

Valdez, Alaska - It's the snowiest place in the U.S.

The city of Valdez receives an average of 300 inches of snow annually. But that's in town, at sea level. Nearby Thompson Pass sees 600 to 900 inches each year on average, and during some winters 100+ inches can fall each month for up to five consecutive months. Compare that to Jackson Hole at 459 annual inches, Alta at 563, Crystal Mountain at 486...

Despite the heavy snowfall, Valdez schools have only had one snow day in recent memory.

The winter of 2011-2012 brought an unusually heavy snowfall in town. By January 24 of 2012, 327 inches had fallen in Valdez — already well over the yearly average of 300. December alone saw 152 inches, with another 103 falling in January. City-owned buildings, including schools, reported snow loads that exceeded their design capacity. For the first time in decades, Valdez kids got a snow day.

It's one of the most spectacular places to watch the Northern Lights.

It's hard to beat that backdrop for seeing the dancing lights of the aurora borealis.

Courtesy of: Matthew Meltzer / Dec 28, 2021