Skagway, Alaska

Six blocks of gold rush town, a railway built in 1898, and a mountainside the town is spending $28 million to hold up.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Skagway has four cruise berths. The Municipality of Skagway states that Railroad Dock pier access remains restricted because of an active slide zone, with alternative disembarkation by tendering at Railroad Forward and bussing from Railroad Aft. On the White Pass and Yukon Route railway, the trains that turn at the 2,865-foot summit are published as requiring no passport, while any train ending in Canada requires one.

Facts checked against official sources on 24 September 2026

WHY I WOULD GO BACK TO SKAGWAY TOMORROW

Of the whole Alaska trip, the White Pass railway is the day I talk about.

You get on an old wooden rail car with a stove in it and windows that open, and the thing starts climbing. And it keeps climbing. You go over a bridge that seems to be attached to nothing, past a gorge with a river at the bottom of it that looks a very long way down, and the trees get shorter and then stop altogether.

And then you are at the top and there are flags — the American flag, Alaska, the Yukon, Canada — standing in a scraped-bare landscape of rock and scrub. That is the border. You are at the border, in a train, in the rain, and it is wonderful.

I did not have to be able to walk far to do any of it. That mattered to me more than I expected.

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Cruise ship calendar
Municipality of Skagway

Summit train
White Pass & Yukon Route

Klondike park hours
National Park Service

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The docks	The Port of Skagway's own schedule uses five codes: **RRF** Railroad Dock Forward, **RRA** Railroad Dock Aft, **BRD** Broadway Dock, **ORE** Ore Terminal Dock, **AMH** Alaska Marine Highway Dock
Which one walks to town	The municipality's own plan describes a **sidewalk from the Broadway Dock to 1st Avenue and Broadway**, which is the foot of the main street
The shuttle	SMART bus, dock to downtown, daily 7am to 9pm, **wheelchair accessible**. (907) 612-0902.
The railway	White Pass & Yukon Route. Cruise passengers *"board the train on the pier alongside your ship."* Depot at 201 Second Avenue.
The summit	**Milepost 20.4, 2,865 feet** — and the railway states plainly it is *"the official border between the United States and Canada"*
Documents	Depends entirely on which train. See below. This one catches people out.

At the Port of Skagway (Railroad, Broadway and Ore docks) cruise port: what's there

Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

Skagway's docks are not a resort pier; they are the edge of a little gold-rush town, and the big thing waiting at the dock is the White Pass & Yukon Route train, which I rode in July 2018 and still talk about. The town's level streets start about three-quarters of a mile from the docks, and a $3 bus covers the gap. If I were staying close to the ship, I'd ride the SMART bus to the foot of Broadway and spend the day at the free National Park Service visitor centre and the shops. One thing to check before you sail: the Railroad Dock sits beside an active slide zone, and the town says access there may mean a tender or a bus.

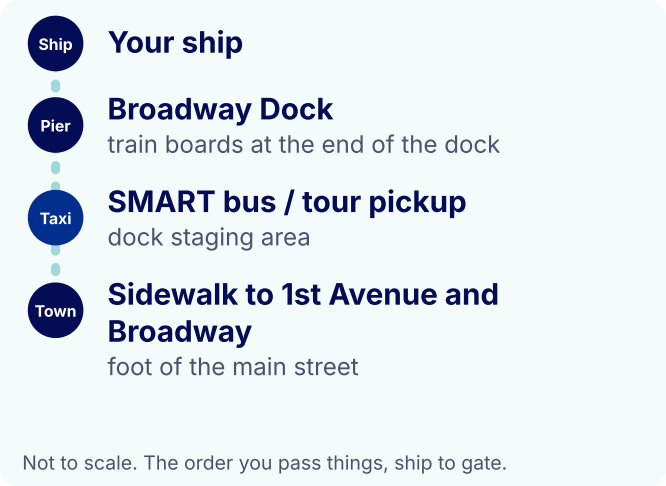
See the official port map

The port side publishes its own map. We link to it rather than copy it, so you always see the current layout. Open it before you sail and save a screenshot to your phone. Map by Municipality of Skagway.

aicruisegranny.com/go/skagway-port-map

From the ship: Broadway Dock (BRD)

