“How hard to realize that every camp of men or beast has this glorious starry firmament for a roof. In such places, standing alone on the mountaintop, it is easy to realize that whatever special nests we make — leaves and moss like the marmots and the birds, or tents or piled stone — we all dwell in a house of one room — the world with the firmament for its roof — and are sailing the celestial spaces without leaving track.”

John Muir
Trip Overview

Clear skies, dark nights and prime location make Fairbanks, Alaska one of the best places in the world to view the Northern Lights. On our Ultimate Northern Lights Photography Tour & Workshop we take you NORTH to one of the absolute BEST locations in the world – to view and photograph the Aurora Borealis. Fairbanks boasts the clearest night skies in Alaska and its prime location directly underneath the Auroral Oval make it second to none as a destination for photographing the Northern Lights!

Join us this year on our seven-day lodge-based Photography Workshop that will leave you with dazzling images of the Aurora from several different locations around Fairbanks, Alaska.

We time this excursion so that it occurs during the best months of the year to photograph the Aurora and we schedule it to coincide closely with the new moon for the darkest skies possible. Although predicting
the Aurora is fickle at best, statistically September, October & March are the best months overall for viewing the Aurora and photographing this phenomenon under clear skies.

On this trip, we switch gears and photograph at night while sleeping during the day! Each night after a hearty Alaskan dinner we will head out to search for the Aurora. Evenings are spent at a remote cabin with access to great photographic compositions, so you can quickly return to the cabin and warm-up when the Northern Lights calm down. When the Aurora comes on strong, we head out to photograph! After each night’s photography session, we head to our nice accommodations and catch-up on sleep during the day in Fairbanks. Our hotel understands the nature of Northern Lights Photography and the rooms are cozy, quiet and quite nice for daytime sleepers!

There will be lots of instruction while we are waiting for the Aurora to come-on and the opportunity to photograph beautiful Alaskan Winter Landscape scenes and to go dog-sledding (included in the price!).

Join us in Alaska and experience the magic of the Aurora Borealis.

_Fairbanks, Alaska is the best place in the world to view the Aurora Borealis on a consistent and fairly predictable basis. Although we have never had a group not witness the Northern Lights on one of our trips it is possible due to weather and atmospheric conditions. Typical groups have a 40-70% success ratio throughout the trip - meaning there are usually a few cloudy days that prevent good viewing / photography - hence the six-night trip. We want to give you the best chance possible for excellent aurora photos!_

**Highlights**

- 6 Full Nights of Incredible Northern Lights Photography
- Cozy Alaskan Hotel in Fairbanks
- Clearest Skies in Alaska
- Photograph the Aurora Borealis with expert photographic instruction
- Several unique photography locations for epic compositions and variety
**Noteworthy Travel Logistics**

- This trip begins & ends in Fairbanks, Alaska at:

  **Springhill Suites Fairbanks***
  575 1st Avenue
  Fairbanks, Alaska 99701 US
  +1 907-451-6552

  *Please note: Exact hotel is subject to change - equivalent hotel may be substituted. If you are planning on arriving early or staying late please contact us.

- You can arrive at any time on Day One of the tour as long as you arrive in time for the 8pm orientation meeting that evening.
- You can depart Fairbanks at any time on the last day of the tour.

**Transportation On-Tour**

When you arrive in Fairbanks, Alaska just call the Springhill Suites Fairbanks at +1 907-451-6552. *If you are using their complementary airport transportation, please contact them at least 24 hours before your arrival to arrange your shuttle pickup. For the duration of the tour we will provide ground transportation.*
Itinerary

Most meals included – (B,L,D) denotes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day One (Travel Day)(D)

Plan to arrive in Fairbanks, Alaska by 8pm today. We will have an orientation dinner and preliminary instruction on Northern Lights Photography then it’s off for a few hours of rest. We will wake you up just before midnight to head out to one of our favorite locations – a frozen lake surrounded by dark forests for an incredible first night of Northern Lights Photography. We have even rented a private Ice Fisherman’s shack for warming while we are waiting for the lights!

