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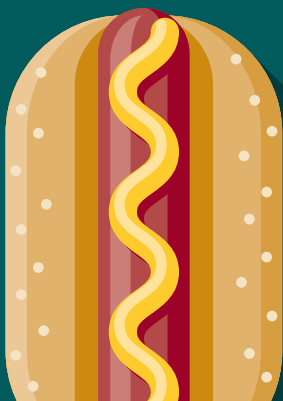
NOME



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Welcome to Nome!

Greetings,

Thank you for taking a look at Nome, Alaska as your travel destination for a near-term visit! Whether fulfilling a life-long dream and are checking something off your bucket list, or you more recently heard of Nome's mystique and are making more of a spur-of-the-moment decision, we know you will find a visit rewarding and enjoyable.

Nome is likely the most recognized and best-known Alaska city. Native Alaskans traversed the coastline pursuing sea mammals, moose and caribou, wild plants and berries that continue to be a part of a subsistence lifestyle and diet. Over 50 percent of our population identifies as **Alaska Native** or Inupiaq, with some Siberian Yupik and Yupik Eskimo. Despite variants in language, you will find their friendliness is the same.

Gold discovered on the beaches in 1898 is credited with putting Nome on the map. The population swelled to 20,000-plus people at that time, and currently is about 3,700. Nome grows annually in summer when hardy men and women still trek to the "**City of Golden Beaches**" to sift our sands. Both large- and small-scale mining occurs by diving in to the Bering Sea waters, both in summer off floating dredges and in winter through holes in the sea ice. If you're interested in picking up a gold pan and trying your luck, there are areas where recreational mining is permitted.

Nome is proud to be the official finish line for the **Iditarod Sled Dog Race**, a 1,049-mile course where canine athletes and their human companion travel across the vast and beautiful Alaskan expanse to finish here under the "burled arch." Not any less exciting is the Iron Dog snowmachine race in mid-February, where Nome is the halfway point.

Nome is the "**hub city**" in Western Alaska. Our airport is the feeder to smaller



Mayor John Handeland with one of his best friends, Maxine Merrill

surrounding villages. Through the Port of Nome, ice-free for about seven months, comes supplies not easily transported by air. Vehicles, large equipment, building materials and much more arrive on barges at Nome with smaller vessels feeding a distribution network to surrounding communities. As global warming accelerates, the Arctic is becoming more traveled with ships navigating a broader area to take advantage of the **Northwest Passage** route over the North Pole.

To get a true sense of the magnificence we value every day, do try to venture some miles away. Think about renting a vehicle. More than 350 miles of **well-maintained roads** await you, open during the summer months. The Native village of Teller, and routes to Kougarak and Council have historic relics, breathtaking views, clear streams and gorgeous tundra flowers. And **wild animals** might also cross your path.

Consider a stop at a local gift shop for beautiful ivory carvings crafted by skilled **regional artisans**. Visit the museum and the cultural center. Stop by a local restaurant.

We don't have some of the big city trappings like malls or even street lights. But we've got some of the greatest, **friendliest people!** We tend to take care of the insides of our homes over outside cosmetics, due to the fact that for months each year snow drifts up and the sides are covered to the windows, or even above. We value our friendships and family, and the great outdoors.

Thank you for considering Nome as the place for your next getaway. We will do our best to make you feel at home, and hope you will understand why we say "There's No Place Like Nome!"

John K. Handeland

Mayor, City of Nome, Alaska

Cori Eide

Nome Visitors Center

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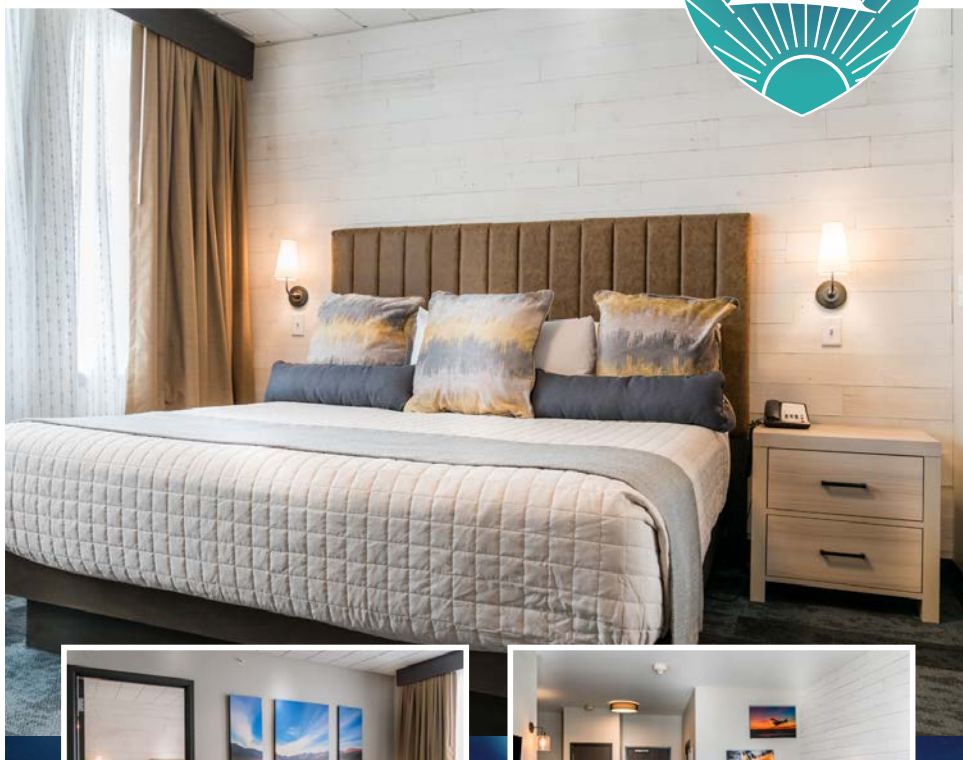
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SUPER-SIZED ADVENTURE

Go "Beyond Out There" to Explore

SENDING AN Instagram-worthy photo standing by a glacier or riding in a dogsled can be easily misleading for those who can't see the rest of the image. Zoom out a little and you might see the city skyline in the background, or a highway just a few feet away. In large cities like Anchorage and Fairbanks, these awe-inducing moments can be enjoyed just minutes from your hotel room.

