

ALASKA 2019

This is the first in a new series of trip stories. The software we have used to create our website is being discontinued, so this and future stories will be e-mailed only to friends, family, and anyone who requests it. We are sorry about it, but the thought of creating an entire new website with all of our trips is out of the question.

Our original website has the bulk of our travels to all kinds of wonderful places around the world. See them at <http://stevekathytravels.com/>. The story of our 2007 Alaska cruise is there, as well as our trip to the interior of Alaska in 2011.

After a very enjoyable cruise to Hawaii, Kathy said she would like to take an Alaskan cruise to see Glacier Bay. I am also interested, as I have not seen it since 1988, and would like to see the effect of global warming.



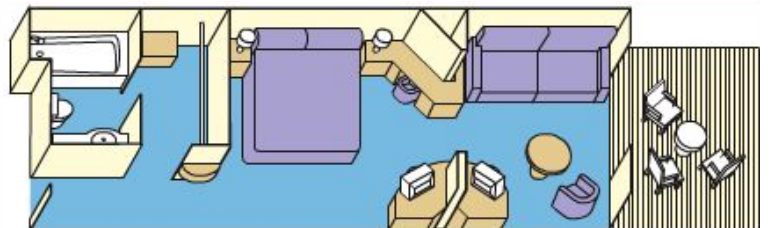
For the first time, we were interested in a suite, rather than a minisuite, and the \$1600 per person difference did not dissuade us. Since we are traveling less, it will fit in our budget, Our travel agent worked her magic, and found us the last available suite in a good location on the starboard side of the ship.

The main thing is that we will leave and arrive in Los Angeles-No airports! The fare may be more expensive than the shorter cruises leaving from Seattle, but the costs are lessened because we will not have to pay for airfare. Plus, we will be pampered for those extra days at sea.

Suite 533 Sq Ft



Mini suite 323 Sq Ft



As you can see, the suite is much larger, and has a much larger balcony. It even has a wet bar! One great thing is a curtain that can divide the two rooms. This is great if one of us gets up earlier than the other or one of us want to nap.

The bathroom also has two entrances, one from each room.

Since we are now "Elite" passengers on Princess, we get free laundry service as one of the perks! This means that we can bring fewer clothes and just have them laundered. We also get a bar setup of 8 miniatures plus some mixers. We get them exchanged for gin and brandy, as no rum was available to

exchange.

Princess has designated our suite as a “Club Class”. We experienced “Club Class” on our 2018 Hawaii cruise, and really enjoyed it. No waiting to be seated, the same wait staffs each night, and an extra entrée on the menu.

Speaking of menus, someone on Cruise Critic posted menus from the cruise they just took on the same ship. They look great, and the meals were seasoned much better than on previous cruises.

WEATHER

Our biggest concern was the weather. When I took an Alaskan cruise in 1988, it rained every day except one. We tracked the 10 day forecast for all ports, and we saw a gradual clearing trend.

We were so lucky that we had bright sunny days in all of our ports. We apparently hit a window of good weather, as it is raining there the day after we returned.

NORTH TO ALASKA

The sea was a little rough northbound, as we were heading into the swells. However, we were out on our balcony, and saw something amazing! We have seen many rainbows in our lives, including a double rainbow on Kauai, but have never seen one that arcs completely from end to end. We believed rainbows are a good omen, and were glad to see it.

