

# Chilkat Guides, Ltd.

P.O. Box 170, Haines, Alaska 99827 \* Phone: 907-313-4420 \* Fax: 907-290-5124  
E-mail: raftalaska@chilkatguides.com \* Website: www.raftalaska.com



## Upper Alsek River Expeditions



This 8-day river adventure combines world class whitewater, unforgettable alpine hikes, and breathtaking views for a genuine 'far north' escape into the surreal and pristine glacier wilderness.

This shorter Alsek trip is ideal for adventurers with limited vacation time or seasoned travelers eager to pack as much awe-inspiring exploration into a compact timeframe as possible.

This Alsek journey begins in Haines Junction, Yukon, flows thru Kluane National Park and Reserve, home to the largest non-polar ice cap in the world, and culminates with an intimate bush flight offering stunning views of the surging Tweedsmuir Glacier and formidable Turnback Canyon.

Rafters will transcend time as they witness the dynamic, everchanging glacial terrain, and trek thru unparalleled landscapes abundant with wildlife and wildflowers.

### Itinerary

#### **DAY 0**

We ask that you be in Haines, AK the day before your trip start date.

#### **DAY 1**

Our Alsek River adventure begins in Haines Alaska, a small town located 100 miles north of Juneau on the Lynn Canal. We will have an orientation session and gear check. From Haines, we will drive 165 miles to Haines Junction in Canada's Yukon territory. The stretch of road from Haines is one of the most spectacular in the world. At first, the drive follows the Chilkat River, home of the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve, the drive then climbs out of the coastal valley into the high alpine region, a wonderland of wild flowers, glaciers and incredible vistas. Typically, we'll camp at the put in on the first night so we can get an early start on the river the following morning.

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## DAY 2

We will plan to get an early start in the morning. After a riverside breakfast and breaking camp we board the rafts on the calm waters of the Dezadeash River, setting a mellow pace for the first few days of the trip. We gain some down-river momentum at the convergence of the swift moving Kuskowalsh River, thus signifying the beginning of the Alsek River. From here we meander our way into the ice age wilderness, a sparse environment ripe with the scars of recent glacial activity.

## DAY 3

We will make our way down to the Lowell Glacier – the first of the many glaciers that come right down to the river. It is very active and, like most glaciers, has a lake at its base into which huge chunks of ice frequently calve with a tremendous thunder. Hundreds of feet up the valley sides there are still obvious lines marking the levels of the lakes that have been formed by the glacier surging forward, completely blocking off the river. The river flows into the lake, where we will set up camp for the first of our lay over days.

## DAY 4

We will plan to spend the day hiking up Goatherd Mountain from our camp. From the top of the mountain, the views are breathtaking. The Lowell Glacier stretches away into the mountains some 65 Km. Its blue surface striped with gently curving lines of rock moraine. Towering peaks jut into the heavens, and if we are blessed with a clear day, we will see the monstrous mass of Mt. Logan, the second highest peak on the continent at 19,850 feet, as well as several peaks over 13,000 feet. And as its name suggests, there are herds of mountain goat and Dall sheep on the mountain, giving us an excellent opportunity for photos.

## DAYS 5-7

From the Lowell Glacier we will wind our way downstream, through deep canyons with steep mountains on either side. There are several large rapids to negotiate and we will stop to scout several of them to be sure we pick the safest way through their rolling waves and crashing holes. On the eighth day we will arrive at the largest of all the glaciers on the trip, the Tweedsmuir. It forces the river up against the wall of the valley crowding it into a narrow deep gorge known as Turnback canyon.



In Turnback, the river plunges through a ten-mile series of horrendous rapids. Though it has been kayaked several times, it is still considered to be unsafe for rafts. We will camp above Turnback Canyon, at the foot of the glacier.

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## DAY 8

Early in the morning, a fixed wing plane will arrive to begin our exhilarating departure. In authentic bush fashion, we will fly in small groups of 3-4 passengers, taking off from gravel bars just up from Turnback Canyon along the Alsek riverside. Aboard this breathtaking, thirty-minute flight we will soar above famous rapids that few have seen and have an opportunity to witness the grandeur of North American glacier country with once-in-a-lifetime perspective. We will land on a remote airstrip surrounded by the scenic landscape of Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Wilderness Park in British Columbia, where our van transportation back to Haines awaits.

### What's Included

Included in this expedition is transportation to and from the put-in, a bush flight at Dry Bay, all food on the river, a shared tent, sleeping bag and pad, life jacket, heavy-duty seam-sealed rubber rain gear, rubber boots with felt insoles, heavy-duty rubber gloves, two dry bags and an optional camera box (military ammo can).