But in Nome, yet another level of adventure is added to, well, the adventure. Just getting to this far-flung city is a unique opportunity all its own, but then stretch your limitations even further, and there's just no end to what can be experienced here.

"Just arriving in Nome is the high point for many people," said Paul Kostko, Nome Chamber of Commerce's executive director. "But we have many activities, from biking to paddling to mountain running. And then there is Iditarod"—and it doesn't get more adventurous than that.

Ken Hughes is a longtime Nome resident who has tried it all. One of the most adventurous events he gets excited about takes place in the winter.

"It's called the Nome-Golovin 200, which is a snowmobile race down the coast to Golovin and back," he said. "The record time is a few seconds shy of two hours"—faster than any vehicle could ever drive the course he added, especially considering there is no roadway.

Hughes has done the race 13 times, but

EXPERIENCE ADVENTURE

• **Nome Visitors Center** (301 Front St., 907-443-6555) can direct you to local outfitters or do-it-yourself destinations ranging from biking to swimming (yes, it's a real adventure to swim in the Bering Sea!) to sea kayaking or lake canoeing.

• **Nome Outfitters** (400 Bering St., 907-387-1219) is a good resource for do-it-yourself adventure including camping supplies and other gear, such as fishing tackle, in stock.

• **Nome Community Center** (104 Division St., 907-443-5259) rents equipment such as kayak, canoes, paddleboards.

says these days he likes to take it easier. Still, he added, the race is adrenaline-inducing and offers a perspective on the region that can only be gained by going into the wild.

Other activities include stand up paddleboarding, pack rafting, cycling and mountain running. The Anvil Mountain Run is held July 4 and challenges runners to follow an out-and-back course that covers about 17 kilometers and more than 1,100 feet of elevation gain. Competitors must complete the course within five hours to receive their finisher's certificate. (For more information on the Independence Day event, which is part of a day of festivities, contact Leo Rasmussen at 907-304-2573).

Above: Mt. Osborn is the highest mountain on the Seward Peninsula at 4,714 feet. Experienced hikers can find it at the end of Grand Central Valley.

Welcome to Nome!

Thank you for coming

Quyaana Qairuasi

(Inupiaq)

Quyaana Tailuci

(Central Yup'ik)

Quyakamsi Tagilghiisi

(St. Lawrence Island Yupik)

WELCOME TO SITNASUAQ, the largest community in the Bering Strait Region. The region is home to vibrant living cultures whose roots go back thousands of years. Three major Alaska Native cultures call the Bering Strait Region home. The Inupiat, the Central Yup'ik and the St. Lawrence Island Yupik people. Each of the region's 20 communities maintain a government-to-government relationship with the United States as Tribal Nations and have been known to occupy their respective homelands for several millennia.

Sitnasuaq is known among Alaska Native Peoples of the region as a historically permanent community. In 2005 and 2006, the City of Nome undertook a port facility construction project. Two subterranean homes, a hunting cache and a trash midden were found by construction workers during excavation. The homes were radiocarbon dated as 250-400 years old.

During the Gold Rush era, Alaska Natives were excluded from staking claims until they were granted citizenship to the United States in 1924. A study done in 2011 by Amber Lincoln, PhD, stated, "By 1924, the resources from placer mining had largely been extracted and gold strikes had ceased," and "the historic territorial and federal Jim Crow Laws that were exercised in Nome denied Alaska Native people of property, civic, and representational rights." One striking example of this was in 1898, when



two Inupiaq boys, Constantine Uparazuck and Gabriel Adams, showed three Scandinavian prospectors the location of a gold deposit near Nome, but denied the right to stake claims. A memorial statue commemorating Constantine and Gabriel is located on Anvil City Square, and it was the Native schoolchildren of Nome who fundraised and commissioned the beautiful statue.

Indigenous Peoples have maintained their values, knowledge, culture, and ways of being and knowing, for thousands of years. In recent history, there have been difficult times. During the late 1800's and early 1900's, illnesses that were common to European individuals were devastating to Alaska Native people, and in some cases, entire communities perished. In 1900, the Nome flu epidemic took 60 percent of all local Native people, and the 1918 Spanish flu caused 75 percent of the population of nearby Wales to succumb. From the 1920s through the late 1970s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs instituted an assimilation policy, and many Alaska Native children were removed from their communities and sent to boarding schools where speaking Native languages was forbidden.

Nome played an important role in the U.S. Civil Rights movement. In 1944, Alberta Schenck (Inupiaq) was arrested for sitting in the "whites only" section of the Dream Theater. Alberta wrote a passionate and compelling



ALASKA NATIVE PARTNER AGENCIES

- **Norton Sound Health Corp.**, a tribally owned health corporation, providing all health care services for the region.
www.nortonsoundhealth.org
- **Kawerak, Inc.**, a tribally run non-profit organization serving the region.
www.kawerak.org; www.katirvik.org;
www.walrusivory.org
- **Bering Straits Native Corp.**, the regional for-profit Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporation.
www.beringstraits.com
- **Norton Sound Economic Development Corp.**, the region's fisheries Community Development Quota Program corporation. www.nsedc.com
- **Sitnasuak Native Corp.**, Nome's ANCSA Native village corporation.
www.snc.org
- **Nome Eskimo Community**, the tribal government for Nome.
www.necalaska.org
- **King Island Native Community**, the tribal government for King Island, based in Nome
- **Native Village of Council**, the tribal government for Council, based in Nome
- **Native Village of Solomon**, the tribal government for Solomon, based in Nome.

letter to The Nome Nugget newspaper and a telegram to the Territorial Governor, Ernest Gruening, on the issue of racism. Alberta's advocacy, along with other Alaska Native leaders like Elizabeth Peratrovich, Tlingit of Southeast Alaska, are heroes of equity and social justice.

