



## *Yellowstone & Grand Teton Explorer* **TRIP PLANNER**

Congratulations! You are about to embark upon the vacation of a lifetime...O.A.R.S. Yellowstone & Grand Teton Explorer on Yellowstone Lake, Jackson Lake, and the Snake River in the heart of two major national parks.

As you plan for your trip, many questions may arise. What should I pack? What equipment will O.A.R.S. provide? What will the weather be like? What about accommodations before and after the trip?

Please use this Trip Planner as a resource for general information on your Yellowstone & Grand Teton Explorer. The information enclosed covers almost everything you'll need to know before your trip. Of course, if you have questions that are not answered in this packet, we are happy to help! Just call 1-800-346-6277 in the USA or Canada or 1-209-736-4677 if outside the USA or Canada to speak with an adventure consultant, or email us at [info@oars.com](mailto:info@oars.com).

### **Pre-Departure Information**

*\*\*\*Please fill out the Guest Registration form included with your confirmation e-mail and return it to our office at least 90 days prior to your departure—this information is invaluable to us in planning your trip.\*\*\**

### **Getting There**

The Yellowstone & Grand Teton Explorer begins and ends in Jackson, Wyoming. Jackson is accessible:

#### **By Air**

- The closest airport is Jackson Hole Airport. American, Delta, Northwest, United, and Skywest service Jackson. There are many taxi companies, shuttle services and rental car agencies available on site at the airport. A complete list can be found on the Jackson Hole Airport's website: [www.jacksonholeairport.com](http://www.jacksonholeairport.com)
- Alltrans (800) 443-6133 / [www.jacksonholealltrans.com](http://www.jacksonholealltrans.com) meets all incoming flights and provides round-trip and one-way shuttle service to all area properties. (One-way \$16 / Round-trip \$31) Advance reservations required.
- The Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites, our pre trip meet place offers complimentary van transportation from the airport. Call the Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites, 307-733-2648 upon arrival for van pick-up.

#### **By Shuttle**

- Jackson Hole Express (Alltrans) (800) 652-9510 / provides a daily shuttle service to Jackson from Salt Lake City, Idaho Falls and Pocatello.  
[www.jacksonholealltrans.com/jacksonholeexpress.html](http://www.jacksonholealltrans.com/jacksonholeexpress.html)

#### **By Auto**

- Five major highways lead into the Jackson Hole area: US 26, 89, 189, 191 and 287.
- Jackson is:

300 miles from Salt Lake City, approximately 5.5 hours  
215 miles from Bozeman, MT, approximately 5.5 hours  
177 miles from Cody, WY, approximately 4.5 hours  
91 miles from Idaho Falls, ID, approximately 2.5 hours



“Additional maps of the area can be found at: [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), [www.yahoomaps.com](http://www.yahoomaps.com), or in some cases [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)”

**Rendezvous**

- There is a pre-trip meeting at the Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites (285 N. Cache) in Jackson at 7:30 PM the evening before your trip begins. You will have the opportunity to meet your trip leader and others on your trip, receive your dry bags and ask any last-minute questions.
- Jackson has a public shuttle bus that transports people around the town of Jackson for free within Jackson town limits and for a small fare to limited (outside of town) locations.  
<http://www.startbus.com/schedules.html>

**After Your Trip**

- After your trip, you will be dropped off at the Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites between 4–6 PM. If it’s not essential that you leave immediately, we recommend you overnight and enjoy a hot shower followed by a night on the town.

## **Pre- and Post-Trip Accommodations**

- We recommend that you make reservations well in advance at the Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites to guarantee lodging—Jackson is a popular destination. We also recommend the facilities listed below. All are fine establishments, well maintained, clean and comfortable. Lodging is not included in the trip cost.

