

# Hells Canyon Trek & Float



**Call for Dates**

*Choose between a 6-day and an 8-day trip*

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Backpacking on the rim of Hells Canyon and the Salmon River Canyons
- Climb non-technical peaks, fish crystal clear alpine lakes, explore remote backcountry wilderness
- Class III-IV whitewater rafting on the Snake River in Hells Canyon
- Excellent bass fishing and optional kayaking



## Trip Overview

Explore Hells Canyon from rim to river on this epic adventure. You begin your journey in the Seven Devils Wilderness area on the rim of Hells Canyon - home to high alpine lakes, stunning granite peaks and serene wilderness. We can fly-fish, explore remote backcountry, cross trail-less mountain passes or bag one of the Devils.

We'll rest our weary feet for the second half of the adventure, as we paddle the famous whitewater of the Snake River in Hells Canyon. Class III-IV whitewater, great bass fishing, stunning scenery and wildlife combine to make this a journey of a lifetime.

## Difficulty Rating

The Trek and Float trip is rated MODERATE to CHALLENGING, and requires good physical condition.

## Types of Water Craft NWV Offers:

**Oar Rafts:** In these boats, the guide sits in the middle of the boat with oars and has complete control of the raft. You can paddle if you wish, but paddling is optional at all times. In oar boats, you can sit back, enjoy the scenery and let the guide do all the work if you wish. Our most relaxing and least participative option.

**Paddle-Assist Rafts:** In paddle-assist boats, the guide has oars (typically mounted in the back of the boat) but needs paddling help during rapids and occasionally during some of the flat water. This is the most popular boat for people who wish to paddle during their trip.

**Paddle Rafts:** Our paddle boats have a guide in the back with a paddle (no oars) and the guide steers, but provides no power. Paddling is required the entire day. Due to the nature of our rivers being big volume pool and drop rivers (very different from small volume technical East Coast & California rivers), and the tendency for upstream wind, this option is only appropriate for people who **really** want to paddle **all day** long. We have found that most people who request paddle rafts are actually happier in paddle-assist rafts.

**Inflatable Kayaks:** Thrill-seekers can brave our biggest rapids on their own in one of our single or double "duckies." In smaller rapids and calmer waters, the kayaks are great for anybody (including younger kids) who wants to get a little closer to the action. They do not require experience or knowledge of how to "Eskimo-roll". If you flip the kayak, you fall out and swim, we come rescue you and everyone is happy!

Once you book your trip, we will have you complete a trip questionnaire that will help us plan the right mix of boats for the entire group on your launch date.

## Weather

The weather in Idaho in the summer is beautiful! Most summer days are hot and dry, with temperatures ranging from the 80's to the occasional 100 degrees or more, with very low humidity. Fortunately we have our rivers to cool off in. The nights are perfect for camping, with clear skies, brilliant stars and pleasant temperatures. We do have the occasional afternoon thunderstorm, but they usually dissipate within an hour or two.

The spring is typically warm as well, but there can be occasional days of chilly weather or rain. The fall is a beautiful time here with mild temperatures in the 60s and 70s. Winter in the immediate area is mild and rarely falls below freezing. Up in the mountains, we receive many feet of snow in the winter that offer great recreation opportunities and help supply our rivers with melt water come springtime.

## Detailed Trip Itinerary

**Pre-Trip Orientation:** Whether you stay with us or somewhere else, the night before your trip, join us at the Little Salmon Lodge for your pre-trip orientation. At this optional get together, you will get to know your guides, fellow trekkers and we'll go over our packing list to ensure each of us is ready to head into the wilderness in the morning. We'll also answer any last minute trip questions you may have. The pre-trip orientation is typically around 7 p.m.

**Day 1:** Plan to be to our Lodge by 7:30am for an 8:00am departure. From the lodge we will drive to the trailhead. Depending upon the group's ability and interests, we'll head out to explore a variety of stunning and remote

wilderness. We typically camp near one of the dozens of pristine alpine lakes in the Seven Devils. We'll enjoy a good meal by the campfire, sit back and get ready for some of the best star gazing of your life.

