

Middle Fork Wilderness Outfitters – Trip Information

Travel Info – You’ll start your Middle Fork river trip from Salmon, Idaho. Many of our guests spend an extra day or two either before or after their trip exploring beautiful Central Idaho. Please feel free to ask us for recommendations if you would like to try some other activities in the area, and we can help you get set up.

Several airlines provide air service to Boise, Sun Valley, or Idaho Falls, Idaho. You might also want to look at flying into Missoula Montana. From Boise you can fly to Salmon on Gem Air (208) 756-7382 (contact Gem Air for pricing), and then the hotel shuttle can pick you up at the Salmon airport. If driving your own car or renting a car, you will simply leave it at the Salmon airport and it will be waiting there when you get back from your river trip. Another option would be to contact Sawtoothtrans.com. They offer van charters to and from Boise and Sun Valley. This is always a great option for groups. FYI, Boise is approximately a 5 hour drive from Salmon, Idaho Falls is about 2 ½ hours, Missoula and Sun Valley are both about 3 hours away.

You will need lodging in Salmon for the night before your trip begins. There are limited options for lodging in Salmon so be sure to book your lodging far in advance as Salmon can fill up quickly during the summer months. Hotels typically start accepting reservations in December for the next year. We recommend the Stagecoach Inn which is located in town and right on the river. Their phone number is (208)756-2919. Depending on your return flight/trip plans after your river trip ends, you may need to book an additional night’s stay in Salmon.

We will depart from the Salmon airport the morning of the launch at approximately 8:00 am.

Trip Orientation – We will meet in Salmon at 5:30 pm the evening before your trip begins. Typically, our meeting will take place at Stagecoach Inn, in the back near the river. This is a group meeting where you will have the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers. We’ll discuss river safety, low impact camping and river procedures to follow for the duration of your trip. At the meeting we will provide you with two waterproof duffels for your personal gear and instructions on how to pack (see **How to Pack** instructions below). After (or before) our meeting, we’ll be glad to make recommendations on where to eat dinner in Salmon.

Transportation to start and end of trip –Transportation to start and end of trip – We will start at the Salmon Airport, so you will need to drive to the airport (most people leave their car here during the week) or arrange for a shuttle from the Stagecoach Inn. From Salmon Airport, we will take a short and scenic backcountry flight to either Bruce Meadows runway (followed by a short bus ride to the put-in, Boundary Creek) or to Indian Creek runway/boat ramp. *Where we start the trip from (Boundary Creek or Indian Creek) is entirely dependent on water levels/river conditions - generally June/July trips start from Boundary Creek, in August we launch from Indian Creek.* The cost of this flight is included in your trip price unless otherwise stated. At the end of the river trip, a bus will bring you back from the “takeout” at Cache Bar to the Salmon airport (about a 2 hr drive + a stop for lunch) where your car will be waiting. Guests who fly back to Boise with Gem Air will typically need to book another night’s stay in Salmon before flying back to Boise (call Gem Air for more details).

Equipment and Packing

We provide:

- ❖ Gourmet dutch oven meals- All meals are provided during your time on the river.
- ❖ Unlimited drinking water.
- ❖ One large tent for 2 people for optimum room and comfort.
- ❖ One deluxe Therma-Rest self-inflating sleeping pad per person.
- ❖ A cot
- ❖ Sleeping bag, small blanket and a small pillow
- ❖ A stainless steel tumbler for hot or cold drinks at camp
- ❖ We provide you with two waterproof bags: one for your clothing and overnight gear, one day bag. See "How to Pack" below for bag sizes and packing recommendations.
- ❖ We provide the highest quality, Coast Guard approved Type V life jacket.
- ❖ Drysuits will be provided on early June trips and whenever weather demands. Feel free to bring your own for fit and comfort. Exceptionally large or small sizes may not be available.
- ❖ We send our gear boat ahead daily to set up camp including dining tables, comfortable chairs, your dry bag and your tent and cot. We are fully equipped with extensive first aid kits in all boats. Our guides are trained in first aid, CPR, and on all aspects of river rescue and emergency procedures.
- ❖ Solar showers upon request
- ❖ Limited amount of beer, soda and wine. We try to honor all requests for specialty drinks.
- ❖ Emergency Satellite Phone and communication system

How to Pack

We will provide two waterproof bags to pack your gear in. The smaller day bag holds items such as rain gear, sunscreen and camera; i.e. anything you might need during the day. The larger gear bag is for your clothing and personal items. The larger bags travel in our gear boat which goes ahead of the group to set up camp so once the bags are loaded in the morning they are unavailable to you until we arrive at our camp in the late afternoon. You may find it easier to pack your things in small, soft duffels that slip right into the bigger bag or pack several stuff-type sacks in order to keep clothing organized. Try to limit your gear to our pack list. Remember the environment...pack for comfort.

