

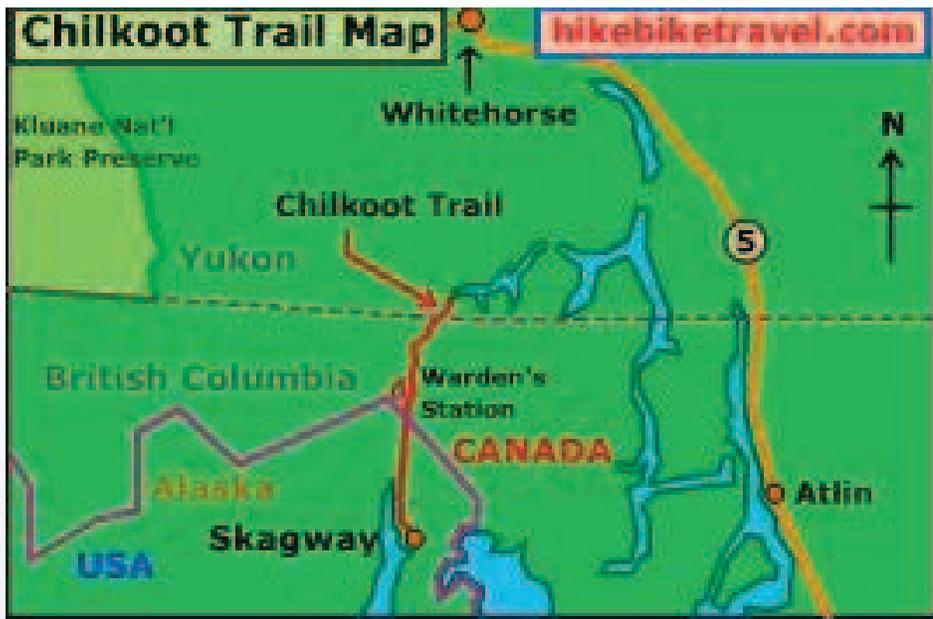


The Chilkoot Trail, which begins on tidewater in Alaska and climbs up over mountains in British Columbia, presents a unique backpacking opportunity, as this is a trail rich with history. It was the main trail used in the famous Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1800's, one of the biggest rushes the world has ever seen. An international crowd of literally tens of thousands, fuelled by dreams of riches, used the Chilkoot Trail to chase the gold in the Yukon. Most suffered incredible hardship, many never even made it and only a few got rich. Today on the trail you'll find plenty of reminders of their epic journey.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A great adventure
- Fantastic scenery
- The possibility of seeing bears
- Klondike history and artifacts
- Scenic lakes
- Great trail camaraderie
- An international trail with the boundary at the summit of the pass
- Several very peaceful and picturesque campsites
- The possibility of a historic train ride on the White Pass and Yukon Route down to Skagway from Bennett

# Backpacking the Chilkoot Trail



The Chilkoot Trail as we know it now, opened as a summer trail in the 1960's. It runs 53 km (33 miles) in the Coast Mountains between Dyea, Alaska and Bennett, British Columbia and as such

crosses the Canada/US border at the summit of the trail. You can do it in three to six days depending on how much time you've got and your current fitness level. Although distances are short the trail is

challenging with sections of mud, rock and even snow in the summer.

Campsites need to be pre-booked and proper documentation including passports and visas (depending on your nationality) are required by both countries. There is a limit of 50 hikers per day so prime time should be booked early.

The trail offers magnificent scenery and a fine sense of accomplishment at the finish. Come prepared for all weather, especially since it covers an area renowned for lots of cold rain and hence the very real possibility of severe hypothermia. Study the bear brochures in view of the fact that both black and grizzly bear sightings are common.

The Chilkoot Trail is an impressive trail and well worth your consideration. For those people who come prepared it will be memorable but do not consider this trail if you are excessively fearful of bears or in poor physical shape and in fact go to the section 'Should you hike this trail?' and answer the questions on whether you should be attempting the trail at all.





Grizzly Bear

### Should You Hike This Trail??

Only you can answer the question. There are MANY factors to think about before you commit to signing up. Go through the list below and answer truthfully. Maybe you need to reconsider this trail in a few years time after you have gained the necessary experience. It is a serious undertaking!!

• **Most importantly have you hiked AND camped before?**

If you are a great day hiker but you have never slept in a tent then this is NOT where you should begin your camping experience. Conditions can become very uncomfortable very quickly. Temperatures can hover in the hypothermia range (average summer temperatures are 10-25°C (50-77°F)) for days at a time, especially early and late in the season and if

you haven't spent long nights in a cramped tent before you might find the situation uncomfortable.

