

# This year, travel with The Planetary Society as we explore **Alaska Aurora Borealis**

*Come see the Greatest Light Show on Earth!*

**March 7-13, 2024**

Dear Friends:

We invite you to join us as we explore the great beauty of Alaska in winter, and see the famed Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights, the greatest light show on Earth!

We will gather in **Anchorage, Alaska**, to begin our adventure. After our welcome in Anchorage, we'll drive along the Chugach Mountains to **Seward**, near Kenai Fjords National Park. Here we will visit the Alaska Sea Life Center to see sea otters, seabirds, and a profusion of Alaska marine life. We will see Alaska's major land mammals including grizzlies, moose, and muskox.

The following day we will explore historic Talkeetna and then take the classic train journey from Talkeetna to **Fairbanks**, passing North America's tallest and most awesome mountain, **20,310-foot Denali** en route.



We will arrive in Fairbanks to enjoy the **World of Ice Art Festival** and to discover the delights of Fairbanks and the night skies.

Our visits will include



the **Geophysical Institute** at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, which was established to study the Aurora and its effects.

In Fairbanks we will go to some of the best locations in the evening to look at the Aurora Borealis: **Mt. Aurora, Chatanika, and Creamer's Field**. We will enjoy hospitality in rustic lodges while seeing the Aurora.

You will have afternoons to discover other delights of this snowy wonderland. We will see sled dogs and they will demonstrate this popular winter sport. We will also learn about the **Poker Flat Research Range** which launches rockets to study the Aurora Borealis.

Leading this expedition will be popular astronomer **Dr. Tyler Nordgren**. Tyler has led many Alaska Aurora Borealis Expeditions for us since 2016.

We invite travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery to explore the day and night winter wonderland of our 49th state this winter!

Sincerely,

*Bill Nye*

Bill Nye  
The Science Guy®  
CEO



THE **PLANETARY**  
SOCIETY

# Aurora Borealis Itinerary

## Day 1 Home to Anchorage

Expedition members fly from their nearest gateway city to Anchorage, Alaska. Transfer on your own to our *Hotel (2 nights)*. Afternoon at leisure, or visit the Anchorage Museum of History and Art for a fascinating introduction to the people and wildlife of Alaska. Welcome social, orientation, and dinner. (D)

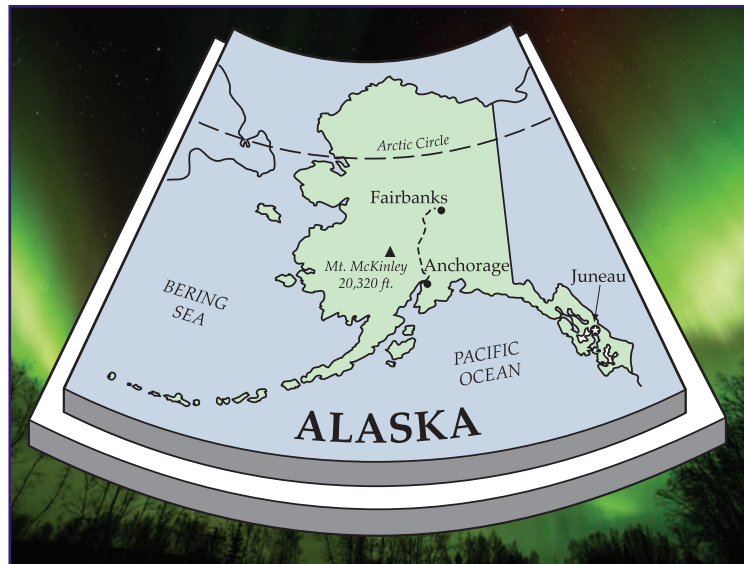
## Day 2 Seward & Resurrection Bay

Today we will travel south through the Chugach National Forest to the fishing village of Seward adjacent to Kenai Fjords National Park. Seward is named for U.S. Secretary of State, William Seward, who convinced Congress to buy Alaska from Russia in 1867 for less than 2 cents per acre. Here, we will explore the excellent Alaska Sea Life Center. We will see much of the marine life of the North Pacific

including seabirds, sea lions, bald eagles, and more! Afternoon return to Anchorage via the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. (B,L)

## Day 3 Talkeetna to Fairbanks by Train

Depart for Talkeetna, a true Alaskan village. Talkeetna inspired the town depicted in the TV series "Northern Exposure" and is almost as quirky. We will explore Talkeetna, visit shops, and the Museum. Then we will board the famous Alaska Railroad for a scenic journey from Talkeetna to Fairbanks, situated in the interior of



this vast state. The rail trip will take about nine hours, with stops along the way to allow locals to get to and from their homes when snow blocks many of the smaller roads.

