



Aleutians Expedition -- 2015

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Volcanoes. Blowing Mist. Swirling Tides. The Cradle of Storms

One 6-year-old. One 4-year-old.

August-September 2015: From Dutch Harbor to ??

Follow the journey on our [live tracker map](#) or on [FB](#)

Flexibility: This time, I haven't even put a line on the map. Because, despite the fact that I'm writing this 2 weeks before we leave, I don't really know where we'll end up. The ferry will drop us off in Dutch Harbor on August 1, after a 4 day journey from Seldovia, with 300 pounds of food. We'd love to fly to Nikolski, then work our way back to Dutch Harbor. But so far, we've found no way to hire or beg anyone to get food out to any part of either of those islands. And we can't actually carry 300lbs of food at once! So, perhaps we'll do several long wandering loops through the fjords of Unalaska. Or run into someone on the docks who can carry us somewhere else and change the plan entirely. Either way, we'll be back on the dock before the last ferry of the year leaves at the end of September.

Hig and I have been doing expeditions like this for fifteen years. The kids have been doing them since birth. And the more we do, the more we embrace flexibility. Partly because we have a lot of comfort with expedition planning. And partly because we have nothing to prove. It doesn't really matter how far we go, or even exactly where. It matters what we experience, what we see, and what we learn.

Stay tuned for that.

Wild Speculations:

We'll weather the storms. That, I'm sure of. Seeing as somehow, always, we are drawn to the windiest places.

Beyond that? Will the crashing waves and swirling currents keep us on the high ridges of those treeless islands? Will the molasses-slow pace of a four year old convince us to paddle as much as possible?

We're going because we're curious. Curiosity has dragged us many thousands of miles across Alaska. And left us with a map full of yawning blank spots—great green-brown swaths of temptation. A lifetime's worth of places I haven't explored.

The Aleutians have more history than almost any other place in the state. They were once one of the most

populated parts of the state, before the Russians came. They were the first place to be touched by outside occupation. They are still covered with layers of WWII detritus. They are the only place we've ever traveled in Alaska where we don't have to prepare for bears. They are the most volcanically active. Further out the chain, they are the most remote. Drawing a line based on the mean July temperature (how ecologists define the Arctic), they are the southernmost Arctic part of the world.

Unalaska and Umnak Islands have all that we need for a good adventure -- Plenty to wonder about.

Where we've been so far...

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