• **How well do you deal with rain and mud?**

There are no weather guarantees on this trail and if you are very unlucky with your timing you could have 3-5 days of rain in a row.

• **Do you have any joint or back problems?**

Do not kid yourself that they are manageable because as the days roll along additional strain is going to be severely placed on knees, feet, shoulders and your back.

• **If you are considering doing this as a family are your children older than 12?**

Children six and younger are not permitted on the trail and it really is not recommended for children younger than 12. Realistically assess your child's capabilities especially as it relates to physical and mental stamina.

• **Are you okay with using outhouses and forgoing hot showers?**

• **Are you prepared to deal with the very real possibility of bumping into a bear?**

• **Do you like the people in your proposed group and how do you think the group dynamics will play out over the planned journey?**

• **Will there be sharing of tent setup and cooking duties?**

• **Do people move at similar speeds? Do you have the same goals? Are you on the same wavelength for starting times each day? How well do you communicate?**

• **What happens if you are delayed one or two days for whatever reason? How flexible are your plans? If at all possible leave an extra day at the end to allow more time if needed on the trail so you don't have to rush – particularly if you are finding it harder going than expected.**

There are steep scrambles.... Remember the classic pictures of single file Klondikers heading up the steep hill. Well, that wasn't the top of it.

Evacuation in case of injury or illness may be very difficult.





Camping platform

## Suggested Itineraries

### OPTION 1— BEGINNING IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON TERRITORY, CANADA

6 days, 5 nights

#### Day 1

Arrive in Whitehorse and transfer to your hotel. Explore the city and finish shopping and packing for your trip. Be cognizant of what food products you can and can't take across the American border (don't take meat across the border!)

#### Day 2

Transfer to Skagway by bus (or rental car) via the beautiful and scenic White Pass. Participate in the noon orientation, get a lift to the trailhead and then head to the first campsite, Finnegan's Point, 7.9 km (4.9 miles) away.

#### Day 3

Continue on to Sheep Camp at 20.9 km (12 miles) to complete your second day of hiking. You'll pass through Canyon City, a former village and freight transfer station of 1500 people with at least 24 businesses. Look for relics. You'll find rangers and a lot of campers at Sheep Camp, the busiest spot on the trail.

#### Day 4

The hike from Sheep Camp to Happy Camp over the Chilkoot Pass is the most strenuous day of the trip. Start early and hike 5 km (3 miles) and 850 m (2700 feet) up on tough trails to reach the pass and the Canada-US border ranger hut. Continue down to Happy Camp at 33 km (mile 20.5) where the landscape of the trail changes dramatically. It will

take some people 12 hours to complete this section of the trail. If you have energy to burn, continue to the much less crowded and very scenic Deep Lake Camp at km 37 (mile 23).

#### Day 5

Hike from Happy Camp to Bare Loon Lake Camp. You'll travel by some pretty lake scenery and if you don't mind the cold you could try a bracing swim in Bare Loon Lake. Total distance is 8.5 mi/13.7 km

#### Day 6

Finish your hike today by taking the cutoff trail and then hiking along the railway to Log Cabin on the highway. It will be about 6 miles. Return to Whitehorse via a prearranged bus pickup or by hitchhiking.

#### OTHER FINISH OPTIONS

Instead of walking out on the railroad continue on to Bennett, 4 miles/6.4 km away. From there take either a prearranged float plane ride out or take the train to Skagway and return by bus to Whitehorse the following day.



**OPTION  
2 — BEGINNING IN SKAGWAY, ALASKA,  
USA**

**6 days, 5 nights**

**Day 1**

Enjoy the day in Skagway and check in with the National Parks people for your orientation at noon. Overnight at a B&B in Skagway or camp near the trailhead at Dyea.

**Day 2**

Hike to Canyon City, 12.5 km (7.8 miles) away. The first 5 miles are surprisingly rough with lots of twisted roots, trees, mud and boulders to deal with. It gets easier after Finnegan's Point.

**Day 3**

It's a more leisurely 5 mile/8.4 km hike to Sheep Camp. You will have time to explore the ruins of Canyon City.

**Day 4**

This is the big day where you'll hike the "Golden Stairs" to reach Chilkoot Pass. It will be a 2700 foot climb with packs to reach the summit. After warming up in the border hut drop down, perhaps on snow, to Happy Camp and along the way enjoy superb alpine scenery. The total mileage is 7.5 miles/12 km.

**Day 5**

Descend through alpine tundra to Bare Loon Lake, 8.5 miles/14 km away. Take time to pick the abundant blueberries.

**Day 6**

Today is a short 4 mile/6.5km hike to Bennett. Rendezvous with the White Pass Yukon Route railway and return to Skagway. The train ride is roughly 3 hours long.

