

Main Salmon River 6-day

Idaho's Main Stem of the Salmon River accesses the most pristine and untouched terrain in the US, slicing through the 23 million acre Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area, the largest roadless area in the country. The Main Stem of the Salmon River is famous for its large sandy beaches for camping, warm water for swimming, great trout fishing, fun and easy whitewater, and the best hot spring in the Pacific Northwest. No river displays all these characteristics quite like the Main Stem of the Salmon River. It also boasts a canyon that is deeper than the Grand Canyon. The river has recently become famous as the best stand up paddleboard (SUP) river trip in the world for its warm water (75°F in August) and fun and safe wave-train rapids. Often called the River of No Return, the Main Stem of the Salmon River is chock full of historic miner's cabins, homesteads and Shoshone Sheepstealer and Nez Pierce Indian pictographs and pit houses. The early river runners called the Salmon River the "River of No Return" because the wooden scows run in the early 20th century were scrapped at the end of their journey and used to build many of the cabins you see in the canyon. But the truth be told the Salmon is in fact a river you'll want to return to time and time again, and not want to return home at the end of your adventure.

ITINERARY Please arrive in Salmon, Idaho the night before the trip begins. Salmon is a 5-hour drive (1 hour flight) from Boise and a 2-hour drive from Missoula. Please see section below on getting to Salmon. We have a pre-trip orientation at the Stagecoach Inn (208-756-2919) at 7:30pm the evening before the trip begins. We will get acquainted, answer questions, and have a short orientation to show you how to pack the waterproof gear bags we provide for your personal gear. Lodging at the Stagecoach Inn is arranged on your own.

DAY 1 - We meet at 7:30am at the Stagecoach Inn for a 2-hour bus ride to the Corn Creek, the put-in for the Main Stem of the Salmon River. We will stop after 45 minutes to get last minute items (fishing licenses, beer, sunscreen etc.) at the North Fork Store. Upon launching our rafts at Corn Creek we journey into the pristine heart of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area. We will encounter Killum, Gun Barrel and Alder rapids today, which are all fun class III wave trains. This river calls to adventure seekers, who can choose between the paddle raft, inflatable kayaks or stand-up paddleboards. Or you can ride comfortably on an oar raft in our luxurious "Queen of Sheeba Couch" and take in the scenery. The fishing is excellent for novice and experienced anglers alike. The warm air and water temperatures encourage frequent refreshing dips in the river and we often find guests in calm sections floating next to the rafts. Evenings find us enjoying delicious dutch oven delights, relaxing by the campfire, playing horseshoes, listening to the guides sing and play guitar and watching for shooting stars.

DAYS 2 ~ 5 - Each day brings new discoveries: exciting rapids like Black Creek, Bailey, 5 Mile, Split Rock, Big Mallard, Elkhorn and Growler rapids, historical sites such as Buckskin Bill's homestead and Jim Moore's place (maybe you'll find the fortune he buried in the hillside!), and the much anticipated Barth Hot Springs. Visit Barth Hot Springs, known as the best hot spring in the Pacific Northwest. We may stop and visit with several families that live along the river year round and they will share their stories of living "off the grid" in the wilderness and take us on a tour of their homesteads. Visit with Sue and Greg Metz at Yellow Pine homestead, Doug and Phyllis Tims at Campbells Ferry homestead and Five Mile Bar, the home of the river's most famous resident "Buckskin Bill". There are abundant hiking options up many of the side drainages. Hike up Indian Creek to visit very rare 2,000 year old Yew trees, also called the immortal tree, which the Plains Native Americans used to make longbows from the wood. Hikes up Chamberlain or Bargamin Creeks give you another perspective of the river or hike up to Rabbit Point for amazing views.

DAY 6 - We float for 5-10 miles this morning and run challenging rapids like Chittam and Vinegar Creek and arrive at the take-out at Carey Creek around 10am. Please see section below on "last day of trip" for logistics today.