Sitnasuak and the region's communities have, for hundreds of generations, maintained a complex system of kinship, oral history, trade economy, and intimate knowledge of the region's land, sea, natural resources, and technologies necessary to thrive. In the spring, many local hunters can be seen in their skiffs on the ocean seeking bearded seal and walrus. In the summer, families are typically out picking greens, gathering eggs, or fishing for salmon. In the fall, it is time to hunt for moose and caribou, pick berries of all kinds, and harvest beluga whales. Winter provides sea ice, and many families harvest crab and cod from holes in the ice.

Harvesting is important to Alaska Native sustenance, spirituality, and community. In a subsistence harvest, the entire animal is used for food, clothing, tools and more. Carvers make beautiful artifacts with walrus ivory to help share their stories and experiences. This art is at the heart of the cultures and traditions of the people, and provides income to the artists' families and communities in remote areas where economic opportunities are often unavailable. To learn more about the importance of walrus ivory to our region, please visit www.walrusivory.org for more information.

Harvesting allows for sharing of important knowledge to children, connection to the land and sea, and caring for the environment. The late Inupiaq leader Eileen Panigeo MacLean of Utkiagvik shared important wisdom when she said, "Subsistence is not about poverty, it is about wealth...This wealth is expressed in harvest and in the sharing and celebration that result from the harvest."

Today, Alaska Native agencies in Nome work in partnership toward the common goals of cultural education and preservation, language revitalization, perpetuation of cultural values, and the health, social and economic wellbeing of community members. Local Alaska Native agencies work closely with families and local schools, providing cultural education and partnering in delivery of prevention education, youth leadership development and continued involvement youth wellness initiatives.

Quyaana tani (thanks again), and welcome to Nome—we hope you enjoy your stay!



Muskoxen Mascots

ALASKA IS A VAST PLACE, covered in high mountains, glacial fjords, winding rivers and millions upon millions of bodies of water—from small ponds to massive lakes. Roaming all of these wild places are the animals that call Alaska home. From wolves in their forested dens to polar bears on the frozen sea ice, there is no shortage of opportunity to experience this magical collision of wilderness and wildlife together.

Visiting Nome is where you'll be almost guaranteed to see some of Alaska's amazing wildlife, namely the muskox.

"Nome is one of the few places in Alaska where you can get off a jet plane and see a muskox within 15 minutes," said Paul Kosto, executive director of the Nome Chamber of Commerce. In fact, Kosto said, the muskoxen, since their migration into the Nome area, have become somewhat of a local fixture.

"We are really almost making the muskox a quasi mascot here," he said. "It's very unique to Nome that we have this sort of animal so close and accessible."

If you've never seen a muskox up close, the best—and safest—way to view them is from a distance. Start by stopping by the Nome Visitors Center to get a full appreciation of their size and stature.

"We have a muskox in our visitors center,

and you can see just how big it really is," Kosto said of the taxidermied muskox there. "It's impressive."

In real life, muskox appear to be quite docile, and most of the time they are. But a giant muskox can run surprisingly fast if bothered. So viewing them from afar is the best way to appreciate them.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game created "Alaska's Nome Area Wildlife Viewing Guide" that Kosto says is available in the visitors center. It not only includes tips for viewing muskox, but also the other plentiful wildlife that live in the region. Grizzly bears, Arctic fox and moose are among some of the local inhabitants in the area.

But muskoxen remain a unique and special part of the Nome area, appreciated even more today because they once were nearly wiped out.

"They were hunted to extinction in Alaska in the late 1800s," Kosto says. "So we are lucky today to have them here."

In 1930, conservationists reintroduced 34 muskoxen from Greenland to Fairbanks, eventually transferring the herd to Nunivak Island, in the Bering Sea, where they thrived and multiplied. By 1968, the herd had grown to 750 animals. In 1971 and 1980, muskoxen were brought to the Seward Peninsula and by

BE SAFE WHEN VIEWING MUSKOXEN

- Even though muskoxen may appear docile and allow you to get close, resist the urge. They are powerful animals and will react surprisingly fast if they feel threatened in their space. View them from at least 150 feet away.
- A muskox that has stopped feeding, walking, or resting is being disturbed, which means it may be agitated. If it sways its head from side to side, that is a warning. Retreat quickly to avoid confrontation.
- Observe muskoxen from a safe distance. Retreat if they form a defensive line or circle; this is another sign that they are stressed.
- Do not approach females with their young.
- Bull muskoxen are more aggressive during the fall breeding season from August through October. Avoid disturbing males in rut.
- Keep pets under control at all times in muskox country.
- If you are charged, run and seek safety. Do not stand your ground.
- Muskoxen will stand their ground, making it difficult to drive them from an area.
- Feeding muskoxen is illegal, not to mention very dangerous.

— Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game



2000, almost 4,000 muskoxen were recorded across the state. On the Seward Peninsula alone there are an estimated 2,000 wild muskoxen, accounting for half of the state's wild population.

SEEING MUSKOXEN

If you want to see muskoxen in the wild, the best chances for viewing are by driving one of the three roads leading out of Nome—the Teller, Kougarak or Council roads. Muskoxen are in rut in the fall, and you may see males acting more aggressively than normal. The calving season is April through June, so beware protective mothers with calves. Look for the muskoxen on the plains and tundra flats during summer months, when they will fatten themselves on sedges, grasses and berries; or on mountain slopes, where groups of them will feed along side slopes and rub their wooly coats along the willow branches and shrubs, effectively “brushing” themselves.