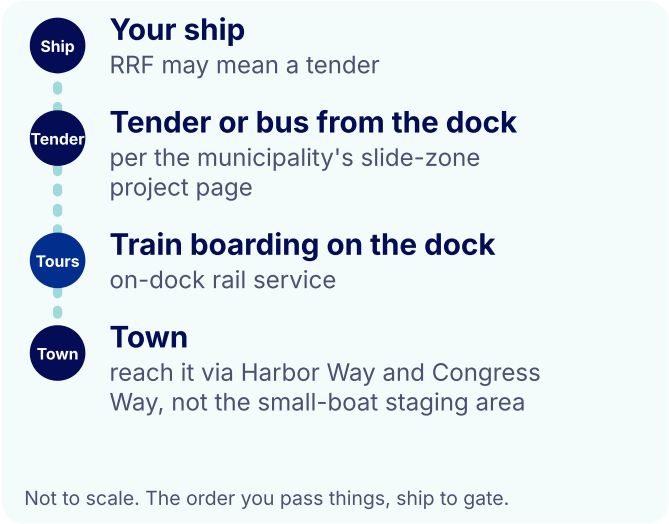
White Pass-owned dock in the centre of the waterfront, at the foot of Broadway. White Pass says rail service begins at the end of the dock so you can board the train there. The municipality describes a sidewalk from the Broadway Dock to 1st Avenue and Broadway.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Railroad Dock (RRF forward, RRA aft)

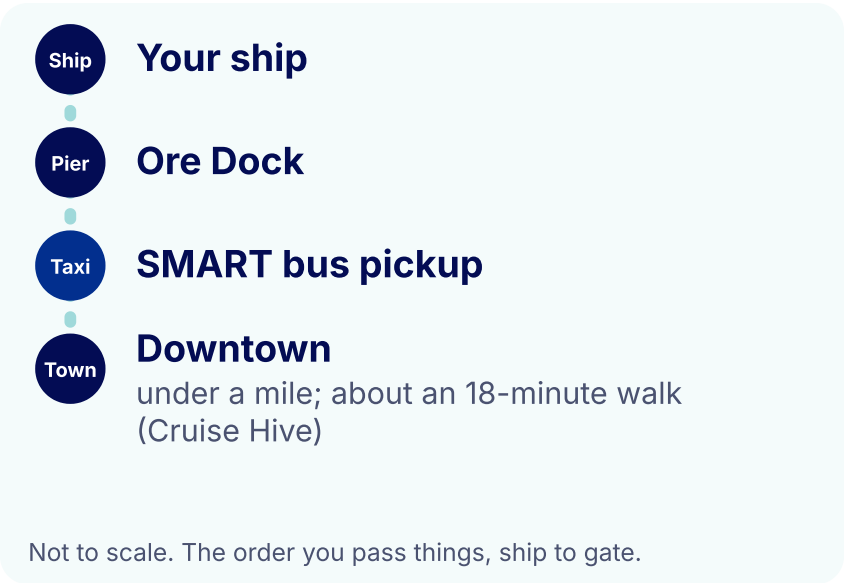
White Pass dock at the south end of town that takes two large ships with on-dock rail service. Beside an active slide zone; the municipality says pier access remains restricted, with tendering at Railroad Forward and bussing from Railroad Aft as alternatives. Ask your line which you are assigned.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Ore Terminal Dock (ORE)

A former ore-loading dock converted to cruise use in the 1980s, at the south end of town; a frequent 2026 assignment per the port's schedule.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Klondike Gold Rush NHP Visitor Center Free — National Park Service centre in the restored railroad depot: a 25-minute film, 'Gold Fever: Race to the Klondike', 30-minute ranger talks in summer, a 3D map and town maps; the Visitor Center Museum is next door. Open daily in summer with restrooms (The Milepost).
2nd Avenue and Broadway
Access: NPS says programs and facilities are wheelchair accessible; hearing assistance and audio description on request.

Centennial Park Free — Little park at the foot of Broadway with Rotary Snowplow #1, the Centennial Statue and benches.
Foot of Broadway

Pullen Creek Park Free — Covered picnic shelter, footbridge and a small dock by the waterfront.
Near the waterfront

Corrington Museum of Alaska History Free — Small museum, free and open in summer (The Milepost).
3rd and Broadway

Skagway Visitor Center (Arctic Brotherhood Hall) Free — Town visitor information and restrooms in the famous driftwood-fronted hall.
Broadway between 2nd and 3rd Avenues

Pools and beaches

No beach or pool at the docks — Skagway's docks are industrial waterfront; there is no port beach or pool.

Food and drink

Broadway restaurants and cafés — Food is in town along Broadway, not on the docks. Cruise Hive mentions vending machines at the port.
Broadway, from 1st Avenue up

Shopping

Broadway shops — The historic district's shops line Broadway starting at the waterfront end.
Broadway
Access: Level streets, per the town.

