



**MIDDLE FORK  
RIVER EXPEDITIONS**

## MAIN STEM OF THE SALMON RIVER – IDAHO

### “THE RIVER OF NO RETURN”

Idaho’s Main Stem of the Salmon River accesses the most pristine and untouched terrain in the US, slicing through the 2.3 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, fun and exciting class 1-III+ 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.

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 Sheepeater 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. Lewis and Clark also ventured down the Salmon River but decided it was so rough that if they went any further they “may never return” hence another reason it’s referred to as the River of No Return.

Our mission at MFRE is to allow river travellers the opportunity to unplug from modern society and reconnect to oneself, family, and friends through nature’s lens. This adventure allows you to have a digital detox from technology and reconnect to a more simple and fulfilling pace of life. There is no Wi- Fi in the wilderness, but we promise you will find a much deeper connection.

Our equipment is specially designed for wilderness whitewater rafting, and offers mild and wild rides (oar boats, paddle boats, inflatable kayaks and inflatable paddle boards). Our river guides are seasoned professionals, licensed by the state of Idaho, and are First Aid and Swiftwater Rescue Certified. They are expert river runners, magnificent cooks, great storytellers, and knowledgeable, helpful outdoorsmen and friends.

Join Middle Fork River Expeditions for a magical wilderness river vacation this summer!

## ITINERARY

☞ Please ***arrive in Salmon, Idaho the night before the trip begins***. Salmon is a 5-hour drive (75 min 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 8:30pm the evening before the trip begins. We will meet on the lawn next to the Salmon River to get acquainted, answer questions, and have a short orientation to show you how to pack the dry bags we provide for your personal gear.

*Lodging at the Stagecoach Inn is arranged on your own (not included).*

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## **DAY 1**

We meet at 7:30am at the Stagecoach Inn for a 2-hour bus ride to Corn Creek, the put-in for the Main Stem of the Salmon River. Please bring to bus your drybags and one empty duffel bag/person (to go in the MFRE truck at the put-in to meet you at the take-out on Day 6 to repack into) before drive to McCall. 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" to take in the scenery. The fishing is fun 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 or bocce, listening to the guides sing and play guitar and star gaze.

## **DAYS 2 ~ 5**

Each day brings new discoveries: exciting rapids like Black Creek, Bailey, 5 Mile, Split Rock, Big Mallard, Elkhorn and Growler rapids and historical sites such as Yellow Pine Bar, Campbell's Ferry, Buckskin Bill's homestead and Jim Moore's place (maybe you'll find the fortune he buried in the hillside). We also 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. We may visit with Sue and Greg Metz at Yellow Pine homestead, or Campbells Ferry homestead or 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. We may hike up Indian Creek to visit rare and historic thousand year old Yew trees, also called the immortal tree, which the plains Native Americans used to make longbows from the wood by cutting long strips down the trunk. 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 about 10 miles this morning and run challenging rapids like Chittam and Vinegar Creek and arrive at the take-out at Carey Creek around 10am. You will unpack from your dry bags into your personal duffel bag you brought to the Bus Day 1 and we placed in the MFRE truck at the put-in. Please see section below on "last day of trip" for logistics today.

## **DATES and PRICES**

Please visit the MFRE website for current dates, prices and availability.

\* All guests on Sept dates starting with the Sept 7 departure must fly out from Mackay Bar Ranch. This is an extra ~\$250/person cost and a link will be sent 2-3 weeks before departure. You can choose to fly to Boise or Salmon. The Sept dates are often 5-day trips as well.

## **What's Included**

- ◆ ground transportation by bus from Salmon to the river Day 1.
- ◆ ground transportation by bus from the take-out at Carey Creek to McCall on Day 6. Unless it's Sept which we have guests fly out at Mackay Bar Ranch (Mile 55 instead of mile 81).
- ◆ meals from lunch Day 1 to lunch 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- usually early July).
- ◆ MFRE mug to use and take home after trip.

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

Getting to Salmon, Idaho; Stagecoach Inn in Salmon for the night before the trip (~\$180); optional car shuttle from Stagecoach Inn in Salmon to McCall (~\$400/car plus \$50 gas); optional flights from Boise to Salmon (~\$220/person) or McCall to Boise (~\$200/person); Sept flight from Mackay Bar Ranch to Boise or Salmon (~\$225); travel insurance; tipping to guides (10-20%+ of trip cost) depending on level of satisfaction.

### **Payments**

**Deposit:** \$500.00 per person, required for confirmed reservation. No credit card fees apply.

**Final Payment:** Due March 15 of the year of your trip. Please note that *Final Payment is due by check so please send by March 1 to MFRE, PO Box 17, Fairfax, CA 94978*. Or use the link in your confirmation e-mail to pay on-line and there is a 3% credit card processing fee. If we do not receive final payment by March 15 we will call you for your credit card information. If Final Payment is not made by March 22 and we are unable to contact you, your Deposit will become non-refundable and we will release your space to the general public.