### **In Jackson**

- **Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites**      **307-733-2648**  
Please mention you are an O.A.R.S. guest for 10% discount [www.lexingtonatjacksonhole.com](http://www.lexingtonatjacksonhole.com)  
The Lexington/ Trapper Inn & Suites offers complimentary van transportation from the airport. Call upon arrival for van pick-up.
- Best Western Lodge                      800-458-3866 / 307-739-9703 [www.bestwesternwyoming.com](http://www.bestwesternwyoming.com)
- Motel 6                                      307-733-1620 [www.motel6.com](http://www.motel6.com)
- Central Reservations                      800-329-9205 [www.jacksonhole.net](http://www.jacksonhole.net)

### **In Yellowstone National Park**

- Yellowstone National Park general information [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)
- Yellowstone National Park, lodging [www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com](http://www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com)

### **In Grand Teton National Park Area**

- Signal Mountain Lodge                      307-543-2831 [www.signalmountainlodge.com](http://www.signalmountainlodge.com)
- Jackson Lake Lodge                      307-543-3100 [www.gtlc.com/lodging/jackson-lake-lodge-overview.aspx](http://www.gtlc.com/lodging/jackson-lake-lodge-overview.aspx)
- Snake River Lodge & Spa                      866-975-7625 [www.snakeriverlodge.rockresorts.com](http://www.snakeriverlodge.rockresorts.com)
- Grand Teton National Park general information [www.nps.gov/grte](http://www.nps.gov/grte)
- Grand Teton National Park, Lodging [www.gtlc.com/lodging](http://www.gtlc.com/lodging)

## **What's Included?**

- Skilled professional guide service
- All meals from lunch on day 1 through lunch on day 5/6
- Expedition equipment, including two-person shared tent, splash jacket and dry bags
- High quality inflatable rafts, sea kayaks and related equipment including paddle and personal flotation device
- All transfers from Jackson to Yellowstone and back from Grand Teton

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

- Transportation to and from Jackson, Wyoming
- Pre- and post-trip accommodations and meals
- Sleeping bags and pads (these items may be rented from O.A.R.S.)
- Insurance of any kind, including travel insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities

## **Equipment & Clothing**

Please refer to your detailed packing list for a complete list of what to bring on your trip.

### **Footwear**

For daily wear in the raft, we recommend an amphibious sport shoe or sandal (with an ankle strap) such as those made by Teva, or a comfortable pair of athletic shoes with good soles. These shoes will be wet

all the time in the raft. Make sure you get good-grip, no-slip soles! Some people prefer to wear sport sandals in the boat and on wet hikes, and cushioned-soled athletic shoes or lightweight boots for the longer hikes. In the boats, in camp and on shorter hikes, sport sandals are ideal. If you plan to buy footwear for the trip make sure you get it far enough in advance to break it in and wear your footwear until it's comfy—if your feet hurt you won't enjoy the trip. For trips in spring or fall, wetsuit booties, neoprene socks, or fleece or wool socks (worn with river sandals) are recommended as an option to help keep your feet warm.

### **Boatwear**

Start with sunscreen, a swimsuit, shorts, and long-sleeved shirt, and then add additional layers of long underwear, socks, rain pants, and rain jacket depending on the time of year. In the morning it can be cool on the boats. As the day warms up layers can be taken off and stored in your day pack.

### **Campwear**

After a long day on the water, you will want to refresh and change into clean comfortable clothing. Soft, loose-fitting shorts or pants, t-shirts, etc. will allow you to truly relax in the evening. You will want to have something dry and warm such as long-sleeved shirts, pants and fleece for the evenings.

### **Sleeping Bags**

You can either bring your own sleeping bag, pad and ground cloth, or you can rent our sleep kit. If you are purchasing your own bag for the trip, keep in mind that a synthetic-fill bag rated to 20 degrees Fahrenheit (the normal range for an all-around, "three-season" bag) is recommended.

### **Sun Protection**

Protecting yourself from the sun should be taken very seriously. A sun hat, sunscreen, lip balm and sunglasses are a must. Also it's a good idea to have a long-sleeved cotton shirt and lightweight long pants (preferably light colors) to cover up when you need a break from the sun. Women may prefer to bring a sarong or a piece of fabric to be used as a cover up. Lightweight gloves can also protect your hands. At the end of each day you will want to have some good moisturizing lotion or cream to replenish your skin from the drying effects of the sun and water.

