PETERSBURG, ALASKA

Petersburg, Alaska, located on Mitkof Island, is considered Alaska’s Little Norway. Petersburg grew up around a salmon cannery and sawmill built by Peter Buschmann between 1897 and 1899. Petersburg is named after Peter Buschmann and part of its charm lies in its magnificent setting and the Scandinavian design of some of its buildings and houses.

Services

Downtown merchants sell a variety of products, including gifts and souvenirs, hunting and fishing gear and licenses, camping supplies, groceries, hardware, marine supplies, automotive parts, and clothing. Unique and colorful gifts and clothes imported from Norway are available at some specialty shops. Artwork by local artists is sold at downtown shops and at an art gallery located near the ferry terminal.

The business district contains two banks, several restaurants, a laundry, a movie theater, and a bookstore. The U.S. Post Office and the U.S. Forest Service ranger district office are both located in the federal office building. Other merchants offer nearly all visitor services, including gas stations and car repair, air taxi services and charters, car rentals, RV parking, propane, and boat repairs and rentals.

Visitor Attractions

Visit the Clausen Memorial Museum at Second and Fram streets to view exhibits that explain local fishing history and Petersburg’s Norwegian heritage. The museum is open daily May through September.

The recently restored Sons of Norway Hall is one of the prominent downtown landmarks. It is a favorite location for artists and photographers. The hall is on the National Register of Historic Places and is open for visitors on special occasions.

Mitkof Island offers a picnic area at Sandy Beach located north of Petersburg. Sandy Beach has a good view of Frederick Sound and offers covered picnic shelters. Camping is not allowed at the picnic grounds.

Walk through any of the boat harbors and you will usually find a friendly fisherman who will explain some of the fishing gear and fishing boats docked in the harbor. Freshly caught seafood is often available at the local markets and also is served at local restaurants.

Walking Tours

Petersburg offers several attractive walks. The city’s Main Street contains brass inlays of area birds and animals, and boasts recently planted trees, custom light poles and benches, and picnic tables along Harbor Way. A boardwalk connects Mountain View Manor with the local ballpark. Other walks are the Loop Walk, Hammer Slough Walk, Harbor Walk, and the Three Lakes Loop Road Walk.

Accommodations

Accommodations in and around Petersburg include three hotels, several bed-and-breakfast establishments, a Forest Service campground, and several remote Forest Service cabins. Tent City, a municipal campground near the airport, is used primarily by the many transient cannery workers who flock to Petersburg during the summer and is not recommended for tourists.

Drivers can generally park recreational vehicles anywhere within the National Forest boundary, provided they do not interfere with logging operations. Camping or recreational vehicle parking in the city limits is discouraged. If you are planning to stay in a hotel, U.S. Forest Service cabin, or on the Alaska Marine Highway, you will need to make a reservation.

Transportation

Daily jet service is available from Seattle, Ketchikan, and Juneau to Petersburg. Commuter airline flights are also available from Ketchikan, Wrangell, or Juneau. The airport and seaplane base are close to town and can accommodate private aircraft. A helicopter charter service also operates at the airport.

The Alaska Marine Highway offers another option for traveling to Petersburg. Petersburg is one of the main ferry stops and service is frequent during the summer. The ferry terminal is a short walk from downtown, and taxi service is available.

If you would like more information on traveling in Alaska, check with a First Choice Travel representative.