### Expert Leadership

Each year we work to make our expedition trips a safe, fun and memorable time for you our guests. It is our guides' love for their jobs and love for the beauty of the wonders surrounding us that makes Chilkat Guides a top pick for expedition rafting trips. We exceed all safety standards and our guides are some of the most talented and qualified rafters in the business.

## River Expedition Frequently Asked Questions:

### **What kind of travelers go on river expeditions?**

All age groups enjoy our expeditions! There are avid rafters who have been rafting for many years and then there are those who are experiencing rafting trips for the first time. Come with a group of friends or come alone and make new friends!

### **How would you rate the difficulty of the trip?**

Our trip will be primarily IV+. For reference, Turnback Canyon is V+.

### **What watercraft do you use?**

We use 18-foot inflatable rafts. Similar to large canoes, inflatable rafts are slower on the river but more suitable for traveling on rivers. These are the safest craft to use for this region. Four guests are carried in each raft oared by one experienced guide.

### **Who does the rowing?**

There is one guide per raft and usually at least three rafts per expedition and the guides do the rowing. You are free to relax, take photos and soak in the scenery and wildlife! We always have paddles available for anyone who wishes to paddle.



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## How long are we on the river each day?

Each day varies, but when we are moving down river we'll typically spend about four to six hours in the rafts. Don't worry, we'll pull over for bathroom stops, breaks, hikes, lunches and just to stop and view the wildlife. Additionally, we'll schedule "lay-over" days where we won't be moving down-stream, rather just staying in one spot for two nights to allow for the incredible bigger hikes or bigger scenery experiences.

## Where do we sleep?

All our expeditions are camping adventures that require you to sleep in tents. We provide you with a top quality, free standing expedition tent. These are based on double occupancy and if you would like a tent to yourself, please let us know as these are available to rent.

## What should I bring?

You provide your personal gear and we provide the rest: top-quality tents, river gear, kitchen and camping equipment and bus/plane transportation. We've included a detailed equipment list with the items you are responsible for bringing as well as the items we have available for rent.

## What do we eat?

We have three guidelines for our nutritious and delicious food selection: quality, quantity and variety. If you have special needs or desire a copy of our detailed menu descriptions, please let us know. With advanced notice, we can accommodate most special dietary requirements. Snacks and treats are provided but if you have any favorites feel free to bring some along.



## What type of wildlife will we see?

Depending on what trip you are on, you may see different wildlife. You are more likely to see more bears on the Alsek and more moose on the Tat. Other wildlife you may see are Dall sheep, mountain goats, wolves, lynx, wolverine, ducks, geese, swans, eagles, falcons, hawks and salmon.

## Are bears a concern?

By keeping our camp area clean we are able to keep unwanted visitors out of our camp site. We also set up our campsite in a way that leaves a "wildlife corridor" next to the river for wildlife that is passing through.

When we go for hikes, we hike in groups of at least four people, and make noise – especially in areas of dense brush.

## What about personal hygiene?

Hand washing before eating or assisting in food prep and after visiting the toilet facilities is essential. The usual shower system is the bucket and bowl method. Water will be heated over the fire and poured into a five-gallon bucket. You can then take your bucket and bowl to a private area for an improvised shower/bath.

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## Is there time for hiking?

There are some amazing hikes on our expeditions! Hikes are led regularly by guides and all are invited to come along. We will keep your hiking boots in a dry bag that stays with the boat you are riding on that day.

## How hard is the trip and who can go?

It is difficult to quantify the difficulty or ease of any experience, but a few examples may be helpful. We have had people in their seventies as well as those as young as 12 years. We try to set the pace to accommodate a wide variety of ability levels. Attitude tends to be the main criterion, so come prepared to relax and enjoy the Great North.

## What about bugs?

Populations of mosquitoes on the Alsek, Tatshenshini and Kongakut vary with temperature, rainfall and wind. As they are in semi-alpine or well drained areas, generally we try to choose campsites that have a slight breeze to be as “mosquito free” as possible. However, on occasion we may be unable to avoid them. In these situations, you will be glad to have mosquito repellent and a head net or bug jacket.



## Life on the River:

The Alaskan wilderness is a vast and varied part of the world with inherent characteristics that you will need to understand before setting out on an extended trip. Safety is of primary concern in these remote regions, as is environmental preservation. Our guides are very experienced in these areas and it is important that you pay attention to the pre-trip safety briefing, as well as advice they may offer throughout the trip.

