

Juneau's Channel Islands Kayak Camp

Frequently Asked Questions

General

- *How many people can participate on this trip?*
Most of our trips are of fewer than 6 clients with one guide. We have enough gear to be able to accommodate large private groups of 15-20 clients.
- *What is the client to guide ratio?*
Our trips maintain a maximum of 6 clients per one guide.
- *What dates is this trip available?*
This trip is available May through September.
- *Where is and what are Juneau's Channel Islands?*
The Channel Islands State Marine Park is located to the 20 miles northwest of downtown Juneau. The Marine Park consists of 14 islands in Favorite Channel: Aaron, Battleship, Benjamin, Bird, Coghlan, Cohen, Gull, Indian, Lincoln, North, Portland, Ralston, Suedla and a portion of Shelter.
- *What is your emergency response plan?*
Our guides will carry with them a marine radio and a cell phone. Almost the entire Channel Islands area has good cell phone coverage. In the event of an emergency one or more of these devices would be used to request help.

Camping Conditions

- *Where do you camp and what is the camping like?*
There are numerous areas to camp on several of the islands. They are all undeveloped sites with tent platforms that are simply flat, bare ground inside the forest that has been impacted by repeated use. Depending on the tide it is also possible to camp on the rounded beach rocks and gravel at the high tide line. Cooking areas are set up in the intertidal zone. Bathroom facilities will either be in the open air of the intertidal zone or for larger groups, utilizing a portable toilet. Food is stored in bear canisters that are kept away from the tents.
- *What food is provided while camping?*
Our guides are experienced backcountry cooks. We pride ourselves in providing high quality meals for our clients. All of our clients will complete a Client Expedition Form that requests information on allergies and food preferences. Based on these forms our guides will create a menu. Meals that have been cooked in the past include the following.
Breakfasts: breakfast burritos, egg-cheese-ham sandwiches, pancakes with fruit, yogurt and granola
Lunches: these are typically a combination of self-made sandwiches and wraps with fruit, snack bars, and a variety of trail mixes. Sandwich/wrap fixing often

include – lunch meat, cheese, tomatoes, bell peppers, carrots, cucumber, hummus, condiments, peanut butter and jelly.

Dinners: salmon fillet with potatoes and vegetables, pesto pasta, chicken alfredo pasta with vegetables, burritos, fish tacos, backcountry pizza

- *What drinks are provided while camping?*

The drinks provided depend on clients preferences. Typically we will have coffee or tea in the morning and hot chocolate, beer, and/or wine in the evening. During the day we will drink water or water with flavored drink mixes added to it.

- *How do you treat your water?*

The Channel Islands have a minimal amount of natural water. As a result on these trips we will carry with us the water needed for the trip. Some sites do have water available in which case we will do a combination of boiling the water and adding chlorine based Aqua Mira drops to treat the water.

- *Do you need to worry about camping in bear country?*

The Channel Islands do not have bears and is therefore no need to follow bear camping procedures.

Weather

- *What is the weather like?*

The weather is similar to the weather recorded at the Juneau airport. Expect to have overcast skies with intermittent showers. In Juneau there are about 300 cloudy days and 220 days with precipitation each year. The average temperatures range between 50-65 degrees. During the summer most days have winds that are less than 15 knots with seas 3' or less. Occasionally winds will pick up and cause unsafe paddling conditions.

Kayaking and Equipment

- *What type of kayaks do you use?*

Clients will be in plastic double sit-in touring kayaks. There are single kayaks that are available for experienced paddlers.

- *What kayaking accessories are provided?*

Rubber boots, rubber rain gear (if necessary), life jacket, spray skirt, kayak paddle, kayaking safety gear carried by the guide (bilge pump, paddle float, rescue sling)

- *What camping gear is provided?*

Above and Beyond Alaska can provide all of the camping gear, if you have your own and want to bring it, then please notify us. We will provide: 2 or 3 person backpacking style tents (Mountain Hardwear and Sierra Designs brand or equivalent), 0 degree sleeping bags (Marmot and Mountain Hardwear brand), Thermo-rest sleeping pad, tarp or social tent, camp stove, cooking pots/pans, utensils, mugs/thermos', headlamps, and light weight rain gear.

Travel

- *How do you get to the Channel Islands Marine Park?*
There are several harbors that we launch our kayaks from that are all accessible off of the Juneau road system. The specific harbor chosen will depend on which islands we kayak to and camp on. From the harbors it is a 3 to 6 mile paddle to the islands.
- *What do you do in the event of a weather cancelation?*
Weather cancelations will be due to unsafe paddling conditions caused by wind and rough seas. If the weather doesn't improve by mid-day then we will attempt to reschedule the trip by one day. We recommend that you book your travel dates so that you have an extra day or two in Juneau following your trip to allow this as a possibility. If the trip is completely canceled by ABAK, then you will receive a full refund.
- *What happens if we can't return at our scheduled time due to weather?*
It is possible that the sea conditions could worsen while we are camped in the bay. If this occurs we will attempt to have a motor boat pick us up. In the event that conditions are unsafe for our boat then we will wait until the next day. We recommend that you book your travel dates so that you have an extra day or two in Juneau following your trip to avoid having to reschedule travel plans due to a late return. Our guides will have an extra days worth of food on all of these trips.

Wildlife

- *What wildlife do you see on this trip?*
The wildlife that we are most likely to see depends on the time of the summer and the island destination. Humpback whales, steller sea lions, and harbor seals all make the Channel Islands their home during the summer. During May and June there is a large steller sea lion haul out on Benjamin Island, and the number of humpback whales peaks in July and August. The following are some of the wildlife that we may see:
Marine Mammals: Humpback whales, steller sea lions, harbor seals, orca, harbor porpoise, Dall's porpoise
Land Mammals: We don't see too many land mammals on the islands, but it is possible to see Sitka black-tailed deer and river otters on the larger islands.
Birds: There are a plethora of bird species in the area. Some of the most common include: bald eagles, diving ducks (scoters, merganzers, harlequin ducks), sea gulls (bonaparte, herring, mew, glaucous), common ravens, northwestern crows, marbled murrelets, belted king fisher, black oyster catchers
- *Will we kayak with whales?*
Humpback whales frequent the waters in the Channel Islands, but we can't guarantee that you will be able to paddle with them. Humpback whales travel at a similar speed as a kayaker, so it simply requires being in the right place at the right time. With the assistance of a motor boat you can pretty much guarantee whale sightings in the area.