### **We Supply**

- 1 waterproof bag to hold your gear for the trip (33" diameter x 29" tall—approximate sealed size). Your sleeping bag and personal gear must fit into that one bag. Tents and sleeping pads will be stored separately. ***Please note: if you rent our gear it will come already packed in your issued waterproof bag. Your remaining gear, therefore, must also fit in that one bag.***
- 1 small waterproof bag for camera and other small items you'll want during the day (17" tall x 9" diameter—approximate sealed size). *While our bags are waterproof to further protect your camera you may wish to place it in a zip-loc plastic bag, or special waterproof camera case. We also recommend padding it with a towel or clothing*
- Two-person tents on a shared basis (There is a \$30 charge for a private tent)
- Personal flotation device (PFD) must be worn at all times on the water in compliance with safety regulations
- Camp chairs
- Eating utensils, cups and plates

### **Rentals**

- **Sleep kit:** Can be rented for \$40.00 per person. Sleep kits consist of a sleeping bag (lightweight for summer, medium weight for fall), sleeping pad, ground tarp, sheet, pillow and pillowcase. Please indicate on your Guest Registration Form whether you want to rent a sleep kit or if you

prefer to bring your own.

- **Sleeping Pad:** The pad only may be rented for \$15.00

**Campwear:** Evenings in Yellowstone and Jackson Lake can be cool no matter what the season. After a long day on the water, you may want to refresh and change into clean, comfortable clothing. Soft, loose-fitting pants and T-shirts will allow you to truly relax in the evening. Bring something dry and warm for when the sun sets, such as long-sleeved shirts, pants and fleece.

**To avoid being cold:** Synthetic long underwear is a must-have. It can be worn under shorts, rain gear, T-shirts, etc., then stripped off when the chill of the morning has worn off. It keeps you warm even if it's wet (which can happen easily), dries quickly, and it's compact enough to be stuffed into your small waterproof bag or day pack after you take it off. It can be layered under your **waterproof** rain jacket and pants. **Be aware that cotton items, once wet, do not insulate; only synthetic and wool materials will keep you warm during cool, wet weather.**

**Something warm for your top & bottom:** Although the weather will probably be delightful, you need to be prepared for inclement weather. Bring a good fleece or wool top and bottom, along with a warm hat and gloves. You'll want to double up on your synthetic layers so that you'll have a set to wear in the boat and a set of warm, dry clothes for camp.

**Midsummer trips:** A long-sleeved shirt is recommended to protect you from the intense summer sun, but still plenty of warm gear is needed as Wyoming can be cold even in summer. The weather in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks can also be changeable and unpredictable at this time of year. A rain jacket and pants will still be needed during the summer months.

### **Cameras**

We provide a small waterproof bag (17 " tall x 9" diameter—approximate sealed size) to hold your camera and other items you might want during the day. It is secured under bungee straps on the kayak or behind the seat, in a readily accessible spot on the kayak. While our bags are waterproof to further protect your camera you may wish to place it in a zip-loc plastic bag, or special waterproof camera case. We also recommend padding it with a towel or clothing. Sand can be a problem—so clean your camera every night with tissue, a brush and lens paper. We also strongly recommend you take out a rider on your homeowner's policy to cover your camera—especially if it's fine equipment. If you are planning on bringing a digital camera make sure to bring additional memory cards, batteries, and any other extras you will need. Disposable waterproof and panorama cameras are also a fun option.

### **For Women Only**

Even if you aren't anticipating your menstrual period, come prepared for it. We recommend you bring some sandwich size zip-lock bags. They can be used during the day while you are on the lake or hiking and can be disposed of when you reach camp. (o.b. @brand tampons are one third the size of regular tampons, tuck discreetly into pockets and have less paper wrapping). Many women suggest bringing a small supply of baby wipes. We provide some feminine products on most trips for emergencies.

A number of our female guests have found a feminine urinary device (F.U.D.) very helpful on rafting or kayak trips and for camping in general. A F.U.D. allows women to urinate while standing and requires minimal undressing for discreet bathroom use. You can use the device in conjunction with a pee bucket (supplied on our trips) to avoid midnight visits to the privy. Previous guests recommend practicing with the device at home to maximize the benefits on your outdoor adventure. For additional information, see *Accessories and Unique Items* for the Pee Pod Feminine Funnel in the OARStore at

<http://oars.newheadingsllc.com>. For interesting and informative reviews, search for *FUD* at <http://www.rei.com>.