**These time tested tips make our trips run safely and smoothly, please read them carefully. We will review these matters before putting on the river, so please ask for clarification if there is anything you do not understand.**

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**Medical Needs** – Please be up front about any medical needs and discuss special medical concerns with your trip leader.

**At the Put-in** – Be patient with us the first day as we stow everything on the rafts. Choose a guide to ride with for the day and present them with your two dry bags. Amongst the last items loaded onto the rafts will be your daypack.

**Arriving to Camp** – When we arrive at camp the Trip Leader will lay out the camp scene with specific spots for tents, kitchen and toilet facility. Everyone then forms a fire line to help ease the unloading of all the group camping and personal bags. We carry the group gear to the kitchen area then choose a tent site and relax!

**Choosing a Campsite** – Find a tent site near camp, not too close to the cooking area but not too far away. Avoid obvious game trails, leaving a wildlife corridor open. Try not to destroy vegetation in tent placement, use existing tent spots when available. Also try to use existing trails as you move about camp to minimize impacts.

**Tents** – Winds can pick up unexpectedly! As you put up your tent use the heavy tent stakes that we supply. Please don't dig a trench around your tent. In the morning, it is a good idea to dry out your tent but be sure to keep it staked down while drying so it doesn't blow away.

**Human Waste** – Liquids go into the river and solids go into the portable toilet facility. A private latrine area will be provided. Wash your hands at the hand wash station afterwards. Cleanliness is very important.

**Firewood** – Gathering firewood is one of the required camp chores. Please collect only down and dead wood that is the thickness of a wrist or smaller.

**Bears** – Keep the camp area clean. Pick it up and dispose of any food dropped, regardless of how small. If you want to go for a walk, discuss it with a guide first; don't go away from the camp by yourself. Hike in groups of at least four people and make noise on hikes, especially in dense brush.



If you spot a bear, notify a guide immediately and gather everyone together. In camp, bring any personal food to the kitchen at night for us to store away. ***Do not have food in or near your tent!***

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**Meals** – By the end of a long day on the river we all get a little hungry. A table for snacks will be set up as soon as possible and we ask that you don't hover in the kitchen while we are cooking. Once meals are called please wash your hands and proceed to the line.

**Dishes** – We have a five-bucket dish washing system; organic waste goes in the first bucket, then a warm pre-wash, a hot wash, a hot rinse and a sanitizer. After washing, put your plate, bowls and cups in the dish drying net under the table and leave your utensils in the sanitizing bucket. We welcome your help with cleaning the group dishes.

**Garbage** – It is essential that everyone understand the need to pick up any items that may fall on the ground. We burn paper garbage, collect metals and aluminum cans and save all other garbage in a collection system of bags.

**Mornings** – If you are an early riser, you are welcome to quietly get the morning fire going and put the coffee water on. Do check your watch to see what time it is though as the sun sometimes rises at 3:00 AM. Coffee call is a wakeup call, come get a warm drink and then go back to start packing your personal gear. Breakfast call will follow. The guides will begin breaking down the community camp, at which time you should finish packing your bags and tent. Once rafts are loaded, choose a guide to ride with and bring your personal gear.

**Personal Hygiene** – Hand washing before eating or assisting in food prep and after visiting the toilet facilities is essential as a bug can easily be passed throughout the group in a short time. The usual shower system is the bucket and bowl method. Water will be heated over the fire and poured into a five-gallon bucket. You can then take your bucket and bowl to a private area for an improvised shower/bath.

**General Information** – It is very important to stay well hydrated, so drink plenty of water. Don't forget to put on sunscreen, the long days and the reflection off the water can be very intense. When you take off your lifejacket, be sure to secure it from blowing away with the sudden winds. We keep a small library of books available for additional education, don't hesitate to ask for reading material.

**Hiking** – Hikes are led regularly by guides and all are invited to come along. We ask that you please do not wander off on your own without first telling someone and that you take someone with you. Hiking trails should be used when available. Do not take shortcuts especially on switchbacks as this causes erosion. When in open areas without trails, try to step on rocks or gravel and avoid moist or vegetated ground.

**Wildlife** – Wildlife viewing is one of the biggest draws to the outdoors, but careful attention is required to maintain the safety of both people and animals. It is important that we never feed any wild animal, even squirrels or birds. Teaching wild animals to associate humans with food can endanger you and the animal.

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**Cultural Considerations** – Native peoples and other explorers are known to have used many of the areas we travel through. It is important that we not disturb any artifacts or cultural sites we encounter.

**Wind** – Winds can pick up in a matter of seconds and un-staked tents or loose clothing items can be lost. Make sure to secure all belongings and gear before leaving them unattended.

