



ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES, LLC

Nizina River Rafting and Hiking Fly-In - 5 days

ITINERARY

The Nizina River Raft and Hike does not require strenuous hiking. Guests that wish to wander slowly and take in the beauty of the landscape will find many opportunities to do so, while serious hikers will have the chance to roam far and wide.

Less than a dozen people float this stretch of river each season. You will truly be among a lucky few and your guides will be thrilled to share the joy of discovery as you wander in places where no person has walked before!

Day One

This first morning you will meet one of your guides at our base, the historic Motherlode Powerhouse. You will pack your clothing and other gear into waterproof dry-bags and store your luggage and any other items you will not need for the next five days. Then we will board a bushplane and fly up the Nizina Valley, getting a birds-eye view of the river we will float in the days to come. We pass under the Mile-High cliffs and circle over the moraine striped Nizina Glacier before landing at its terminus. Our lakeside camp will be waiting for us, along with a delicious lunch. This afternoon we will explore the iceberg filled lake by raft, stopping once or twice to take short hikes along the gravel-bar or up the rocky drainage of Amphitheater Creek. We will spend our first night beside the lake, enjoying a fine dinner and alpine glow on the mountains all around.

Day Two

This morning we eat breakfast, load the rafts, and, after a thorough safety presentation, row across the lake to where the current slowly increases and then pulls us into the splashy rapids of the newly formed Nizina River. We will float its entire forty miles over the next four days. This second day we will likely stop for lunch near one of several waterfalls that pour off the cliffs on the east side of the river. We will camp tonight at the base of the Mile-High Cliffs, where the rock has been folded over billions of years to form remarkable patterns. The sun sets early behind the cliffs, but we will stay warm by the fire and get a good night of sleep in preparation for a day of hiking tomorrow.

Day Three

This morning will eat a hearty breakfast and don our daypacks for a trek up the mighty Chitstone Valley. We will cut through the woods for half an hour and emerge on a vast floodplain. We can hike up this valley as far as we like, stop for lunch alongside the muddy Chitstone River and scramble up the steep valley wall for a look down at where we have been or a close-up view of a hidden waterfall. We will return to camp in time for another great meal (this one well earned) and a second evening beneath the towering cliffs.

Day Four

Today we will continue down stream as the Nizina river becomes braided, forming dozens of channels across a mile-wide floodplain as it sweeps around Sourdough Mountain and heads west. We will negotiate the channels and try to avoid getting the rafts lodge on gravel bars. Trees and other debris are thick along the river in this section because the fast-moving water is eating away at the northern bank. We will pass by a historic bridge that has been mostly washed into the river and, if the weather cooperates, get a view of the peak of Mt. Blackburn, at the head of the Kennicott Valley. As the day draws to a close, the river narrows into a canyon where we will spend our last night with the sound of flowing water.

Day Five

Although our trip is almost over, this last day contains the most exciting whitewater of the trip and some of the best scenery as well. Soon after leaving camp in the morning, the small canyon opens into a wider area as the Kennicott River adds its flow to the Nizina. An hour later, the walls close in again, this time forming tight turns where the water boils and surges as it is forced around the corners. The limestone cliffs are spectacular and you will watch for peregrine falcons that sometimes make this their home. As we emerge from the canyon the wide Chitina Valley opens before us and here we will end our journey. We will arrive in time to unload the rafts, deflate them and be ready when the bush plane lands to fly us back to McCarthy.



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This trip can be combined with the Chitina River Journey or the Glacier to the Ocean trip for a remote adventure up to two weeks or more in length!

We suggest that you spend some time in the Kennicott Valley either before or after this trip. You can add a glacier hike or ice-climbing trip on the Root Glacier, a tour of the historic buildings in Kennecott and/or a day hike to one of the mine entrances as well as a night or more at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge.

Like all of our rafting adventures, the Nizina River Rafting and Hiking Fly-In features professional, experienced guides with a wealth of local knowledge and all necessary rafting gear including dry-bags, raingear, life jackets, rubber boots and tents (you provide sleeping bags and pads). Travelling by raft also enables us to carry excellent, fresh food, including fruits and vegetable, meats and cheeses, and many other items that are truly a luxury in this wilderness environment.