

Expedition to Alaska! July 2016



Aboard the Celebrity Solstice, waiting for departure from the port of Seattle — a rare sunny day in the Pacific Northwest!



As we set sail, massive Mount Ranier towers in the distance.



Arriving in Alaska, we are greeted by clouds and drizzle, with temperature in the 50's.
I brave the elements to get the best photos!



Welcome to Ketchikan, "The Salmon Capital Of The World"!
Fortunately, the rain is letting up!



Into the rain forest, lush and green, teeming with spruce trees covered with moss and lichen. We did not know that rain forests don't have to be tropical — this is a “temperate” rainforest. Luckily we did not encounter any bears!



Judy developed a liking for wild native salmon berries. Very tasty, and (fortunately) not poisonous!



Bald eagle nesting in a tree, captured with my telephoto zoom



This poor guy had a broken wing, and now lives in a bird sanctuary.
Judy wanted to adopt him!



I don't know, Judy — he doesn't look very friendly....
(although I would be angry too if I were a bird who could no longer fly....)



At the end of the tour, we visit the native Tlingit Eskimo Totem Pole workshop.



I don't think they sell this size saw at our local Home Depot....



We have fun with Totems!



More fun with Totems!



The totems are allegorical representations of Eskimo stories & legends.
(these appear to be warning, "Do not eat too much whale blubber at the tribal feast....")



Back on the ship, we clean up our acts for dinner on "Evening Chic Night"



What a tasty dish! (Spicy, too)!



Happy 4th of July from the Dawes Glacier!
It's 6:30 AM, cold & gray, but well worth getting up early for this!



AWE-SOME!!



The massive “river of ice” is at the narrow end of a fjord.



As the captain spins the ship around, you can see how close we are to the walls of the fjord.



These scattered icebergs are too small to pose any danger to our big ship....



....although this little excursion ship should steer clear of this one!
Notice that glacial icebergs are bright blue; they absorb and refract light differently from regular ice because they are very dense from years of pressure. It's all about physics — if you're curious, look it up (I did)!



Cruising back down toward the sea, the fjord opens up wider and the heavy cloud cover starts to break up.



As the sun breaks through, it finally gets warm enough to take off our sweaters.



From our balcony, we are rewarded with some fantastic northern vistas!



We'll admire these views for the rest of this day at sea as we cruise onward to Juneau.



It's a new day and we board a small excursion boat out of Juneau to go in search of.... whales!



And there she blows! (actually there are two of them, side-by-side)



They've come up to feed. Wow, that is a big mouth!



"Admiral.... there be whales here!"
(Who said it? Do you know? **Answer at bottom of next page.)



The sea lions wisely stayed safely atop this buoy.



Judy took this great shot of the whale watch boat at twilight.

(** Answer to trivia question: "Scotty" to James T. Kirk in *"Star Trek IV - The Voyage Home"*)



On our final day in Alaska, we're going for a ride into the wilderness on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad.



The RR was built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush to carry prospectors to the Yukon River in Canada. Today it carries tourists for 20 miles long and 3000 feet elevation.



The ride is really spectacular!



Up through the barren tundra. Not much grows here except some moss and lichen



The train takes you up, and a bus takes you back with some fantastic photo stops....



....like this one!



....and this one!



Since we had crossed over into Canada, we got welcomed back to Alaska again!
We love this shot. It captures our spirit of adventure!



Back on board the ship, guess what's for dessert? Baked Alaska cake!
(actually, they serve Baked Alaska on the final night of every cruise, but it seems particularly fitting tonight)



Into the wilderness in style! Live for Vacay!