

Historic Ketchikan Inc.

DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

1 Downtown Walking Tour points of interest. The entire Downtown tour, following points in order, can be walked in 1.5 to 2.5 hours.

- Downtown Walking Tour route
- Public streets
- Pedestrian ways: boardwalks, stairs, sidewalks, footpaths
- Waterfront Boardwalk

Map is not to scale. Projection was altered to improve ease of use.

Deer Mountain T
A short day hike (3-5 hours) offers a spectacular view of Ketchikan and near islands. Follow Fair St. to Ketchikan Lakes Rd. Signs guide you to the trailhead. The trail to the 3,001-foot summit is suitable for moderate strong hikers. There are some wet terrain. The overlook is about a mile from the trailhead. Hikers should stay on the trail.

Joseph William waterfront bike pedestrian
1.0 mile to U.S. Coast Guard Base Ketchikan
2.5 miles to Saxman and his totem

DOWNTOWN START HERE



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1 Ketchikan Visitors Bureau. Nearby is “The Rock,” artist Dave Rubin’s representation of Ketchikan’s first peoples and pioneers. A Historic Ketchikan Inc. history kiosk and the famous “rain gauge” marking our remarkable precipitation are near the Tour Center, which has information on visitor activities and facilities. *1 minute to next site.*

2 Welcome Arch. The first arch in the early 1920s welcomed visitors on steamships. An arch with neon was put up by the Chamber of Commerce in the 1950s. This replica arch was erected by Historic Ketchikan Inc. in 1996. *3 minutes.*

3 Yates Memorial Hospital. Built in 1905 as the Clergy House for the Episcopal Mission, the building was re-purposed in 1909 as a hospital in Ketchikan’s boom years. The building later housed *Alaska Sportsman*, forerunner of *Alaska* magazine. The Yates is being restored by Historic Ketchikan Inc. and houses the non-profit’s offices.

4 St. John’s Episcopal Church. St. John’s, built in 1902, is the oldest church building in Ketchikan. The sanctuary, paneled in cedar from a Saxman mill, originally stood on pilings above the sea. *2 minutes.*

5 Whale Park and Chief Kyan Totem Pole. A site with greenery, a history kiosk and a bench for rest and people-watching. Chief Kyan totem pole, carved by Israel Shotridge in 1993, replicates a pole raised in 1898 for a Tlingit chief. Billingsley Clock is our oldest public timepiece. Note the new home of Ketchikan Fire Department across Mill Street. *1 minute.*

6 Chief Johnson Totem Pole. A replica of a pole raised here in 1901 by Tlingit Chief Johnson in honor of the Kadjuk House of the Raven Clan; the original is at Totem Heritage Center. Israel Shotridge carved the replica in 1989. *1 minute.*

7 Bayside Hotel. First known as Thomas Basin Rooms, Bayside Hotel was built in 1927 by Forest and Harriet Hunt. It was a cafe/pool hall and boardinghouse for fishermen and cannery workers and became a “sporting house” in Creek Street’s brothel era. It’s being restored with help from Historic Ketchikan Inc. Adjacent is a deck with views of Ketchikan Creek, salmon runs, birds and seals. *1 minute.*

Tour Creek Street Historic District now by following Points 23 to 25 (Dolly’s House and Creek Street). You may then rejoin the full tour at the pedestrian bridge near Point 8 or, for a briefer tour, you may then follow Dock Street in front of the museum to Point 26.

8 Tongass Historical Museum. See artifacts, text and photos from our history as a Native fish camp, mining hub, salmon-canning capital and timber town. (Fee.) Centennial Building commemorates the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. In front is the Raven Stealing the Sun pole, carved by Dempsey Bob in 1983. *4 minutes.*

9 Grant Street trestle. From a safe vantage on the sidewalk, note how Ketchikan conquers terrain with ingenuity and lumber. Near the trestle are several houses, dating from 1900 to 1920, on the National Register of Historic Places. American Legion Post Home 3 across Park Avenue was built in 1932; the post dates to 1919. *3 minutes.*

10 Water warehouse and creek overlook. Built in 1912, the warehouse is one of Ketchikan’s oldest remaining commercial structures; it was reclaimed in a project by Historic Ketchikan Inc. and is used by Ketchikan Youth Initiative. A view platform is at creekside above the creek; see salmon schooling for their swim up the falls. *1 minute.*

11 Fish ladder. Salmon struggle back to their native streambed, fighting lower falls and then using a concrete fish ladder to avoid the roughest white water. *1 minute.*



Boaters gave way to batters at low tide at the creek mouth in the early 1900s, under the original Chief Johnson pole. This game was played in 1916 against a team from Prince Rupert, B.C., Canada. Dredging for Thomas Basin boat harbor let the sea take the field.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

12 Ketchikan Creek. Rainfall, springs and mountain snowpack keep the creek flowing clear and cold year-round. In summer, see salmon by the thousands spawning in the gravel beds where they were born years before. *10 minutes.*

13 Harris Street Bridge. An excellent overlook for salmon in season. *5 minutes.*

14 Hatchery. Hatcheries operated along the creek since the 1930s, augmenting natural salmon runs. A nonprofit aquaculture group took over in 2015. *1 minute.*

15 City Park. Small ponds in the park go back to the early 1900s, when they were holding ponds for salmon in the city’s first hatchery. The lighted fountain, originally built in the 1930s, was restored by volunteers in 1989. *2 minutes.*

16 Totem Heritage Center. A world-renowned collection of original, unrestored totem poles from Tlingit and Haida villages testifies to the artistry of 19th-century Native carvers. The center, part of the municipal museum department, exhibits Native arts. Guided and self-guided tours. (Fee.) *9 minutes.*