## Making a Reservation

Reservations for the upcoming season are accepted beginning on January 4, 2010. Call 1-800-661-0486 from anywhere in Canada or the US, or 1-867-667-3910 if you're calling from overseas. Also from June 1st until Labour Day weekend in September, reservations can be made through the Skagway Trail Center from 8:30 am -4:30pm. Call them at 1-907-983-9234. When you make a reservation you will need all of the following information.

- You must specify which campground you will camp at each night of your trip (to ensure everyone has a place to camp and to prevent overcrowding)
- Have an alternative itinerary in case you can't get everything you want
- If you plan to exit via the train make sure your exit day corresponds to the train schedule. Visit [www.wpyr.com](http://www.wpyr.com) to make sure.
- Reserve Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm PST.
- You will need a credit card to make the reservation. You'll have to pay all fees at the time you make the reservation. Reservation fees are non-refundable.

There is a quota of 50 hikers per day that are permitted to enter Canada over the Chilkoot Pass. If

you are making a booking for a group keep in mind that the maximum number of hikers allowed in the group is 12. Also, each day, eight permits are available for walk-ins on a first come first served basis at the Trail Center in Skagway which you can find on Broadway between 1st and 2nd Avenue. The eight permits are available beginning at 1pm the day before you start. The last option is to get a permit for a same day start and these are only available if there are no shows beginning at 1pm.

### The campsites in order from Dyea, Alaska to Bennett, BC are as follows:

- Finnegan's Point km 7.9/mile 4.9
- Canyon City km 12.5/mile 7.8
- Pleasant Camp km 16.9/mile 10.5
- Sheep Camp km 20.3/mile 12.6 (very busy since it's the camp before the climb to the pass)
- Happy Camp km 33/mile 20.5
- Deep Lake km 37/mile 23
- Lindeman City km 41.8/ mile 26
- Bare Loon Lake km 46.7/mile 29
- Bennett km 53.1/mile 33

*Once you have your permit there are a few practical items you should know:*

- Do not take away any of the historic or cultural resources on the trail.
- Do not feed the wildlife; keep food away from your tents.
- Unfortunately no campfires are permitted.
- Keep pets on a leash at all times.
- Pack out all garbage and food waste.

### **Getting to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory**

You don't have a lot of options when it comes to getting to Whitehorse. You can either fly in or drive - though Whitehorse is a long way from anywhere.

#### **BY AIR**

You have a choice of two airlines.

#### **AIR NORTH**

[www.flyairnorth.com](http://www.flyairnorth.com)

They fly from Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver to Whitehorse.

#### **AIR CANADA**

[www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com)

They have flight offerings from Calgary and Vancouver on a seasonal basis.

#### **BY ROAD**

You will have to plan on a multi day drive if you're coming from any of Canada's cities. Edmonton is the closest large city and it is nearly 2000 km away. The Alaska Highway is paved with regular services but don't expect fancy hotels and lattes along the way. Spare tires should be properly inflated and it would be worthwhile to have your car serviced before the trip. You'll be looking at more expensive gas the further north you go to. Expect to see bear, moose and caribou along the side of the road. There are lots of lakes where you can get out fishing but don't forget to get a fishing license. Campsites are plentiful.

#### **Whitehorse Hotels**

Whitehorse is a northern city and although it has numerous hotels and motels, few are of the same caliber that you're probably accustomed to staying in. The one exception is the Inn on the Lake which receives accolades from National Geographic Traveler magazine as one of the top places to stay in North America for 2009.

#### **INN ON THE LAKE**

[www.exceptionalplaces.com/hotel-overview.html](http://www.exceptionalplaces.com/hotel-overview.html)

Ph: 867-660-5253

A 4.5 star hotel, 35 minutes outside of Whitehorse. This is the type of spot to enjoy for a few days before or after your hike if you can fit it in your budget.

#### **SKKY HOTEL**

[www.skkyhotel.com/](http://www.skkyhotel.com/)

91622 Alaska Highway

Ph: 866-799-4933 or 867-456-2400

This is the only boutique type hotel in Whitehorse and a welcome change from some of the other dowdier hotels in the city. Rates are \$189-\$295 per night in the summer.

#### **RIVER VIEW HOTEL**

[www.riverviewhotel.ca/](http://www.riverviewhotel.ca/)

102 Wood Street Ph: 867-667-7801

A basic hotel located on the banks of the Yukon River with rooms running at \$134 per night.

#### **HIGH COUNTRY INN**

[www.highcountryinn.yk.ca/](http://www.highcountryinn.yk.ca/)

4051-4th Avenue

Ph: 800-554-4471 or 867-667-4471

This is one of the better hotels to stay at in Whitehorse. Rates are \$169-\$259 in the summer months.