**Relaxing** – Breathe deeply to fill your lungs with the unpolluted air. Notice the lack of extraneous sounds. Marvel at the spectacular mountains and sky scenes. Fall into the relaxing rhythm of the rolling river and finally, enjoy to the fullest every moment of this unique adventure of a lifetime.



## River Expedition Equipment List:

### On the River

It can't be stressed enough that dressing in layers is the secret to being comfortable on the river. Wear your light layers close to your body and have progressively warmer layers either on you or in your daypack. We strongly urge you to use synthetic, wool or fleece items because they remain warm when wet and dry quickly. It is very difficult to get into your dry bag during the day, so keep your daypack handy with extra socks, clothes, raingear, etc. Store your camera and binoculars in a waterproof container when not in use. Both your daypack and ammo can will be near you on the boat.

The remote and pristine wilderness we will be traveling through is in a temperate rainforest. Rain is an integral part of this unique region and weather can range from horizontal, driving rain to sunny and 75° F. There is no reliable way to predict the weather, therefore it is crucial to prepare for all possibilities.



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This is an international trip. We will be passing through Canadian customs. Everyone must bring a current passport. Non-U.S. citizens must have a re-entry visa for the U.S. and Canadian visas where applicable.

The following is a list of clothing that we recommend for your expedition.

## Base Layers

- 2-3 Sets of light/medium weight synthetic long underwear
- Underwear – as many as you think you will need (non-cotton fabric recommended)
- 1 – 2 Sets of expedition weight tops & bottoms (synthetic or wool)
- 2 – 3 Cotton T-shirts for camp or hikes – not recommended for river days!
- 2 Long sleeve shirts (synthetic or wool)

## Outer Layers

- 2 Lightweight pants (fleece, synthetic or wool)
- Shorts – light and quick drying (also nylon pants with zip off legs works well, too)
- Sweater – thick wool or fleece
- Windbreaker jacket (nylon or lightweight Gore-Tex)

## Extremities

- 5 – 7 Pairs of socks – Synthetic or wool blend (warm, dry feet are happy feet!)
- 2 Pairs of warm gloves – wool or fleece (we provide a heavy rubber glove for river days)
- Liner glove (thin fleece, synthetic or wool to fit inside the rubber gloves)
- Baseball or brimmed hat (for sun and rain)
- Wool or fleece hat (fleece headbands are great for cold ears)

## Foot Gear

- Hiking boots - with good ankle support
- Camp shoes – athletic, running or sport sandals
- We provide rubber boots to be worn on river days

## Miscellaneous Necessities

- Passport
- Sleeping bag – rated 10/20° F (complimentary if needed)
- Daypack (1800-2100 cu. in.) lined with a thick plastic compactor bag – this is a must!
- 3 Carabiners – to attach items to the boat (D-shaped metal rings with latch, found at climbing stores)
- Water bottle
- Moisturizing lotion (heavy duty; the silty environment is hard on the skin and hands)
- Sunblock and lip balm (plus a spare)
- Spare glasses or contact lenses
- Sunglasses (“Chums” or “Croakies” to keep them attached to you)
- Insect repellent
- Bug head net
- Thick compactor, garbage bags (to line your daypack)

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## Recommended Items

- Neck gaiter
- Binoculars and camera
- Personal beverages and alcohol
- Reading material, notebook and pen, cards, neoprene socks & gloves, handi-wipes, wash cloth (or small towel), biodegradable soap, bandana, small flashlight, pocket knife
- Personal favorite snack items

## We Supply:

Dry bags – two NRS 2.2 cu. ft. outfitter bags, shared tent, sleeping pad, sleeping bag, rubber boots and felt insoles, rubber gloves, lifejacket, optional camera box (military ammo can).

The two rubber dry bags that we supply are quite large. Clothes are packed into one bag and your sleeping bag, sleeping pad and a few small items will go into the other. These dry bags are not accessible while we are on the river, however your daypack will be. Daily items you will need in your daypack are: hat, gloves, extra socks, warm layers, rain gear, water bottle, sun screen, lip protection, sun glasses, etc. They will stay dry better if you line your daypacks with a thick, plastic compactor garbage bag. Cameras and binoculars can be stored in an optional waterproof ammo can wrapped in a scarf or hat. (Pelican cases are specialized, waterproof boxes for your camera and belongings, if you have one bring it). We will fly any clothing and baggage that doesn't go with you on the river to Juneau where it will be waiting for you upon conclusion of the trip.



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## Trip Registration

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Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ River & Trip Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name you go by) \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Passport # \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you hear about Chilkat Guides, Ltd. \_\_\_\_\_?