**Days 2-3:** After a hearty breakfast, we will discuss our options for the next two day's hiking. We have the option to explore the backcountry and fly-fish in the high alpine lakes. We can choose to attempt a non-technical climb of one of the major peaks in the mountain range. Or we can simply stick to the trails and explore the region on foot. We can either keep a base camp set up each night, to lighten our loads for the day, or we can continue heading deeper into the wilderness - it's up to you.

If we plan to hike out at Windy Saddle, we'll return to the Little Salmon Lodge on the third day and enjoy a hot shower and meal (and bed) before beginning the Hells Canyon rafting adventure in the morning.

If we plan to descend the canyon to the river, we'll head further into the wilderness and camp at Hibbs Cow Camp in preparation for our descent the following morning.

**Day 4:** Assuming we've stayed in the wilderness, on our final day of hiking, we descend more than 6,500 feet into Hells Canyon. The terrain changes rapidly from alpine to sub-alpine and finally to desert as we reach the canyon floor. Here we will meet our river expedition team and begin the two- to four-day rafting portion of the trip through America's deepest canyon - which you will have surveyed from 7,000 feet above the river! We typically meet our rafting party and camp for the evening around 4pm. A hot shower and gourmet meal will rejuvenate tired bodies and prepare us for the next phase of our adventure.

**Days 5-7:** The next several days you will enjoy Class III-IV whitewater, awesome river meals, hot showers, and a new set of travelers. See the Snake River Rafting trip for more explicit details. You can choose to complete your journey on the river on Day 6 at Pittsburg Landing or continue on for Days 7 & 8 and take out at Heller Bar.

**Day 8:** On the final day of our journey, we typically arrive back to the boat ramp around 2:00pm, where we quickly load our boats and head back to the Lodge. You can expect to arrive to the Little Salmon Lodge around 6:00 p.m.

Most people choose to spend their last night with us at the Little Salmon Lodge.

**Note for making departing flights after the trip:** Please do not schedule any departing flights for the last day of the river trip. Most people prefer to spend this last night at our lodge and drive to Boise in the morning to catch an early afternoon flight. If you must catch a morning flight, you will most likely prefer to drive to Boise on the last night of the trip and expect to arrive in Boise around 9-10pm. Call us if you have any questions about appropriate flight times.

### **Trip Cost**

Windy Saddle to Heller Bar - 8 days, 7 nights  
\$1,999 per person

Windy Saddle to Pittsburgh Landing - 6 days, 5 nights  
\$1,599 per person

2 – 10 Day custom itineraries from \$299 per person

### **What's Included**

#### **Luxury River Camps**

Our river camps feature amenities not normally found in remote wilderness areas. A full kitchen set up allows our guides to cook a wide variety of delicious meals. Our river camps include:

- private tents for each 2 people
- thick sleeping pads and sleeping bags (if requested)
- camp chairs and tables
- solar heated river shower
- large shade tarp to escape the rare rain storm or the sun, and for covered dining

#### **Backpacking Camps**

As a true backpacking trip, we are self-sufficient and carry everything with us on our journey. Our guides carry most of the heavy equipment while our guests carry a day pack with some personal gear and water. Typically guests help set up their own tents and gather fire wood to help set the mood

for the evening. We camp in backpacking tents with inflatable sleeping pads and sleeping bags. Even with the limited amount of kitchen gear we bring, you'll be amazed at how awesome our meals are.

### **What's Not Included**

The cost of the trip does not include airfare to Boise, Idaho; transportation from the airport to the Little Salmon Lodge; lodging the nights before or after your trip; optional gratuities, and applicable taxes.

Tipping is not required, but is generally customary if you feel your guides have worked hard and provided you with a wonderful experience. While any amount is appreciated, a gratuity of \$20 per guest per day is considered a nice tip. For multi-day trips on which a crew of several guides has worked, your gratuity can be given to any of the guides and they will pool and share all tips equally.