#### **WESTMARK WHITEHORSE HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER**

[www.westmarkhotels.com/](http://www.westmarkhotels.com/)

201 Wood Street

Ph: 800-544-0970 or 867-393-9700

This is your basic conference type of hotel. Rates are \$149 and up.



### Whitehorse Restaurants

Whitehorse leaves much to be desired on the restaurant scene.

#### KLONDIKE RIB AND SALMON BBQ

2116 2nd Avenue Ph: 867-667-7554

This is a fun and usually very busy place to eat. Make a reservation.

#### GEORGIA'S CUCINA

208 Jarvis Street Ph: 867-668-4050

Italian food, somewhat on the pricey side, but still one of the best choices in town.

### Getting to Skagway

#### BY AIR

You can't fly directly to Skagway. Instead you must fly to either Juneau or Anchorage from Seattle on Alaska Air and then get a connecting flight to Skagway. Two companies run the 45 minute connecting flight from Juneau to Skagway, Air Excursions ([www.airexcursions.com/](http://www.airexcursions.com/)) and Wings of Alaska ([www.wingsofalaska.com/](http://www.wingsofalaska.com/)). There are many flights a day to choose from though they are weather dependent.

#### BY SEA

The northern terminus of the Alaska marine highway system, which begins in Bellingham, WA is Skagway. You can get the full schedule and all fare information at [www.state.ak.us/ferry](http://www.state.ak.us/ferry). You have the choice of free camping on deck or stateroom accommodation. The trip takes nearly 3 days and will run you about \$US365 one way as a walk on passenger.

#### BY LAND

Skagway is easily accessed by car or bus from Whitehorse by taking the South Klondike Highway. It's a good road with great scenery. Just 30 miles south of Whitehorse is the historic community of Carcross where you can load up on food and gas. In total it's about a two hour drive between the two towns. Rental cars are available in Whitehorse through Budget and National.

The other option is to hop on the bus in Whitehorse to reach Skagway. Visit [www.yukonalaskatourist-tours.com/](http://www.yukonalaskatourist-tours.com/). Buses leave Whitehorse everyday but Sunday at 8:30 am and a one way fare is \$US60.

## White Pass and Yukon Route Railway

The 110 mile narrow gauge railway was built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush and is today an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. In just 26 months the railway was built using tens of thousands of men and 450 tons of explosives under extremely harsh conditions. The railway climbs almost 3000 feet in 20 miles and includes 2 tunnels, bridges, trestles and a cliff hanging section. Ultimately it connects Skagway, Alaska with Carcross, Yukon.

In 1982 the railway operations were suspended in the wake of the collapse of metal prices and Yukon's mining industry but just 5 years later it reopened as a seasonal tourist attraction.

Today it operates from early May until late September. Visit [www.wpyr.com/](http://www.wpyr.com/) to make an online reservation. The best combination if you're actually planning to backpack is to book the bus/train combination. It will take you from Whitehorse by bus to Carcross and there you'll board the train for Skagway. Leave Whitehorse on a Monday, Tuesday or Friday at 7:30 am and arrive in Skagway at 4:30pm. The one way price is \$195. Be very careful that you're operating on the correct time zone as there is a one hour difference between Yukon and Alaska!

## Skagway Hotels

Skagway is a town of only about 1000 full time residents though it is a popular docking spot for cruise ships. You won't find the same class of hotel or accommodation in general as you might find in a larger center. The B&B's probably offer better value for your dollar plus you'll get an insider's perspective of the area too.

### SGT. PRESTON'S LODGE

<http://sgtprestons.eskagway.com/>

Corner of Broadway and 6th Ph: 866-983-2521

Look for a basic hotel right downtown with prices starting at \$US90 per night.

### WESTMARK INN

[www.westmarkhotels.com/skagway.php](http://www.westmarkhotels.com/skagway.php)

Third & Spring Streets

Ph: 800-544-0970 or 907-983-6000

You'll find a basic hotel room with rates starting at about \$US129 per night.

### SKAGWAY HOME HOSTEL

[www.skagwayhostel.com/](http://www.skagwayhostel.com/)

Third Street

This is a budget option with rates as low as \$US15 per night for a mixed dorm room.

## CHILKOOT TRAIL OUTPOST

[www.chilkoottrailoutpost.com/](http://www.chilkoottrailoutpost.com/)

Ph: 907-983-3799

They are conveniently located just half a mile from the start of the Chilkoot Trail and 7 miles from Skagway. Rates are \$US145 per night with breakfast. They also have a storage area for vehicles and gear if you are going to return to Skagway at the end of the hike.