In winter, the views of Mt. McKinley, at 20,310 feet, can be outstanding with clear skies. The train has a dining car for meals. Arrive in Fairbanks and transfer to our *Hotel (4 nights)*. (B)

## Day 4 Aurora Photography & Ice Festival

This morning we will have an introduction to photographing the Aurora Borealis. We will learn about the different types of Auroras, the colors and movements. Sound at different wavelengths is also emitted by Auroras, but whether a human can hear the sounds has long been debated.

Later in the day, we will visit the World Ice Art Festival. Here, tantalizing images of moose, swans, and other fanciful works of imagination have been carved from massive blocks of ice and illuminated by colored lights to enhance the effects of size and realism.

Following dinner on your own, we will drive to the wildlife refuge, Creamer's Field, to be joined by local star gazers to view the night sky, and the Aurora Borealis. (B)

## Day 5 Geophysical Institute & Mt. Aurora

This morning we will visit the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The Institute has a long history of Aurora research. We will then visit the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the 800-mile-long pipe that carries crude oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez for shipment by enormous oil tankers to the "lower 48." We will continue northeast of Fairbanks through rounded, snow-covered schist hills which were a focus of gold mining at the turn of the century. Millions of ounces of gold were taken from this region over a period of 60 years.





We will also learn about the Poker Flat Research Range. Poker Flat is the world's only university-owned and operated rocket range. The range has been in operation since 1968 and fires rockets to study the Aurora Borealis and do other atmospheric research. We continue to historic Chatanika for a lodge dinner and evening Aurora viewing. Late return to our hotel. (B,L,D)

#### Day 6 Sled Dogs & Aurora Borealis

After a late breakfast, we will continue our lecture program. We will then visit a kennel of dogs and learn about the art of raising sled dogs and driving dogsleds through the Alaskan wilderness. You may register for an optional sled dog ride.

We will also see a curling demonstration and visit the University of Alaska Museum of the North today. Here, we will see examples of the many peoples who inhabit interior Alaska and displays of both migratory and non-migratory wildlife.

Tonight we will watch and photograph the Aurora from an Aurora-viewing facility outside of Fairbanks. Some may choose to photograph the star trails. These dark nights might be a time to experience some of the hearty beverages that keep away the cold. (B,L,D)

#### Day 7 Fairbanks to Home

After breakfast, transfer to the Fairbanks Airport. Connect with a flight to Anchorage and fly to the "lower 48" states. (B)



## Reservations

#1709

**Yes!** I/We want to join the **Alaska Aurora Borealis Expedition, March 7-13, 2024**, offered by **The Planetary Society and Betchart Expeditions Inc.** Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) on the expedition. As a deposit, I/we have enclosed a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ (\$500 per person), payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Work (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship: \_\_\_ USA \_\_\_ Canada Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_ Planetary Society \_\_\_ AAAS \_\_\_ Sigma Xi \_\_\_ ACS

Accommodations Preference:

\_\_\_ Twin \_\_\_ Single Twin Share \_\_\_ with a friend or  
\_\_\_ assign a roommate  
\_\_\_ Nonsmoker \_\_\_ Smoker

Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail To: Alaska Aurora Borealis 2024**

**Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

**17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

## New Mexico Annular Eclipse Expedition October 10 - 17, 2023



**Including Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon  
& the International Balloon Fiesta!**

*Come join us for 8 days and 7 nights on a wonderful  
adventure through southern Colorado and New Mexico,  
including the "Ring of Fire" Annular Eclipse October 14,  
2023, at Chaco Canyon World Heritage Site.*

**\$5,495 pp twin share + air**

For a detailed brochure, contact: [info@betchartexpeditions.com](mailto:info@betchartexpeditions.com)

**Phone 800-252-4910 USA • 408-252-4910 Int'l**

# Costs & Conditions

**Expedition Fee:** \$3,395 per person twin share for 7 days (plus airfare to Anchorage, Alaska, with return from Fairbanks).

