

## WINTER ACTIVITIES

### Northern Lights viewing at the Lodge

The lodge offers multiple vantage points for observing the Aurora, providing panoramic views to the north and south from key areas such as the dining area, deck, and the belvedere. Situated "off grid," the lodge ensures minimal interference from artificial light, creating an optimal environment for experiencing the full beauty of the aurora borealis.

The Northern Lights viewing season commences in early fall in the Alaska Range. For guests prioritizing this celestial spectacle, it is recommended to plan their visit during periods of high forecasted aurora activity. Various links and apps are available to access these forecasts, such as at <https://www.gi.alaska.edu/monitors/aurora-forecast>.

Depending on the chosen package, guests can partake in presentations on the scientific aspects of the aurora and gain insights into effective photography techniques. Some packages include the presence of a professional photographer throughout the entire stay, with opportunities for outings depending on availability.

On clear nights when the aurora is not actively dancing across the sky, guests will have the option of engaging in computer-assisted star-gazing and constellation viewing, enhancing their overall astronomical experience at the lodge.

### Evening Northern Lights Adventures include:

The focus is entirely on the mesmerizing lights! In case the auroras are not visible at the Lodge, we have undisclosed locations that we transport guests to, initiating what we call "Chasing the Lights." Numerous viewpoints both north and south of the lodge offer incredible vistas of the lights. During our pursuit, we excel in discovering spots where the lights gracefully dance, creating diverse backgrounds for photography. Occasionally, we kindle a small fire for both warmth and captivating photography effects. Even if the auroras don't grace us with their presence, guests will still be treated to stunning views of the Eastern Alaska Range and the Delta River valley from these vantage points. These locations serve as an ideal setting for northern lights viewing, framed by the majestic mountains and the vast northern sky.

### Dog Mushing:

Visitors have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the authentic experience of early travel out of Fairbanks, mirroring the journey undertaken by residents of Interior Alaska. A visit to a dog kennel offers the chance to partake in a dog sled ride, providing a glimpse into the transportation methods of a century ago. This experience aims to recreate the essence of slowly approaching the mountain pass named after the captivating Isabel.

While this encounter offers a taste of the past, it's important to note that the Valdez trail, now reclaimed by nature, is home to the sole remaining Roadhouse stop just below the Lodge and is incredible to check out. The evening unfolds with an outdoor fire, where guests can indulge in the warmth while sipping hot chocolate and roasting marshmallows. It's a remarkable evening, offering a nostalgic taste of the bygone era against the stunning backdrop of Isabel's mountain pass.

## Ski or Snowshoe

The Lodge at Black Rapids boasts ski and snowshoe trails conveniently situated behind the lodge, providing guests with easy access without the need to drive. Additionally, we offer guided excursions to various areas within 30 miles of the lodge in the Alaska Range. Nearby mountain creeks present captivating opportunities for afternoon skiing or snowshoeing, leading to glaciers, ice caves, frozen waterfalls, and breathtaking canyons. Our knowledgeable guides not only showcase techniques for staying warm but also impart skills for navigating snowy, icy, and uneven terrain. Weather permitting, guests can enjoy spectacular views of the Alaska Range and Delta River valley.

We customize all activities to align with our guests' fitness levels and individual preferences. First-time cross-country skiers and snowshoers are not only welcomed but encouraged. Our commitment to personalized service includes individual instruction to ensure comfort and warmth.

For **routes**, we may utilize the trails behind the lodge or explore valleys to the north or south, depending on factors such as weather conditions, snow conditions, guest fitness levels, available time, and other relevant considerations.

The **length** of the excursions varies based on the chosen route. A typical 1.5-mile (4 km) route behind the lodge, leading to Wedding Knoll, along the blue trail (Intermediate) to Gunnysack Canyon, and concluding on the green trail (Beginner), takes about 1-2 hours. Trips to valleys and creek beds within 30 miles of the lodge (ranging from beginner to intermediate) generally last 2-3 hours.

The **difficulty** level ranges from easy to moderate, with conditions varying from no snow to deep powdery snow, demanding substantial physical exertion even with snowshoes. Extreme cold, wind, and/or heavy snowfall can add an extra layer of challenge to the treks.

The cost of our guided service includes equipment and lunch can be added, ensuring a comprehensive and enjoyable experience for our guests.

## Ice Cave Adventures

**Route:** The tour starts about 10 miles south of the Lodge. Depending on snow conditions we will walk or snowshoe about a mile along the creek to Castner Glacier where the cave entrance is located. You will use ice cleats to explore inside the cave, which extends for several hundred feet into total darkness. Snowshoes, ice cleats, headlamps provided; skis work best for guests who bring their own.

**Length:** 2.5 miles round-trip (4 km), 2-4 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate. Conditions may vary from no snow to deep powdery snow requiring significant physical exertion even with snowshoes. Extreme cold, wind, and/or heavy snowfall can make the trek more challenging.

## Flightseeing Winter & Summer, The Alaska Range

Experience flightseeing year-round, immersing yourself in an educational adventure that unfolds against the breathtaking backdrop of the Alaska Range. Weather-dependent, our carefully curated flights take place during the winter, spring, and

summer seasons, prioritizing the clearest and calmest days for an extensive flightseeing experience.

But this is more than just a journey through the skies. Each flight serves as a gateway to a captivating educational experience, offering a glimpse into the rich history of Alaska mountaineering. Guests are treated to rare footage of the historic 1941 first ascent of Mt. Hayes and tales from local legend Hank Dube, who led climbs up the North Ridge of Mt. Hayes during the 1960s at the Black Rapids Mountain Warfare Training Center. Throughout the trip, expert guides share their own climbing stories, providing a unique and firsthand perspective on the rugged landscapes. While many only glimpse the Alaska Range from a distance, our flights go beyond the ordinary, revealing the awe-inspiring scale and geological wonders hidden within the range.

As you soar through the skies, take in the dramatic beauty of Mt. Hayes, often regarded as one of the world's one hundred most beautiful mountains, with its peaks rivaling the Himalayas. Nearby, Mt. Deborah boasts the tallest vertical face in North America, adding another layer of wonder to this extraordinary flightseeing adventure. \*All trips are weather permitting.

**Winter:** Though March and April are typically two of our clearest months and temperatures are mild (by Alaskan standards) and each day is seven minutes longer than the one before, our deep winter adventures call the hardest of travelers, and we embrace them as strongly as the pioneers of the early gold rush days.

**Where we go:** Tours include the Black Rapids Glacier, Mt. Hayes, the Trident Glacier returning home going north along the Delta River, with multiple sightings of wild bison and other wildlife. Other routes may be used depending on weather. Flights south for the famous Copper River Red fishing take quests through the corridor of the Rainbow Ridge mountains and the valleys of the Delta River.