

If you want a real cool summer vacation, fly, drive or cruise to Alaska. We mean really cool. The northern part of the state, although great for fantastic scenery and is close to the Arctic, never really gets warm enough for sunning and swimming. However, the middle and southern areas often have daylight temperatures in the 70s in July and August.

Another advantage of a summer vacation in Alaska, the land of the midnight sun, is that daylight can last 20 to 22 hours. This allows more time for hiking, kayaking, fishing, riding the river rapids, sightseeing, mountain climbing, glacier viewing, skiing, animal watching and every other fun activity.



Juneau, is the only state capital city that's actually an island, and can't be reached by land, because no roads connect the city to the rest of the North American (Alcan) highway system. So, if you're driving, be sure to check on various ferrys and bridges that connect with the capital.

Alaska, although purchased from Russia in the 1860s, didn't become the 49th state until 1959. It was also the only U.S. state to be invaded by a foreign enemy, when Japanese troops landed on two Aleutian Islands, Kiska and Attu, in 1942. The islands were recaptured a year later.

The state is also home of Aleuts and Eskimos, believed to be peoples who migrated from Asia across land bridges that existed thousands of years ago. Related peoples continued the migration into North America to become the Native American peoples of what is now Canada and the United States.

While in Alaska, travelers can sign up for wilderness and mountain treks, as well as go on cruises. The vast state is home for thousands of species of wildlife, from enormous grizzly bears to soaring eagles. Incidentally, don't expect to see any penguins. Despite what many people believe, those birds live only in the southern hemisphere of the tips of Argentina, New Zealand, as well as the South Pole. Also, if you're from Texas, your sad fact is that Alaska is the largest state in the union.

Although in some areas, daytime summer temperatures can be moderate, travelers should pack heavy clothing if they plan to travel to colder northern and mountain (Denali and McKinley) areas, where there's snow and ice year around.