**Singles:** We encourage singles to register on a "twin share" basis. Should you desire single accommodations, the single supplement is \$695. If you do not have a roommate and we cannot assign one, you must pay the single supplement.

**What to Expect:** This expedition is for the travel enthusiast who would enjoy seeing the great beauty of Alaska in winter, including "the greatest light show on Earth"—the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. Visit Resurrection Bay for the winter wildlife and great scenery. Travel on the classic train journey from Talkeetna to Fairbanks, passing North America's greatest mountain, Mt. McKinley, en route. See ice sculptures in Fairbanks, learn about the Aurora Borealis at a scientific institute, and visit the Museum of the North. Evenings view the Aurora at Chatanika, Mt. Aurora, and Creamer's Field.

The Aurora is normally seen on 80% of the clear nights in March and an active Aurora on 4 out of 10 nights in March. There may be some nights when no Aurora is seen, or there could be bad weather (we hope not, but be prepared for this possibility). Two trips in 18 years have seen no Aurora.

Typically, it will be from 15° to 35°F during the days; with temperatures dropping to 10° to -30°F at night. If you have any questions, please consult your physician before you register. This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery! (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

**Expedition Fee Includes:** Land transport by coach, train, or vans; six nights accommodations in first-class hotels, twin share with bath; six breakfasts, three lunches, and three dinners; group entrance fees; leadership, administration.

**Expedition Fee Does Not Include:** Airfare to Anchorage with return from Fairbanks; arrival transfers in Anchorage; two lunches, three dinners; independent airport transfers; optional activities; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, laundry, phone calls, bottled water, soda, snacks, or personal insurance.

**Airfares & Airline Ticketing:** Please make flight arrangements directly with the airlines to arrive in Anchorage by 4:00 p.m. March 7, and to depart from Fairbanks late morning March 13.

## FOR RESERVATIONS

*Please mail the completed reservation form with a deposit check for \$500 per person to:*

**Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

**17050 Montebello Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

Telephone **(800) 252-4910** (USA)  
or **(408) 252-4910** (International)  
Fax: (408) 252-1444

Email: [BetchartTerri@gmail.com](mailto:BetchartTerri@gmail.com)

Final payment is due January 5, 2023

Look on the Web: [www.betchartexpeditions.com](http://www.betchartexpeditions.com)



## Cancellations & Refunds:

The initial deposit for this expedition is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There will be no refund for any cancellation after the 60-day period unless your place can be resold, then only the handling fee of \$100 is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other expedition features. Trip cancellation insurance will be offered; it can cover preexisting medical conditions. Please inquire.

## Questions?

Please call **Terri Stevens**  
**Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

Phone: **(800) 252-4910** (USA)  
or **(408) 252-4910**  
(International)

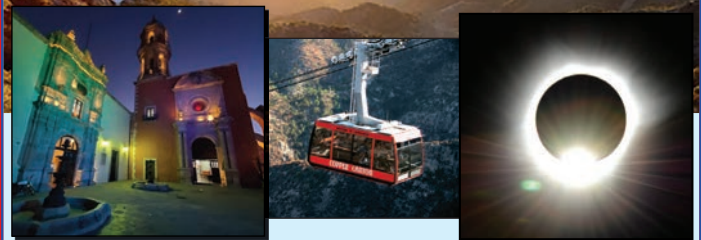
Fax: (408) 252-1444

Email: [BetchartTerri@gmail.com](mailto:BetchartTerri@gmail.com)

## MEXICO'S COPPER CANYON

### 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

April 1-9, 2024



Join us for this 9-day adventure to Mexico's Copper Canyon, historic El Fuerte and Durango, to see **the Total Solar Eclipse April 8, 2024** at a splendid mountain resort between Mazatlan and Durango. \$5,995 pp twin share + air

For a detailed brochure, contact: [info@betchartexpeditions.com](mailto:info@betchartexpeditions.com)

**Phone 800-252-4910 USA • 408-252-4910 Int'l**

**Responsibility:** Betchart Expeditions Inc. and The Planetary Society act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels and exercise every care possible. We can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident, or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, acts of God, terrorism, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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