This passage in the Fish and Game guidebook describes how muskoxen groom themselves: “Groups of muskoxen often leave wisps and wads of their soft underfur—called “qiviut”—hanging in the willow branches. Occasionally, during the first warm days of spring, they will comb out larger clumps of shedding fur by pushing through dense willow thickets.”

The Kougarak Road is a great destination for seeing muskoxen, as their favorite hangout is ridgelines and hilltops, where they can scan the horizon and enjoy the breeze. They especially hang out in this area during winter, because the wind blows the snow free from the ridges, making it easier for them to walk.

MORE WILDLIFE INFO

Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Wildlife Viewing Guide www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/viewing/pdfs/nome_guidebook.pdf

Nome Visitors Center (301 Front St.) provides information on muskoxen or any other wildlife in the area—marine mammals are also a special treat to see





A Birder's Delight

Nome is a crossroads for rare and plentiful avian species

IF BIRDING will be part of your visit to Nome, it's sure to be a highlight.

Endless daylight, gravel roads that roll through changing landscapes, and a wide assortment of species combine to make Nome birding both magical and unforgettable.

Our road system, second biggest in the state, provides some 300 miles of access to an exceptionally diverse range of habitats—from marine waters, coastal beaches and estuaries to wetlands and tundra habitats to shrubby river drainages, rock outcrops and rocky alpine ridges, even boreal forest. Each provides different food, shelter and nesting opportunities that attract a tantalizing variety of bird species.

Over 100 species travel ancient migration routes to our area every spring. Decked out in striking breeding plumage, they arrive ready for a short, intense summer of raising the next generation. They come for the long days and for the food—insects, plants, seeds, aquatic creatures, small mammals—needed to nourish their chicks. These spring arrivals join a good handful of species that stay on the peninsula year round.

Nome sits on the southern edge of the Seward Peninsula, which pokes into the Bering Strait.

Birds normally found on the other side of the

International Date Line—such as a taiga bean goose and a great knot spotted in spring 2021—can unexpectedly land in Nome's backyard when navigation goes awry due to storms, high winds, or just a mistake. In addition, birds traveling further north to breed can be spotted on their way through the Nome area.

Some species that spend most of the year in Europe, Asia, Africa, or on Pacific islands travel to the Seward Peninsula annually to breed, but don't venture much further into North America. If you want to see a bluethroat, bristle-thighed curlew, Arctic loon, spectacled eider, or northern wheatear, start your search in Nome.

Late May and early June are good times to catch passing migrants, though birding the Nome road system can be rewarding any time between mid-May and October. If the McKay's bunting is on your list, visit Nome between late November and early April.

While many birders come to Nome with tour groups, it is very possible to bird Nome successfully on your own or with a local guide. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Nome wildlife viewing handbook, available online or at the Nome Visitors Center, will lead you along each of the major roads, describing major habitats you will pass through and species you may find there. A study of eBird reports, range



Left: Red-throated loons are very common even on the edges of town. Above: The bluethroat is a target species for most birders visiting Nome. Below: A birding group scours the landscape.



maps, and song recordings available online or in birding apps will help you prepare and plan for your visit.

And please do plan ahead. Tour group slots often fill early. If you intend to bird on your own, reserve lodging and a vehicle as far in advance as possible to avoid disappointment.

To make the most of your Nome visit it's wise to plan for three full days on the ground—one day for each of our three major roads, each of which extends for over 70 miles. Some birders budget an extra day or two so they can seek species missed the first time through an area, or hunt for any rarity reported by other birders.

Nome is a unique, off-the-beaten-path birding destination. Maybe it's time to add it to your life list.

Carol Gales lived in Nome for 12 years before learning to appreciate the area's avian wonders. She shares her enthusiasm for all things Nome, including the birds, through her guiding business, Roam Nome.

DON'T JUST WING IT

Getting out to find the birds is where the fun begins! Here are some tips to consider:

- ☛ **Pack the right gear!** Be ready for sun, rain, wind, snow, heat, cold. Bring rain/windproof layers and a warm hat, neck gaiter or scarf, gloves or mittens. If you intend to hike in search of the bristle-thighed curlew (a hike that starts at mile 72 of the Kougarok Road), consider bringing mud boots. Be ready for changing conditions throughout each day.
- ☛ If driving a rental vehicle, **fill the gas tank** before each day's excursion. There are no service stations outside of town.
- ☛ Aside from the outhouse at the Salmon Lake campgrounds, there are **no public facilities** along our roads. Pack along a Ziploc bag with toilet paper and another Ziploc bag for your used tissue.
- ☛ Take along plenty of **water and snacks** each day.
- ☛ Be ready for **challenging road conditions**. Take your time when encountering rough spots. Be aware of local drivers in a hurry. Pull well to the side of the road before leaping out of your vehicle for a must-see bird.
- ☛ **Stop periodically** and get out of your vehicle to look and listen. An area that seemed birdless from the car could yield a surprising find.
- ☛ Pick up a free copy of **Alaska's Nome Area Wildlife Viewing Guide**, available at the Nome Visitors Center and downloadable at www.tinyurl.com/nomewild. This book describes habitats and species found along Nome's roads.
- ☛ **Nesting birds are sensitive** to disturbance. Use a long lens for photography. If birds flush and appear alarmed by your presence, retreat or leave the area.
- ☛ It's important to **respect private property**. If you want to drive the length of the Cape Woolley road, which starts at mile 40 of the Teller Road, please first get a permit from King Island Native Corporation (907-443-2209).



of the main hubs in western Alaska. Nome's population stands at about 3,700 residents, more than half of whom are Alaska Native or of Alaska Native descent. Tom Gray, who has lived in White Mountain and Nome his entire life, is trying to make sure his Native lifestyle is not forgotten. Not only does he offer hunting, fishing and birding trips to everyday travelers to the region, but he also stresses the importance of learning a little about the Native way of living while here.

"One of the things that I want to do is involve people in our Native culture," said Gray, who with his wife runs a fishing lodge, leads hunting trips, offers birding outings and develops custom trips for those who want to experience what life is like for Alaska Natives

who still live a subsistence lifestyle.