Days Two-Six (B,D)

We’ll spend the next several days photographing the Northern Lights around Fairbanks. Each night we’ll head out to different locations and photograph the Aurora Borealis! During the day, you can catch up on much needed sleep, and we’ll offer you other activities such as dog sledding (weather-dependent), and visiting the Chena Hotsprings. Every evening before we head out there will be an instructional session and some time to help improve our photography.

Day Seven (B)

After our final night of shooting the Northern Lights you can book tickets home at any point today.

Please Note: Weather delays are possible, and we highly recommend travel insurance. The exact sequence of the itineraries on all photography trips will be based on weather and lighting conditions. The goal on these trips is to make sure we are at the right place at the right time for the perfect light on our subjects. Also, itineraries can change for a variety of other circumstances including floods, forest fires, national park closures, road closures and more. Due to the nature of wildlife and nature photography we do not guarantee any specific
sightings or specific compositions regarding wildlife or natural phenomena.

Trip Details

Physical Requirements
All participants must be in good physical condition and have the ability to walk short distances with camera equipment and essential hiking gear. For example, tripod, camera, lenses, water, snacks, and extra layers (if necessary).

Group Size
On this trip, there will be up to ten guests and two photo instructors.

Accommodation
We will be staying in a great hotel in Fairbanks so you can rest soundly during the day!

Trip length
7 days

**Meeting Time and Place**
8pm in the lobby of your hotel on Day One of the trip.

**Fitness Level 1:**
Fairly Easy – *Light walks*

**Trip Conclusion**
Fairbanks, Alaska at approximately 3am on Day Seven. You can fly out anytime when you wake-up on Day Seven (just catch our hotel’s free shuttle to the airport!)

**Price/Start Dates**
[Ultimate Northern Lights (see website)](http://www.backcountryjourneys.com)

**Meals**
Most meals are included during the trip dates. Lunches are not included based on the nature of the tour. We will spend most of our time photographing in the evenings after dark in search of the Aurora.

**Weather**
Statistically September, October & March in Fairbanks have the absolute best chance to see the Aurora Borealis due to the highest average of clear skies to dark nights ratio. In the fall it is generally pleasant but can be slightly chilly at night. In March it will be cold. Very cold. Sometimes in the evenings it can get below -30 Fahrenheit. We stay in a cozy warm lodge and there is always access to warmth throughout the trip.

**Weather Fairbanks, Alaska**
We recommend checking this Weather link prior to your trip departure to plan your gear and clothing packing accordingly.

**Price Includes**
Breakfast and all but one dinner, which will be on your own, ground transportation, accommodation during the trip dates: from the evening
of day one through the morning of day seven, professional photography instruction, medically certified wilderness guide, & gratuities for service personnel such as drivers, pilots, captains as well as hotel & restaurant staff.

**Price Does Not Include**
Airfare to/from Fairbanks, alcoholic beverages, accommodations before or after the trip dates, lunches and one dinner on your own, souvenirs, & trip leader gratuities *(industry standard is typically 10%-20% of the trip cost based on your experience)*

**Conditioning for Photography Trips**

There is no hiking on this trip but there are some walks along potentially snowy paths. The better shape you’re in, the more you will enjoy the trip. I recommend walking as often wearing the boots you plan to hike in. Balance is critical on uneven snowy ground. Whatever you can do to improve your balance will pay big dividends.

**Lodging & Meals**

Backcountry Journeys Photography Tours & Workshops include all breakfasts and all dinners except one dinner on your own, lodging from day one through the morning of the last day of the tour, ground transportation while on the tour, guide fees and other items essential to a successful trip – meaning that once your there all you will have to focus on is your photography. We can accommodate most special diets so please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.
Gear list

This gear list should answer a lot of your gear questions so please read through this carefully. If you still have questions, please give us a call.