What's Included

- ◆ ground transportation by bus from Salmon to the river Day 1.
- ◆ meals from lunch Day 1 to breakfast Day 6.
- ◆ expert leadership with seasoned professional river guides who are Wilderness First Aid and Swiftwater Rescue certified.
- ◆ all camping equipment including 4-man tents for 1 or 2 people, large rectangular 20F sleeping bag, 2" sleeping pad and camp pillow.
- ◆ 3 dry bags: one for camp clothing, one for sleeping kit (pillow & sleeping bag) and one small dry bag for items to have access to during the day like sunscreen, rain gear, camera etc.
- ◆ all commissary equipment for meals and camp.
- ◆ all rafting equipment (life jackets, helmets, paddles etc.)
- ◆ all water craft including oar boats, paddle raft, inflatable kayaks and inflatable stand up paddle board (when river levels permit).
- ◆ MFRE mug to use and take home after trip.

What's Not? - Getting to Salmon, Idaho; Stagecoach Inn in Salmon for the night before the trip; optional car shuttle from Stagecoach Inn to Carey Creek take-out (~\$360/car plus \$50 gas); optional flights from Boise to Salmon (\$220/person) or McCall to Boise (\$200/person); optional bus from Carey Creek to McCall (\$50/person) and McCall to Boise (\$50/person); travel insurance; optional tipping to guides (10-15%+ of trip cost) depending on level of satisfaction.

Payments - Deposit: \$500.00 per person, required for confirmed reservation. Balance: Payable May 1.

Cancellation Policy - Deposits are refundable (less \$150.00 service charge per person) if written notice is received 120 days prior to your departure date. With less than 120 days notice from your departure date your monies are nonrefundable. If Middle Fork River Expeditions must cancel a trip due to water levels, weather conditions, wildfires or any other circumstances, your trip will be refunded or re-scheduled for the same date the next summer. Custom trips and groups of ten or more have a separate payment and cancellation policy.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expert Leaders – Middle Fork River Expeditions attracts gifted guides for whom leading trips is their passion. Middle Fork River Expeditions guides positively elevate your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends. Most MFRE guides have 10 or more years experience on rivers and all are First Aid Certified and licensed by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board.

River Craft Options – MFRE prides itself in offering more river craft options than any other company on the river. We rotate guests into various river craft depending on your desire for the day. Most guests ride in our oar powered rafts. For the more adventurous we run a paddle raft, no experience required as your guide steers at the stern while you and other guests paddle up front. When water levels permit (usually July thru Sept only) you can try out our single inflatable kayaks or an inflatable stand up paddle board for thrill seekers.

Hiking – There is plenty of time and numerous opportunities to hike during your trip. All of the hikes can be done in your river shoes, but it is also nice to have a pair of lightweight hiking shoes available in case you get blisters on your feet from your sandals. We can visit Shoshone pictographs, miner's cabin's, historic homestead's, water falls and hot springs on a given day. All hikes are optional and some people choose to relax on the boat underneath the shade of an umbrella and read a book.

Fishing – The Main Salmon has some great fishing opportunities. Fishing is for cutthroat trout, rainbows and small mouth bass. An Idaho State fishing license is required and may be purchased in Salmon, Idaho before the trip. Kids 14 and under can fish without a license. Spinners or fly rods work well on the river. It is not catch and release so we can eat the fish if you wish. We ask that you clean and cook the fish you wish to eat. Please know we bring lots of food so the fish caught will be eaten as an appetizer and not necessary to our meal planning. Kids 14 and under can fish with no license. To get your license in advance, go to <https://id.outdoorcentral.us/>.

Camping – This is one of the best parts of the trip, to be lulled to sleep by the sound of the river. We provide all camping gear for you, including a large rectangular sleeping bag, 2" Paco sleeping pad, camp pillow, 4- man tent (for 1 or 2 people only), and all camp equipment. In the evening, we have chairs to relax in for meals and around the campfire. We bring along a wilderness porta-potty and place it in a private place with stunning views. We practice Leave No Trace camping ethics, so you are sure to learn a lot about this on the trip and be able to take some of these new skills home with you.