### **Why Northwest Voyageurs**

**Safety:** The most important part of any outdoor adventure is safety. Safety comes first and foremost from having experienced, well trained guides who know how to avoid dangerous situations and minimize risk. All outdoor adventures have inherent risks associated with them. Our job as your outfitter is to minimize that risk as much as possible. In 25 years of guiding whitewater trips, we have never had a serious injury. Our safety record is impeccable and speaks for itself.

**Exceptional People:** When we consider hiring anyone in our company, we want to ensure first and foremost that the person is extraordinary. Maybe we are selfish - we like to surround ourselves with inspiring people! We know we can teach almost anyone the skills to row a boat, or work at our front desk. But we can't teach people to understand people and how to exceed their expectations. This trait is inborn and we search long and hard to find these people.

**Experience:** Experienced guides bring more to the table than a safe trip. They bring deep knowledge of our rivers and destinations - and they also know how to maximize the fun-factor while minimizing risk. We boast some of the most experienced guides in the industry, as evidenced by a fair amount of white and

grey hair in our guide staff. We also boast a very high level of education in our guides and staff in a variety of fields.

**Service:** Our owners have extremely high expectations of themselves and our staff. We differentiate ourselves on providing an extraordinarily high level of service on our trips and in our lodge. Our goal is to solve your problems and issues before you have them and to smile the entire time. Ultimately, it's our passion for sharing the outdoors with people who may be out of their element that drives us to provide this level of service. It makes your experience that much more rewarding - and makes you want to come back again and again.

**Professionalism:** While our guides are fun-loving and relaxed, they are also professionals. They've been trained in customer service and are able to handle difficult situations with grace and poise.

**Delicious Gourmet Food:** One of the elements of our river trips that stay with our guests the longest is our amazing food. People are in awe of what we can create in the middle of the wilderness. Dutch-oven cooking, fresh baked desserts, lots of variety, and often a bit too much food! We can also accommodate any special dietary requests with advanced notice to ensure your enjoyment of our meals. Our menus vary with seasonal availability but here is an example of what you may enjoy on your journey:

*Breakfast:* Made-to-order omelets, banana walnut pancakes, home-made "Egg McMuffins," fresh fruit salad, and only the finest gourmet coffee - we are coffee snobs!

*Lunch:* New York Style Deli spread, smoked salmon and bagels, chicken salad on fresh croissants, taco salad, all with a selection of fresh fruit, veggies and dip, chips and a Katy's homemade cookies.

*Dinner:* Lime-dill salmon grilled to perfection with sautéed garlic asparagus, juicy steaks with giant Idaho potatoes and all the trimmings, chicken pesto fettuccine with roasted red peppers, freshly baked breads, fresh green salads.

*Dessert:* Pineapple upside-down cake, fresh picked blackberry cobbler, fudge brownies, strawberry shortcake or even a birthday cake - all baked fresh on the river.

## Getting Here

**Flight Information:** Most guests choose to fly into Boise, Idaho which is about 3 hours from our lodge and headquarters. All major carriers except American Airlines fly into Boise. Spokane, WA and Missoula, MT have major airports as well and both are 4 hours from us. If your itinerary includes a trip to Coeur d'Alene or Glacier National Park, these cities will likely be more convenient than Boise. Lewiston, Idaho (2 hours) is served by Horizon Air from Seattle. From all airports, most of our guests rent cars and drive to our facility.

**Shuttle Service:** Shuttle service for parties of 6 or more is sometimes available from Boise or Lewiston. Please call our office at (800) 727-9977 for more information.

**Public Transportation:** Bus service is available once per day between Boise, Lewiston or Spokane to our lodge via Northwestern Trailways. Please check with us or the bus company for up-to-date schedules. Round trip tickets run approximately \$45 per person.

**Driving Directions:** The Little Salmon Lodge and Northwest Voyageurs' headquarters are located in West Central Idaho, 10 miles south of Riggins, just off Highway 95 on Pollock Road. Turn west on Pollock Rd. between highway mile markers 186 and 187 and you will see our lodge 100 yards down the road on the left. For more specific directions please contact Northwest Voyageurs and we will be happy to assist you.

