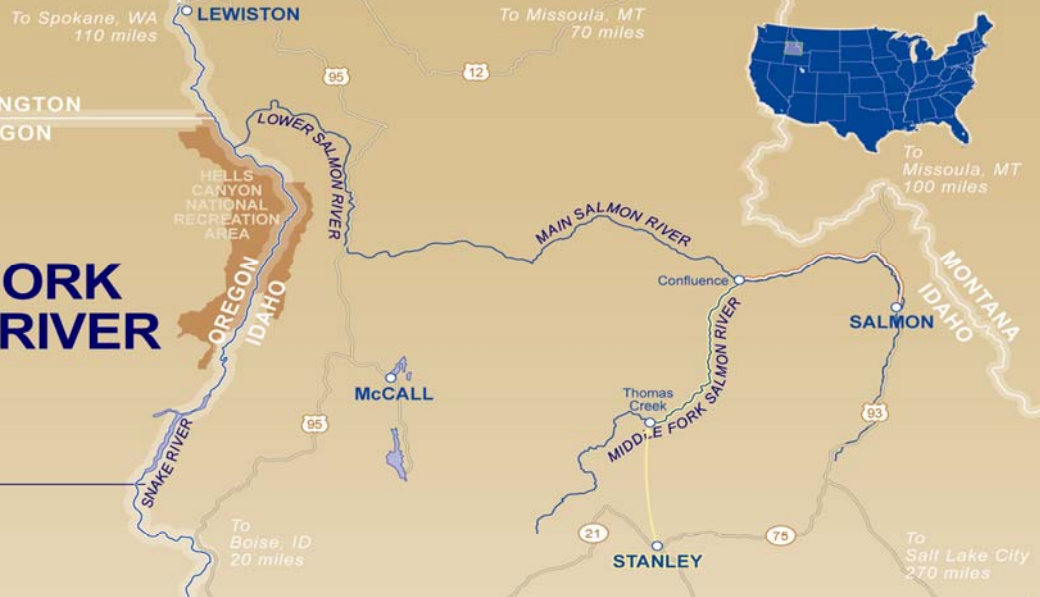




# MIDDLE FORK SALMON RIVER HIKER

*Itinerary*



<b>MEETING PLACE:</b>	Mountain Village Lodge, Stanley, Idaho
<b>MEETING TIME:</b>	8:00 PM, the evening before your trip
<b>RETURN TIME:</b>	Approximately 4:00-6:00 PM, Stagecoach Inn, Salmon, Idaho
<b>RIVER RATING:</b>	Class III-IV
<b>RIVER MILES:</b>	65
<b>PUT-IN:</b>	Thomas Creek
<b>TAKE-OUT:</b>	Confluence of the Middle Fork and Main Salmon
<b>AGE LIMIT:</b>	Minimum age is 12 (15 at high water)
<b>TRIP LENGTH:</b>	6 Days / 5 Nights
<b>BOAT OPTIONS:</b>	Oar raft, paddle raft, dory (during high water only), inflatable kayak

Idaho's rivers access some of the most pristine terrain in all the state. They are home to abundant flora and fauna, an impressive network of hiking trails, and some of the country's best whitewater. Of all the rivers that flow through Idaho, perhaps the most spectacular is the Middle Fork of the Wild and Scenic Salmon River. Considered the state's "Blue Ribbon" river, the Middle Fork Salmon boasts non-stop, Class III-IV whitewater, natural hot springs, and excellent fishing. And then there's the scenery—soft meadows that roll towards the base of soaring mountains, craggy canyons ribboned with waterfalls, deep green forests and grassy hills dotted with wildflowers...the diversity and beauty of the Middle Fork is stunning. Join O.A.R.S. and see how good a river vacation on this breathtaking waterway can be.

This unique, active hiking departure includes all the beauty, wildlife, and comforts of a standard O.A.R.S. trip, but with a special emphasis on hiking. Escorted by expert hiking guides, guests carry daypacks with drinking water and a delicious packed lunch on the longer treks. Back in camp guests are greeted with appetizers and a dinner spread that puts traditional backpacker fare to shame. After dinner and stories, weary hikers bed down in warm sleeping bags, atop thick, cozy, sleeping pads. Inside your rugged, roomy tent or under the starry night sky, you'll sleep soundly, serenaded by the crickets and the rush of the passing river.