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

White Pass & Yukon Route railway — The 1898 narrow-gauge railway; cruise passengers board alongside their ship on the Railroad and Broadway docks. Summit trains turn at milepost 20.4 (2,865 ft) and need no passport; any train ending in Canada does. Fares vary by excursion.
On the dock; depot at 201 Second Avenue
Access: White Pass publishes an Accessibility Plan; ask at booking.

Skagway Museum
$2 adults, $1 students, under 12 free
— Town museum (The Milepost).
Spring Street at 7th Avenue, one block east of Broadway (not on the waterfront)

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Public restrooms Free — Cruise Hive reports several public restrooms across the port. In town: NPS Visitor Center, Arctic Brotherhood Hall, the ferry terminal at the end of Broadway and the small-boat harbor (The Milepost).
Docks and lower Broadway

Wi-Fi — Cruise Hive reports no free Wi-Fi at the port.

Skagway Visitor Department — (907) 983-2854, skagwayinfo@skagway.org.
Arctic Brotherhood Hall

Port alerts Free — The port pushes dock and traffic changes through Everbridge alerts at skagway.org/portofskagway.
Online

Getting out of the port

SMART bus

$3 per person each way, or $5 all-day pass

— Municipal bus from the docks to downtown, daily 7am to 9pm when cruise ships are in; pay the driver. Wheelchair accessible.
Dock pickup zones
Access: Wheelchair accessible.

SMART on-demand shuttle

$5 dock to Skagway River Bridge; $10 to end of pavement on Dyea or Liarsville Road; $15 to Dyea or the White Pass summit border

— Year-round, 8am to 1am; call (907) 612-0902 (24 hours' notice outside those hours).
Dock

Walking to town Free — The docks are about three-quarters of a mile from the historic district on level streets (Skagway Visitor Department); Cruise Hive puts it around 18 minutes.
about 18 min walk from the ship
Access: Level, but a long way for some; take the bus.

Car rental — Affordable Car Rentals, 648 Broadway, (907) 983-2277; Drive About, 202 9th Avenue, (907) 612-8024. Rental vehicles may not be left in port zones.
In town

Whitehorse motorcoach — White Pass runs a Skagway to Whitehorse coach late May to early September via Fraser and Carcross; 1-800-343-7373. Passport needed for Canada.
Skagway

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day close to the ship in Skagway, I'd take the SMART bus ($5 for the day) rather than walking the three-quarters of a mile, and hop off at the foot of Broadway. I'd sit through the free park film at the National Park Service centre in the old depot, catch a ranger talk if one's on, then wander up Broadway, stopping at the Arctic Brotherhood Hall for the restrooms and the photo. A free peek into the Corrington Museum, lunch on Broadway, and a rest on the benches in Centennial Park, and I'd ride the bus back. And if you can squeeze in one paid thing, make it the White Pass train. It boards right by the ship, and it was the best day of my Alaska trip.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Railroad Dock: the municipality says pier access remains restricted because of the slide zone; alternatives include tendering at Railroad Forward and bussing from Railroad Aft. A tender means a moving gangway and steps, so ask your line which dock you have.
- The SMART bus is wheelchair accessible and runs dock to downtown 7am to 9pm on ship days.
- Town streets are level (Skagway Visitor Department), but the docks are about three-quarters of a mile from the historic district.
- Cruise Hive (2025) reports each terminal and pier as wheelchair accessible; not confirmed on an official page.
- The NPS Visitor Center's programs and facilities are wheelchair accessible.
- No published wheelchair or scooter rental at the docks.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

▼ How far is the Skagway cruise port from town?
About three-quarters of a mile to the historic district on level streets. The SMART bus runs dock to downtown for $3 each way or $5 for the day.

▼ Does the White Pass train leave from the cruise dock in Skagway?
Yes. White Pass says cruise passengers board on the pier alongside their ship, with on-dock rail at the Railroad Dock and at the end of the Broadway Dock.

▼ Do you have to tender in Skagway?
Usually not, but the Railroad Dock's slide zone means the town lists tendering at Railroad Forward as an alternative. Ask your cruise line which dock your ship is assigned.

