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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAMP LIFE & MEALS

Will we be at a new camp every day?

Yes, we do normally change campsites every day. This allows us to cover new scenery, rapids, and side adventures each day at a fun, comfortable pace. On the Middle Fork Flathead we usually take one “layover” day where we stay at the same camp and spend the day fishing, hiking, or relaxing.

Will there be a campfire every night?

Yes, we almost always have a campfire every evening and morning.

What clothes should I bring for camp?

Your river and/or hiking clothes can double as camp clothes, but you are welcome to bring something else if you would like, such as a cotton shirt, an athletic dress/skirt for women, or some fiesta-wear.

How big are the tents? Do we have to share a tent with someone else?

Most of our tents are high-quality three-person tents, but we only put two people in each tent. If there is an odd number in your group we will not make you share a tent with a stranger. We offer brands like Mountain Hardware, North Face, and Sierra Designs.

Will my tent be set up for me?

In the interest of a more genuine wilderness experience, we encourage people to pick their own sleeping sites and set up their tents (or sleep under the stars, weather permitting!). If you need assistance, we're happy to help.

What kind of food will we be eating?

Wonderful, marvelous, gourmet cooking! Breakfasts and suppers consist of culinary delights like wild Salmon and steak, many of which are cooked over open campfires and dutch ovens. Lunches are a combination of tasty salads, sandwiches, fruits, and assorted snacks. Healthy and nutritious options are always available, and meals always include fruits and vegetables (local when we can, including veggies from our own greenhouse and garden!).

I am a vegetarian/vegan/gluten-free/lactose intolerant/other dietary restriction or allergy.

WRO will happily provide vegetarian meals and do our best to accommodate any dietary restrictions at no additional cost! Please notify us of any dietary restrictions or allergies as early as possible so that we can adjust the menu accordingly. In certain cases, individuals may want to supplement meals and snacks with some items of their own.

Can I bring my own soda, snacks, and/or alcohol?

WRO provides ample snacks as well as plenty of drinking water, fruit juices, and coffee, tea, and cream in the morning. We do not provide soda or alcohol. If you feel you would like to have soda or other canned beverages on the trip, please bring what you wish. You are also welcome to bring your own alcohol (packed in unbreakable containers whenever possible, please).

How will we wash ourselves during the trip?

On the Middle Fork Salmon, Main Salmon, and Lower Salmon, there will be opportunities to swim (though the water will still be quite cold on early season trips). The Middle and Main also have hot springs to soak in. We need to keep soap out of the rivers (and the hot springs), so if you want to use soap and bathe on the trip, you need to



do so above the high water mark. The guides can help carry heat up some water if needed. Face and body wipes also work well for helping stay clean.

How will we use the bathroom?

In order to keep these places beautiful for years to come, all rivers are “pack it in, pack it out.” We bring fabulous portable toilets and handwashing stations that we place in a private location away from camp with the best bathroom view you will ever have.

ON THE RIVER

How long will we be floating on the river each day?

Each trip is tailored to the desires of the guests, but generally we will be on the water a total of 5 or so hours each day (give or take a couple of hours), broken by a lunch stop and any other side adventures. We usually start floating about 10am each day and arrive in camp around 4 or 5pm. Each day will be different, with varying options for hiking, exploring, swimming, fishing, and great lunch stops. Your lead guide will give you an overview of the day each morning.

What will I do with items I need accessible during the day or on the boat?

In addition to the large waterproof bag issued for packing clothing and camp items, everyone is also issued a smaller “day bag” to carry items you will need access to while on the river (sunscreen, camera, extra layer, etc.). Put anything you might need during the day in this day bag, as the larger bag will usually be inaccessible until we reach camp for the evening.

How will I keep my phone/camera/other valuable items safe from the elements?

We discourage bringing any unnecessary valuables on your trip. Phones can be placed in a ziploc bag or waterproof case and put in your day bag if you would like to have it accessible for taking pictures during the day. If you are bringing a large, expensive camera, we recommend you bring a hard waterproof case in which to store it and accessories.

What kind of boat will I be riding in?

We usually have a variety of boats so that everyone gets a chance to experience each type of river craft, water level permitting. During your registration, you will note your boat preferences so we can plan accordingly. Unless you have requested otherwise, we bring several oar boats, a paddle boat, and several inflatable kayaks. On the Main and Lower Salmon we may also bring some paddleboards, and even a wooden dory on certain Main Salmon launch dates. We recommend trying out each boat and riding with each guide as they all have something different to offer.

If we say we want to paddle are we committed to paddling the entire trip?

Generally no, as we usually have enough boats that guests can rotate and have the option to paddle when they wish.

What will temperatures and weather be like? Will it be cold? Will it rain?

Summer temperatures in the Northern Rockies can fluctuate dramatically in a 24-hour period, from freezing at night to 70-80s the next afternoon. Storms can roll in unexpectedly, and it's best to be prepared for anything. Rain is always possible, but trips earlier in the season are more likely to see precipitation and/or cooler temperatures than mid to late summer trips. Check out the weather section of the packing list for specific seasonal information and average temperatures for your trip.