"We will go see the northern lights, go set a crab pot, see the sea ice and see seals, have a crab feed, go to a hot springs, have a Native food dinner, go to a fish camp, see fish hanging and drying and canning," he adds. "Whatever is in season, we can get you there."

Gray said the goal of his trips is twofold—not only does he strive to make a living in Nome, but he also wants to spread an appreciation for the rich diversity of the land, and the people who subsist on it. These day-to-day moments—like going to fish camp to catch, dry and can salmon—are commonplace for those like Gray who have grown up in Nome and gone to fish camp every year of their lives. But for those visiting Nome, seeing the way salmon are gathered and harvested is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Locally, Gray is involved in spreading the rich culture of the region too. In Nome, many of the teachers at the schools are hired from outside of Alaska, so when they arrive so far away from home, they often know little about the area. So

An Insider's Experience

Local guide champions Alaska Native culture

BEFORE THERE WERE HOTELS and restaurants, before gold mines, and before there was even a single Caucasian resident, the Nome area was a land of Alaska Natives living a subsistence lifestyle and depending upon the land for their survival. The Inupiaq, Central Yup'ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik Eskimo history of the area dates back some 4,000 to 6,000 years, with evidence of human inhabitation going back nearly 10,000 years. The people here hunted sea mammals and inland wildlife, and picked berries and greens. They harvested and dried salmon and they traveled by dog team between villages.

Today, those very same things are still happening, despite Nome's growth as one

Guests of Tom Gray’s “custom cultural experiences” might see what it is like to harvest salmon or visit a hot spring. Opposite: A traditional blanket toss.



he hosts a culture camp for teachers who want to gain continuing education credits, and he said he loves watching the teachers get fired up about the lessons.

“Probably 80 percent of them are like, ‘Let’s get our hands dirty.’ They want to dive right in,” he said. “They learn about our culture, and it helps them become better teachers too.”

Gray is admittedly not going to put on Native dances or sing Native songs—he said his focus is more about the day-to-day lifestyle, sharing with visitors how Alaska Natives live off the land. He will take visitors berry picking, let them observe subsistence fishing with personal-use nets (laws prohibit direct participation), and even take visitors out in his boat to observe beluga whale hunting. The key, he said, is to ensure that each visitor experiences an authentic slice of life, not one pre-packaged or planned in advance.

“Native culture is a lifestyle I want them to be involved in,” he said “If somebody calls me and says, ‘I want to come to Nome, what can we do?’ we do what’s in season. If it’s winter, we might catch king crab; if it’s summer, we might process salmon—it all depends on the season and what we are doing at that time.”

Once, Gray said, he had three visitors from France who wanted to find some ivory carvings. Because Gray has so many connections within his community, he was able to meet their needs perfectly. Rather than go to a shop, he drove them straight to the source.

“We went to Elim and we went to a carver’s house and looked at carvings,” he said. “You don’t just get to go inside people’s houses anytime you want.”

For more information on Gray, and his custom tours, contact him at tom@akadventure.com or (907) 304-2003. The site is mostly about his fishing trips, but remember—no two trips are the same, so he is just waiting to create your custom cultural experience.

EXPERIENCE NOME’S NATIVE CULTURE

- ➦ **Katirvik Cultural Center** (100 W. 7th Ave.) View artifacts and learn about the region’s cultures. To arrange a private tour call 907-443-4340
- ➦ Consider timing your visit to coincide with the **Savoonga Walrus Festival** (May or June), the **Shishmaref Carnival** (late April) or the **Gambell Whaling Festival** (July). All of these events bring the surrounding communities together to celebrate their heritage and the bounty of the land.
- ➦ **Nome Visitors Center** (301 Front St.) can point travelers to shops and businesses that feature locally made artwork. Nome offers a variety of stores with excellent Alaskan gifts such as sealskin slippers, mukluks, grass baskets, Alaskan art, Eskimo dolls and numerous ivory, jade or soapstone carvings.
- ➦ **XYZ Center** (907-443-5238), an activity center for Nome’s elders, is another good place to meet locals. The center hosts lunch at noon on weekdays. Call ahead—elders eat free but others are asked to pay a small fee. On Fridays, the menu features local foods such as berries, reindeer and salmon, and often there are arts and crafts for sale.

When in Nome

NOME DATA

- Population: 3,699 (city limits)
- Climate:

	Average High	Average Low
June	55	41
Sept.	49	37
Jan.	13	-3
March	19	2

Record High: 86 (2013)
Record Low: -54 (1989)
- Daylight:

Winter solstice: 4 hours
Summer solstice: 21.5 hours
- Location: Nome is a Bering Sea community located in Northwest Alaska, on the Seward Peninsula and the northern coast of Norton Sound. It is 539 air miles from Anchorage.
64°30'14" N, 165°23'58" W

NOME CALENDAR

- January through March: **Nome Kennel Club Sled Dog Races**, the world’s oldest dog mushing organization
- February: **Iron Dog**, “the world’s longest, toughest snowmobile race,” hits Nome
- March: **Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race**. AKA, “The Last Great Race,” is an annual long-distance sled dog race. Established in 1973 as a symbolic link to early history of the state. Events happen until the Red Lantern arrives.
- March: **Nome Golovin 200**, Alaska’s oldest snowmobile race

- April: **Nome Cannonball Snowmachine Race**
- End of May through June: **Prime Birding Time**
- June: **Midnight Sun Festival**. The week of the summer solstice, with events such as Eskimo dancing, Native Youth Olympics games, Polar Bear Plunge, and the Nome River Raft Race.
- July 4th Festivities. Parade, street games for all ages, and Fire Dept. Ice Cream Social
- Summer: **Outdoor Recreation**. Fly-fishing, hiking, camping, beach combing, exploring the history of Nome and the region, and viewing



wildlife from the extensive Nome road system.

