

## Portage Glacier



Portage Glacier is probably the most visited glacier in Alaska. The glacier is easily accessible from Anchorage via the Seward Highway. When you look for Portage Glacier, it may be a bit hard to find. However, it is relatively easy to see where it once was. In the past decade, the Portage Glacier began its retreat from the lake where it originated. If you look at a small section in the middle, you can see some exposed bedrock. However, a significant portion of the Alaska Portage Glacier extends down over 100 feet into the Portage Lake.

If you plan to take a Portage Glacier tour, your first stop should be the Begich-Boggs Visitor Center. According to an article in the New York Times, the most common question asked of the rangers at the center is "Dude, where did Portage Glacier go?" A display inside the center shows that 11 years ago, the Alaska Portage Glacier descended down to the end of the lake. However, it is now at the back of the lake, completely out of sight from the center.

The center has a number of interesting exhibits, as well as a fascinating film about glaciers entitled "Voices from the Ice." Other exhibits at the center focus on the Portage Valley, Prince William Sound, glaciers, wild weather conditions, the unique Alaska animals and interesting stories about Alaskans. A new wing of the visitor center called the Portage Valley Learning Center offers Summer Forest Explorer Programs.

Your next activity on the Portage Glacier tour will be a walk along the lake in order to get up close and personal with the icebergs. However, if you want to see the Portage Glacier, you will need to drive further along the lake to find the sightseeing boat dock, where a Portage Glacier tour cruises through the lake to the face of the Alaska Portage Glacier. Given the affects of global warming, if you are interested in glaciers, it behooves you take an Alaska glacier tour within the next few years. Who knows how long the glaciers will actually be there?