



DAY TRIP TO INDEPENDENCE MINE

From Palmer · Matanuska-Susitna, Alaska



GOLD MINING



Photo: Watts, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

STATE PARK · SEASONAL

Preserved ruins in a state historical park, with buildings open on guided tours from June 18 to September 30 per the park and tour operator pages (the same dates in 2025 and 2026). A visit video posted August 15, 2026, shows the camp and the assay office open.

Independence Mine is a short mountain drive from Palmer up Palmer-Fishhook Road into Hatcher Pass. In season, give it half a day: a guided walk through the camp, time in the assay office and the bunkhouse, and a stroll up the paths among the ruins.

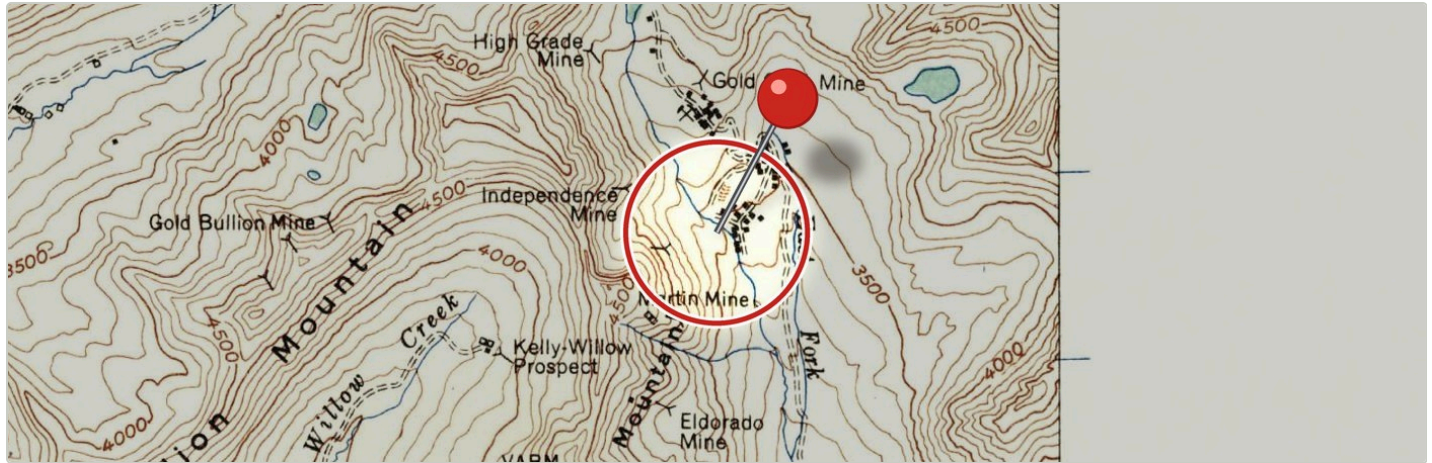
A SAMPLE DAY

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| ☐ Morning | Drive from Palmer up Palmer-Fishhook Road into Hatcher Pass. |
| ☐ Late morning | Check in at Bunkhouse No. 2 and join a guided tour. |
| ☐ Midday | See the assay office and the manager's house, then walk the paths below the mill. |
| ☐ Afternoon | Drive back down to Palmer. |

Check the season with Alaska State Parks or the tour operator before you go.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The bunkhouses** The red-trimmed bunkhouses with Bullion Mountain behind, from the path above.
- **The fallen mill** From the path: the mill is closed to the public.
- **Fog** When cloud fills the bowl, as in the 2017 photos here, frame the bunkhouses against it.



USGS topographic map, 1949 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	21 mi, about 39 min each way from downtown Palmer. From Anchorage: 60 mi, about 1 h 27 min.
SEASON	Visitor center open daily June 18 to September 30, per Alaska State Parks (no year given; the same dates were posted in 2025 and 2026). Buildings open 10 am to 6 pm, per the tour operator.
GATE	Upper-lot gate open 9 am to 7 pm. At other times, park in the lower lot and walk up.
FEES	\$5 daily parking (Alaska State Parks fee table, 2026). Tours: \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and military, \$5 children 2 to 11, infants free (Salmon Berry Travel & Tours). The state fee table also lists mine admission at \$15 a person.
TOURS	45-minute walking tours on the hour; check in 10 minutes early at Bunkhouse No. 2. Groups over 20 need a state parks permit.
CLOSED AREAS	The mill and mine shafts are closed to the public. Which buildings are open has changed with restoration since 2024.
FOOD	Snacks in the Bunkhouse No. 2 gift shop. Bring water and layers: summers are cold at 3,500 feet.
GOLD PANNING	Allowed in the park with a pan and shovel only.
WEBSITE	dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/matsu/indepmineshp.htm

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 61.79028, -149.28472 • 61°47'25"N
149°17'05"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/alaska/independence-mine/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.