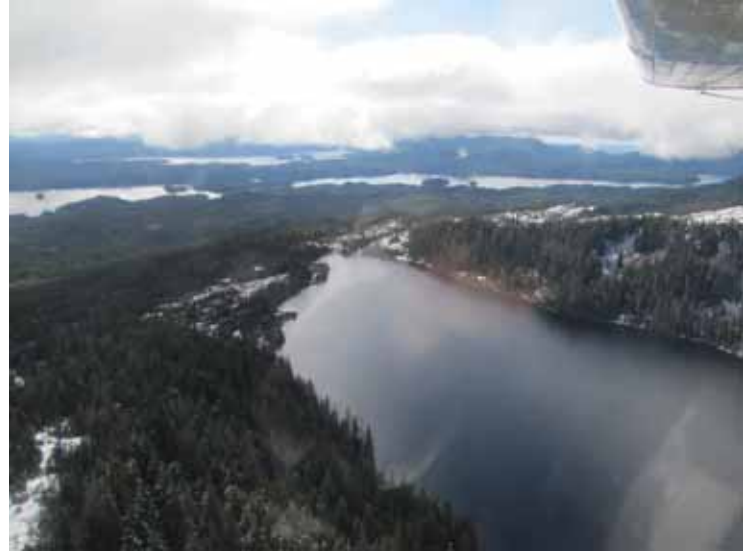


KETCHIKAN

Coming into Ketchikan, we saw the most unusual sight. We called it a “jetway” for seaplanes, apparently to protect passengers during winter. We also saw a number of seaplanes docked near us. Hopefully, I can take a flight in one over Misty Fjord.



I saw a booth on the dock near the ship offering flights over Misty Fjord. When I was here in 1988, it was so cloudy you could not see anything. This time the weather was clear and I got some great photos. Kathy was thrilled that that I got fly over Misty Fjord while she enjoyed the morning on board the ship. We first crossed George and Carroll Inlets



From there we crossed Mirror Lake. Unfortunately, I was in the copilot seat, and got some reflections in the photos. The right hand photo is NOT upside down, but the reflection in the lake.



In many places, we flew through notches in the mountains, attesting to the skill of our pilot. We then flew across the Behm Canal to the Rudyerd Inlet, where we landed and changed passenger seating. I was happy to be in the back as I had a big bubble window to shoot through.

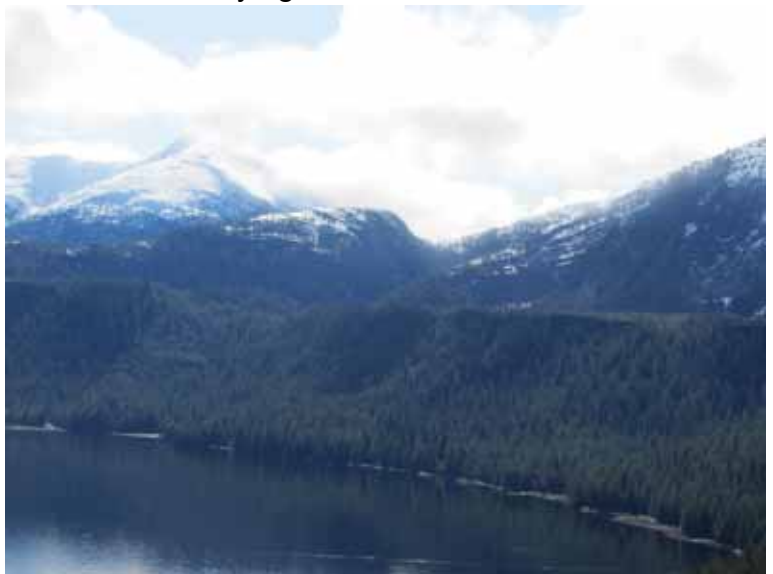




I even found a little waterfall running into the inlet.



As you can see, the cloud bases were about 4,000 feet, and we were flying about 500 feet below them.



