



SCHOOL PACKET

Information about Fairbanks and Interior Alaska





FAIRBANKS: "The Golden Heart City"

Fairbanks: Latitude 64, a land of contrasts, a place where you can experience the midnight sun in June and witness the beauty of the northern lights in December, where you can take a boat adventure along the Chena River in July and ride a dogsled along that same frozen waterway in February. A town too tough to die, rising from the ashes after a disastrous fire in 1906 and rebuilding after the flood of 1967. A community made up of independent, diverse people from every state and numerous countries that make Fairbanks their home and add to the spirit of "The Golden Heart City."

Fairbanks, the second largest city in Alaska, is located 199 miles south of the Arctic Circle and is nearly at the geographic center of the state. The city lies on the banks of the Chena River in the Tanana Valley, surrounded by low, forested hills on the west, north and south and flatlands to the south. Fairbanks is 358 miles north of Anchorage (45 minutes by air), 120 miles north of Denali National Park, 300 miles west of the Canadian border and 500 miles from the Arctic Ocean. The city encompasses 31.9 square miles of land and .8 square miles of water, and lies in the heart of the Fairbanks North Star Borough (similar to a county in other states). The Borough encompasses 7,366.2 sq. miles of land and 77.8 sq. miles of water, making it comparable in size to the state of New Jersey.



POPULATION

The population of the City of Fairbanks was 29,954 in 2007 according to statistics from the Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development. Communities within the Borough, which include College, Eielson Air Force Base, Ester, Fairbanks, Fort Wainwright Army Base, Fox, Harding Lake, Moose Creek, North Pole, Pleasant Valley, Salcha and Two Rivers, boost the area's population to 85,000.

The Athabascan Indians lived in Interior Alaska for thousands of years before non-Natives arrived in the area in the mid-1880s during the Pedro Dome Gold Rush. The population continued to increase after the construction of the two military bases and the Alaska-Canada Highway (The Alcan Highway) in the 1940s and the trans-Alaska oil pipeline in the 1970s. Today, nearly 10 percent of the population of the area is Alaska Native or part Native. The other 90 percent are non-Native and many are transplants from other states or countries.



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WEATHER

Fairbanks lies between two mountain ranges, the Brooks Range to the north and the Alaska Range to the south. This basin effect presents Fairbanks and the surrounding areas with a unique weather pattern. In the summer, Fairbanks is usually 10-20 degrees warmer than any other place in the state. The Interior basks in nearly 21 hours of daylight and 70-degree temperatures are the norm. It is not uncommon to have a few days where the thermometer reaches 90! Frequent late afternoon thunderstorms can spark lightning strikes, the number one cause of wildfires in Alaska.

Summer is 100 days of biking and boating and baseball and golf and a myriad of other outdoor activities. Gardens are abundant with huge vegetables and the Farmer's Market is open for local farmers to sell everything from potatoes to carrots to squash to cabbage the size of basketballs. Flowers brighten the city and the aspen, birch, spruce and willow trees throughout the region turn the hills a brilliant green, dotted by colorful wildflowers. The sun dips below the horizon late at night and rises long before the earliest bird is out of bed.

That same basin effect that creates the beautiful summers also affects winter. Cold air tends to hover over the city while the warm air clings to the hills. The mountains block the wind and the cold can sit over the Interior until a strong low pressure system passes through and pushes the cold air out, making way for snow. The days grow shorter, with less than four hours of daylight between Nov. 18th and Jan. 24th. The trees, stripped bare, are covered with snow and/or hoarfrost. The first snowfall, usually in October, covers the ground in white where it remains until the April thaw, called "breakup."

Yet winter is a wonderland in the Interior, offering everything from dog mushing to skiing, hockey to curling, snowshoeing to sledding. Fairbanksans pull on their boots and coats and enjoy every aspect of winter. After all, the longest of seasons can last well into April! Fairbanks is the home of the famed Yukon Quest, a 1,000-mile sled dog race between Fairbanks and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada; the World Ice Art Championships, where ice sculptors from around the world compete in single and multi-block competitions; and lots and lots of hockey, from pee-wee to college level. However, the Interior of Alaska is probably most famous for the mysterious aurora borealis.