Bathing and Swimming – The Main Stem of the Salmon is a very pristine river and there is no bathing allowed in the river and all bathing must be done above the high water mark, at least 100 feet from any water source and with biodegradable soap. For a wilderness shower, we have collapsible buckets that you can fill with river water and you can lather up away from the river and have a friend gently pour it on your head. Or better yet do it at Barth Hot Spring after soaking for a while. There are some great swimming holes and rock jumps on the river that are always optional. No diving is allowed and life jackets must be worn at all times when swimming. We often find guests (and guides!) jumping into the river from the rafts and swimming along them during calm sections to cool off. As this is a free flowing snowmelt river drainage, the water temperature is cold in May/June (45-55F) for swimming, refreshing in July (65-75F), and comfortable in August (75+F).

Food – We provide healthy and delicious meals, accompanied with lots of salads, fresh fruits and vegetables. We also use as much organic produce/products as is available in central Idaho. Our goal is to have you eat healthy meals so that you feel good and refreshed during the day with lots of energy for fun in this remote wilderness setting. Vegetarians, Gluten Free and Paleo diets welcome and meat eaters alike. There are also always snacks available during the day. Our past guests rave about our menu and dutch oven delights.

Drinks – We offer drinking water at all times as each raft has a water cooler and electrolyte crystals are available during lunch. For evening we provide soda such as Coke, Diet Coke, Izzie, LACroix, and San Pellegrino. We provide limited (1-2 glasses/guest) red and white wine in the evenings. We do not provide beer and you are free to bring some, just make sure beer is in cans only. For those who want more than a couple of glasses of wine at night, you can bring more wine if you wish and glass is ok. Hard liquor can be brought in glass as well. You can purchase beer/wine/liquor at The North Fork Store on Day 1 on the drive to the put-in point.

Main Salmon River ~ Travel to Salmon, Idaho

Lodging

Lodging is needed the night before your trip in Salmon. We will meet at the Stagecoach Inn (208-756-2919) at 7:30pm the night before your trip begins. The best rooms are on the river side of the hotel and a little more expensive but well worth it.

At the end of the trip, the Super 8 in McCall (208) 634-4637 has clean rooms or the Hotel McCall (866-800-1183) is a more expensive and a very nice hotel. For Boise, we recommend the Best Western Vista Inn (800) 727-5006 which is right next to the airport and has a shuttle service. There is also a nice restaurant adjacent to the hotel for dinner. *Please call them directly after you have signed up for the trip.*

Travel to Salmon, Idaho

Guests are responsible for their travel arrangements to Salmon. There are two transportation options to choose from, **driving or flying**. There is commercial air service to Boise, Idaho or Missoula, Montana. Then rent a car and drive to Salmon (5 hours from Boise or 2 hours from Missoula) or fly in a small 5 or 9 seater airplane with Sawtooth Flying Service (800-798-6105).

- **If you are driving to Salmon**, you can drive right to Salmon, Idaho either by personal car or rental car from Boise or Missoula airports. *Please arrange with River Shuttles (208-756-4188) to shuttle your vehicle from the Stagecoach Inn in Salmon to Carey Creek, which is the take-out for the river.* The cost is ~\$350/car and \$50 gas deposit. Please make the reservation for this immediately after booking your trip to be sure they have enough drivers to do your shuttle. Upon your arrival at the Stagecoach Inn, there is a desk with paperwork to fill out and an envelope to place your keys and place in a locked box for River Shuttles to pick up. Please be sure you bring 2 sets of car keys, one to leave with the shuttle company and one to bring with you on the river. If you have only one key, you must state on your paperwork you want the key left on the tire outside the car otherwise they will assume you have an extra key and lock the keys in the car.
- **If you are flying to Salmon**, you can fly into Boise, Idaho and then take the flight (approximately 1 hour and \$220) directly to Salmon, Idaho the day before your trip begins. You can contact Sawtooth Flying Service (800) 798-6105 to reserve your flight. These are small 5 and 9 seater aircraft and it is a spectacular flight. When you arrive in Salmon, the Stagecoach Inn will pick you up at the airport and drive you to the hotel. If you need assistance with your travel arrangements, please ask MFRE.