- Labor Day**: The Great Bathtub Race and Snake River Rubber Duck Race
- December: **Annual Fireman’s Carnival**: This fundraiser for the fire department is always fun for the whole family!

MORE EVENT INFO AT:
visitnomealaska.com/calendar

TRAVEL

GETTING TO NOME

- Fly commercial**: Alaska Airlines flies between Anchorage and Nome twice a day: alaskaair.com, (800) 252-7522. The airport is 1.4 miles from downtown Nome.
- Port of Nome**: With the Northwest Passage opening, sailboats, cruise ships and other vessels are calling in Nome more often.

TRAVELING IN THE NOME AREA

- Bush plane**:

Bering Air operates transport to and from surrounding villages, and helicopter tours: beringair.com, (800) 478-5422
- Taxi service**:

Checker Cab, Inc., (907) 443-5211. Sharing a ride with other passengers during a taxi trip is common in Nome.
- Vehicle rental**:
 - Stampede Vehicle Rentals: (907) 443-3838 or (800) 354-4606
 - Dredge No. 7 Inn: (907) 304-1270

GOLD RUSH HISTORY

The Gift of Gold

TEN YEARS after prospectors first struck gold in California, the search for these shiny flecks worth a fortune continued, bringing hopeful gold-seekers thousands of miles north to Alaska. And with a frenzy similar to that of the California Gold Rush, it wasn't long before Nome found a place on the prospecting map.

The "Three Lucky Swedes"—two prospectors from Sweden and one from Norway—are credited with finding the first significant amounts of gold in Alaska, off Anvil Creek in September 1898. Because of the gold's abundance, word spread and in 1900 Nome blossomed to a large city with more than 20,000 hopefuls. Prospectors flocked to the area, scouring the creeks, hillsides and even the beaches for evidence of gold.

Visiting Nome is not complete without at least a cursory examination of the Gold Rush's significance to the town's history and how it operates today. In fact, gold mining and quarrying is still a large economic driver in the region accounting for seven times the average number of workers expected for a town of this size, according to the research company DataUSA.

To learn more about mining's history and significance, visit the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum, which features a long-term exhibition called Nome: Hub of Cultures and Communities Across the Bering Strait. The exhibit includes more than 50 community collaborators, who participated in interviews, shared stories, and contributed photographs. Among the exhibition's five main themes that

SWANBERG DREDGE

The Swanberg Dredge is an old gold dredge located within walking distance from downtown Nome, if you head east from Front Street for about a mile on the Council Road. It was built in San Francisco and put into operation in 1946. While it hasn't been used in decades, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The local preservation committee recently received funding to fix it up for visitors to see. The dredge contrasts starkly with the new Nome hospital in the background, which opened in 2013.

address topics of Arctic concern is mining—along with subsistence and the environment, the built landscape, transportation, and sustainability.

Another way to appreciate the region's gold-mining history is by driving along any one of the three main roads leading out of Nome to see one of the 40-plus remains of old gold dredges parked within view of the roads like broken-down vehicles. These huge pieces of equipment were key to the thriving mining community that called Nome home.

Or watch mining in action by simply walking along Nome's beaches, where dredges are still filtering out the gold from the Bering Sea. The popular Discovery Channel show, "Bering Sea Gold," is set here, and dredges from the show are lined along the beaches for visitors to check out.

Finally, immerse yourself into the world of mining by trying your own hand at gold-panning, an entertaining sampling of just how much work goes into extracting gold from the land. Contact the Nome Visitors Center at (907) 443-6555 to find out more on gold-panning opportunities.

IDITAROD TRAIL



Iditarod's Last Stop

Nome is where the celebration begins for the Last Great Race

THE IDITAROD TRAIL Sled Dog Race is an iconic tradition in Alaska, a canine-human exhibition of cooperative racing that challenges even the fittest of animals and humans. Each year, at the beginning of March, mushers and sled dogs gather for the race's start in Anchorage and then spend the next nine to 14 days racing across some of the most beautiful yet challenging terrain in Alaska.

Their destination: Nome.

As the frontrunners come down Front Street and pass their teams under the giant burlap arch set up at the finish line, there are countless spectators there to cheer them onto victory. In the 2019 race, for instance, Bethel musher Pete Kaiser made it to the finish first, covering the 1,000-plus mile course in 9 days, 12 hours, 39 minutes and 6 seconds. He was the first Yup'ik Alaskan to win the race on a trail that was once a vital link for year-round mail and freight service to western Alaska miners more than 100 years ago.

Today's Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race celebrates that history, particularly the events of

the winter of 1925, when a deadly diphtheria outbreak in Nome necessitated an urgent need for life-saving serum. Ice-bound Nome had no way of receiving the medicine, which was in Anchorage. Quick-thinking Alaskans created a relay of dog teams spread over hundreds of miles of trail, starting in Nenana, as far as the newly constructed Alaska Railroad engines could take the medicine. From there, dog teams took over, with a new team taking over at every village.

The story has a successful ending. The 20 mushers and their teams took six days to cover 700 miles, and the serum arrived in time to save hundreds of lives, according to historians. Because the conditions were so challenging, with blizzards and temperatures plunging into the negatives, the serum run received press coverage the world over, and two of its many lead sled dogs, Balto and Togo, are still revered today.

The first Iditarod race to Nome started March 3, 1973, and the event has grown ever since. Today, while still celebrating its heritage, the race also showcases the incredible amount of

work, training and mental toughness required of both musher and canine as their athletic skills are challenged from the moment they leave the starting chute. Travelers from the world over come to Nome to watch the teams come in.

According to the Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau, “During the finish of the race Nome’s population grows by approximately 1,000 people and turns Nome into what people everywhere warmly refer to as the ‘Mardi Gras of the North.’ With hundreds of events to participate in and the ability to rub elbows with some of the most notorious names in the dog mushing industry, the finish of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Nome is an event not to be missed.”

