



# Ultimate Iditarod Winter Wonderland

Anchorage - Talkeetna - Fairbanks

And "The Last Great Race" is on!



March 4 - 11, 2021 (8 days)

## HIGHLIGHTS



**Iditarod Festivities**

**Time with four-time Iditarod Champion Martin Buser at his Happy Trails Kennel**

**Iditarod Headquarters**

**Official Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Anchorage**

**Experience the restart of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race in Willow**

**Scenic drive north to Denali National Park**

**Murie Science and Learning Center**

**Night of Aurora Viewing**

**City tour of Fairbanks, featuring the Trans-Alaska Pipeline as well as the Museum of the North**

**Ride the Alaska Railroad from Healy to Talkeetna**

**City Tour of Anchorage**

## MAP AT A GLANCE





### Iditarod Fun Facts:

- 1973 was the first year the race went from Anchorage to Nome
- There are 23 checkpoints on the northern route and 24 checkpoints on the southern route, with the first checkpoint being in Anchorage and the last in Nome. The northern route is used on even years & is approx. 975 miles total. The southern route is used on odd years & is approx. 998 miles.
- The teams average 16 dogs, which means over 1,000 dogs leave Anchorage for Nome!
- The closest finish was in 1978. Dick Mackey finished one second ahead of Rick Swenson. Mackey's time was 14 days, 18 hours, 52 minutes and 24 seconds. The winner was decided by the nose of the lead dog across the finish line.
- Awarding a red lantern for the last place finisher in a sled dog race has become an Alaskan tradition. It started as a joke and has become a symbol of stick-to-itiveness in the mushing world.
- Rick Swenson is the only five time winner of "The Last Great Race", having won in 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982 and 1991. He is now the only person to win the Iditarod in three different decades, a record that will probably never be broken.



Thomas Waerner - 2020 Iditarod Champion with his IditaRider in Anchorage

Photo credit: The Iditarod

Denali National Park is breathtaking in the winter - truly a winter wonderland!



The Sled Dogs can't wait to get the race started!

### Day 1 - Home to Anchorage, AK

Today our Iditarod adventure begins as we fly into Alaska's largest city, Anchorage. Our local Alaska Tour Director will meet us and we'll check into our lodging for the next three nights. Tonight, we'll enjoy Iditarod festivities and dinner at the Musher's Banquet.

**Hotels:** Marriott Anchorage or similar (3 Nights)

**Included Meals:** Dinner

### Day 2 - Anchorage

Breakfast will be included this morning. Today we travel north to meet four-time Iditarod Champion Martin Buser at his Happy Trails Kennel. Hear personal stories while viewing a glimpse of the grandeur Alaska has to offer along the Iditarod Trail. Later, we'll return to Anchorage with an included stop at the Iditarod Headquarters enroute. Dinner will be served this evening.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 3 - Anchorage

After breakfast this morning, our exciting day begins as we head to 4th Avenue to get a great spot at the Official Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. We'll spend time cheering on mushers from all over the world. Mushers will depart the starting gate every two minutes. Watch each of them depart or you may slip away to enjoy other Iditarod festivities in Anchorage. This evening we'll have dinner together before we turn in for the night.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner





## Day 4 – Anchorage to Talkeetna, AK

After breakfast we depart for the adventure north to Willow for the restart of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Be sure to dress in layers to maximize staying warm as the entire day will be spent outside cheering on your favorite dog teams. Enroute, stop at a local grocery store in Wasilla to pick-up lunch items (on own.) Prepare for a bit of a walk to find the perfect spot along the fence line of the race. Mushers take off across Willow Lake on their 1,049-mile journey by dog sled to Nome. The Willow Community Center is open and offers a break from the cold with vendors selling food and drink as well as local crafts. Don't miss out on the special, included snacks throughout the day! Later, we will board our deluxe motorcoach for a scenic drive north to the quaint town of Talkeetna. This evening we will overnight at the majestic Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge! Then you may want to venture into downtown for dinner, as there are many little unique restaurants to choose from.