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Northern Lights (aurora borealis), present only in the Northern Hemisphere, can be seen an average of 243 nights a year in Fairbanks. The phenomenon has mystified people throughout the ages and continues to do so, attracting visitors from around the world who hope to catch a glimpse of the natural light show. One needs only to see the lights once to understand their beauty and magic.

Although the Northern Lights are always present, they are only visible when the skies are dark and clear. The curtain of lights are created when electrons and protons, pushed by a solar wind, collide with gases in the upper atmosphere, all powered by interactions between the sun and the earth.

Sometimes the auroras over Alaska, and other auroral zones, appears colorless and unmoving, but at other times the auroras can be incredibly bright, multi-hued and fast-moving. Tall green curtains of lights, red-tipped at their bottoms, stretch from horizon to horizon. They ripple and sway, fold and unfold, then suddenly disappear, only to reform in a new shape minutes later.



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For those who live in Alaska, the aurora is a part of northern life. Fall and spring offers the best viewing of the lights, yet they are difficult to predict. Even scientists at the University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute, with their sophisticated equipment, can only forecast the aurora a few days in advance. Some Alaskans have "aurora alerts;" the first person to spot the elusive auroras begins a phone tree to get the word out. Hotel front desks will give you an "*aurora wake-up call*" if you wish to be awakened to see the lights. (For a current aurora forecast, visit www.gi.alaska.edu/)

ECONOMY AND TRANSPORTATION

City, Borough, State and Federal government agencies, including the military, provide nearly half of the employment in the Borough. The Borough School District and the University of Alaska Fairbanks are the primary public employers. More than 6,000 residents are military. Retail services, gold mining, tourism and transportation are the primary private sector activities. Fairbanks hosts more than 335,000 visitors in both summer and winter.

Four main highways connect Fairbanks and the Interior to Anchorage, the Arctic Ocean, Canada and the Lower 48. Truck, rail and air services provide transportation of cargo. Scheduled jet services are available at Fairbanks International Airport. Floatplanes are common, with a public seaplane base located south of town on the Chena River. In addition, there are several privately owned airstrips and heliports in the vicinity.

GOVERNMENT

Two basic forms of government exist in Fairbanks: the city and the borough. Voters elect mayors and delegates to sit on the City Council and the Borough Assembly respectively. Although they are separate governing bodies, the two groups often work together.

Alaska became the 49th state on January 3, 1959. At that time, the state constitution, written by elected delegates and approved by Alaska's voters, took effect.

THE FIRST RESIDENTS

The Athabascan (ath-uh-BASS-kun) Indians of the Interior became wanderers following the migrating caribou herds and taking advantages of seasonal abundance of fish, waterfowl and other game. The Eskimo people, like the Tlingits, depended upon the sea for life. However, a more hostile climate and fewer resources required a far different way of living.

The impact of 20th Century culture has brought great changes among all of the Alaska Native people. As a result, some Eskimo and Indian people still live much as their ancestors lived while others have adjusted to the non-Native culture. To understand some of the problems faced by the present day Alaska Native people, it is necessary to know something of their past.

Before the arrival of the white people, the Interior Alaskans were nomadic, following the moose and caribou. There were no permanent villages and they developed no agriculture. Theirs was a hunting and gathering economy. When the game was plentiful, they thrived, and when the game was scarce, the people starved. True, they were and are somewhat dependent on the river fish, especially the salmon, but the latter are not too plentiful in spite of fish wheels



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and other collection methods. The people of the Interior were always oil-hungry. Oil, particularly seal oil from the Eskimos and eulachon oil from the Tlingits, was consistently sought after as an item of trade. Rich and valuable furs found their way to the coast from the Interior, having been bartered for oil.