Approximate driving times from regional towns and cities:

Riggins - 10 minutes  
McCall - 45 minutes  
Grangeville - 1 hour  
Lewiston - 2 hours  
Boise - 2 hours, 45 minutes  
Coeur d'Alene, ID & Spokane, WA - 4 hours  
Tri-Cities, WA - 4 hours  
Portland, OR - 7 hours  
Seattle, WA - 8 hours  
Salt Lake City, UT - 8 hours

## Accommodations Before and After Your Trip

We invite you to join us at the lodge the nights before and after your trip. Nestled on the banks of the Little Salmon River, lies the Little Salmon Lodge, home of Northwest Voyageurs. The Lodge runs as a full bed & breakfast, featuring 12 guest rooms with private baths, a beautifully hand carved beer and wine bar, river side hot tub, great room, and the most hospitable staff around. With most adventures starting and returning to the Little Salmon Lodge, it is the perfect place to relax before and after your trip. Call ahead for dinner reservations in the summer.

If you prefer to camp or have an RV, consider our neighbors up the road at the Canyon Pines RV Park. If beach camping without facilities is more your style, check out the many free camping options along the Salmon River just upstream (east) of Riggins.

## What to Bring

### Summer

In July and August, the weather on our rivers in Idaho is typically warm and beautiful, with only a slight chance of precipitation. Average highs are in the 90s and average lows in the high 50s to 60s. We do have a week or two that can be considerably hotter, with daytime highs exceeding 100F.

In normal summer conditions, we recommend quick dry shorts or bathing suits, cotton t-shirts, a long sleeve cotton shirt and long light weight pants for sun protection, hat and sunglasses for sun protection. **IMPORTANT:** Cotton clothing IS RECOMMENDED for very hot weather and it stays wet and helps cool your body temperature. However, cotton is not recommended for cooler weather, so you should bring some non-cotton layers even in the summer to be prepared for cooler weather. Our detailed packing list includes gear for rare cool summer weather. Even though we hope to never use it, it is very important to bring it along.

In the raft and kayak, you should wear shoes that will not fall off your feet and that you don't mind getting and staying wet. River sandals with heel straps (for instance Teva or Chaco sandals) are ideal, as are water shoes like those made by Keen. Tennis shoes work, but will get wet and tend to stay wet throughout the day.

Lastly, when in camp, you will want to have dry shoes to change into. Some people prefer tennis shoes, some sandals. During camp, we will have opportunity to do some short hikes. Tennis shoes or sandals are typically fine for our short hikes, but some people may prefer to bring light weight hiking shoes or boots for longer hikes.

## How to Pack

### Backpacking:

For the backpack portion of the trip, we are fully self-support. Considering this, you will want to pack as light as you can (see the Detailed Packing List at the end of this packet for detailed items). You will want a medium sized backpack to hold your personal gear and water.

### On the River:

We supply each person with one large overnight bag. Before you leave for your backpack trip, you will pack your river gear in one of our river bags. That bag will meet you in camp on the last day of your hike.

For items you may need during the day, we supply one medium sized bag for two people to share. Your overnight bag has plenty of room for your sleeping bag and one good sized duffle bag for your personal items. (Note, you can not typically fit suitcases in this bag.) This bag should be packed knowing that you will not have access to it until you arrive at that evening's camp.

Your second bag is a day bag which you will have access to during the day. This smaller bag is typically shared with one other person and is large enough to hold things you will need access to during the day such as a camera, sun screen, warm fleece or rain jacket etc.

We use water tight NRS Dry Bags. When packed and sealed correctly, these bags will stay dry under most conditions. Our guides will help you to ensure they are sealed well. To fully protect your gear, particularly items that can't get wet such as cameras, medications etc., you may want to bring along along several zip lock bags for double protection. If you plan to bring an expensive camera, we recommend purchasing a dry box such as a pelican case. See Detailed Packing List on last page of this packet.

## Fishing

If you like, you are welcome to bring along your own backpacking fishing rod, tackle, and license. We can make recommendations on what tackle to bring along.

The Snake River features excellent fishing opportunities beginning in July. Opportunities are available to fish from the bank during lunch and in camp. You can often fish from oar boats during the day. You will need to bring your own fishing tackle and obtain a valid Idaho fishing license.

