



SOUTH FORK AMERICAN RIVER GORGE RUN

Itinerary



MEETING PLACE:	Mother Lode River Center (6280 Hwy 49)—2.3 miles north of the Coloma/Lotus bridge on Hwy 49 & opposite County road marker 26.51
GPS LOCATION:	38.825846, -120.940646
MEETING TIMES:	11:30 AM with deluxe BBQ lunch 12:00 PM without our lunch
RETURN TIME:	5:00 PM
RIVER RATING:	Class III (Moderate whitewater suitable for first-timers)
RIVER PUT-IN:	Mother Lode River Center
RIVER TAKE-OUT:	Salmon Falls Bridge
MILES COVERED:	10 river miles with 11 recognizable rapids
AGE LIMIT:	Minimum age is 7 (12 at high water)
BOAT OPTIONS:	Paddle raft (Oar rafts may be available upon request)

The South Fork of the American River—flowing through the heart of California’s Gold Country—is everyone’s favorite California river! The rapids are challenging—they’ll get your heart thumping but they’re not intimidating—and spread just far enough apart to allow for some water fights, group bonding, joke telling and a refreshing swim.

Rafting novices, seasoned veterans and kids of all ages enjoy this river time and again.

Its close proximity to Sacramento, Lake Tahoe, Yosemite and the San Francisco Bay Area—and its long season—makes it an extremely accessible trip.

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 part of the recipe for this success. Always focusing 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, with the best guides and the best equipment, always with an eye on improvement.

BOAT TYPES

We typically run the South Fork of the American exclusively in paddle rafts—fun, maneuverable inflatable rafts powered by four to seven passengers with paddles, along with a guide. Paddle rafts offer an active, hands-on challenge and are usually the preferred vessel on most whitewater trips. If you do not wish to be in a paddle raft, we may be able to accommodate you in an oar raft where the guide rows, but we must **know in advance**.

WHITewater

The South Fork's exciting Class III whitewater is near-perfect fun for the whole family! Water levels sufficient for rafting on the South Fork during the summer months are a result of releases from hydroelectric facilities located upstream. Such water releases are not subject to the control of El Dorado County or commercial rafting companies. Fortunately, there is a relatively predictable flow schedule in place so we can maximize the whitewater excitement.

Sample Itinerary

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

- Meeting time at the Mother Lode River Center is 11:30 AM. The roads around here are winding, so please be sure to allow for plenty of travel time. From the parking lot, follow our signs to the check-in desk. Our office/store is in the new yurt near the top of the hill.
- We trust you'll want to join us for lunch (if not, the trip meeting time is 12:00 PM), and we'll point you toward our picnic area where you may enjoy your made-to-order lunch. At around noon, your guides will present a thorough river orientation and safety talk, and then your adventure begins. After practicing your paddle-strokes with your guide, your day starts with Highway Rapid and plenty of opportunities to go swimming. Beautiful river scenes stretch out around you, with red tail hawks soaring overhead and the occasional river otter frolicking nearby. Several miles of Class II rapids allow you to warm-up before our rafts enter the ever-exciting Gorge.
- The South Fork's Gorge begins at the base of the Lollipop Tree, where the canyon walls constrict the flow of the river and help create a half-dozen enjoyable Class III rapids. Such memorable torrents as Fowler's Rock, Satan's Cesspool and Hospital Bar are sure to get the whole family's pulse racing. Be sure to smile for the photographers' cameras!
- The fun comes to a close as you approach Folsom Reservoir and your take-out at Salmon Falls Bridge. From the water's edge, there is a short, steep hill up to the parking lot where our shuttle vehicle, and restroom facilities, awaits you. If you're feeling fit, our guides appreciate help carrying the rafts and other equipment up the hill. Please feel free to bow out if you wish. After enjoying a cold soda or juice from the cooler, we'll head back to the Mother Lode River Center and your car, arriving around 5:00 PM.

What's Included?

- Skilled, personable and professional guide service
- High-quality inflatable rafts & related river equipment including paddle, helmet and personal floatation device
- Transfers from the meeting place to the river and back

What's Not Included?