What to Wear

We recommend layering clothing for most river days, so you can adjust your clothing as the day warms or the weather changes. Most days, you would wear a swim suit or quick dry shorts and bring a quick dry top for sun protection. You may need a fleece top for the morning when it is cooler which can be put into your "day" bag when it warms up, river sandals or tennis shoes that are comfortable when wet, a hat, sunglasses with strap and plenty of sunscreen. Follow the packing list below and you will have everything you need and not be over packed.

Suggested Packing List

When packing clothing for your trip keep in mind that you can expect warm days (60 to 90's) and cool evenings (40-60's) on the river during June, July and August. However, mountain weather can change rapidly. It can snow in July or it can be intensely hot. The weather is impossible to predict. You may not use all of the gear on this list but we recommend bringing it all so you are prepared and comfortable.

- ❖ Hats (Warm and Sun)
- ❖ Personal water bottle clearly marked with your name
- ❖ Quick Dry clothing for river use (nylon shorts and/or swimsuit 2+ pairs, short and long sleeve shirts 1-2 each, lightweight pants 1 pair)
- ❖ **Good Rain Gear (jacket and pants) Important!**
- ❖ River Shoes (river type sandals with heel strap or tennis shoes)
- ❖ Camp Shoes – tennis shoes or dry sandals
- ❖ Long Underwear top and bottom
- ❖ Warm Jacket- fleece or down

- ❖ Camp Clothes: long pants or sweats 1-2, T-shirts short and long sleeve 1-2 each, sweatshirt or any type warm top - anything else comfortable to change into after a day on the river
- ❖ Underwear and Socks (include 1 pair wool socks or neoprene socks to wear on river for chilly days)
- ❖ Gloves: wool or polypropylene for camp and neoprene for rafting (optional).
- ❖ Personal Toiletry Items, small towel and washcloth
- ❖ Travel pack of handi- wipes or sanitizing gel (we provide wash stations at all meals)
- ❖ Reef safe sunscreen!!!
- ❖ Sunglasses with strap (spare pair recommended)
- ❖ Headlamp or small flashlight
- ❖ Camera or cell phone for photos...no service on the MF!!!
- ❖ Special medications, prescriptions (bring two containers)
- ❖ Extra Contacts or glasses
- ❖ Your Musical Instrument!
- ❖ Good book
- ❖ Personal wine, beer, liquors and soft drinks. We provide enough beer for each adult to have two to three beers per day and a couple of glasses of wine with your dinner. You are welcome to bring additional beer, wine and liquor if you would like. Don't forget the mixers if you are bringing liquor and please try to avoid glass bottles. We also provide a variety of non-alcoholic drinks and will do our best to honor requests for you.

Optional

- ❖ Wet Suit and or neoprene socks-if you want your own.
- ❖ Small day pack or Hydration pack for hikes
- ❖ "Funky" costume for last night
- ❖ A sarong or cover-up for hot, sunny days on the raft

If you have any questions about gear or what to bring, feel free to call or email us.

Gratuities

Tips are greatly appreciated but completely discretionary. Your guides are some of the best on the river, giving you unequalled service, and as you will see, they work tirelessly to make your trip the most memorable you have ever had – in fact, the trip of a lifetime! A tip of 15-20% would be appropriate and can be given in check or cash (we can accept Venmo; however, Venmo charges us a fee so the guides don't receive your full tip) to our lead guide at the end of the trip. Tips are split equally among the guides because they are all equally awesome!

Water and Weather

Every trip on the Middle Fork is unique. There is no way to predict the weather or water level for any week on the river, so our packing lists help to ensure that guests come prepared for all conditions.

In general, in early June the water level is the highest and will be the biggest, wildest whitewater of the year. The weather for the early June trips can be changeable spring type weather - hot and sunny one day, colder the next. Later June and into July is typically when the water level starts to come down a bit, the wildflowers bloom and the weather becomes warmer. An afternoon temperature in July might be 80 degrees or warmer, with overnight lows 45-50 degrees. In mid-July and into August the water warms significantly and guests enjoy swimming and fishing in the clear water. Late August and September trips are chilly in the mornings and evenings with warm days for great fishing. Most days will be spent in shorts or swimsuits and short sleeves, but rain gear and extra layers should always be packed in your day bag for changeable mountain weather.

Trip Itinerary

Launch Day 1: We will depart from the Salmon Airport the morning of your launch. You'll be notified of the time at the trip orientation meeting. We suggest that you eat breakfast in town that morning.

- The flight to Bruce Meadows airstrip is about 45 minutes and you'll take a short bus ride to the launch point from there.
- The flight into Indian Creek takes about 30 minutes and is right there at our launch point.

The boats will be loaded, you will be briefed on river safety, and we will be on our way down the river, usually around 11:00 am. A lunch stop will be made shortly afterward.