Fly fishing recommended gear:

- 5-6 weight fly rod
- 5-6 weight floating line w/ medium to fast sinking tip-Bass flies: Varies. Try purple, green and white poppers. Streamer patterns.
- Trout flies: Caddis patterns, midges.

Spinning Gear recommended:

- Average sized trout rod with light tackle, or ultralight rod
- 2-4 pound test line
- Lures: Spinners, meps, spoons, jigs

Northwest Voyageurs can provide rental spin fishing equipment, including a supply of lures, for \$75 per rod per trip. Rental equipment is in limited supply and must be reserved in advance.

## Recommended Reading List

### General:

*Indian Creek Chronicles* Pete Fromm

*River Tales of Idaho* Darcy Williams

*Water – The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource* Marq De Villiers

*Roadside Geology of Idaho* David Alt

*Myths of Idaho Indians* Deward Walker Jr.

### Snake River:

*Standing Up To The Rock* T. Louise Freeman-Toole

*Home Below Hells Canyon* Grace Jordan

*The Sterling Years* Bonnie Sterling

*Snake River of Hells Canyon* Johnny Carrey, Cort Conley, Ace Barton

*Island and Rapids: The Geologic Story of Hells Canyon* Trace Vallier

## **Emergencies**

Should your friends or family have an emergency, please ask them to contact us directly at the lodge at (208) 628-3021. We will do our best to get any appropriate message to you. It is often exceedingly difficult for us to reach our trips with a message, as we are often in remote, roadless wilderness areas. You will be responsible for any cost associated with retrieving you early from a trip or getting a message to you. So please be sure to let your friends and family know that they should be very clear with us the urgency of the message.

## **Payment and Cancellation Policy**

Northwest Voyageurs requires a non-refundable \$400 deposit from each person to secure your reservation on this trip. Final payments are due no later than 90 days prior to the departure date. If you find you must cancel your trip, please notify Northwest Voyageurs in writing as soon as possible. If we have not received your final payment by the due date, and if we have not received written notification of your need to cancel your reservation, Northwest Voyageurs may at its sole discretion charge the remaining invoice balance to your credit card on file or consider the reservation cancelled and release your spaces.

All payments are non-refundable. However, if you notify us in writing of your need to cancel your trip at least 90 days prior to your departure, we will hold payments on your account less the initial deposit for a period of one year. If you notify us less than 90 days prior to your departure, all payments will be forfeited. Please understand that once you sign up, we lose the right to sell your space to another individual. Therefore, we regretfully cannot make exceptions to our cancellation policies. Northwest Voyageurs **STRONGLY** recommends purchasing travel insurance for all multi-day reservations.

## **Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance can cover unforeseen costs or problems such as lost baggage, cancelled flights, and the costs of canceling your trip due to illness or injury. Northwest Voyageurs **STRONGLY** recommends purchasing travel insurance for this trip. It is very important to consider purchasing your insurance within 15 days of making your reservation, as there are additional benefits included in the policy including a waiver of pre-existing medical conditions. For more information, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit:

<http://www.travelinsure.com/what/selecthigh.htm?32922>

## **Other Questions**

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us by email at [info@voyageurs.com](mailto:info@voyageurs.com) or by phone at (800) 727-9977 and we will be more than happy to assist you in any way that we can.

**Detailed Packing List - Backpacking List - keep in mind that we carry everything we bring, so when possible, take less and keep it light!**

Day Hiking Gear & Equipment List:

- Personal clothing (under garments, lightweight pants with removable legs to convert to shorts, light weight shirt)
- Personal medicines (allergy pills, blister protection, etc)
- Hiking boots (well broken-in) and socks (one thin layer, one thicker)
- Sun protection, hat, sun glasses, sun screen, lip balm
- Fleece or non-cotton layers for cool weather hikes.
- Light weight non-cotton layer (rain jacket and pants)
- Day pack for personal hydration system (2 liters minimum) and enough room for an extra layer of clothes (call if you don't have one)
- Hiking/trekking poles (optional)
- Camera / film\* (optional)