- Transportation to and from our meeting location at Mother Lode River Center
- Pre- and post-trip accommodations
- Deluxe BBQ riverside lunch (available for only \$10/person), with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables

For more information, call 1-855-541-4792 in the USA and Canada or 1-530-626-5600 outside the USA and Canada, or e-mail info@oars.com

- Wetsuits (available for rent on early season or cold weather trips)
- Items of a personal nature (see suggested packing list below)
- Insurance of any kind, including travel insurance
- Gratuities for the guides

SOMETHING VOLUNTARY

- In reviewing your statement, you'll notice a \$1/person/day donation to the American River Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the Forks of the American River. See www.arconservancy.org for more information. One-hundred percent of your tax-deductible donation goes toward conserving the American Rivers watershed. 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 if this is your choice.*
- 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. Please visit www.oarsfoundation.org to learn more about how your tax-deductible donation can change young lives for the better.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Meeting Place & Time

We'll meet you at 11:30 AM for lunch (12:00 PM if you aren't enjoying lunch with us) at our camp at the Mother Lode River Center, located at 6280 Hwy 49, just north of the town of Coloma.



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Getting to the Mother Lode River Center

By Auto

- **From Sacramento on U.S. Hwy 50:** Follow Hwy 50 east toward Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. Take the Ponderosa Road exit (Exit #37), turn left onto Ponderosa/S. Shingle and cross over the freeway. At the second stop light, take the right turn on N. Shingle Road toward Coloma/Lotus. After six miles N. Shingle turns into Lotus Road—continue going straight. Pass through the first stop sign and continue on to a dead end intersection with Hwy 49 (the Sierra Nevada House will be on your right). Turn left onto Hwy 49 North and cross the bridge over the South Fork American. Mother Lode River Center is on the left side of Hwy 49, **2.3 miles from this bridge** and opposite County road marker 26.51. Our physical address is 6280 Hwy 49.
- **From South Lake Tahoe:** Take Hwy 50 West to Placerville. Turn right on Hwy 49 (North) and follow the directions from Placerville listed below.
- **From Placerville:** Proceed north on Hwy 49 through the town of Coloma. Just past Coloma, cross the bridge over the South Fork of the American. The Mother Lode River Center is located on the left side of Hwy 49, **2.3 miles from this bridge** and opposite County road marker 26.51. Our physical address is 6280 Hwy 49.
- **From Reno/North Lake Tahoe:** Take Hwy 80 West to Auburn. Take Hwy 49 South from Auburn. Approximately 9 miles past the town of Cool, you will arrive at Mother Lode River Center. Mother Lode is on the right side of the highway, opposite County road marker 26.51. Our physical address is 6280 Hwy 49.

Mileage and Driving Times

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| • From San Francisco | 3 hours | 140 miles |
| • From San Jose | 3.5 hours | 175 miles |
| • From Sacramento | 1 hour | 50 miles |
| • From South Lake Tahoe | 2 hours | 62 miles |
| • From Reno | 2.5 hours | 130 miles |
| • From Los Angeles | 8 hours | 420 miles |

By Air

- The closest major airport is in Sacramento (SMF), which is served by most major airlines and car rental companies. Oakland (OAK), San Francisco (SFO) and Reno (RNO) are within a 3-hour drive.

By Van Shuttle from the Sacramento Airport

- www.folsomlakeexpress.com 916-984-3046
- www.folsomairporter.com 916-983-7257

Pre- and Post-Trip Accommodations (not included in your trip cost)

- **Riverside camping is available with O.A.R.S. at the Mother Lode River Center for \$15 per person/night.** Please ask an Adventure Consultant about the details of staying at our beautiful riverside camp. Our shady, grassy campsites are another ideal way to enjoy your time at the river before and/or after your river trip. We hope you come and linger with us along the shores of the American River.
- We recommend that you make reservations well in advance in order to guarantee lodging.

Motels

- Gold Country Inn, Placerville (530) 622-3124 www.goldcountryinnplacerville.com
- Mother Lode Motel, Placerville (530) 522-0895 www.placervillemotherlodemotel.com

Bed & Breakfast Inns

- American River Inn, Georgetown (800) 245-6566 www.americanriverinn.com
- Coloma Country Inn, Coloma (530) 622-6919 www.colomacountryinn.com
- The Sierra Nevada House (530) 626-8096 www.sierranevadahouse.com

RV Camping

- Camp Lotus (530) 622-8672 www.camplotus.com
- American River Resort (530) 622-6700 www.americanriverresort.com

GETTING READY

Physical Requirements

Our primary goal is for you to have an enjoyable experience. The nature of the trip is such that it involves some physical exertion and potential exposure to the elements, including cold water and weather, heat, sun, wind and rain. We have experience accommodating people with a wide range of physical disabilities and/or health conditions. However, individuals who are overweight or lack conditioning can endanger themselves, other guests and the guides. Please consult your doctor if you have medical or health conditions that could impact your ability to participate in this outdoor adventure. In general, trip participants must be able to:

