

A travelers' sampler to Alaska's wilderness lodges

Alaska's privately-owned wilderness lodges are family-owned boutique properties offer an inside look at life in the far north. The owners' interests will determine the look and feel of the lodge; its location will be a factor in the kinds of adventures you'll experience.

The lodges listed below range from full-service properties to homespun chalets. All take guests for stays of any length. Generally, prices reflect the age of the lodge, as well as service levels, guide-to-guest ratio, cuisine, sports gear and extras such as wet-gear drying rooms, spa services and hot tubs.

To make price comparisons easier, I've given the average rate per day, per person. The longer you stay, the lower the daily rate. Note that in this economy, it's worth asking about discounts.

FULL-SERVICE LODGES

● **Crystal Creek**, a luxury log lodge on the Naknek River at the west end of Katmai National Park, is open from June 8-Oct. 5. All-inclusive vacations include guided salmon and trout fishing, flight seeing adventures, wildlife watching and hunting. The lodge takes a maximum of 14 guests in double rooms with private bath. The lodge is five miles from King Salmon and accessible by road.

The average daily rate for a six day-seven night stay is \$1,208 in June and July, (\$7,850 for the week); and \$1,285 in August (\$8,350 for the week). Shorter visits can be arranged. www.crystalcreeklodge.com; 907-357-3153.

● **Winter Lake**, a fly-in luxury lodge on remote Finger Lake, 194 miles from Anchorage near the Iditarod Trail in the foothills of the Alaska Range. All-inclusive

summer and winter vacations of any length include helicopter glacier flights, guided fishing, Iditarod Trail hikes, cooking classes, canoeing, dog sledding and Nordic skiing. It closes closes for several weeks in spring (when the lake ice melts and planes can't land) and in fall (during freeze-up).

The lodge takes up to 14 guests in seven double cabins, each with private bath. Children 12 and up are welcome. The average daily rate per person is \$965 (\$3,860 for a four-day/four-night stay). The one-night rate is \$1,330. www.withinthewild.com; 907-274-2710.

● **Boardwalk**, a luxury fishing lodge on Prince of Wales Island near Ketchikan in Southeast Alaska, is open mid-May through September. All-inclusive vacations specialize in salmon and halibut fishing in the Inside Passage; other activities include whale and marine life watching, sea kayaking, fly fishing in nearby lakes and rivers, hiking, caving and biking.

The lodge takes up to 24 guests in 12 double rooms with private bath. Children 12 and up are welcome. The average daily rate per person is \$1,248 (\$4,995 for a four-day/four-night stay). www.boardwalklodge.com; 800-764-3918.

MID-RANGE LODGES

● **Tutka Bay**, a luxury wilderness lodge on Tutka Bay near Kachemak Bay State Park, is an Alaska classic, owned for many years by Jon and Nelda Osgood. It is open from early May through September. New owners Karl and Kirsten Dixon (owners of Winter Lake Lodge) plan to continue the lodge's signature service, emphasizing the guest experience, fine food, bird watching, fiord explora-

tion, sea kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, fly fishing, and salt water fishing for salmon, halibut and ling cod. Cooking classes, yoga and spa treatments are planned.

The lodge takes up to 20 guests in 10 double cabins, each with private bath. Children are welcome. The average daily rate per person is \$842 (based on \$3,365 for a four-day/four-night stay). www.withinthewild.com; 907-274-2710.

● **Riversong**, a rambling log lodge on the Yentna River west of Anchorage, is open from mid-May to mid-September for trout, arctic grayling and salmon fishing. All-inclusive vacations focus on guided trout, arctic grayling and salmon fishing in scenic surroundings. One of a half-dozen lodges clustered in the Lake Creek area, the fly-in lodge provides a casual vacation atmosphere and stays of any length for up to 25 guests in rustic cabins, each sleeping two or four guests. Six cabins have private bath; four share the shower house.

Children are welcome. Beer, wine and soft drinks are not included in the price. The average daily rate per person is \$752.50 (\$3,010 for a four-day/four-night). The one-night rate is \$990 per person. Children 4-12 pay two thirds of the adult rate; kids under four are free. www.riversonglodge.com; 907-350-2392.

● **Silver Salmon Creek**, a comfortable fly-in lodge inside Clark Lake National Park, is on the west shore of Cook Inlet, west of the Kenai Peninsula. All-inclusive vaca-

tions focus on bear and bird watching in adjacent marshes and salmon streams, nature photography, fly fishing, kayaking and nature preserve trips.

The lodge takes up to 16 guests in double rooms in the lodge and in rustic double cabins. Children 10 and up are welcome. The average daily rate per person is \$725 (\$2,900 for four nights). At salmoncreeklodge.com; 888-872-5666, or e-mail to David.Coray@aol.com.

● **Togiak River Lodge** is a fly-in, fishing-only lodge on the Togiak River 55 miles west of Dillingham. Partly-inclusive vacations focus on fly and reel river fishing for salmon, trout and Arctic char.

The lodge takes up to 12 guests in modest double rooms, each with private bath. Fishing tackle, waders and roundtrip float plane transportation from Dillingham are not included. The average daily rate per person is \$750 (\$3,000 for four days). www.togiaklodge.com.

VALUE LODGES

● **North Face and Camp Denali**, private lodges inside Denali National Park, are 90 miles from the National Park entrance, in sight of snow-capped Mt. McKinley. Owned by the Cole Family, the two lodges sit less than a mile apart. Each offers all-inclusive six, four and three-night stays for active guests interested in experiencing the tundra ecology first-hand. Included are guided naturalist walks and hikes, birding, and use of sports gear, including

bikes, canoes and fishing equipment.

Historic Camp Denali, near Wonder Lake, has a central lodge where meals are served, and 18 cabins with various bed configurations; the rooms taken together sleep up to 40 guests. Modern bathrooms and showers are an eight-minute walk away. North Face Lodge, a newer building, has 15 rooms with various bed configurations, each with private bath; it sleeps a total 35 guests. Children are welcome.

The average daily rate, per person, is \$475 (based on \$1,900 for a four-night stay. www.campdenali.com; 907-683-2290.

● **Ridgewood Wilderness Lodge**, is on Ishmailof Island, near Kachemak Bay State Park, is accessible from Homer by motorboat. Partly-inclusive vacations include guided hikes to nearby glaciers, an all-day Kachemak Bay marine tour, beachcombing, a visit to Halibut Cove village, lake kayaking, fishing in the cove and scenic surroundings. Optional activities, including flight seeing and bear watching can be arranged through local outfitters.

The lodge takes up to eight guests in four double rooms, each with private bath. Chil-

dren are welcome. The average daily rate per person is \$375 when paid by cash or check; \$400 per person for charge transactions. www.ridgewoodlodge.com; 907-296-2217.

● **Sadie Cove Wilderness Lodge**, is accessible from Homer by motorboat. Partly-inclusive vacations in this hand-designed and uniquely crafted lodge include owner-guided ecology tours on private trails, hikes to alpine valleys and the Harding Ice Field, clamming, beachcombing, kayaking, shore fishing, rods and reels, birding, use of a Finnish sauna and plunge pool and chef-prepared meals. Optional activities such as bear watching and flight seeing can be arranged through local outfitters. The lodge is wind and water-powered, and self-sufficient.

A maximum of 10 guests stay in five double cabins, each with private bath. Children are welcome. Roundtrip water taxi from Homer (\$125 per person) is not included. The average daily rate per person is \$425 per night when paid by check to the lodge; \$550 per night if booked through an agency or on a charge card. www.sadie.cove.com; 888-283-7234.

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