



Mayor's Cup Weekend Itinerary

Held annually in March, the [Mayor's Cup Snowmachine Race](#) has been a long-standing sporting tradition in Valdez, Alaska since the 1970s. Spending a weekend in Valdez is a great opportunity to discover the first hand thrill of snowmachine racing along with the picturesque winter beauty of Valdez, America's snow-capital.

Friday: Arrive In Valdez

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive to Valdez by either road or plane. Driving from Anchorage to Valdez normally takes about five hours, though winter travelers should allow for extra time to drive safely on the Glenn and Richardson Highways. The drive offers breath-taking sightseeing along the way, including the snowcapped peaks of the Wrangell Mountains, the massive snow accumulation in [Thompson Pass](#) and the towering frozen waterfalls in [Keystone Canyon](#). Air service is also available, with daily flights from Anchorage to Valdez taking about 45 minutes and flying over the glaciers and mountains that line Prince William Sound.

Evening: After arriving in Valdez, check into your local hotel or B&B. Make sure to stop by the Health & Fitness Center at Prince William Sound College to check out free winter gear for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing through their [Ski for Free Program](#). The Health & Fitness Center is open most days until 7:00 PM, though you should arrange ahead of time for the free gear rental. Next, you'll want to grab a bite to eat at one of Valdez's local restaurants after a long journey.

Night: Take advantage of the nighttime for [aurora viewing](#). The best viewing locations are a few miles out of town, such as at Valdez Glacier Lake or Robe Lake. Make sure to follow the [UAF Aurora Forecast](#) to take advantage of times with peak aurora activity.

Saturday: The Race

Morning/Afternoon: Attend the Mayor's Cup Snowmachine Race. The races are held at the Valdez Pipe Yard, located along the Richardson Highway, just past [Old Town Valdez](#). Parking and admission for the snowmachine races are free, and spectators have plenty of room to roam around to find the best views of the snowmachiners. Several races will be held throughout the morning and early afternoon for the different race classes, which include Pro, Semi-Pro, Veteran, and Juniors. Food trucks are available at the race for spectators to warm-up with a delicious pastry or hot cup of coffee.

Discover More: www.ValdezAlaska.org or call 907-835-2984



Evening: After the races, grab some dinner and then head to our local breweries, [Valdez Brewing](#) and [Growler Bay Brewing](#), for a pint of local craft beer. The two breweries are located near each other on Galena Drive in town, only a short walk from any hotel. Many of the snowmachine racers will likely be out enjoying a brew as well!

Night: As the evening winds down, take advantage of the dark skies for another night of aurora hunting. A second night in Valdez offers the opportunity to explore new areas for aurora viewing, such as along [Dayville Road](#) or even as far out as Thompson Pass.

Sunday: Explore The Snow

Morning: Break out your snowshoes or cross-country skis from the Ski for Free program and hit the trails! If you didn't grab gear, many of Valdez's [winter trails](#) are accessible for hiking as well, though make sure to wear boots and dress in layers. Easier trails that offer amazing scenery include those along the Mineral Creek Trail system, such as [Homestead Trail](#) or the [East and West Dike](#) trails. Another option is to head out to [Valdez Glacier Lake](#) and hike, ski or snowshoe out to the frozen icebergs.

Afternoon: Looking to warm up after being out on the trails? Check out the [Valdez Museum](#) on Egan Drive in town, which is open through the winter from noon until 4PM. Those who are up for another adventure should also consider a helicopter tour over Valdez with [VS Helicopters](#).

Evening/Night: Use your last night in Valdez to rest before traveling or for one last opportunity for aurora viewing.

Monday: Depart Valdez

Morning/Afternoon: Check out of your hotel or B&B in the morning, but make sure to grab a hearty breakfast in Valdez before traveling. Remember to return your winter gear to the Health & Fitness Center before departing. Driving out on the highway or flying out from the airport will again provide amazing opportunities for sightseeing the winter landscape of Prince William Sound or the Copper River Valley.

Header photo by Jiyeon Juno Kim