The Alaskan Athabaskan Indians are the Northern Athabascans. The Southern Athabascans are the Navajo, Apaches and Hupai of the southwestern portion of the United States and are closely related to their northern cousins. The Alaskans, so far as is known, lived formerly in Canada and were driven into Alaska by the warlike Crees, possibly 700 or 800 years ago. All the Athabascans have a similar language. Those from as far south and west as Iliamna can understand the people of Fort Yukon in the north and east. The similarity seems to be that of Dutch and German. Athabascans extended from Kachemak Bay on Cook Inlet, up the Kenai Peninsula though most of the Interior, to the south of Brooks Range, and east to the Canadian border.

THE FOUNDING OF FAIRBANKS

Although Fairbanks is only 100 years old, it boasts a colorful and eventful past. The town's history began as gold miners headed into the Klondike. There were a hardy few that decided to make their way into Alaska. One of these men was Felix Pedro, an Italian immigrant who searched for gold in the hills of the Tanana Valley.

One spring day in 1902, Pedro and his partner saw the smoke of a steamboat unloading on the banks of the Chena River. Tired and hungry, they decided to head in its direction, hoping to buy supplies.

Meanwhile, E.T. Barnette was arguing with the skipper of the riverboat Lavelle Young. Barnette had paid the captain to take him up the Tanana River but the river could not be passed and the Chena also proved too shallow. According to their agreement, the captain put Barnette and his large stock of trade goods ashore near the present site of downtown Fairbanks.

Barnette was not pleased with the prospect of establishing his trading post so far from the existing gold fields. However, when Felix Pedro arrived in camp, Barnette changed his mind. If there were prospectors in the area, money could be made here.

It was a fortunate decision because three months later Pedro found his gold. From that moment on, E.T. Barnette focused on making the best of his accidental landing. He built a community and persuaded Judge James Wickersham to build his courthouse here. Wickersham, "in return," named Fairbanks in honor of Charles W. Fairbanks, a senator from Indiana. Sen. Fairbanks was later to become Vice-President of the United States under President Teddy Roosevelt.

Within five years, Fairbanks was the largest and busiest city in Alaska. Since then, Anchorage has surpassed Fairbanks over as the largest city, with Fairbanks second and Juneau, the state capital, in third.

A MODERN FRONTIER TOWN

The pioneering spirit that built this city near the Arctic Circle is still alive. Besides having



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public services and community facilities expected in a similarly sized town in the "Lower 48," Fairbanks. entertainment includes theaters, restaurants, and nightspots. There are several shopping malls and department stores in and around the city. Fairbanks also provides an excellent choice of seasonal and year-round attractions.

Fairbanks plays host to the farthest north university, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which is located northwest of the city. Research activities in a northern environment, a wide range of academic studies, the University of Alaska Museum of the North, and natural exhibits attract both students and sightseers. UAF is the only university in the world that has a special studies program specifically for the aurora borealis. UAF also supports NCAA sports programs, such as basketball, hockey, rifle and volleyball.

Fairbanks has airplane, bus, and highway access to the .Outside,. (any location outside of Alaska) and the city is the termination point of the Alaska Highway and the Alaska Railroad.



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FACT ABOUT FAIRBANKS

QUICK REFERENCE

CITY FOUNDED: 1901, by E.T. Barnette

NAMED FOR: Indiana Senator Charles Fairbanks

CITY NICKNAME: "The Golden Heart City"

CITY POPULATION: approximately 30,000 in 2007

CITY LAND AREA: 31.9 square miles

NORTH STAR BOROUGH POPULATION: 85,000 (2007 state estimate)

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH LAND AREA: 7,361 square miles, about the size of New Jersey

AVERAGE SUMMER TEMPERATURE: 61 degrees F (July)

AVERAGE WINTER TEMPERATURE: -10 degrees F (January)

