



Know Before You Go

Safety tips for traveling in Bear Country

Protect Yourself - Protect the Bears

Safety in bear country begins before you set up camp or hit the trail. Understanding and exercising proper preparation for personal safety and management of food and other attractants will go a long way toward ensuring a rewarding experience.

Bears by nature are opportunists. In the wild, they will feed on whatever is readily available. Food odors and improperly stored garbage will attract bears to campgrounds and picnic sites. Bears become habituated to human food if they find it readily available and may begin to associate human scents with the reward of food. These bears can become a threat to humans, property, and themselves— a pattern that normally results in the death of the bear. Protect yourself and protect the bears by storing trash and food in designated areas when you visit a national forest.

BEAR Country

Be alert - bears can be active anywhere and at any time of the day.

Educate yourself - know the recent bear activity reports and/or regulations of where you are traveling or camping.

Always play by the rules - never feed wildlife, keep food away from bears, stay on designated trails and leash pets.

Remain calm - if you see a bear, back away slowly while facing the bear and talking calmly. **Never run from a bear.**



Left to right: brown bear, and black bear.

Randy Armstrong

Safety Tips

1. Remember: You are responsible for your own safety and for the safety of those around you!
2. Alaska is Bear Country and many areas support both black and brown bears. Color is not a good indicator of species.
3. Avoid bears. While traveling in Bear Country, make noise, travel in a group and be alert.
4. When hiking, stay on designated trails, keep pets leashed, and keep children nearby.
5. Slow down. Running, biking and other high speed sports in bear country increase risk and can affect your reaction time and distance.
6. Be prepared for an encounter. Your behavior influences the outcome of bear encounters.
7. Carry and know how to use bear spray, have it easily accessible.
8. Your initial response to all bear encounters should be the same: Stand your ground, ready your deterrent, group up, watch the bear, and talk to the bear in a firm voice.
9. Never approach, crowd or pursue a bear. Even bears at designated bear-viewing areas need their space and space to leave.
10. Stay informed! Check local agency offices and websites for information on bear sightings and regulations.

For more information:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/visit/know-before-you-go/bears>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/plants-animals/?cid=FSEPRD500233>



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