Is it possible to rent a drysuit (spring trips)?

We provide wetsuits for spring trips, but we also have drysuits available to rent for added comfort. Let us know if you're interested in a drysuit and we can ensure we have the right size and add it to your invoice.



CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, & GEAR

What kind of footwear should I bring? What shoes will I wear in the boat?

For most trips you will need two pairs of shoes, one to wear in the boats and one to wear hiking and around camp. For spring trips, we recommend neoprene socks to wear on the river with your river shoes. By July, water temperatures become warmer and socks are no longer necessary. Most people enjoy wearing water shoes or sturdy sandals with an ankle strap (popular options include Chacos, Tevas, and Keens). Old running sneakers can also work well as river shoes. Flip-flops are great for around camp but you need something that will stay on your feet while we are on the boats. For most trips, sneakers or a lightweight hiking boot will be fine for side hikes.

What clothing should I wear in the boat?

This will depend on the time of year. For spring trips, we provide wetsuits, underneath which you can wear long underwear. For cooler early-season days you can wear long underwear, synthetic pants with rain pants over them, and a fleece or other warm layer with your raincoat on top. As temperatures warm up, we might just wear a pair of shorts over a bathing suit, or light pants and a sun shirt. Quick-dry clothing, layers, and sun protection are the most important things to keep in mind.

Why do you recommend synthetics instead of cotton?

While on the river you will get wet going through rapids (what fun would it be if you didn't?!). Synthetic materials are lightweight and dry much quicker than cotton. They also keep you warmer when wet. Comfort is essential to having fun!

What size and type of sleeping pad does WRO provide?

We provide deluxe, self-inflating basecamp "Therm-a-rest" pads. These are very comfortable and fit very nicely in our gear bags.

Can I bring my own sleeping pad/bag/tent/other gear?

You are welcome to bring your own sleeping gear if you wish, but if you do, please bring your own complete sleep kit and let us know ahead of time.

How big are the waterproof bags and how much stuff can they hold?

Everyone is issued a waterproof "day bag" to carry items you will need access to during the day while on the river. This day bag is 9 inches in diameter and 20 inches tall. Everyone is also issued a large waterproof bag for your personal gear and clothing. This bag should be plenty large enough for everything listed on our suggested packing list. We recommend limiting your personal gear to 35 pounds.

LOGISTICS

When do we need to be there?

You should arrive in the town of departure the day before your trip is scheduled to begin. There will be an evening orientation with WRO guides and guests, where we will go over trip details, answer last-minute questions, and hand out hydroflasks and waterproof bags to repack your gear into. You will head to the river the next morning (the official starting date of your trip).

Is there a place to store our non-river luggage while we're on the river?

Yes, we will store your extra bags and make arrangements for them to be transported to meet you at the end of the trip. However, we do recommend that you leave any unnecessary valuables at home. Your wallet & cash should be placed in a ziplock bag and taken with you on your trip.



How, where, and when do we get our fishing licenses?

If you want to fish, a license purchased in the state your river trip is located in is mandatory. Most states have an option to purchase online before you arrive. Idaho and Montana also have the option to purchase a fishing license just for the time you are on the river.

Is there somewhere to purchase last-minute items before the trip?

Yes, there are usually outdoor stores located fairly close to all the hotels we recommend or on the way to the river.

Can I stay at a different hotel than your recommended options before the trip?

You are welcome to stay wherever you'd like as long as you are at 1) orientation the evening before your trip and 2) your trip's designated pickup location ready for departure the morning your trip begins. We recommend the most convenient lodging, which is usually where orientation is held and where group transportation will pick up and drop off guests before and after the trip. Most of the towns we begin and end our trips have no taxi options like Uber or Lyft, so if you don't have a vehicle, staying in the recommended lodging is especially convenient.

MISCELLANEOUS

How old does my child have to be to participate?

It depends on the time of year, and on the child. We generally suggest 8 years old as a minimum for most Middle Fork and Main Salmon trips and 6 years old for the Lower Salmon. For spring or high-water trips, and for the Middle and South Fork Flathead, we recommend closer to 12, depending on experience. Contact us to ask about your child.

What if there is a family emergency back home? How will they locate us?

We always carry a satellite communication device for emergency situations and staying in contact with WRO staff in Salmon, who are aware of our location and campsites during the trip. If our office staff is notified of an emergency they will let our crew know.

What happens if someone gets sick or injured?

All of our trip leaders are certified Wilderness First Responders, along with the majority of our other highly capable guides, several of whom are Wilderness EMTs. All guides are trained in Swiftwater Rescue. Evacuation plans are in place for each trip in case of an emergency, and a satellite communication device is carried at all times.

What is an appropriate gratuity for your guides?

Guides are usually tipped 10-15% of the cost of the trip, more for exceptional service. The guides equally split the total tip amount from each guest. They are most appreciative to receive this directly from the guest, either at the end of your trip or at the farewell dinner, so we recommend planning ahead to have cash or checks on hand. Please do not make tip checks out to Wilderness River Outfitters. They will need to be made out to the guide or to cash.