultural practices and ancestral knowledge, the Tribal House will provide park visitors with opportunities to learn about Huna Tlingit history, culture, and ways of life through ceremonies, workshops, camps, tribal meetings and other events. [http://www.nps.gov/glba/learn/news/glacier-bay-np-tribal-house-work-begins-in-august.htm](http://www.nps.gov/glba/learn/news/glacier-bay-np-tribal-house-work-begins-in-august.htm)

- **Programme of Artists in the Park**
  The Alaska National Park Service is also planning a programme of *Artists in the Parks*, including art displays and a classical concert series starting in Fairbanks in October 2016 and hopefully following suit in Anchorage. The Fairbanks concert (along with choreographed images of national parks) is scheduled for October 2, 2016, at the Davis Music Hall at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. [www.nps.gov/gaar](http://www.nps.gov/gaar)

- **New ranger led hikes at Denali National Park**
  2015 and 2016 welcome a new range of trails and ranger led hikes at Denali National Park. A new section of the Horseshoe Lake Trail, located just before the entrance area visitor centre, creates a loop around the small, scenic lake. Also recently finished is the Savage Alpine Trail, a four mile path connecting the Savage River area with the nearby Savage River Campground. By 2016, work is expected to be completed on the Gorge Creek Trail which heads out of the Eielson Visitor Center, at Mile 65 of the park road. [http://www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/dayhiking.htm#deets](http://www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/dayhiking.htm#deets)

**Juneau Food Tours**
In December, Juneau Food Tours will begin offering a culinary tour of downtown Juneau with a prohibition theme focusing on local Juneau fare and craft cocktails. Previously, Juneau Food Tours offered culinary walking tours only during the summer months. The tours are a leisurely two and a half hours long and provide guests with not only opportunities to delve into the culinary scene in Juneau, but also a colourful history of the state’s capital and local culture. Guests will dine on delicacies such as Alaska king crab, smoked salmon dip, Alaska cod tacos and locally brewed award-winning beer. Tours are limited in size so that guests receive a quality and intimate experience while exploring Juneau’s culinary scene. [http://www.juneaufoodtours.com/](http://www.juneaufoodtours.com/)

**Seward Harbor 360 Hotel**
Previously the Holiday Inn Express, the hotel was recently purchased by Major Marine Tours and will be undergoing extensive renovations in advance of the 2016 visitor season. The newly renovated and renamed Seward Harbor 360 Hotel will continue to offer guests expansive views of Resurrection Bay and Mount Marathon, but with upgraded facilities. Renovations to the rooms include new furnishings and a more family-friendly layout. Guests staying at the Seward Harbor 360 Hotel in 2016 will also now be able to enjoy direct access to Major Marine Tours cruises, which will now depart from the docks directly behind
the hotel. Other amenities at the hotel include free breakfast and access to a swimming pool and spa on site. [http://harbor360hotel.com/]

### New coastal adventures in Homer

The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies in Homer is offering two new tours where a local naturalist leads visitors on a half-day adventure that combines exploration of Homer’s coastal habitat with a stop at a local eatery. “Beaches, Birds, Brew and Oysters Too” is offered every Friday from 1-5 p.m. during the summer months. “Beaches, Birds and Brunch” is also offered during the summer months every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tours treat visitors to an opportunity to explore Kachemak Bay’s surrounding forest and beaches in an intriguing outdoor adventure led by a local naturalist. “Beaches, Birds, Brew and Oysters Too” ends at the Homer Brewing Company where guests sample a flight of beer and a plate of oysters while learning how the brewery operates. “Beaches, Birds and Brunch” begins at the Mermaid Café on Homer’s Main Street, where visitors enjoy a meal prepared with Alaska ingredients with Louisiana flair followed by an intertidal exploration or bird-spotting excursion. Special tours can also be booked for groups of eight or more people. [http://www.akcoastalstudies.org/]

### Denali Park Zipline

The newest member of the Denali Park Adventures family, Denali Park Zipline, will open to the public in the summer of 2016 near the entrance to Denali National Park & Preserve. Visitors will be able to take full advantage of the newly constructed zip line course, which features a total of eight zips, six suspension bridges and a half-mile of lines. The course offers challenges for the more adventurous travelers, but also is a great place to start for any members of the group who haven’t been zip lining before. Knowledgeable guides take guests through the course, which highlights the breathtaking forest and tundra of the Denali park entrance area. [http://www.denalizipline.com/]

### Rust’s Flying Service

As one of the oldest flightseeing companies in the state, Rust’s Flying Service has been offering bear viewing opportunities to visitors during the months of June, July and August for many years. New for summer 2016, Anchorage-based Rust’s Flying Service will begin offering bear viewing during the month of May to Chinitna Bay in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. Guests will depart from the Lake Hood airstrip, in a wheeled aircraft equipped for beach landings, for this half-day bear-viewing trip. A lodge lunch is included in the package. [www.flyrusts.com]

-Ends-

For more information on Alaska as a travel destination, please visit [TravelAlaska.com](http://TravelAlaska.com)

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