## **AWARD-WINNING NATURE-BASED ADVENTURES SINCE 1969**

O.A.R.S. has been in business for over 40 years and that is no accident. Great trips on some of the world's best rivers and coastlines are the recipe for this success. Always focused on our clients and their vacations, it is our genuine belief that river trips and nature-based adventures are extremely valuable life experiences. With that as our foundation, we have committed ourselves over the years to providing the best trips available, always with an eye on improvement.

## **BOAT SELECTION**

- We may be able to bring the full gamut of O.A.R.S.' river vessels on the Middle Fork Salmon River, depending on the water level. Riding in an oar boat one day, then challenging the whitewater hands-on in a paddle raft or inflatable kayak ensures a diverse and exciting river adventure for each member of your party. During high water, early season trips we may be able to bring along a whitewater dory, too!

## **WHITEWATER**

- Rated Class III-IV, the Middle Fork Salmon has more whitewater rapids than any similar-length river in the U.S.—over 100 rapids in 100 miles. Turn by turn, as each tributary surges into the river, the Middle Fork dramatically changes character from a big creek into a thundering river, all the while creating rolling wave trains and thrilling drops.

## **Sample Itinerary**

We pride ourselves in running a relaxed and flexible schedule. Every trip is different depending upon the group, other trips on the water, and sometimes the weather. The following is a sample of what your trip might be like.

### **The Day before Your Trip**

- We'll meet at 8:00 PM in the conference room of the Mountain Village Lodge for a pre-trip meeting. This is an opportunity to meet your fellow travelers and trip leader and ask any last-minute questions. Your guides will give you a thorough trip orientation and pass out your waterproof river bags so that you can pack your belongings that evening.

### **Day 1**

- We'll take a scenic flight to our put-in at Thomas Creek, where your boats and crew await you. After an informative safety talk and brief paddle raft/inflatable kayak instruction, we take to the pure blue waters of the breathtaking Middle Fork. Today we'll travel 16 to 18 river miles before we pull over for camp at White Creek or Shelf and a moderate 2-4 hour hike to Loon Creek Hot Springs. We follow the river trail down-river to the mouth of Loon Creek (about one mile from Shelf, two miles from White Creek) then follow the creek up another 3/4 mile to the hot springs. The trail continues to entice further exploration up the creek drainage if time allows. This is a nice warm-up hike to get you into the groove for the challenge tomorrow.
- Our first day generally sets the pattern for our week on the river. Typically, we spend a few hours on the water in the morning, sometimes stopping for a great hike, a visit to a waterfall or an Indian pictograph, or a soak in a natural hot spring. Come lunchtime, we pull over to a sandy beach and enjoy a delicious picnic. After feasting and relaxing on the beach (or perhaps swimming, a game of Frisbee, a nature walk...), we get back in our boats for more exciting whitewater. Be sure to try your hand at the paddleboat and inflatable kayak! Mid- to late-afternoon, we stop and make camp; you grab your bags and set up your tent while we take care of the kitchen and "living room"—camp chairs and the site for tonight's campfire (if permitted). Before long you'll be savoring pleasing hors d'oeuvres and the beverage of your choice! Read, nap, or just sit back and laugh with friends and family as we prepare dinner. After another satisfying feast, the evening is yours to spend however you wish. Maybe music, stories or jokes will bring us together tonight; maybe the popping of the fire, the whisper of the river and the clarity of the big, star-filled sky will encourage silent reflection on the amazing wilderness that is, for now, our home.
- We have an ambitious collection of hiking options that are worthy goals. Depending on the weather and group fitness levels, our plan may be revised. Given that there is a lifetime of incredible hikes in this canyon, you have only to be curious to want to come back for more.