HUNTING

Subsisting Off the Land

Hunters can find success around Nome

IF YOU’RE A HUNTER, Nome has plenty of land on which Alaska’s wildlife roams, and a broad season that ranges from year-round to just a few days.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s Game Management Unit 22 includes five sections composed of the land in and around Nome. It consists of the Bering Sea, Norton Sound, Bering Strait, Chukchi Sea, and most of Kotzebue Sound’s drainages—be sure to check the department’s regulations for specific locations. It also includes the adjacent islands in the Bering Sea between the mouths of the Goodhope and Pastolik rivers, and all seaward waters and lands within three miles of these coastlines, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Game Management Units 21 and 23 border Nome, and are also accessible from this seaside town.

Hunting opportunities include black bear, brown/grizzly bear, caribou, emperor goose, moose, muskox, wolf and wolverine. Note that muskox hunting is open to Alaska residents only.

FOLLOW THE IDITAROD

For dog lovers and mushing enthusiasts, there are several opportunities to follow the Iditarod.

- **Iditarod.com** has detailed information on racers, race routes, weather and other pertinent details.
- **Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau** website, visitnomealaska.com, which lists lodging opportunities and day trips. Book early because everything fills up fast!



As for species, black bear hunting is allowed year-round, but they are rarely seen in the region; however, grizzlies are more common. Caribou are often found along the Kougarak Road, making road-accessible hunting a real possibility for visitors.

Moose hunting opens as early as August 1, depending on the region within Game Management Unit 22, and closes as late as March 15, also depending on the region. Some areas have area limits, which can be reached in as little as two days.

Be sure to check Fish and Game hunting and trapping regulations, as they change often, depending on the current population levels. www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=contacts.nome

FISHING FEVER



Angling by Automobile

Harvest a bounty of fish on a Nome road trip

IF THERE IS ONE THING for which Alaska is known, it is world-class salmon fishing. From the tip of Southeast Alaska, to as far north as—you guessed it—Nome, salmon fishing is nothing short of spectacular. But with so much geographical acreage to choose from, what sets Nome’s salmon fishing apart from the others?

The answer is: Just about everything.

“There are no crowds,” says Paul Kosto, executive director the Nome Chamber of Commerce. “There is salmon fishing for all five species right on the three roads surrounding Nome, as well as the option to fish in the ocean at the mouth of a few rivers all within about 10 miles of Nome.”

The combination of accessibility and breathing room makes Nome a real draw for anglers who want to get away from the combat-style, elbow-to-elbow fishing spots closer to the state’s larger cities. Not only can you have a stream or river all to yourself, but you also can soak in the solitude and beauty of

the arctic environment. In the summer, the tundra is dotted with cottongrass and other colorful wildflowers, and wild muskoxen roam the land freely. It’s a scene that is unmatched anywhere else in Alaska. And to top it off, the fishing is productive.

“If you get out on a boat on the rivers, you will have almost guaranteed sole access to the ‘hot spots,’” Kosto says. “Besides salmon we also have a very abundant grayling fishery with many over 20 inches.”

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, there are 14 rivers in the Nome area that offer productive grayling, pike or salmon fishing.

The best place to catch pike is a bit further off the road system and by boat, guaranteeing an even more “on-your-own adventure,” Kosto says.

“One particular favorite spot up river, off the end of the Kougarok Road, is a place called Alligator Slough, and for good reason,” Kosto adds.

HIT THE ROAD

To launch your own fishing expedition, rent a car and hit the roads. Kosto says there are also ATV and fat bike rentals available if you want to stay closer to town for your fishing. Several guiding companies can help you find the best spots, too, he adds. Check out Nome Outfitters or Alaska NW Adventures for more on fishing trips offered by local Alaskans.

LEARN MORE

➤ **Alaska Department of Fish and Game.**

Nome office (summer): (907) 443-5796.

Fairbanks (off-season): (907) 459-7207.

➤ **Nome Roadside Fishing Guide,**

produced by ADF&G, is helpful in identifying areas to target for fishing.

However, it was published more than five years ago, so confirm bag limits and bait restrictions for 2023 before launching a trip. Visit www.adfg.alaska.gov/static-sf/region3/pdfs/nome07.pdf



FISHING ROAD TRIPS

There are three directions to consider for a road trip fishing expedition: the Kougarok, Council and Teller roads.

➤ **The Nome-Taylor Road** is known locally as the **Kougarok Road** and begins in Nome via either Beam Road or Dexter Bypass Road, continues to Dexter, about eight miles from town, and continues north along the Nome River toward Salmon Lake. The road extends about 86 miles before becoming impassible to most vehicles.

➤ **The Council Road** begins at Nome and extends roughly 73 miles to the old mining town of Council, on the north bank of the Niukluk River. The road parallels about 35 miles of Norton Sound coastline along the beach berm separating Safety Sound from the sea. It then turns inland and follows the East Fork of the Solomon River, ending on the south bank of the Niukluk River at Council.

➤ **The Teller Road** begins in Nome and parallels the southern coastline of the Seward Peninsula for 72 miles to Teller. It crosses a number of rivers that drain the south side of the Kigluaik Mountains and enter directly into the Bering Sea.



Ken Hughes Jr. shows off the pike he caught along the Kuzitrin River. Top: Anglers catch silvers at the Safety Sound Bridge.

Target grayling as soon as the ice leaves the rivers, Kosto says. Pike can be caught year-round. The salmon runs begin a bit later than in the rest of the state, as the species has to travel so far north from the Pacific Ocean. Still, Kosto says, the wait is worth it.

If king salmon are your goal, the only rivers with king runs that are accessible from the road system are the Fish, Niukluk and Pilgrim rivers, and those runs are small, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Red salmon are popular, too, and can best be caught along in the Pilgrim and Sinuk rivers. Silver salmon arrive in late summer and can be found along the road system as well. Also popular are pink and chum salmon, both of which are plentiful throughout the region. Pink salmon are the most abundant along the road system.