Best practice on this trip is to wear a pair of good synthetic “Smartwool” Ski / Mountaineering type socks under heavy winter boots (good brands are Baffin or Sorrel). You’ll want to bring several base-layers (thermal underwear) that you can stack, snow-pants, a heavy down jacket (Canada Goose is the best brand), gloves, warm-winter hat and a balaclava. As weather conditions change you will add insulating / weatherproof layers to your base setup. Don’t bring any cotton clothing for our night-time field sessions. Cotton is not a good insulator and once it gets wet it takes forever to dry. Absolutely no jeans! (see complete clothing list below)

Always Check the weather forecast first when packing clothing and layers! Depending on the weather, items marked (Winter Version of the tour) you will likely only need on the winter version of the tour not the Fall version of the tour.

Photo & Field Gear

Recommended Camera Gear:
- DSLR or Mirrorless Camera. (Nikon, Canon, Sony, Panasonic etc.)
- Wide-angle lens (10-20mm, f2.8 or faster is best)
- Normal Lenses (ranging from approximately 35mm to 100mm)
- Sturdy but lightweight Tripod (must be able to carry this on short hikes)
- Memory Cards
- Batteries & Chargers
- Lens cleaning pen & cloth
- Camera Day Pack (this should appropriately carry all your camera & hiking gear and have a rain cover)
• Camera Rain Sleeve

Optional (but recommended) Camera Gear:
• Back-Up Camera Body
• Medium telephoto zoom lens (*100–400mm zoom or equivalent*)
• Macro-Lens (snowflakes anyone!)
• 1.4x tele converter
• Laptop Computer with Lightroom / Photoshop Pre-Installed (for personal use in hotels for downloading images while on tour)
• External Hard Drives
• Remote Shutter Trigger
• Camera’s Instruction Manual

*please contact us at 928-478-1521 with any specific camera gear questions. We are here to help you plan the perfect trip!

Suggested Field Gear & Clothing for Alaskan Winter
• Base Layers (top & bottom): *Mid-weight long-john style thermal underwear (merino wool is best)*
• Mid Layers (top & bottom): *Heavier weight long-john style thermal underwear (merino wool is best)* (*Winter Version of the Tour*)
• Heavier Mid Layer (top & bottom): *Heavier fleece or wool jacket / fleece pants*
• Top Layers: Insulated snow pants & good winter jacket or parka (heavy, puffy down jackets that are water-resistant are best): extreme cold weather brands such as Canada Goose perform leaps and bounds above the rest. (*Winter version of the Tour*)
• Weather-Proof Layers: Weatherproof jacket that goes over down-jacket
• Thick down, wool, or fleece vest is also essential for keeping your core toasty.
• Heavy, warm, ski mountaineering socks (*wool / merino wool*)
• Insulated winter boots (*high performance insulated boot that is supportive, waterproof, lightweight, and breathable.*)
• Hand-wear: Light-weight fleece gloves +
• Heavy down gloves over the top as well as heavy duty waterproof mittens. *(Winter Version of the Tour)*
• Hand warmers and toe warmers are fantastic.
• Warm hats: Thick beanie plus aviator style winter cap is optimal!
• Scarf or neck warmer
• Balaklava *(Winter Version of the Tour)*
• Headlamp with Red Light Capabilities and multiple spare batteries *(there are short daylight hours during the winter)*
• Gaiters *(optional, but recommended, depending on your ski pants)*
• Shooting Gloves
• Knee / butt pads (for low-angle shooting)
• Casual wear for around town & in the hotel
• Swimsuit for the hot-tub
• Water Bottle (insulated is best, such as a Hydroflask)
• Pocket knife *(optional)*
• Trekking poles *(optional)*
• Prescription medication
• Personal toiletries
• Money, for tipping your guide *(industry standard is generally 10%-20% of the trip cost based on your experience)*, and for any personal expenses not included in the tour package such as alcoholic beverages, a few of the meals, souvenirs, etc.

This is a general list. Call or email us with any questions!

**Note on Packing for the tour:**

*Please pack your extra clothing, toiletries, extra camera gear, and other travel items into a suitcase, duffel or travel bag. You will not bring all your camera gear on every hike or outing. Each day you will be briefed on which lenses, filters, etc. you will need on each outing the following evening.*