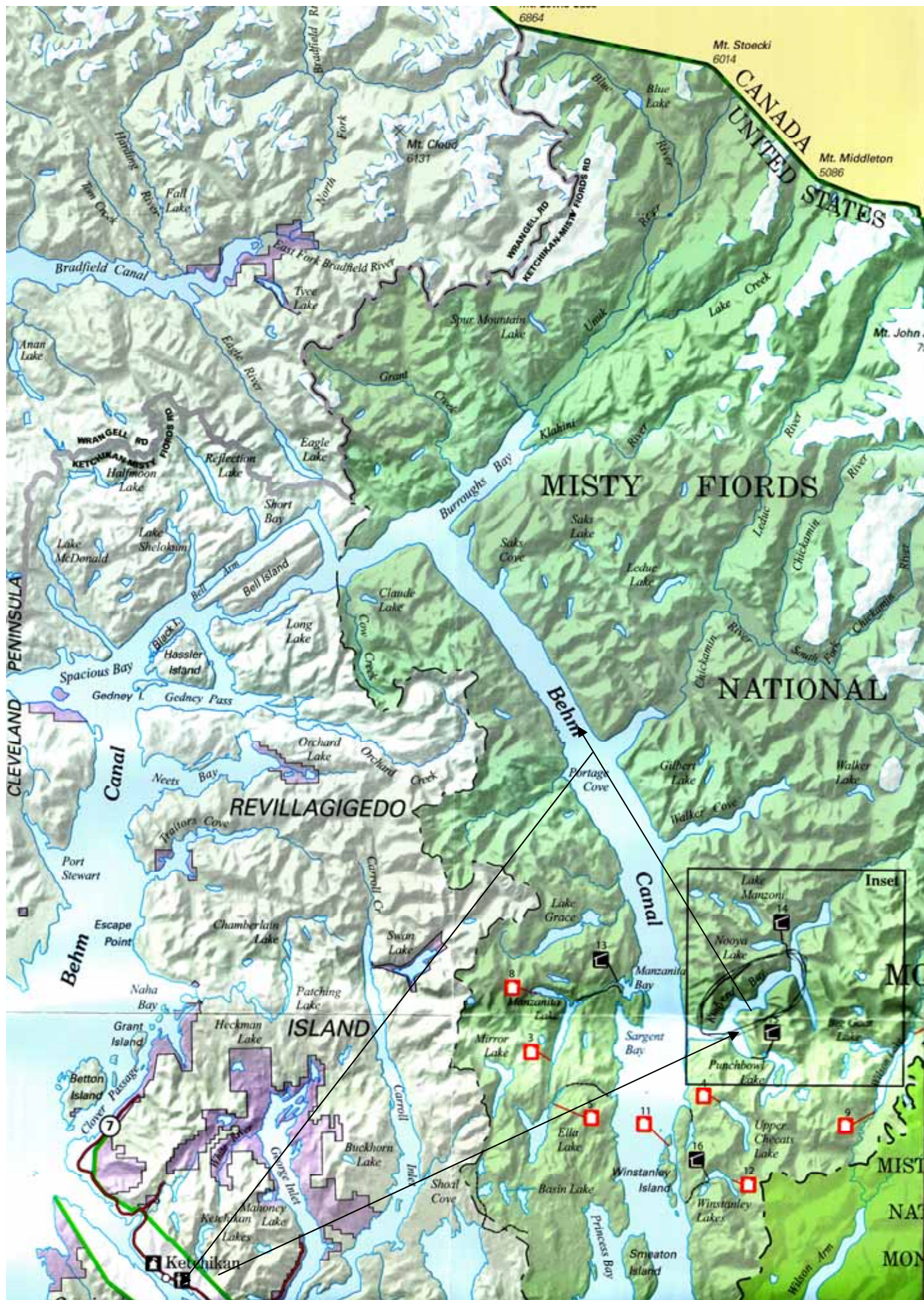
We then flew back across the Behm Canal, and passed over New Eddystone Island. This island was formed by magma pushing up through cracks of the earth and solidifying. It was named that by Capt Vancouver as it resembled the Eddystone lighthouse off the south coast of England. A picture of the lighthouse is below



We then flew back across the Carroll and George Inlets on the way back to Ketchikan. It was a fantastic experience and I was glad I finally got to see Misty Fjord.



The next page is a map of Misty Fjords, with the arrows indicating our flight path.



In the afternoon we went to a lumberjack show that was very entertaining. There was a program on one of the TV channels on the ship about the man who started the show. Rather than just having lumberjack demonstrations, he made it a challenge between American and Canadian lumberjacks, which made it a lot more interesting.