17 St. Elizabeth’s Church. The church was built by Ketchikan Native Episcopal Community around 1927, when congregations in Ketchikan were segregated. A church until 1962, it now serves as Ketchikan Mortuary. (Please note: the mortuary is a private business and is closed to everyone but customers. Visitors are not welcome.) *2 minutes.*

18 Ketchikan Indian Community. K.I.C. is a federally recognized tribal government, organized in 1939 under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. K.I.C. is involved in health, education and culture issues for Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people, along with other Alaska Natives. Northwest Coast-style eagle and raven panels outside the building were produced by Tlingit artist Ernie Smeltzer with high school students in 1983. *5 minutes.*

STEDMAN / THOMAS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT The Stedman-Thomas neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The area of historic properties on Stedman and Thomas streets extends to Ketchikan Creek. *Diaz Cafe, Union Machine Shop, Potlatch Bar and the New York Hotel are historic properties still in use.*

19 Sun Raven Totem Pole. Tlingit artist Israel Shotridge in 2003 raised this replica of a pole dating to the early 1900s on Tongass Island, ancestral home of the Tongass Tribe of Tlingit Indians. Another Sun Raven replica from 1939 stands in Saxman. The carver gave this pole to the Tongass Tribe and community. It stands beside UAS Ketchikan campus’ downtown facilities. *2 minutes.*

20 Thomas Street. This wood-plank street fronts the site of an early Ketchikan dock; in the 1890s it was a makeshift log raft. Thomas Street has been home to boat yards, carpenters, machine shops, bars and bordellos. *2 minutes.*

21 Thomas Basin and viewing platform. The Ketchikan Creek mouth was a broad tidal flat that served until the 1920s as a baseball field; local and visiting teams lined out a diamond at low tide. In 1922, pilot Roy Jones arrived here in a small seaplane; he was first to fly from Seattle to Ketchikan non-stop. The Corps of Engineers dredged the creek mouth in the 1930s for a harbor. A Historic Ketchikan Inc. kiosk has information on Ketchikan’s fishing industry. The waterfront boardwalk extends out the breakwater for a spectacular look at Deer Mountain, the harbor and downtown. On Stedman Street is a privately commissioned totem pole carved by Haida artist Warren Peele; it depicts three watchmen, an eagle, a raven and a man with a talking stick. *2 minutes.*

22 Stedman Street bridge. In season, see thousands of salmon gathering to run up the creek. Anglers fish from the wide sidewalk on the seaward side. *1 minute.*

CREEK STREET NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT This area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014. It’s been the scene of a Tlingit fish camp, sawmills, bawdy houses. Design standards preserve much of the early 20th century charm.

23 Creek Street. The area became a red-light district in 1902. More than 30 bay houses, most with one or two “working girls,” lined the creek over the years. With Prohibition, some became speakeasies; rowboats slipped in at night on high tide a liquor rose through trap doors. The city outlawed prostitution in 1953 and Creek St became a mixed residential and commercial area. The Star House at No. 5 Creek St. once a dance hall and the only registered brothel in the Territory of Alaska, is on the National Register of Historic Places. *1 minute to next site.*

24 Dolly’s House. Dolly Arthur was Ketchikan’s most famous madam in the hey of Creek Street. Her house, preserved much as she left it, features antiques, caches garish decor. Tours are provided. (Fee.) *5 minutes.*

25 Footbridge. Observe unique Creek Street, where historic buildings on piling flank a salmon stream. See the historical kiosk at the head of the bridge. *5 minutes.*

26 Ketchikan Daily News. The lone survivor of more than a dozen papers published here since 1900, the Daily News was founded in 1935.

27 Edmonds Street. Our steep terrain challenges engineering and construction techniques. This street is really a long set of wooden stairs to a great hillside view of lower downtown, the boat harbor and Tongass Narrows. *1 minute.*

28 Main and Dock streets. Ketchikan’s historic business center. The Heckman Building, from 1912, is one of the oldest concrete structures in Alaska. *2 minutes.*

The alternate walking route along Dock Street to Front Street avoids a fairly steep climb to marker 33; this route rejoins the Downtown Walking Tour near the tunnel.

29 Ketchikan Fire Department / KPAC KFD’s former downtown station; the department moved out in 2012. KFD was founded by volunteers in 1900. Next door the hill is the future Ketchikan Performing Arts Center, where First City Players is raising funds to renovate Elks Lodge 1429, built in 1949. *2 minutes uphill.*

30 Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council. KAAHC supports Ketchikan arts community and presents arts events. Main Street Gallery features visual artist most local. The building was formerly a Christian Science church. *1 minute.*

31 Red Men Lodge. Ketchikan’s first fraternal organization dates to 1900 and featured many Ketchikan civic leaders. It was all-white until the 1960s. The original lodge building was at the corner of Mission and Main streets. *4 minutes.*

32 Burkhart House. This turreted Victorian was built in 1904 for H.Z. Burkhart, a founder of Ketchikan Power Co., predecessor of Ketchikan Spruce Mill. It’s among our last examples of the Queen Anne style popular in the early 1900s. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. *4 minutes uphill.*

33 Knob Hill overlook. This walkway offers a sensational view of Newtown, the waterfront and First Lutheran Church. Your walk takes you past Knob Hill homes of prosperous pioneers, dating as early as 1901. *4 minutes down the stairs.*

34 Eagle Park. Across Front Street from this pocket park is the Gilmore Hotel, built in 1927 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. *2 minutes.*

35 Tunnel. According to Ripley’s Believe It or Not, this is the only tunnel in the world that can be driven through, driven around and driven over (on upper Front Street). Finished in 1954, it eased access to Newtown; for half a century before it, narrow streets on pilings skirted the rock. *4 minutes.*