### MILE ZERO B&B

[www.mile-zero.com/](http://www.mile-zero.com/)

9th and Main Street Ph: 907-983-3045

Comfortable rooms for \$US135 per night in the summer.

### HISTORIC SKAGWAY INN B&B

[www.skagwayinn.com/](http://www.skagwayinn.com/)

Paradise Alley and Broadway

Ph: 888-752-4929 or 907-983-2289

Antique Victorian decorated B&B with summertime rates of \$US119 and up.

### THE WHITE HOUSE

[www.atthewhitehouse.com/](http://www.atthewhitehouse.com/)

475 Eighth Avenue Ph: 907-983-9000

Rates are \$US125 and up per night in the summer. The house is a registered National Historic Place.

## Skagway Restaurants

Skagway caters to the cruise ship crowd so you'll find lots of places to grab a quick bite as well as cafes and bakeries. If you're interested in a bigger meal then try one of the following:

### OLIVIA'S AT THE SKAGWAY INN

Paradise Alley and Broadway

Ph: 888-752-4929 or 907-983-2289

Offering seafood and local organic produce with a tapas style menu.

### STOWAWAY CAFÉ

205 Congress Ph: 907-983-3463

Look for Alaskan food with Thai, French and Cajun influences.

### SKAGWAY FISH COMPANY

201 Congress Way Ph: 907-983-3474

The place for seafood chowder and fish and chips.

## Border Crossing

Make sure you know before you go what documentation is required. At a minimum you will need a passport but perhaps a visa too, depending on your nationality. Also include a notarized letter and birth certificate if there are children involved but one absent parent.

## Getting to the Trailhead

The Dyea trailhead is only 10 miles (16 km) from Skagway via an all weather dirt road. You can easily find a private shuttle in Skagway; the drivers are on the prowl for business and will be in the vicinity of the ranger cabin where you have your briefing.

If you need a ride back from Log Cabin on the Klondike Highway when you exit the trail then you can prearrange a pickup in Skagway. Drivers vary from season to season but you will have no trouble getting to the trailhead for a reasonable sum. There is also overnight camping just half a mile from the trailhead.

### TRAIL WARNING

The short distance on the Chilkoot Trail belies the fact that it can be an extremely difficult, slow going and treacherous hike. You will encounter mud and slippery twisted roots, especially on the first day, unstable boulders and even snow, especially around the pass. In fact, avalanche danger is a threat until early July. The climb to the pass, referred to as 'The Scales' is a route over enormous boulders marked by white poles which in inclement weather can be difficult to see.

### THE ROUTE ITSELF

The first few days on the Alaskan section of the trail take you through forests, along rivers, through mud, over roots with intermittent views of hanging glaciers. There is not a lot of elevation either gained or lost until you climb to the pass. The scenery is pleasant but not spectacular ... Yet.

The climb from Sheep Camp to the Pass is very beautiful and obviously the higher you go the better it gets. This is a tough section to hike as it's over large boulders so footing can be precarious at times, especially when you're weighted down with a pack. Snow may greet you at the summit, even in August, so be prepared for a little sliding to get down to the dirt trail. There is a dramatic change in the scenery on the Canadian side of the pass. Look for stunted trees and tundra vegetation. There are numerous lakes, small falls and lovely campsites. As you get close to Bennett it flattens out again but there are still mountainous vistas to enjoy.

The entire route is well marked and obvious with one exception. When you climb towards the pass conditions can be poor and visibility low. There are white markers but you may have to look hard to see them on occasion. At the end of the season this part of the trail is not maintained by the rangers.

### FINISH OPTIONS

*There are three possible ways to finish the trail:*

- Once you reach Bennett it is possible to return to Skagway by rail on the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway. Visit [www.wpyr.com/](http://www.wpyr.com/) to get the schedule. Of note is the fact that this option is not available every day.
- Arrange for a float plane charter from Alpine Aviation. Check out their website for more information at [www.alpineaviationyukon.com](http://www.alpineaviationyukon.com). The 2010 cost for flights is based on the group size. The prices are \$160 per person if there are four or more, \$185 per person if there are three or more and \$210 per person if there are only two of you. They also offer a glacier flight which adds a half hour and costs about \$55 per person more.
- It is also possible to hike out to Log Cabin on the highway via the railway tracks and in fact there is a cutoff trail so you don't need to go all the way to Bennett to do that. It's not the most interesting hike but it is an inexpensive option. This is the option my group chose and even though we had arranged for the bus to pick us up on the highway, we found it to be more expedient to hitchhike. Our friends headed to Skagway on the first vehicle going south and we waited about 30 minutes for a ride and in the end got dropped off at our hotel doorstep in Whitehorse! Speak to the bus company if you go to Skagway by bus and they can prearrange a bus pickup.