The audience was divided into two groups, one group rooted for the Canadians, and the other group rooted for the Americans.

The first was the underhand chop, where the men stand atop a log and chop below their feet. They then turn around and chop from the other side.



The next event was axe throwing, with a double headed axe.



Following that was the two man buck sawing. It was amazing how fast they cut through the log.



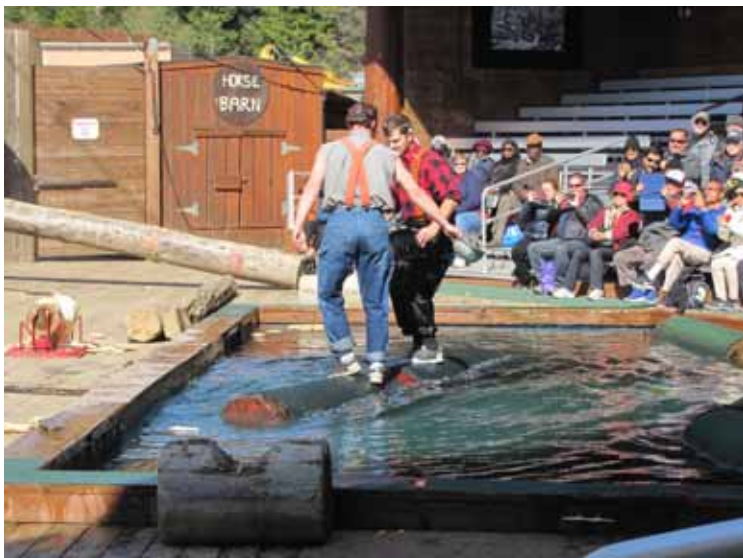
The next event was the springboard, where the men stand on a springboard to chop the wood



The tree climb was really exciting, with both men with climbing spikes on their shoes and a rope



The final event was log rolling, where two men stand on a log and spin it. The object is to dump the other person in the water.



All in all, it was a lot of fun, and the Canadian team won, to the wild cheers of half the audience.

JUNEAU

On coming into port in Juneau, we saw the most amazing sight. The bow thrusters of the ship stirred up the bottom of the dock area, and attracted all kinds of small fish to eat what is stirred up. The fish in turn, attract bald eagles, and we were sitting on our balcony watching dozens of bald eagles diving for the fish.



We wanted to take the tram up to the top of Mt Roberts to get some panoramic views of the area. There are 3 places for the ship to dock, one next to the tram, one far away where a shuttle was available, and one in the middle, which was where we docked. No transportation was available, so we took a taxi to the tram.

The Mount Roberts Tramway ride transported us 1,800 feet above sea level. The sky bridge and numerous viewing platforms offered stunning panoramas and a number of alpine paths with great views. We checked out the Native exhibits, theater, bar and restaurant in the mountaintop lodge. Unfortunately, we did not see the American bald eagle at the Juneau Raptor Center exhibit as it was being rebuilt.

The restaurant experience was a disaster! We had been viewing their menu on line, and it looked great! However, when we got there all that was offered was a "Spring Menu". No oysters, no king crab legs, etc. Kathy had a fish and chips plate, and I opted for the king crab salad.

When my salad arrived, other than a couple of spindly pieces of king crab, the bulk of the salad was Dungeness crab. I told the poor waiter that I had cleaned many king crab and Dungeness crabs, so I know the difference. He was apologetic and adjusted our bill.

After lunch we got some great scenic shots from the top.



The photo on the right shows a tree avalanche. When the soil can no longer hold the trees, it gives way much the same as snow does and leaves a bare scar on the hill.



SKAGWAY

The most interesting thing to do in Skagway is to take the White Pass and Yukon train up to the Canadian border. We had previously taken the train, but on this cruise the ship offered a VIP car for only 14 people. The overstuffed swiveling leather club chairs were luxurious, instead of the hard wooden benches with 40 people in the other cars we had previously experienced. In addition we were served wine and canapés, which made us feel like real VIP's even though we were not.