### **Cancellation Policy**

Deposits are refundable (minus \$150.00 service charge per person) if written notice is received before March 15 of the year you are booked. After March 15 your monies are nonrefundable. Charter group deposits and final payments are non-refundable.

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 an available date the next summer.

### **Lodging**

Lodging is needed the night before your trip in Salmon. We will meet at the Stagecoach Inn (208-756-2919) at 8:30pm the night before your trip begins. The best rooms are on the riverside 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. **Please make all required hotel/shuttle/flight/car rental reservations immediately after booking your trip.**

There are two transportation options to choose from, **driving or flying**. There is commercial air service to Boise, Idaho or Missoula, Montana, then you can rent a car and drive to Salmon (5 hours from Boise or 2 hours from Missoula) Alternatively you can fly from Boise in a small 5

or 9 seater airplane with Sawtooth Flying Service (800-798-6105) or Gem Air at 208-756-7382 which is ~\$250/person.

**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 to shuttle your vehicle from the Stagecoach Inn in Salmon to McCall.* The cost is ~\$400/car and \$50 gas deposit. Go to: [www.rivershuttles.com/shuttle-reservation](http://www.rivershuttles.com/shuttle-reservation) to make a reservation. 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 or in the gas cap 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 (~75 minutes and \$250) directly to Salmon, Idaho the day before your trip begins. You can contact Sawtooth Flying Service (800) 798-6105 or Gem Air at 208-756-7382 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 have questions about your travel arrangements, call MFRE and we are happy to help.

*\*Please note we will provide transportation from Salmon to the river put-in point on Day 1 and from the take-out to McCall on Day 6.*

### **After The Trip**

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

### **Sept Trips Only**

For Sept dates we fly all guests from Mackay Bar Ranch to Boise or Salmon. This is at mile 55 instead of mile 81 on the river and usually done in 5 days and not 6. This is because the river by Sept is often low water and windy which makes it difficult to make miles. Flying out at Mackay Bar Ranch allows for a much more leisure pace and time to explore the most beautiful stretch of the canyon. Plus the transportation company stops running in Sept because their busses are used in local schools. We will send all guests a link for payment information 1-2 weeks before the departure and you can choose at that time where you wish to fly to either Boise or Salmon. Cost is around \$250/person. We will fly on Day 6 at 10am arriving in Salmon or Boise around 12 noon. Do not book your homeward flights before 3pm today.

## **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. For the very fit and adventurous you can try an inflatable stand up paddle board up to Class II rapids only and only at the discretion of the guides.

River Requirements: Minimum age is 12 in May/June, and 5 in July and August. Please note, all participants must be able to swim and be in good physical shape.

## **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 good 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 keep only invasive small mouth bass and clean and cook the fish you wish to eat. We have tin-foil so it's easy. Please know we bring lots of food so the fish caught will be eaten as an appetizer and not necessary to our meal planning. To get your license in advance, go to <https://id.outdoorcentral.us/>. You can also buy your license in Salmon or at the North Fork Store the morning of the trip. The North Fork Store also has beer/wine/liquor and sells lots of river items and fishing equipment.

## **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 provide drinking water at all times as each raft has a water cooler as well as electrolyte crystals during lunch.

We also provide limited (1-2/person/day) of non-sugary drinks like La Croix and Spindrift. If you would like more then this please bring whatever you like in cans only.

We provide limited (6 bottles total or 1-2 glasses/person) red and white wine in the evenings.

We provide one Margarita night for adults only.

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.

## 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 get wet while rafting and your camp clothes will be dry for camp. Have a back up set for both and you will be very well prepared. Most people agree they brought way too many things on the trip!

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.

## MFRE Clothing and Equipment List

### We Supply

- Large rectangular freshly washed sleeping bag (rated 30F)
- 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
- 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 and paddle raft)
- 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 (women bring a two piece swimsuit for ease of going pee)
- Women- Sun Dress for camp. It can be hot at night and this is nice and light.
- 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 (Can be synthetic or cotton or jeans)
- 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 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 (with toe coverage is best) by Astral or other company
- 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- remember days 1-5 only)
  - Shoes- flip flop sandals (for drying out feet at camp)
  - Full sized pillow
  - Collapsible Pee Cup for evening if you tend to wake up at night as the river or high water line can be far away at night and at times walking over un-even terrain)
- \*\* May/June & Sept/Oct trips- bring ski type jacket, a ski hat, camp gloves, 1 pair of synthetic long john top and bottoms, and fleece type pants.