## The Town of Bennett

Bennett is the last stop on the Chilkoot Trail. It is an abandoned town now but during the Klondike Gold Rush it was a vibrant place. This is the spot where the gold prospectors would pack up their supplies and then either build or buy a raft to take them down the Yukon River to the gold fields around Dawson.

## Meal Suggestions

People approach food from many different perspectives. It is an emotionally charged issue at the best of times and when you are hungry and tired perhaps even more so. Some hikers eat only to replenish energy reserves while others look forward to a well planned meal that can give you a real mental boost after a tough day. If you are with a group it would be helpful if you were all thinking along the same lines so discuss food issues and meal preparation before you go.

I have found it to be helpful on my many backpacking trips to plan breakfast and dinners as a group and let everyone fend for themselves for lunch and snacks. Obviously if there are only two of you there is no need for both of you to bring peanut butter (as an example) so use a good dose of common sense. Here are some meal suggestions

that have worked well for me. I also suggest a trip to your local Mountain Equipment Co-op, camping store or the convenience section of your grocery store for some lightweight meals if you are not inclined to put much energy into this part of the trip. Everyone should also bring enough food for one extra day in case an emergency arises.

### BREAKFASTS

*\*\* This is usually a quick, simple affair so you can get moving. Caffeine seems to be important for most people so get water boiling as soon as you get up. \*\*\**

- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate and powdered milk are always staples. You can buy a very lightweight coffee filter that takes up almost no room and makes one cup at a time. It is easier if everyone has their own as they weigh in at only a few ounces.

- Instant porridge + brown sugar or maple syrup
- Granola + skim milk powder
- Pancakes + maple syrup or jam (I buy a mix that only needs water or milk but no eggs) + a small amount of oil for frying. This is a better breakfast for a shorter hiking day.



*Cooking in the rain.*

### LUNCH AND SNACKS

- Carrot sticks, broccoli florets and celery sticks for the first day or two only
- GORP (good old raisins and peanuts) make your own or buy premade; add chocolate bits and extra dried fruit. Bring lots – minimum of ½ c. per day.
- Tortillas - spread with peanut/almond butter and jam. Just roll up and allow 1-2/day per person.
- Fresh bread with your favourite filling for the first few days

- Tortillas with hard cheese (keeps for much longer unrefrigerated) and pepperoni/salami
- Beef or turkey jerky
- Pita pockets – small or regular size with hummous on day 1 or peanut butter/jam combinations later
- Dried fruit such as pears, peaches, prunes, cranberries, mango, apricots....
- Luna bars/Lara Bars/Power bars – bring an assortment so you don't get sick of them. I usually allow 1 per day + a few extra
- Cookies – especially ones that don't break easily like Fig Newtons. Make homemade ones before you go.
- Candy – hard ones to suck on, licorice, gummi bears, jellybeans, and yogurt covered raisins or nuts, chocolate bars or one of your favourites

### BEFORE DINNER – ESPECIALLY ON A COLD DAY

- Cup of soup, tea or hot chocolate
- Dried juice mixes like Gatorade, crystal light on hot days and for hiking
- Chips – maybe one (like Pringles to minimize volume) or crackers with olive spread from a tube, reconstituted hummous, cheese

### DINNER — DAY 1 ONLY

- Bagged Caesar salad is good on Day 1 and coleslaw will last at least 2 days.

If you are a big meat eater you will have to adapt your eating for a few days since carrying canned tuna or meat is not an option and the bears will love the smell of your garbage. Freeze dried meals might be the best way for you to go. Before you leave try a few of the freeze dried meals from your local camping store and bring your favourites. Some will be palatable and a few perhaps will taste like cardboard but there is always dessert.

### OTHER MEAL POSSIBILITIES

- Macaroni and cheese
- Falafels (buy a dried mix and add water) fry and throw in pita bread or tortillas with hot sauce, hummous from a mix and cabbage.
- Pesto (in a tube or dried) and pasta with extra parmesan cheese (+ add cut up sundried tomatoes)
- Thai noodle dish – premade from the grocery store
- Chickpea curry and rice – buy premade
- Tortillas with refried beans (reconstituted) and rice + hot sauce
- Pasta with a sundried tomato sauce – buy a packaged sauce and add dehydrated mushrooms and sundried tomatoes
- Soup + tortillas with melted cheese

## DESSERT

Treat yourself to date squares or bars like pecan bars that are capable of lasting close to a week. Rice Krispie squares are good for the first few days too.

In planning your meals insure that you have enough calories, you are taking foods that you like to eat and that the weight is minimized – dehydrated instead of fresh whenever possible. Reduce packaging before you leave and pack out all garbage. Leave no trace.