- Wear a Type III Coast Guard-approved personal floatation device (maximum chest size of 56 inches)
- Climb in and out of the rafts
- Self-rescue by swimming to a boat or to shore in the event of an involuntary swim

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

Footwear

- The best choice is an amphibious shoe that drains water, won't come off in swirling current and protects your toes from stubbing and the tops of your feet from sun burning. An old pair of tennis shoes will work almost as well. Sport sandals with a heel strap are OK. "Water socks" are not a recommended option and flip flops or "Crocs" are not acceptable. For trips in the spring, we recommend wearing shoes along with wool or neoprene socks to keep your feet warm. Wetsuit booties with a reinforced sole are also a good option.

Clothing

- We recommend starting with bathing suit/swim trunks and a lightweight synthetic shirt, and then adding layers of synthetic long underwear and fleece as needed. It can be cool in the morning even during mid-summer.

Sun Protection

- *Protecting yourself from the sun should be taken very seriously! A hat, sunscreen, lip balm & sunglasses are a must.*

Suggested Packing List

- Sunscreen & lip protection; waterproof and SPF 30 or higher
- Water bottle with securing clip
- Shade hat/visor

- Sunglasses (preferably polarized) with securing strap
- Bathing suit
- Shorts (long board shorts preferable for sun protection) and quick-drying top
- River/tennis shoes or river sandals with heel strap
- Wetsuit (for April – early June trips only)
- Synthetic long underwear for Spring and Fall departures

Rentals

- **Wetsuits:** With advance notice, wetsuits may be rented for \$10 per person (**only necessary on some early-season trips**). It is important for you to advise the office of your size if you are renting a wetsuit. Please indicate your request on the Guest Registration form. Wetsuit rentals must be paid for prior to your trip. **Wetsuit rentals do not include “wetsuit booties” – please bring your own, or wear wool socks with tennis shoes as a good alternative.**

Reminders

- **ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR CHANGEABLE WEATHER!** Especially during the months of April, May and early June, California can experience extreme changes in weather.
- **To avoid being cold:** Synthetic long underwear is a must-have on river trips in the spring and fall. It can be worn under shorts, rain gear, T-shirts, etc. and keeps you warm even when wet.
- **Wearing cotton items on a river trip is only appropriate when the weather is hot. Wet cotton will chill your body temperature.**

Special Considerations

Please let us know if you have any medical issues that we’ll need to consider in planning your trip.

Commercial Photographs

There are several professional companies taking photos of each raft at some of the South Fork’s larger rapids, which provide some great action shots. These companies are not affiliated with O.A.R.S. and you will need to contact them separately to purchase these pictures. Hot Shot Imaging is conveniently based in Lotus; visit them after your South Fork of the American trip at their storefront on Hwy 49 to order pictures. (Photos for SFA trips are not available for purchase online.) For more information: www.hotshotimaging.com or (530) 621-0400.

Extra Gear

We advise that you leave your valuables at home or in your private vehicle and take on the river only what’s absolutely necessary. We also recommend that you leave dry shoes and clothing in your car to ensure a comfortable drive home.

Weather

You may want to check one week prior to your trip for an up-to-date weather forecast. We recommend you check the following web sites: www.weather.com or www.wunderground.com.

Average Air and Water Temperatures

	Air (Day) °F	Air (Night) °F	Water Temp. °F
April	66-70	44-48	58
May	74-78	50-54	60
June	83-87	56-60	66
July	90-94	62-66	68
August	89-93	61-65	67

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Gratuities

Guests often ask whether gratuities are appropriate, and in what amount. If you feel your guides have provided a very special trip for you, a gratuity may be left with the trip leader and will be shared among the crew. Entirely discretionary, anything between 5% and 10% of the trip cost is a general tipping guideline. If you plan to tip, please remember to bring a personal check or cash, since Mother Lode River Center does not have an ATM.

Terms & Conditions

Reservations and Deposits

- A \$30/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 30 days prior to departure.

Cancellations and Refunds

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, notify us as soon as possible. All payments are nonrefundable and we regret that we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, **we strongly urge our participants to investigate trip insurance** (see Insurance).
- If you transfer from one trip to another, there is a \$15/person charge up until 30 days before the trip. Transfers made after this time will be treated as cancellations.

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. West, 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 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.