RECORD SUMMER HIGH: 100 degrees F in June, 1915

RECORD WINTER LOW: -66 degrees F in January, 1989

LONGEST DAY: Sunrise: 2 am, sunset: 11:47 pm (20.9 hours) on June 21st

SHORTEST DAY: 3 hours, 42 minutes of daylight around Dec. 21st

SCHOOLS: 32 schools in the borough, attended by 14,593 (in 2003-04)

STATE AND NATIONAL PARK: 7 state recreational areas and sites, 2 national trails, and a national campground with the borough

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FACT ABOUT ALASKA

QUICK REFERENCE

STATE SYMBOLS



Tree: Sitka Spruce

Sport: Dog Mushing



Flower: Forget-Me-Not

Gem: Jade



Fish: King Salmon

Bird: Willow Ptarmigan



State Seal



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MORE FACTS ABOUT ALASKA

QUICK REFERENCE

ADMITTED TO THE UNION: January 3, 1959 as the 49th state

CAPITAL CITY: Juneau, in Southeast Alaska

POPULATION: 648,818 (2004 estimate)

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Oil, fishing, mining and tourism

LAND AREA: 586,412 square miles or 365 million acres (more than twice the size of Texas and 1/5 the size of the continental U.S)

COASTLINE: 47,300 miles of tidal shoreline, more than all the other 49 states combined.

TALLEST MOUNTAIN: Mt. McKinley, or Denali as Alaska Natives call it, is 20,320 feet, the highest peak in North America. Of the 20 highest mountains in the United States, 17 are in Alaska, which boasts 19 peaks over 14,000 feet.

LARGEST FRESHWATER LAKE: Lake Iliamna - 1,150 square miles. Alaska has more than 3 million lakes, 94 of them have a surface area of more than 10 square miles.

LONGEST RIVER: The Yukon River is 1,875 miles long, 1,400 miles of which flow in Alaska. It ranks fourth in North America in length. Alaska has more than 3,000 rivers.

GLACIERS: Approximately 29,000 square miles, covering 5% of the state. The largest glacier is the Bering Glacier at 2,250 square miles.



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STATE FLAG: Big Dipper and North Star



In 1927, the Alaska Department of the American Legion conducted a contest in the Alaska public schools for designing a flag for Alaska. The design of Benny Benson, a 13-year-old schoolboy, was selected out of 142 entries. Benny's design was adopted as the Flag of the Territory of Alaska in May 1927. The following explanation accompanied his entry:

*The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the Forget-me-not, an Alaska flower.
The North Star is for the future state of Alaska, the most Northerly of the Union.
The dipper is for the Great Bear, symbolizing strength.*

Born October 12, 1913 in Chignik, the son an Aleut-Russian mother and Swedish father, Benny Benson grew up to become a skilled aircraft mechanic and much sought after celebrity at patriotic functions throughout the state. He was awarded a scholarship of \$1,000 and presented with a gold watch as his prize for winning the contest.

ALASKA'S WILDLIFE

Alaska is the world famous for the number and variety of its wildlife. Here in majestic solitude is "Nanook" the great white polar bear and the Kodiak bear, the largest of all bears. The black, brown or grizzly bear and the rare blue or "glacier" bear (phase of the black bear) are also found in Alaska.

Big game animals are found in all parts of the state, and among them are many that are outstanding specimens and qualify as trophy animals. Moose occur generally throughout Alaska. They are the largest living members of the deer family, and the Alaska moose is the largest representative of the several species found in North America often exceeding 1,600 pounds in weight. There are many, notably near Fairbanks and Anchorage, where moose can be seen from the highway at any season.



There are also deer and elk, in small quantities, in Alaska, but the deer are small. Sitka black-tailed deer are found only in the Southeast, and Kodiak Island, and Roosevelt elk can only be found on Raspberry and Afognak islands.