Above: Sea debris and asphalt chunks litter Front Street following the typhoon. Right: Nome's small boat harbor flooded, soaking storage vans and cars. PHOTOS BY ROSA WRIGHT

Typhoon Merbok

Perseverance during the 2022 'storm of a lifetime'



NOME IS USED TO STORMS in the fall. As summer's endless sunlight starts to fade and the tundra changes color, Nomeites know to hunker down and get ready for some rain and wind and high water.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2022 the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a Significant Storm Warning for the Alaska West Coast with predicted high winds, gusts to 90 mph, elevated surf to 13 feet above high tide. Will the storm stall out in the Bering Sea and have minimum effect on the coastal communities? Or will it maintain in strength and wreak havoc on communities all along the west coast of the state and the Island communities of Diomedede, King Island, Gambell, Savoonga, St. Paul and St. George?

On September 14, the NWS upgraded the weather event to a Major Coastal Storm, with winds gusting 60-75 mph and water levels expected to rise 8-12 feet above normal high tide, not including wave surge. A storm of this magnitude has the potential to blow off roofs, flood mid-lying areas in town, cause downed power poles and lines, and cut off sections of the community from emergency response and evacuation.

The storm was forecast to go from

Wednesday into Saturday, predicted to track over the Aleutian Islands into the Bering Sea, then north through the Bering Straits and into the Arctic Ocean. As Merbok came their way, Nomeites did what they always do in the face of bad weather: people tied down their property; schools let out early; businesses closed; emergency supplies were gathered; flashlights and radios were tested; water and food were collected for both pets and people.

When the storm front hit town, it brought sustained winds as high as 75 mph and the ocean rose to a point that all of Front Street was under water. Waves broke as high as 10 feet above the sea wall designed to protect the community. Ocean front buildings experienced their basements flooding, causing damage to heating and electrical systems. Residents living along the sea wall were evacuated and provided temporary shelter at the City Recreation Center.

On September 17, the National Weather Service forecast was coming to fruition and was in full swing with winds steadily increasing to a sustained 60 mph, water height 12 feet above normal high tide and waves of 6-8 feet above that, making the storm surge of almost 20 feet above normal water levels.

In Nome, the damage was everywhere. Tiles

EMERGENCY PLANNING

📍 **September 13:** The city activated the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to review the Nome Emergency Response Plan on September 13. City leadership began to refine the identification of emergency shelters, evacuation routes, flood response, medical transport and care, as well as maintaining critical infrastructure (power, water and sewer) and the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to monitor the storm. The state updated its Emergency preparedness level to level 2 (heightened awareness), and began the manning of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) 24 hours a day to track storm development.

📍 **September 14:** the state upgraded to Preparedness Level 3 (Ongoing Incident). The planning section would begin hourly updates of current weather conditions. Operations would begin manning ambulance, fire, and public works to decrease response time to identified emergencies.

were flying off of people's roofs, glass broke, garbage blew everywhere. Sea foam littered the air as thick and high as a snowfall. Flooding around the port area washed one house off its foundation and caused the house to float upstream in the Snake River until it ended up pushed against the Jafet Road Bridge, (normally 14 feet above the river surface). The storm sustained its intensity for nearly 24 hours. Tragically, many people's out-of-town camps, small cabins crucial for fishing, drying and living out other parts of the Western Alaskan subsistence lifestyle, were damaged or

completely destroyed. Many people in Nome are still feeling the effects of that cultural loss.

On Sunday, flood waters had started to subside and the winds had reduced to 40 mph. The Bering Sea Bar and Restaurant caught fire. With winds sustained at that intensity it was only minutes before the building was fully engulfed in flames. Upon arrival of the fire department, it was determined that the situation called for a defensive attack in an attempt to keep the fire from spreading to adjoining structure: The historic Nugget Inn. The Inn was separated from the restaurant by only 12 inches of space and a fire barrier wall. The wind coming out of the south ended up being a blessing as it directed the flames away from the Inn. The fire department had the fire under control after 45 intense minutes. The Bar and Restaurant were a total loss but thankfully there were no human casualties.

On September 21, Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy declared the destruction a state disaster, followed by President Joe Biden declaring the devastation from the storm a national disaster. This allowed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to begin to offer recovery aid.

Many say this was a storm of a lifetime. With the unpredictability of the causes of climate change and the recent history of storms coming earlier and with greater intensity, maybe not. Only time will tell. Nome came together as a community to clean up that damage. Nomeites stopped what they were doing to pick up a trash bag and to bring their community back to normal. Nome stood strong, giving to those who had lost in the storm. Nomeites are resilient. Although we still feel the bad effects of Typhoon Merbok today, the strength, solidarity and kindness the storm brought out in Nomeites will always be a part of our community.

— Kevin Knowlton & Miriam Trujillo



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**The Nome Chamber of Commerce
Nome Alaska VFW Post #9569
Proudly bring to Nome a Sponsor A Flag program.**

In July of 2018, through a generous one-time gift to VFW Post #9569 we were able to purchase for Nome the United States flags we now see on Front Street. In an effort to establish a tradition of flying the State of Alaska and United States flags more often throughout the year we are giving individuals and businesses an opportunity to participate in an annual program to raise funding to purchase flags and hardware. This will be an annual Sponsorship and we will accept donations throughout the year. Each flag flying today with the associated hardware cost \$75. Below is a form you can fill out and return with a Sponsor Donation.

Choose your Sponsorship Level:

☐ SALUTE \$25 ☐ HONOR \$50 ☐ REMEMBRANCE \$75 ☐ MEMORIAL \$100

Name of Sponsor: _____

In Remembrance of: _____

What days would you like to see our flags flown: _____

Please submit this ad with your Sponsor Donation to:

Nome Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 250, or 113 Front Street Suite 101 (Post Office building), Nome Alaska, 99762.

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