Multi-Day Hiking Gear & Equipment List: adjust the quantities of the Day Hiking Gear List to meet your personal trip length requirements and include:

- Backpacking sleeping bag
- Thermarest or lightweight sleeping pad
- Backpack (call us if you don't have one)
- Flashlight / Headlamp
- Warm hat, thin pair gloves
- Personal hygiene products
- Sandals with heel strap or water shoes
- Walking shoes for in camp and short hikes

Optional Items:

- Backpackers fishing rod and tackle
- Sandals for camp (multi-day only)
- Journal or book (multi-day only)
- Gratuities for guides
- Camp pillow (multi-day only)
- Alcoholic beverages\* - no glass bottles please. If you wish to bring wine or other spirits, we recommend pouring it into a lexan "nalgene" bottle prior to departure. We sell lexan water bottles at our lodge, as well as a nice selection of wine.

Northwest Voyageurs Provides:

- Tents
- First aid supplies
- All food and cooking and eating utensils
- Water purifier

**River Trip List:**

Gear & Equipment:

- Sleeping Bag (if you bring your own)
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Waterproof camera & film (disposable waterproof cameras available in our shop)\*
- 2 - 1 litre water bottles\*, refillable during the day
- Light-weight duffel bag for clothes – used to put into our dry bags
- Several zip lock type bags for personal items

Clothing and personal items

- 2-3 short-sleeve t-shirts\*
- 1 long-sleeve t-shirts or old dress shirts (for sun protection)
- 1-2 pair quick dry shorts
- Bathing suit
- 2-3 pairs of socks
- personal undergarments
- 1 warm top (non-cotton such as fleece)
- 1 pair lightweight pants for evening
- Sunglasses with retainer straps \*
- Plenty of waterproof sunscreen \*
- Lip balm/chapstick\*
- Towel, bio-degradable camp soap, lotion and personal toiletry items
- Floppy hat, baseball hat, or visor for sun protection\*
- Good quality rain jacket and pants (we can provide splash jackets and pants if needed – more important in spring and fall than in summer)
- Sandals with heel strap or water shoes
- Walking shoes for in camp and short hikes

Optional Items to Bring

- Fishing license
- Fishing rod and tackle
- Lightweight hiking boots
- Camera or camcorder
- Musical instrument
- Camp pillow
- Alcoholic beverages\* - no glass bottles please. If you wish to bring wine, we recommend pouring it into a lexan "nalgene" bottle prior to departure. We sell lexan water bottles at our lodge, as well as a nice selection of wine and canned beer for your trip.

### Spring and Fall Additional Clothing Items:

- Pack for layering: Non-cotton warm layers, poly-propylene underwear, fleece, a warm coat, etc.
- Warm Goretex/waterproof jacket and pants or good quality rain jacket and pants (we can provide splash jackets and pants if needed)
- 2-3 warm tops (fleece or wool)
- 2-3 pair pants (jeans, fleece, carhartts, for in camp.)
- 1-2 sets long underwear (synthetic, quick dry fabrics like polypropylene, capilene, and polyester fleece)
- 2-3 pairs wool or synthetic socks
- Non-cotton winter hat and gloves

### Northwest Voyageurs Provides

- Life jackets
- Tents
- Thick sleeping pads
- Sleeping bag (if requested)
- Wet suits (if necessary)
- Camp chairs and tables
- Dry bags for your personal gear
- Camera boxes
- First Aid supplies
- All cooking equipment and meals
- Ice and mixers for alcohol (please request any specific mixers)

### Please Do Not Bring:

- Radios (personal headphones OK)
- Valuables
- Pets
- Firearms

### **Where can I buy these items?**

Asterisked items in the above list are available for purchase when you arrive at our headquarters, the Little Salmon Lodge. Many of the other items can be purchased from a variety of general stores or local sporting goods stores. For specialty river or camping items including synthetic clothing, some of the many vendors to consider are:

*Northwest River Supply:* [www.nrsweb.com](http://www.nrsweb.com)

*REI:* [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

*EMS (Eastern Mountain Sports):* [www.ems.com](http://www.ems.com)