One of the most unusual animals found in Alaska is the musk ox, a furry, ox-like animal that was once extinct in Alaska. Musk oxen have big shoulder humps and swayed backs, but their long shaggy fur masks their body from full view. A bull may weigh close to 900 pounds.



Eskimos call musk ox - umingmak (OO-ming-mak), "the bearded one". Several dozen musk oxen were returned to Alaska from Greenland in 1930 and now the herd numbers over 1,200 animals. These large animals were once protected from hunting because they were so rare, but they populated so well that there is now limited hunting by permit only. Today, qiviut (KIH-vee-yoot) - the soft under hair of the musk ox - supports a small manufacturing industry.

After disappearing from the state more than 500 years ago, the American bison was reintroduced in 1928. Twenty-three animals from Montana were brought to the Delta Junction area, and large herds have since developed. As grazers, their numbers are naturally limited by Alaska's climate and terrain. A bull may weigh more than 2,000 pounds; cows are about half that size. This massive bovine is characterized by its shaggy hair and large shoulder hump.

In addition to bears, moose, caribou and other large animals, Alaska has a great number of mountain goats and sheep. They are found in the high, rugged mountains and remote valleys but may sometimes be observed from highways in the refuges where they are protected. The highly prized Dall sheep has a white coat and golden-colored horns. These sheep are highly prized because they are the only white, wild sheep in the world, and are only found in Alaska and some parts of Canada.



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Caribou herds are widespread throughout Alaska, with nearly half a million in the state. They range in vast herds though both Arctic and sub-Arctic areas. Alaska also has reindeer, descended from stock brought from Lapland. Reindeer are just domesticated caribou, whereas caribou are generally wild. Both reindeer and caribou provide food, tools and clothing for Alaska. Alaska also has one of the world's largest wolf populations. Wolves are seldom seen by man unless a special effort is made to observe them. They travel in packs with a leader and eat deer, moose, caribou, fish, and berries. Wolves also catch and eat rabbits, porcupine, mice, lemmings and any other small fur bearing animals. Wolves in Alaska range in color from jet black to snow white and brown.

In the north of Alaska, walrus, seal, and sea otter are found. Some islands, known as rookeries, have populations of these animals, and the noise they make can be heard for many miles. Some of the older walrus may weigh as much as 4,000 pounds and they live to be 35 years old. These large mammals' only natural enemies are polar bears and killer whales. The otters are the clowns of the sea world and are frequently found inland along the rivers. The hides of the otter are very valuable, sealskins and walrus hides are often used for clothing, or as skin covers for boats.

There are many smaller animals in Alaska, trappers and hunters often are successful in getting muskrats, beavers, lynx, fox, wolverines, pika, mink, ermine, martens, and marmots.



Those who like to watch birds will enjoy Alaska once they learn when and where to look for the state's many fascinating species. The coastal waters from Ketchikan to Cape Lisburn abound with murre, tiny murrelets, puffins, cormorants, and gulls. The inland and coastal marshes, like river bottoms elsewhere in the world, are alive with dozens of species of ducks, swans, geese, and shore birds. In winter the snowy woods of Alaska, held tightly in the grip of sub-zero temperatures; seem at first glance to be barren of bird life. A closer look shows a surprising variety of residents including; chickadees, jays, woodpecker, owls, grouse, ravens, and ptarmigans.



In Bristol Bay, the body of water to the north and west of the Alaska Peninsula, salmon spawn in such great number that they literally fill the streams of hundreds of miles around. Each year the king, silver, sockeye, chum, and pink salmon migrate from salt water to the fresh water streams and lakes to spawn and die. It is during this time of year that the bears come to the stream sides to compete with the fisherman for food, sometimes a little too close for comfort. Streams and lakes around the state teem with rainbow trout, arctic char, pike, grayling, Dolly Varden, sheefish, and burbot. Alaskans are proud to observe and conserve their rich wildlife heritage.





THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ALASKA

1. **Q. How long is the Alaska Highway, and where does it run?**
A. 1428 miles, from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada, to Delta Junction, Alaska.
2. **Q. How long is the longest and shortest day of the year?**
A. In Barrow during the spring and summertime, the sun does not set for 84 days, and in the winter months, the sun does not rise for 67 days.
3. **Q. What are the highest and lowest temperatures ever recorded in Alaska?**
A. 100°F at Fort Yukon in 1915 and .80°F at Prospect Creek in 1971.
4. **Q. When and where was the biggest snowfall recorded?**
A. 974.5" at Thompson Pass near Valdez, during the winter of 1952-53.
5. **Q. What causes the Northern Lights?**
A. Gas particles in the upper atmosphere being struck by solar electrons trapped in the earth's magnetic field.
6. **Q. What is Baleen?**
A. The long, fringed, bone-like strips that line the mouth of the baleen whale. This baleen filters frill and plankton out of the seawater. Dark in color, it is several feet in length, and often used in Alaska Native artwork such as baskets.
7. **Q. Why did the Eskimos invent the blanket toss?**
A. Because there are no trees or any elevation in the Arctic, the Eskimos would toss a person into the air on a skin blanket in order to spot wild game such as walrus, and seal from land.
8. **Q. What is Cabin Fever?**
A. A state of mind blamed on cold, dark winter weather when people are locked up in their cabins for long period of time.
9. **Q. What is a Cache (cash)?**
A. A small storage cabin built on stilts, out of reach of hungry animals.
10. **Q. What is a Cheechako (chee-CHA-koh)?**
A. A newcomer, tenderfoot or greenhorn who has just arrived in Alaska.
11. **Q. What is a Sourdough?**
A. Originally, sourdough was a yeasty mixture with a long life used to make bread or pancakes. A Sourdough is an old-time Alaskan who people say has soured on Alaska with no dough to get out.



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12. Q. How strong was the March 27, 1964 earthquake?
A. 9.2 on the Richter scale, the strongest ever recorded in North America.
13. Q. Why are glaciers blue in color?
A. They have very little air trapped in them due to the weight of the snow and ice above them; these compressed crystals absorb most colors of light but reflect blue.
14. Q. How long is the Iditarod Sled Dog Race?
A. Advertised as 1,049 miles, actually the race is 1,100 miles. The race originated in 1967 and runs from Anchorage to Nome.
15. Q. How long is the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race?
A. Often said to be the most difficult race, it is 1,000 miles long running from Fairbanks, Alaska to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada.
16. Q. What is the Nenana Ice Classic?
A. A contest to guess the exact date and time when the ice will go out on the Tanana River at the city of Nenana, marking the beginning of spring.
17. Q. What kinds of Natives live in Alaska?
A. Eskimo: Inupiat in the Arctic, Yupik in the Southwest; Athabascan Indians in the Interior, Aleuts in the Aleutian Islands and Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Indians in the Southeast.
18. Q. How many Alaskan Natives are there?
A. 102,523 (16% of the population).
19. Q. What is permafrost?
A. Permanently frozen ground or subsoil that thaws and heaves when built upon.
20. Q. Where does the Alaska Railroad run?
A. From Seward and Whittier to Anchorage and Fairbanks, 470 miles of track completed in 1923.
21. Q. Are there any wild snakes in Alaska?
A. No, in fact, there are no reptiles in all of Alaska.
22. Q. Why do Alaskan Indians carve totem poles?
A. To make public records of the lives, stories, and history of the people, showing pride in their ancestors.
23. Q. How long is the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline and how much did it cost?
A. 800 miles long from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, costing \$8 billion including the Valdez terminal. This was the most expensive privately-funded project in history.