A Typical River Day: Our guides will have coffee and a cold breakfast ready by 6 am for any early risers and a hot breakfast ready to serve around 8. We break camp and are usually on the water by 9:30 am each day. Guests may choose from oar boats for sightseeing, relaxing and fishing, paddle boats to paddle and maneuver through the rapids and inflatable kayaks for the ultimate challenge of paddling on your own. Each day consists of great

whitewater, majestic scenery, wildlife viewing, fishing, stops for side hikes to historic, geographic or scenic highlights, hot springs soaks and swimming. We will always take time to stop and relax for a delicious lunch. There is also a trail that follows the course of the river so we always encourage hiking for anyone interested. There is something for everyone of all ages. Our camps are different on every trip, so our daily mileage will vary. We will stop for lunch and depending on that day's mileage, we will arrive in camp between 4 and 6 pm. Our large gear boat will travel ahead of the group, so when we arrive at camp, tents are set up, appetizers are underway and you are free to get settled and enjoy yourself while a gourmet dinner is prepared.

Final Day 6: The Middle Fork will keep you enthralled with every mile as the character of the river and its canyon change from the beginning to the end. On our final day, we are in the Impassable Canyon and run some of the biggest whitewater of the trip between impressive granite walls. At the confluence with the Main Salmon, we leave the Middle Fork behind. You can take a moment to look back upstream at the spectacular canyon that has been your home for the last 6 days. We typically "take-out" at Cache Bar, board the bus and drive a short distance down the road where lunch will be served. We take you by shuttle bus back to the airport in Salmon, aiming to arrive by 2 pm.

Fishing on the Middle Fork

If you have an interest in fishing on the river, we strongly encourage you to do so. We always bring a few fly fishing rods to be used by the group, but recommend you bring your own gear if you want to do a lot of fishing so you don't have to share! The Middle Fork of the Salmon is known as one of America's premiere rivers for native cutthroat trout. In order to preserve this fishery, fishing regulations are very strict. The river and tributaries are catch and release with single barbless hooks and no bait fishing. If you want to bring your own gear, we recommend #3 to #6 weight fly rods and 4X to 5X tippet material. Dry flies that work well include Fat Alberts, Purple Haze, Stone or Salmon fly imitations, Elkhair Caddis, Hoppers, Turks Tarantulas, Madam X's and Parachute Adams. Suggested lures: Mepps #2, Roostertails and Small-Spinners. For avid fisherpersons we can offer a small fishing raft for an additional fee. Fishing licenses are required and can be obtained at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/licenses>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many people/rafts go on each trip?

We take a maximum of 22 guests and 8 guides. In addition to our sweep boat carrying all of the gear, we have several oar boats in which the guide is rowing and you are free to relax or fish, paddle rafts that have the guests paddling and maneuvering the raft through the rapids with the guide in back, and up to 4 inflatable kayaks.

What is the food like? Do I need to bring anything?

We take great pride in our menu and all of our meals are designed to have something for everyone. Breakfasts include egg dishes, meats, fruits, and granola/yogurt. Lunch always consists of a beautiful “spread” of meats, cheeses, breads, fresh salads, fruits, chips and treats. Appetizers will start off your evening in camp each night. Dinners will feature savory grilled meats, chicken or fish, fresh salads, vegetables, a variety of side dishes and Dutch oven specialties, such as fresh baked bread and desserts. Please let us know if you have any medical dietary requirements in advance. We are more than happy to accommodate special diets, including gluten free and vegetarian.

We serve juice, coffee, tea or hot chocolate for breakfast; juices, fizzy waters or soda pop for lunch; and red and white wines for dinner, along with a limited supply of beer in camp. We also always have plenty of drinking water available. If you would like to bring premium liquors, you may purchase them and bring them with you (don't forget the mixers and the limes and please try to avoid glass bottles whenever possible). Because we can't anticipate how much or what type people prefer we ask that if you want a specific beer or soda, please bring your own in cans when possible and marked with your initials to avoid confusion. If you call/email us ahead of time, we will do our best to fulfill any special drink requests. You can give us any beverages you bring the morning of departure and we will pack them for you.

Is there a toilet? Shower?

A portable potty is set up each afternoon at a private place away from camp which is for solids only. As “dilution is the solution”, the Forest Service requests that we urinate directly into the river or in the wet sand.

We will provide and fill solar showers on nights 2 & 4 of a 6 day trip. All bathing must be done at least 150 ft away from any water source and above the high water line. Our guides will assist in finding a great shower spot for you at camp.

Can I use a cell phone? Can I be reached in case of an emergency?

There is no cellular phone service on or near the river. HOORAY!!!! We carry a Satellite messaging device for emergency use and to check messages. Please leave our office number 1-208-221-7935 with your family or friends that may need emergency contact with you during the week. We will check messages from our satellite phone several times during the trip.

*If planning on bringing a personal Satellite Messaging device please be advised that we will ask you to consider and honor the other guests' wilderness experience during the trip.