## Days 2 & 3 Layover

- Camp options: Camas Creek or Funston (12 or 14 river miles). Both of these camps give us the opportunity for an all day hike the following day.
- From Camas Creek camp there are two options for the all-day hike. The first is up the creek drainage. It is five miles to the Yellow Jacket Creek junction following the narrow creek gorge leading out of the main canyon. From this point you can choose which drainage to follow—either one is well worth the time to explore. The well-used trail is impossible to miss, and each corner and curve brings new cascades and pools to see. The fishing is hard to pass up, even if you are committed to the journey. “Plan B” is the more difficult option up the ridge toward the Middle Fork fire lookout. This trail is much less used than the trail up Camas Creek and is similar to the Bear Creek Point trek in that it follows a ridgeline to the high country and a big canyon view. It is very steep at the outset and mellows a bit after the initial climb; the incredible views are awe-inspiring. Only the most fit have a chance at making it to the Middle Fork fire lookout.
- An all-day hike from Funston to Bear Creek point overlook involves lots of climbing, and some short sections are difficult. However, even novice hikers have made it smiling. It’s a ridgeline trail that is challenging. Through more open terrain, the well-marked trail offers incredible cross-canyon views the whole way. You can go for the final high point destination or stop earlier and still get the full grand-view experience. Wildfire scars like a checkerboard provide a deeper understanding of the history of fire ecology here.

## Day 4

- Camp options: Survey Creek or Woolard Creek (15 river miles). Survey is a gorgeous ponderosa-lined bench surrounded by big quiet pools at a bend in the river. Woolard—just across the river and downstream—has a grassy meadow that attracts bighorn sheep with its lush grass. For those who can’t stop hiking, there are short hikes to the benches above both camps.
- Hikes to either Aparejo (moderate) or Jack Creek Point (difficult), 1.5 hours each. Both of these hikes take you up from the river to scenic overlooks. Not long in miles (just one mile), these do include strenuous climbs and steep downgrades. The destination points are strikingly gorgeous viewpoints that call for the binoculars for closer observation of canyon slopes and benches, soaring raptors, swifts, and swallows.
- As we continue down the river, we’ll see the scenery change from mountains to gently rolling hills. Thick forests give way to miles of open grassland dotted with cool glades of pine. The views remain stunning and the whitewater action-packed. Our journey downstream takes us to more hot springs, alcoves decorated with Sheepeater Indian pictographs, and magnificent Veil Falls, a unique waterfall that plummets freely into a natural amphitheater from a high rock overhang. Early Indian pictographs are evident and easily visible on panels of rock here. Bighorn sheep frequent the cooler microclimate of the amphitheater.

## Day 5

- Camp: Ship Island (22 river miles) tucked into a corner of Impassable Canyon. This camp is our last night for relaxing and celebrating our accomplishments. Hiking options can be varied in length from a short 45-minute foray to 3 hours, depending on the group.
- Waterfall Up and Up (difficult, scenic overlooks). Waterfall Creek offers a short walk just up to the falls that tumble nearly right into the river or a down-river route to get up and around the falls. The latter leads to a trail junction offering tough choices either up- or down-river. The down-river trek goes to a

most impressive north-facing down-canyon overlook of the “impassable canyon” section of the Middle Fork of the Salmon, or back to an overlook down the Waterfall Creek cascade to the river.

- The Big Creek (moderate, creekside) trail is another very well used trail that leads up this major tributary for 25 miles to the high country. There are secluded pictograph panels about five miles up and a gorge section about seven miles up that are worth the effort to get there. Unfortunately, to make either of these destinations you would have to give up all the others this day and get up very early this morning to make a fast hike to cover the miles.
- Veil Falls (best, short climb to a super scenic amphitheater) features pictographs and amphitheater/waterfall, a cooling misty microclimate, and a welcome contrast to the arid feel of late summer.

### **Day 6**

- Nugget Grotto (shorter, but sweet, hike to an overhanging creek grotto) is a short walk up a creek (3/4 of mile) past Earl Parrot’s cabin and homestead. Parrot was a colorful hermit who lived in the canyon in the early 1900s before even the earliest river exploration. Pioneer history buffs will be interested in the stories of his survival, trials, and tribulations as told by our guides/interpreters. The coolness of the narrow creek gorge leads to an enchanting grotto and a beautiful weeping wall waterfall.
- Towards the end of our voyage, the Middle Fork rushes into a narrow gorge that creates some of the most high-intensity and continuous whitewater of the trip. Paddle hard through Redside, Rubber, and Hancock rapids, and enjoy the sudden spectacular change in scenery from wooded hills to the sheer granite walls and huge boulders of Impassable Canyon. Finally, we reach our take-out at the confluence with the Main Salmon. Our journey has ended, but we’re sure that although you leave the river, the river will never leave you.