Where the port facts come from: Port of Skagway: 2026 Cruise Ship Schedule (24 April 2026) (30 October 2026); Port of Skagway: 2026 Cruise Ship Schedule (2 March 2026) (30 October 2026); Skagway Visitor Department: Getting Around (30 October 2026); Skagway Visitor Department: Cruises & Ferries (30 October 2026); White Pass & Yukon Route: Dock Information (30 October 2026); National Park Service: Klondike Gold Rush NHP Visitor Center (30 October 2026); The Milepost: Skagway (30 October 2026); Cruise Hive: Skagway cruise port (modified August 2025) (30 October 2026); The Points Party: Skagway cruise port for first-timers (21 October 2026) (30 October 2026)

The rockslide, and what it means for getting off your ship

This is current, official and easy to miss when you book.

The Railroad Dock sits beside an active slide zone. The mountainside moved significantly in **autumn 2022** and a natural disaster was declared. The Municipality of Skagway's own project page currently states:

"Pier access remains restricted; alternative disembarkation includes tendering at Railroad Forward position and bussing from Railroad Aft position."

Read that again if you have mobility issues. If your ship is assigned Railroad Forward, getting ashore in Skagway may mean a **tender** — a small boat, a moving gangway, and steps. Skagway is not a port most people expect to tender at. Ask your line which berth you are assigned, and if the answer is RRF, ask what the arrangement is on your date.

The scale of it: the municipality says the situation affects *"approximately 535,000 passengers and 225,000 crew members yearly."* The fix is a FEMA grant of **$19.9 million** against a total project cost estimated at **$28.4 million**, to excavate unstable rock at the apex of the North Slide and avert a catastrophic failure that could generate a tsunami at the port.

Where it stands: Phase 1 is design and engineering, sitting at 10% conceptual design with a 65% plan review document posted, with a contractor appointed in October 2025 and a public open house held in June 2026. The project page says **Phase 1 is expected to be completed in 2027**. The municipality's own fact sheet says Phase 1 should wrap up **by 2026**. Two municipal documents, two answers; neither is dated, and we are not going to guess.

Separately, a Port Director update dated **7 May 2026** says a rockslide safety maintenance project was **completed** — scaling, lower draped mesh bolt repairs, cable tensioning, final slope inspections and debris removal — to support continued operational safety at the Railroad Dock. That update does not discuss the tendering arrangement either way.

The White Pass railway, and the passport question

Get this one wrong and you do not board. The railway draws the line at whether your train **ends in Canada**, not at whether it touches the border.

White Pass Summit Excursion	40 miles round trip, 2.5 to 2.75 hours, turns at the summit. **"No passport required."**
Steam Summit Loop	40 miles round trip, 3 hours. **"No passport required."**
Journey to Inspiration Point	36.6 miles round trip, 2.5 hours, turns at Mile 17. **"No passport required."**
Fraser One Way Service	27.7 miles one way into British Columbia, 1.75 hours. **"Passport required."**
Bennett Scenic Journey	120 miles round trip to Carcross, Yukon. 8 hours. **"Passport required."**

So yes: the Summit train physically reaches the international boundary at Milepost 20.4 and the railway still publishes "no passport required," because you do not get off and you do not clear Canadian customs. Any train that continues to a Canadian stop is a different matter.

We would still take the passport. It weighs nothing, it lives in the safe the rest of the week, and it removes an entire category of problem. Note also that the railway's own excursions index lists the Summit Excursion at 2.75 to 3 hours while the product page says 2.5 to 2.75. Same railway, same trip, two figures.

Accessibility on the railway, in its own words

Summit Excursion	*"This excursion is wheelchair accessible. However, space is limited in lift-equipped cars."*
Inspiration Point	Wheelchair accessible, limited lift-equipped space. *"Please let us know when reserving your seats if you or anyone in your party will require the lift to get onto the train."*
Fraser Service	*"All Fraser Service trains are wheelchair accessible."* Limited lift-equipped space.
Steam Summit Loop	***"This train is not equipped with a wheelchair lift."***

That last row is the one to circle. The steam train is the romantic one, and it is the one without a lift. The railway does not publish a step count or step height for boarding any of its cars, so if a high step is your issue rather than a wheelchair, you will have to ask.

Season and price for 2026: the Summit Excursion runs **30 April to 7 October 2026** at $155 adult, $77.50 for children 3 to 12, infants free. Reservations 1-800-343-7373, Monday to Friday 7:00am to 3:00pm Alaska Time.