**Hotel: Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge**

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Snacks**

## Day 5 – Talkeetna to Fairbanks, AK

A wonderful breakfast is served before we take a scenic drive north to Denali National Park. Upon arrival into Denali, we'll visit the Murie Science and Learning Center which acts as the Denali Visitor's Center in the wintertime. We'll watch the National Park film, "Heartbeats of Denali," hear from a local ranger about the park, and even have a chance to snowshoe! Later, we'll continue north to Fairbanks, the Golden Heart City. Dinner will be included this evening. Tonight, enjoy a night of Aurora Viewing. Fairbanks will be our home for the next two nights.

**Hotel: Pike's Waterfront Lodge or similar**

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

## Day 6 – Fairbanks

Today after breakfast, we will experience a city tour of Fairbanks, featuring the Trans-Alaska Pipeline as well as the Museum of the North. Later, we will then board our motorcoach for a scenic ride to Chena Hotsprings where we will have a chance to relax in the healing waters of the wonderful hotsprings. Dinner will be included this evening.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

## Day 7 – Fairbanks to Anchorage, AK

After breakfast, we will head to the Healy Rail Depot where we will board Alaska Railroad's deluxe railcar for a scenic ride south to Talkeetna. Food and drinks are available for purchase on board. Upon arrival into Talkeetna, we will again board our deluxe motorcoach for a scenic transfer south to Anchorage and check into our lodging for the night. This evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner at 49th Street Brewery.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

**Hotel: Marriott Anchorage or similar**

## Day 8 – Anchorage to Home

This morning after breakfast, we'll enjoy a city tour of Anchorage including the historic downtown area, Lake Hood where 190+ floatplanes take off and land daily in the summer, Earthquake Park to learn about the 1964 Earthquake, a visit to the Ulu Factory, as well as a visit to the Anchorage Museum where we will have a chance to learn about the history and culture of Alaska. Lunch will be included today. Later, it will be time to say goodbye to our local Alaska Tour Director as we head to the Anchorage Airport for our flight. What an ultimate experience this has been!

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

Iditarod CEO greeting spectators at restart in Willow

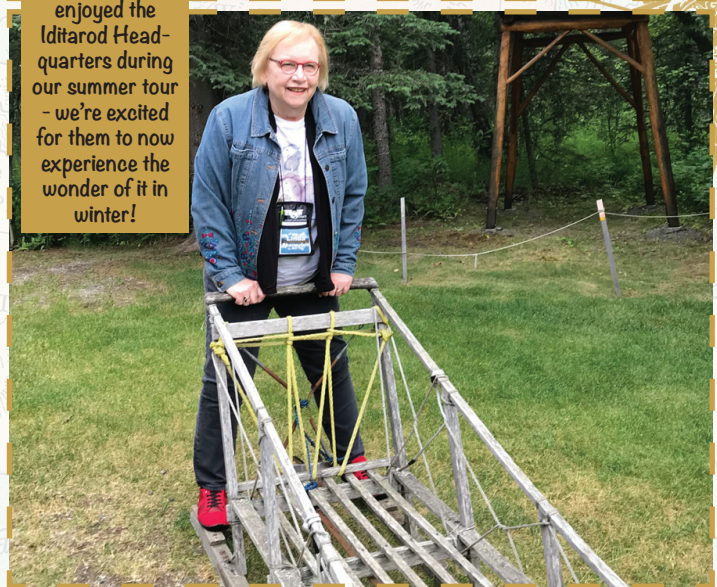
Photo credit: The Iditarod



Dog handlers get mushing teams ready as they enter the start chute - Anchorage Photo credit: The Iditarod



In the past, R&J Travelers have enjoyed the Iditarod Headquarters during our summer tour - we're excited for them to now experience the wonder of it in winter!



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### 2021 DATES & PRICES

DATES:	March 4 - 11, 2021 (8 Days)	
PRICE PER PERSON:	\$4,499 Double	\$5,149 Single
PRICE INCLUDES:	Roundtrip Airfare from MSP including all baggage fees, taxes & surcharges, 14 Meals & Snacks, Hotels & Activities as stated in brochure, Luxury Motorcoach	
DEPOSIT DUE PER PERSON:	\$200 deposit per person at time of reservation. Full payment due 45 days prior to departure.	
OPTIONAL TRAVEL PROTECTION P/P:	\$305 Double p/p	\$407 Single
TRAVEL BUCKS:	\$55 per person on future travel with R&J	
TOUR PACE:	Extensive Walking (due to snow conditions) at own pace (*Altitude Changes!)	

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