### **What’s Included?**

- Skilled professional guide service
- 5 nights catered camping
- Meals from lunch on day 1 through lunch on day 6, with limited beer, wine, and soda at dinner
- Expedition equipment including 2-person shared tent, sleeping bag with liner, sleeping pad, pillow with pillow case, ground tarp, and waterproof bags to hold your gear
- High quality inflatable rafts and kayaks and related river equipment including paddle, helmet, personal flotation device (PFD)
- Wetsuits and splash jackets for paddlers – weather dependent
- Transfer from Stanley to the river and from the river to Salmon
- Flight from Stanley to put-in for Indian Creek launches

### **What’s Not Included?**

- Transportation to Stanley and back from Salmon
- Pre- and post-trip accommodations and meals
- Single supplement tent (\$30 plus tax)
- Insurance of any kind, including travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature (an equipment list will be provided)
- Gratuities

## SOMETHING VOLUNTARY

- In reviewing your statement, you'll notice a \$1/person/day donation to Idaho Rivers United, a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting Idaho's clean water, wild rivers and fish, and the communities that depend on them. One-hundred percent of these funds go directly to Idaho Rivers United and your contribution is tax-deductible. This donation is voluntary and may be removed from your invoice if you choose not to participate. *Please notify our office to delete the donation from your balance.*
- The O.A.R.S. Foundation is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with the express goal of providing opportunities for young people to experience the magic of a river trip. Visit [www.oarsfoundation.org](http://www.oarsfoundation.org) to learn more about how your tax deductible donation can change young lives for the better.

## Terms & Conditions

### Reservations and Deposits

- A \$500/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.

### Cancellations and Refunds

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, please notify us as soon as possible. The cancellation fee after you've made your deposit can range up to the entire trip cost, based upon the number of days prior to your trip that we receive your cancellation notice. We regret we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, **we strongly urge you to investigate trip insurance** (see Insurance).

<u>Date of Cancellation</u>	<u>Cancellation Fee</u>
360 days or more prior to your trip	\$50/person
359 - 180 days prior to your trip	\$100/person
179 - 120 days prior to your trip	\$200/person
119 - 90 days prior to your trip	\$300/person
89 - 60 days prior to your trip	\$500/person
59 days or less	Full Fare*

\*If we are able to fill the trip and replace the cancelled passengers, the fee will be reduced to 30% of the trip cost.

### Medical

- Under most circumstances, if you are of an adventurous spirit and in reasonably good health, you should have no problem enjoying an O.A.R.S. trip. People with medical conditions, including pregnancy, should have a physician's approval before taking an adventure travel trip.

### Insurance

- Although every effort is made to insure a safe trip for all, we strongly recommend that you protect yourself, your belongings, and your vacation through the purchase of a short-term traveler's policy. A trip cancellation policy covers your non-refundable payments in most cases, should you have to cancel your trip at the last minute due to illness or injury. Trip participants should realize that in the event of illness or injury on an adventure travel trip, evacuation can be prolonged, difficult and expensive. Personal belongings and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and O.A.R.S. accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged, delayed or stolen property.

### Liability Waiver

- Everyone is required to sign a standard release before the trip, acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety is of the utmost concern on our trips. However, due to the nature of the activities, a condition of your participation is that you will sign this form and return it to our office before the trip begins. Anyone who refuses to sign the form will not be allowed to participate, and consistent with O.A.R.S. cancellation policy, there will be no refund of the trip fees at that time.

### Responsibility – An Important Notice

- O.A.R.S. Dories, Inc. and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services, and assume no responsibility however caused for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, force majeure, failure of

For more information, call 1-800-346-6277 in the USA and Canada or 1-209-736-4677 outside the USA and Canada, or e-mail [info@oars.com](mailto:info@oars.com)

any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, and discrepancies or change in transit over which it has no control. Reasonable changes in itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well being of the participants, including cancellation due to water fluctuation, insufficient bookings (this trip requires a minimum of 4 guests), and other factors. There is risk in whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. Your guide will make every attempt to assist, but you must be strong and agile enough to “self-help” and “float-it-out” without further endangering yourself or others. We reserve the right not to accept passengers weighing more than 260 pounds or with a waist/chest size exceeding 56 inches. We may decide, at any time, to exclude any person or group for any reason we feel is related to the safety of our trips. We are experienced at accommodating people with various disabilities. Please give us an opportunity to make you feel welcome. We need to discuss any special requirements ahead of time. On advancement of deposit the depositor agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. Prices subject to change without notice.

© 2011 O.A.R.S. Dories, Inc. 12/15/11 AJ