**Please note we will provide transportation from Salmon to the river put-in point on Day 1.*

After The Trip

We will arrive at the take-out point at Carey Creek at approximately 10am on Day 6.

If driving, your car will be waiting for you and you can be on your way.

If flying, We provide transportation (2 hours) from Carey Creek to McCall, Idaho, arriving by 2-3pm for flights (~\$200) with Sawtooth Flying Service (800-798-6105) back to Boise or Salmon, arriving by 3-4pm. If you plan on flying out of Boise this day please book after 6:30pm. We recommend you stay the night in Boise and fly out the next day to avoid complications in flight connections after the trip. We recommend the Best Western Vista Inn (800) 727-5006 which is right next to the airport and has a shuttle service. There is also a nice restaurant/ brew pub adjacent to the hotel for dinner.

Weather - Idaho weather can be variable and vigorous. So come prepared with **warm and cold weather** clothing. There is no such thing as bad weather if you bring the right clothing. Synthetics are best for layering and keeping you warm in all weather conditions. Weather during the daytime is 70-90F and evenings 40-60F. The easiest way to think of river trip clothing is having both daytime "river" clothes which are synthetic and dry camp clothes which are cotton and more comfortable. The daytime clothes will be wet and your camp clothes will be dry. Have a backup set for both and you will be very well prepared. Below is our recommended clothing and equipment list. If you bring what's on the list you will be all set for the trip. If it rains at camp we set up large tarps so everyone stays dry and have a roaring fire to keep warm if it's chilly. During the day, the oar rafts have large umbrellas that can be used in addition to your splash gear.

We Supply

- Large rectangular freshly washed sleeping bag (rated 20F)
- 2" thick "Paco" sleeping pad

- Pillow (this is a camp pillow- 10" x 12", so if you want a full sized pillow please bring it).
- Splash gear (jacket and pants) for daytime- *For Middle Fork only*
- 3 Dry Bags (1 for sleep kit, 1 for evening gear, 1 small for daytime gear)
- Kelty Gunnison 4.1 tents (4 man tents for 1-2 people)
- Farmer John wetsuit (when needed in June and early July)
- Waterproof socks and neoprene gloves (for June and early July trips only or if cold sensitive)
- Life Jacket (Type V)
- Helmets (for inflatable kayaks, paddle raft and stand up paddle board only)
- All water craft and commissary equipment, including camp chairs
- MFRE coffee mug- a gift for you to take home

You Bring

- Sarong or quick dry towel (good for sun, drying off or changing clothes)
- Water bottle with carabiner
- Personal toiletry items
- Biodegradable soap (no bathing within 100 feet of any water source is allowed)
- Sunscreen lotion and chapstick
- Sunglasses with retainer
- Sun hat (baseball hat ok, but larger full brim better with chin strap is better)
- Bathing suit
- Socks - 4 pair (2 cotton for camp, 2 synthetic for hiking)
- T-shirts - 3 (two cotton for evenings and one synthetic for daytime)
- Long sleeved shirts - 2 (one cotton for evenings and one synthetic SPF sun shirt for daytime)
- Long pants - 1 (jeans for evening)
- Shorts - 2 (one cotton for evenings and one synthetic for daytime)
- Underwear - assorted (cotton for evening and silk/synthetic for daytime)
- Rain jacket (we provide splash gear tops and bottoms on *Middle Fork only* for daytime but nice to have a dry rain jacket at camp)
- Medium weight fleece or sweater
- Shoes - dry shoes for camp (lightweight hiking boots or tennis shoes)
- Shoes - river shoes (Tekstra or Keens with toe coverage is best but Teva's will work too)
- Camera and spare battery
- Headlamp (better than flashlight for getting into dry bags at night!)

Optional

- Ziploc bags - handy for small items or to isolate wet articles from rest of gear
- Olay face wipes or other brand for cleaning face
- Fishing fly rod in sturdy hard case
- Fishing license (only if you are fishing)
- Shoes- flip flop sandals (for drying out feet at camp)
- Full sized pillow

** May/June & Sept/Oct trips- bring a ski hat, camp gloves, 1 pair of synthetic long john top and bottoms, and fleece type pants.