### In case of emergency, please notify:

Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____
Phone # _____	Phone # _____

Medical insurance carrier:

Policy #/ group/ agent:

With whom would you like to share your hotel room and/or tent?

If you are traveling independently what accommodations can we reserve for you?

- Single tent = \$150
- Single Hotel room = \$250

### RIVER GEAR REQUESTS

Please reserve the following **complimentary** gear for me:

- Rain Gear    S   M   L   XL   XXL
- Shared Tent
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Rubber Boots (shoe size \_\_\_\_\_)

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## Client Profile – Upper Alek

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

List your other wilderness camping trips/expeditions. *(None required, we're just curious.)*

What river rafting or canoeing experience do you have?

What is your present state of health?

Describe your physical activities.

Can you swim?

Are you taking any medications?  
*PLEASE be specific.*

Do you have any allergies?

Are you a vegetarian or vegan?

Do you eat/like fish?

Do you prefer coffee, tea or hot cocoa?

Do you have any dietary restrictions or food preferences?

Tell us about your interests, skills or areas of expertise (i.e. botany, geology, photography, etc.)

### TRAVEL ITINERARY

#### Juneau Arrival -

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Time \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations \_\_\_\_\_

#### Haines Arrival -

*(Schedule arrival into Haines 1 day prior to trip start date)*

Ferry Name or Flight # \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Time \_\_\_\_\_

#### Haines Departure -

*(Schedule departure from Haines at least 1 day following the last day of your trip)*

Ferry Name or Flight # \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Time \_\_\_\_\_

#### Juneau Departure -

Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Time \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations \_\_\_\_\_

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## VISITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISKS – Rafting & Hiking

In consideration of the services of Chilkat Guides, Ltd their officers, agents, employees, stockholders, owners, volunteers, participants and all other persons or entities associated with those businesses (hereafter collectively referred to as "CG") I agree as follows:

Although CG has taken reasonable steps to provide me with appropriate equipment and skilled guides so I can enjoy an activity for which I may not be skilled, CG has informed me that this activity is not without risk. There are certain risks in each activity, including physical, emotional and other injury; illness; paralysis; loss and damage to third parties and to equipment and other property as well as to myself; permanent trauma; and death. CG does not want to frighten me or reduce my enthusiasm for this activity, but believes it is important for me to know in advance what to expect and to be informed of the risks. The following further describes some, but not all, of these risks:

The risks include, among other things, the hazards of walking on uneven terrain; slips and falls; being struck by objects dislodged or thrown from above; using the equipment for the activity; forces of nature, including lightning and weather changes; exposure to insect and animal bites and attacks; cold including hypothermia; drowning; my own condition and any medical or physical condition I might have; the physical condition of other participants; and the physical exertion associated with this activity. The risks of rafting also include the hazards of tides and currents and exposure to the elements.

Furthermore, CG employees have difficult jobs to perform. They seek safety, but they are not infallible. They might be unaware of a participant's fitness or abilities. They might misjudge the weather, the elements or the terrain. They may give inadequate warnings or instructions, and the equipment being used might malfunction. They also might be negligent in other ways.

I am aware that rafting and hiking entail risks of injury and death to any participant. I understand that the description of these risks is not complete and that other unknown or unanticipated risks may result in injury and death. I agree to assume and accept full responsibility for the risks identified herein and those risks not specifically identified. My participation in this activity is purely voluntary; no one is forcing me to participate, and I elect to participate in spite of and with full knowledge of the risks.

I acknowledge that engaging in this activity may require a degree of skill and knowledge different from other activities and that I have responsibilities as a participant. I acknowledge that the staff of CG has been available to explain to me more fully the nature and physical demands of this activity and the risks, hazards and dangers associated with it.

I certify that I am fully capable of participating in this activity. Therefore, I assume and accept full responsibility for myself, including all minor children in my care, custody or control and assume all of the risks for injury, death or loss of personal property and expenses as a result of those risks and dangers identified herein and those risks and dangers not specifically identified, including but not limited to those resulting from my negligence in participating in this activity, and I voluntarily release, forever discharge and shall be estopped from bringing any and all claims, demands and causes of action which are connected with my participation in this activity. In the event that I file a lawsuit against CG I agree to do so solely in the State of Alaska and I further agree that the substantive law of Alaska shall apply in that action without regard to conflict of laws rules.

I agree that if any portion of this agreement is found to be void or unenforceable, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

I have carefully read, clearly understood and accepted the terms and conditions stated herein and acknowledge that this agreement shall be effective and binding upon me, my heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate and for all members of my family, including minor children.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signature of Parent or Guardian, if participant is under 18 years of age*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date