The town itself

Historic district	**Six blocks** of downtown Skagway are a National Historic District. The National Park Service manages more than 20 buildings in and just outside it.
NPS visitor center	In the **restored 1898 rail depot at 2nd and Broadway**. Programs and facilities wheelchair accessible; service animals welcome. 907-983-9200.
Moore House and Jeff. Smiths' Parlor	Both close for the season in **early October**. Hours vary; check at the visitor center the day of your visit.
Gold Rush Cemetery	**1.9 miles** from 1st and Broadway. This is the only walking distance the municipality prints on its own map.
Municipal visitor center	205 Broadway, in the 1899 Arctic Brotherhood Hall. (907) 983-2854.

What Skagway does not publish. No dock-to-Broadway distance in feet or miles for any berth. Nothing about Broadway's boardwalk surfaces or curb cuts. Nothing on whether the Ore Dock walks to town. And no official statement on whether the Railroad Dock tendering applies to every ship or only some. We asked the documents; they do not say.

MY VERDICT

Skagway is the best value port day in Alaska, and the railway is why. It is expensive and it is worth it, and it is one of the very few big-ticket excursions anywhere that a person with limited walking can genuinely do — as long as you pick the diesel train and tell them when you book.

Two warnings and then I will stop. Check your berth assignment, because Railroad Forward may mean tendering. And if you want the steam engine, know that it is the one without the lift.

Questions people ask about Skagway

Do I need a passport for the White Pass railway?

Only if your train ends in Canada. The White Pass Summit Excursion, the Steam Summit Loop and the Journey to Inspiration Point are all published by the railway as "No passport required," even

though the Summit train reaches the international boundary at Milepost 20.4. The Fraser One Way Service and the Bennett Scenic Journey both say "Passport required."

Is the Skagway Railroad Dock open?

The Municipality of Skagway's current project page says pier access remains restricted because of the active slide zone above it, and that alternative disembarkation includes tendering at the Railroad Forward position and bussing from the Railroad Aft position. Both positions still appear on the 2026 cruise schedule. Ask your cruise line which berth your ship is assigned.

Can you walk from the Skagway cruise dock into town?

The municipality's own transportation plan describes a sidewalk running from the Broadway Dock to 1st Avenue and Broadway. It does not publish a distance in feet or miles from any dock. The SMART bus connects the docks to downtown daily from 7am to 9pm and is wheelchair accessible.

Is the White Pass train wheelchair accessible?

The Summit Excursion, Inspiration Point and Fraser Service trains are published by the railway as wheelchair accessible, with limited space in lift-equipped cars, and the railway asks you to say so when reserving. The Steam Summit Loop is not: the railway states that train is not equipped with a wheelchair lift.

How high is the White Pass summit?

2,865 feet, at Milepost 20.4, which the railway states is the official border between the United States and Canada.

Where these facts come from

- Municipality of Skagway, 2026 cruise ship schedule (PDF) (https://www.skagway.org/media/89686)
- Municipality of Skagway, 2026 cruise ship calendar (https://www.skagway.org/portofskagway/page/2026-cruise-ship-calendar)
- Municipality of Skagway, BRIC Grant: Rockslide Mitigation Project (https://www.skagway.org/administration/page/bric-grant-rockslide-mitigation-project)
- Municipality of Skagway, Port Director Update, 7 May 2026 (PDF) (https://www.skagway.org/media/90776)
- Municipality of Skagway, Skagway 2030 Comprehensive Plan, draft transportation chapter (PDF) (https://www.skagway.org/media/27586)
- Municipality of Skagway, downtown SMART bus map (PDF) (https://www.skagway.org/media/46541)
- White Pass & Yukon Route, Summit Excursion (https://wpyr.com/excursions/product/summit-excursion/)
- White Pass & Yukon Route, Steam Summit Loop Excursion (https://wpyr.com/excursions/product/steam-summit-loop-excursion/)
- White Pass & Yukon Route, Fraser One Way Service (https://wpyr.com/excursions/product/fraser-one-way-service/)
- White Pass & Yukon Route, White Pass international border (https://wpyr.com/sights-sounds/places/white-pass-international-border/)
- White Pass & Yukon Route, dock information (https://wpyr.com/company-info/dock-info/)
- National Park Service, Klondike Gold Rush NHP hours (https://www.nps.gov/klgo/planyourvisit/hours.htm)
- National Park Service, Skagway Historic District (https://www.nps.gov/klgo/learn/historyculture/skagwaydistrict.htm)
- Skagway Visitor Department, getting around (https://www.skagway.com/plan-your-trip/travel-transportation/getting-around/)

Ports change their rules and their prices. Check the official pages above before you sail.

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