## Safety Concerns

- Keep all food, toiletries and garbage in the metal bear proof boxes. Do not cook or eat near your tent.
- Go upstream from any bathing or washing for your drinking water and filter it.
- Use the outhouses wherever possible. Otherwise dig a 6 inch hole and bury your waste. Pack out or burn the toilet paper.
- Arrive in camp before nightfall – which shouldn't be hard with long days in the summer.
- If you start to get a blister stop immediately and attend to it before it becomes a bigger problem.

## BEARS

Encounters with Black and Grizzly Bears are a distinct possibility. Grizzlies are considerably larger and have a distinct shoulder hump.

*The basic principles when you happen upon a bear are as follows:*

- a) If a bear sees you but doesn't run away then:
  - 1) keep an eye on the bear but don't make direct eye contact; 2) provide the bear with an escape route; 3) speak in a calm voice (easier said than done and it could be up an octave or two) 4) remain in a tight group with four people being the magic number to avoid an attack; and 5) make yourself look taller.
- b) If it heads in your direction, then:
  - 1) use bear bangers, flares or whatever noise-maker you have; 2) yell and speak loudly; and 3) use bear spray if it gets within 4 metres (12 feet), but make sure the wind isn't blowing in your direction or you will become incapacitated.
- c) If it charges, stand your ground as it is usually a bluff.
- d) Never: 1) run away, as a bear can run 40 km/hour (25 mph); 2) swim for it, as bears are better swimmers than you are; and 3) let your dog off the leash as it will make the bear more agitated if it is running around barking.



*Grizzly Bear*

*And as for what you should do if it continues towards you or if the bear attacks:*

If it is a black bear, then:

- a) DO NOT CLIMB A TREE but back away slowly; b) if it attacks you, fight back with anything you might have and target its nose and eyes while doing your best to protect your face and stomach area; and c) DO NOT PLAY DEAD!

If it is a grizzly bear, then:

- a) back away slowly and TRY to CLIMB a tree, but it is extremely important that you get up higher than 4 metres (12 feet) or you will likely be pulled down by your feet; and b) if it attacks, protect your head and stomach area BUT THIS TIME PLAY DEAD!!

## HYPOTHERMIA

*Hypothermia is a concern when the weather is damp and cool. The signs are as follows:*

- Initially, uncontrolled shivering of the whole body
- Stiff joints, loss of coordination
- Slurred speech, apathy, mental confusion
- State of denial because of mental impairment
- Eventually shallow breathing
- Overwhelming urge to sleep

## TREATMENT

- Immediate removal of all wet clothes and replacement with warm, dry, windproof clothing. Put on a hat.
- Start a fire if possible for heat – if not get into a tent and into a sleeping bag lying on a thermarest
- Apply warm water bottles to the groin, armpits and if possible around the neck
- Drink a hot, sweetened beverage
- Medical attention is needed for severe cases as too rapid warming can result in heart problems so send for help and call the emergency number given to you by the rangers

## Costs

*The location of the Chilkoot Trail makes it inherently more expensive to access than most. Budget for the following:*

- Transportation to Skagway
- Return transportation to Whitehorse, Juneau or Anchorage and home
- Transfer from Skagway to the trailhead at Dyea via taxi
- Chilkoot Trail Permit (all fees in \$Cdn) \$50.80 – adult, \$25.35 – youth (6-16)
- US Only permit \$16.50 – adult, \$8.25 – youth
- Canadian only permits \$34.30 – adult, \$17.10 – youth
- Canadian day permit - \$9.80 for adults and youths
- Reservation –\$11.80 per person
- Overnight camping fee in Bennett(not everyone does this) \$9.80/night
- Accommodation pre and post trip
- Food and a celebratory meal
- Miscellaneous camping equipment



*Cultural remnants*

## Tour Companies

If you're short on trip planning time or have never undertaken such an adventure then consider one of the following companies.

### ALASKA MOUNTAIN GUIDES AND CLIMBING SCHOOL

[www.alaskamountainguides.com](http://www.alaskamountainguides.com)

Ph: 800-7663396 or 907-766-3366

The 4 day trip is \$US790 and the 5 day trip is \$US890.

### CABIN FEVER ADVENTURES

[www.cabinfeveradventures.com](http://www.cabinfeveradventures.com)

Ph: 867-335-0318 or 778-786-0760

Their 6 day trip is \$1249 plus 5% tax.



#### **CANADIAN WILDERNESS TRAVEL LTD.**

[www.canwild.com/](http://www.canwild.com/)

The standard 6 night/7 day tour is offered for \$Cdn1575 per person starting in Whitehorse.