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24. Q. How many different kinds of whales live in Alaskan waters?
A. 15 species.
25. Q. Where is Mt. McKinley?
A. Near the geographic center of the state, the entrance to Denali National Park and Preserve, where Mt. McKinley is located, 237 miles north of Anchorage and 121 miles south of Fairbanks on the George Parks Highway.
26. Q. Where is Cicely, Alaska?
A. Cicely does not exist; it was an imaginary town in the TV show "Northern Exposure". The show was actually filmed outside of Seattle, Washington.
27. Q. What is breakup?
A. The equivalent to spring in other parts of the country. The melting of snow and ice, which raises the level of streams and rivers each spring, often causing flooding.
28. Q. What are bunny boots?
A. Inflatable boots of white insulated rubber that are good in very cold temperatures down to -70 F below zero and cost around \$189 brand new.
29. Q. What is the bush?
A. Any area of Alaska that is not accessible by road. More than 50% of the state is considered "bush".
30. Q. How large was the biggest gold nugget ever found?
A. 107 ounces, 7 by 4 by 2 inches, found near Nome.
31. Q. Do Alaskans live in igloos anymore?
A. Not the kind made of ice and snow, which was originally for temporary shelter on hunting expeditions in northern Canada and Greenland. The Alaskan Eskimos dwelling was traditionally made of driftwood, whalebone, animal skins, and sod called a Barabara.
32. Q. Why do many vehicles in Alaska have an electrical plug hanging out the front of the vehicle?
A. So that the battery blanket, engine block heater, and possibly oil pan heater may be plugged in during the cold weather to make sure the vehicle starts.
33. Q. Can anyone hunt polar bear?
A. No, it is illegal for anyone but an Alaskan Native to hunt polar bears in Alaska.
34. Q. Which is the largest city in area in Alaska?
A. Sitka with 4,710 square miles, 1,816 square mile of which is under water. Juneau is the second, with an area of 3,308 square miles.



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35. Q. What is a Qiviut (KIH-vee-yoot)?
A. Soft under hair of musk oxen, considered one of the world's rarest fibers, spun into yarn for knitting highly prized sweaters, gloves and scarves. This wool is softer than cashmere and warmer than wool.
36. Q. Are the mosquitoes really bad?
A. The mosquitoes can be bothersome in remote areas. Remember, only the female mosquito bites. Normal insect repellent is usually sufficient to ward off even the most determined bugs.
37. Q. Are there any penguins in Alaska?
A. No, penguins live at the South Pole in Antarctica, parts of southern South America and Galapagos Islands.
38. Q. Isn't it cold all the time in Alaska?
A. Actually, Fairbanks is considered a desert climate and gets less than 12 inches of precipitation annually, which includes snow and rain. Average highs in the summer can reach into the 80s and 90s.
39. Q. What is Muktuk?
A. Another Eskimo delicacy consisting of raw whale blubber with the skin attached, usually cut directly from a fresh whale kill.
40. Q. Do Ice Worms really exist?
A. Truth is stranger than fiction. Although often regarded as a hoax, ice worms do actually exist. These small, thin, segmented black worms, usually less than an inch long, thrive in temperatures just above freezing. They can be found off glaciers near Cordova.
41. Q. What is Eskimo Ice Cream?
A. Called akutug (AHH-kuh-tak) in Inupiaq, it is an Alaska Native delicacy traditionally made of whipped seal oil, berries, snow and sugar or pieces of fish or meat.
42. Q. What is the Alaska Permanent Fund?
A. A state "trust fund", created by a constitutional amendment, requiring at least 25% of Alaska's royalties from oil and other minerals to be set aside and invested. The earnings can be spent by the Legislature, but have been used mainly to offset inflation and pay yearly dividends to Alaskan residents.
43. Q. What do people in Alaska do in the winter?
A. Outdoor sports such as downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, skijoring, snow shoeing, snow machining, ice skating, snowboarding, sledding, and ice fishing and indoor sports such as bowling, curling, ice hockey, gym sports, and swimming. Residents also go to movies, attend concerts and plays, watch television and read, sew, paint, quilt and do a variety of other arts and crafts. Generally Alaskans keep busy doing anything during the cold, dark winter months to avoid "cabin fever".