

Bering Land Bridge

BERING LAND BRIDGE NATIONAL
PRESERVE
ALASKA

The Bering Land Bridge, now overlain by the Chukchi Sea and the Bering Sea and Strait, was the route over which many plants, animals, and humans migrated from Asia to America. The Bering Strait, alternately a land bridge and a seaway between Asia and America during the glacial epoch, has long interested scientists as among

the most likely regions where prehistoric hunters entered America.

The preserve lies just below the Arctic Circle on the Seward Peninsula in Northwest Alaska, between Kotzebue and Nome. It encompasses some one million hectares (2.59 million acres). There is much tundra,

and the area is relatively flat by Alaskan standards. Clear lakes and dozens of clear streams and lagoons provide fine habitat for waterbirds and fish. There is a variety of wildlife and plants, hot springs, lava beds and other volcanic phenomena, and archeological and paleontological sites.



WHAT TO DO AND SEE

Part of the preserve's attraction is seeing Eskimos from neighboring villages pursue subsistence lifestyles, manage reindeer herds, and produce arts and crafts.

During the short summer the area bursts into life. There are some 245 species of plants, many blooming in splashes of color, others delicate and subtle. From mid-August to mid-September, tundra plants assume the colors of a New England autumn.

You may also see and photograph wildlife: some 112 migratory bird species; marine mammals such as seal and endangered whales; grizzly bear, wolf, and moose. Clear streams and lakes provide excellent sport fishing for salmon, char, and grayling. River floating, boating, and canoeing opportunities are here, if the logistics of gear transport can be solved. And there

are volcanic areas, hot springs, sea cliffs, and beaches to explore.

ACCESS

The preserve is isolated. No roads lead here and airports at Nome and Kotzebue that handle jets are far away. These are usual intermediate points for flights into the preserve or to nearby Native villages. You can charter flights out of Nome and Kotzebue into Serpentine Hot Springs and onto preserve beaches.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

Nearest lodging and meals are at Nome and Kotzebue. Reserve a room because tour groups book much hotel space. Rooms and meals are expensive. Transportation costs in the "bush" keep prices high in these areas. There are no accommodations in the preserve or in Native villages close by. If you plan to stay in the preserve you must arrive self-

sufficient. Some food, clothing, and beverages and some gear may be purchased in Nome and Kotzebue, but supplies in village stores are generally depleted and are intended for local Native consumption. No local guides or outfitters operate in the preserve; bush pilots in Nome and Kotzebue who are familiar with the preserve can be helpful in providing information and services.

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WEATHER AND INSECTS

Most people visit here between mid-June and mid-September when temperatures average around 7°C (mid-40s F) along the coasts and 18°C (mid-60s F) inland. During the ice-free periods along the coasts (late May to late October), cloudy skies prevail, fog occurs, daily temperatures remain fairly constant in the long hours of daylight, and the relative humidity is high. Clearer skies and more pronounced temperature changes occur inland. Insects are most numerous and most irritating from mid-June to early August.

CLOTHING, FOOD AND GEAR

There are no campgrounds. You must arrive self-sufficient

for food, clothing, shelter, and in some cases fuel. Some driftwood occurs on beaches, but inland wood is scarce and should be used chiefly for cooking. As things now stand, before entering the preserve you should possess good outdoor skills and the stamina to survive difficult conditions. You need hiking, backpacking, and camping experience. Know about the food, clothing, and gear to make your trip pleasant and rewarding.

Once here you must carry everything on your back, so bring only essentials: good tent with rain fly, sleeping bag and pad, insect repellent and head net, cooking and eating

utensils, first aid items, maps, knife, food, warm clothing and rain gear, calf-high boots with waterproof lowers, fishing tackle, extra socks, and manageable camera equipment.

PRECAUTIONS AND COURTESIES

The preserve is vast, and a number of dangers may confront even the experienced here. Do not travel alone. Local residents carry on their subsistence way of life within the preserve. Their camps, fishnets, and other equipment are critical to their well-being. Please observe the usual courtesies respecting their property and privacy.

Please get specific information about your planned trip by writing:

Superintendent
Bering Land Bridge National
Preserve
P.O. Box 220
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Phone: (907) 443-2522