#### **THE GREAT CANADIAN ADVENTURE COMPANY**

[www.adventures.ca/gasnet/627-5.htm](http://www.adventures.ca/gasnet/627-5.htm)

They run a one week trip for \$Cdn 1495 per person plus 5% tax.

#### **NATURE TOURS OF YUKON**

[www.naturetoursyukon.com/](http://www.naturetoursyukon.com/)

A 6 night/7 day trip is offered for as few as four people on many occasions throughout the summer for \$Cdn 1595 per person.

#### **PACKER EXPEDITIONS**

[www.packerexpeditions.com](http://www.packerexpeditions.com)

Ph: 907-983-3005

Contact them for pricing.

#### **SEA TO SKY EXPEDITIONS**

[www.seatoskyexpeditions.com](http://www.seatoskyexpeditions.com)

Ph: 800-990-8735 or 604-594-7701

Their 6 night/7 day trip is \$Cdn1495 plus 5% tax. It begins in Whitehorse and includes a ride on the White Pass and Yukon Railroad.

#### **Useful Websites and Contact Numbers**

##### **CHILKOOT TRAIL RESERVATIONS**

800-661-0486

##### **HAINES -SKAGWAY WEATHER**

[www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/textforecast\\_e.html?Bulletin=fpcn69.cwvr](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/textforecast_e.html?Bulletin=fpcn69.cwvr)

##### **WHITE PASS AND YUKON RAILWAY**

[www.wpyr.com](http://www.wpyr.com)

Ph: 800-343-7373

##### **ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY**

[www.state.ak.us/ferry](http://www.state.ak.us/ferry)

Ph: 800-642-0066

#### **YUKON DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE**

[www.travel Yukon.com](http://www.travel Yukon.com)

Ph: 800-661-0494

#### **CITY OF SKAGWAY TOURISM INFORMATION**

[www.skagway.com](http://www.skagway.com)

Ph: 888-762-1898

#### **ALPINE AVIATION YUKON**

[www.alpineaviationyukon.com](http://www.alpineaviationyukon.com)

#### **CHILKOOT TRAIL MAP**

[www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/yt/chilkoot/activ/activ6a.aspx?m=1](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/yt/chilkoot/activ/activ6a.aspx?m=1)

#### **CANADIAN BORDER SERVICES AGENCY**

[www.cbsa.gc.ca/menu-eng.html](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/menu-eng.html)

Ph: 867-667-3943

#### **US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

Ph: 907-983-3144



## Packing List

The weight of your pack will directly influence your enjoyment of the trail. Keep everything to a minimum but also be sure to include everything that is on the 'DO NOT LEAVE HOME' without list. I highly recommend trying out all of your equipment beforehand. In fact don't even think of starting out if you don't know how to put up your tent or use your stove... There should be no surprises on your first night out.

### DO NOT LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING

- Your pack should weigh no more than 30-35% of your body weight!!!!
- Backpack + rain cover
- Tent + waterproof fly
- Stove + LOTS of fuel (you can't fly with fuel)
- Waterproof matches + 2 lighters
- Sleeping bag (packed in plastic or waterproof bags)
- Thermarest-closed cell
- Lightweight pot/pan/coffee filter
- Plate/bowl/cutlery/mug/sharp knife
- 1-2 water bottles
- Water filter or purification tablets
- Biodegradable soap + scrubby
- Well broken in waterproof boots
- Gaiters
- Teva like sandals for camp
- 2-4 pairs of socks

- Quick dry pants – good if zip off to shorts
- Long underwear/warm hat/mitts
- Full rain gear – top/bottom and hat
- 3-6 pairs underwear
- 1-2 quick dry turtlenecks
- 1-2 quick dry t-shirts
- Windproof fleece jacket
- 1 pair of shorts
- Quick dry towel
- Headlamp with extra batteries
- Sunscreen, chapstick, sunhat
- Extra Ziploc bags, toilet paper, garbage bag
- Travel size toiletries, mirror
- Personal medications
- Waterproof map + permits + passport and visa + money in a waterproof bag
- Food for the number of days on the trail + 1 emergency day
- 25' of rope to hang food, a carabiner and a waterproof bag
- Sunglasses, reading glasses, extra contacts
- First aid kit with lots of bandages, moleskin, Advil, Benadryl, antibiotic ointment, tensor bandage, antiseptic wipes, splint, roll of gauze, gloves



Bug nets

### OPTIONAL

- Bear spray (buy in Whitehorse or Skagway)
- Camera, binoculars, cell phone
- Hiking poles/Yactrax
- insect repellent and head net
- Reading and writing material
- Guidebook

Published March 2010. All prices are accurate at time of publishing but verify before booking.