### **Packing Your Gear**

You may find it convenient to pack your gear in a soft duffel bag that you can then pack into your O.A.R.S.-issued waterproof day bag however this is not a requirement. Many folks pack their gear directly into the waterproof dry bag, often lining it with a larger plastic bag. Please pack light; river attire is very casual—comfort, convenience and boat space take precedence over style. However, warmth is also important in Wyoming weather, so don't skimp on warm layers.

The night before your trip, we will give you your waterproof bags for stowing all of your gear, including sleeping bag. There will be a separate bag for tents and sleeping pads.

### **Valuables**

We recommend that you leave your valuables at home. For necessary personal items such as a wallet, credit cards, etc., we recommend putting them in a zip-loc bag and at the bottom of your waterproof bag with your clothing.

### **Extra Luggage**

We recommend you take on the lake only what's absolutely necessary. Keeping gear to a minimum insures it will fit into the waterproof bags we supply and reduces unnecessary packing and unpacking in camp. If you do have extra luggage that you need to store, you may be able to store it at the lodge you are staying at for an additional fee.

### **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.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) or [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov) for weather in Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park

### **Average Temperatures and Precipitation**

<u>Month</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Precipitation</u>
JUN	68	36	1.64"
JUL	78	39	1.13"
AUG	76	38	1.26"
SEP	67	31	1.50"

### **Physical Preparation**

Sea kayaking and rafting in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks is fine for first-time paddlers and rafters; however to get the most out of your trip, reasonable levels of physical fitness are recommended. A combination of cardiac and strength training exercises—jogging plus push-ups and sit-ups, for example—will help ensure preparedness for your trip, increasing your endurance while kayaking and hiking (side hikes are optional, but always worth the effort).

### **Special Considerations**

Please let us know if you're having a birthday or anniversary on the trip, so we can pack a surprise or two! We'll also need to know of any medical or dietary requirements that you'd like us to consider in planning your trip (i.e. if you're a vegetarian or vegan, or if you have any food allergies.). Please note this on the Guest Registration Form (be specific as to what your needs are) and return it to our office at least 90 days before your trip. If you're booking your trip less than 90 days before departure, please make sure you've discussed any special requests with our office.

## During Your Trip

### **Camp Life**

After each active day on the lake, we pull ashore to camp for the night. Upon arrival, our first task is to unload the boats using a fire line of crew and passengers to expedite the process. Individuals then collect their waterproof bags and locate an area to camp for the night. On the first night in camp, a crew member will give a demonstration on setting up a tent, which you'll see is quick and easy. The guides will set up the kitchen and central dining/seating area with camp chairs. They will also locate a secluded area away from camp to set up the privy. As dinner is being cooked by the guides, hors d'oeuvres will be served and you will have an opportunity to relax, enjoy a drink if you wish, and reflect on the day with your fellow traveling companions. In the morning, the first call will be for "coffee," which includes other drinks such as hot tea, cocoa and juice accompanied by fresh fruit. You can then begin to pack up your personal belongings and sleep gear as the guides prepare breakfast. After breakfast is served, the entire camp will be broken down and packing will be completed. The gear will then be loaded onto the boats and we'll head out to see what new adventures await us.

### **Meals**

The meals we serve are hearty and delicious, complete with fresh ingredients and a variety of foods. A typical day might start with French toast, bacon, fruit, orange juice and lots of coffee or tea. Lunch might be a delicious spread of cold cuts and cheeses with several types of bread, or pitas stuffed with veggies and hummus. There are always cookies and a cooling drink to top it off. At dinner, our guides' cooking skills truly shine—sizzling steaks and salmon, chicken enchiladas and delicious pasta dishes are all part of their repertoire. Dinner generally includes a salad and desserts are frequent. Hors d'oeuvres are a pleasant surprise before many meals.

### **Alcohol**

We provide two sodas per person per day, water and lemonade. **Commercial outfitters may not provide any type of alcohol for their guests. You may bring your own supply of beer, wine or liquor in non-glass containers.** If you choose to bring extra sodas or alcoholic beverages, please let us know in advance. For your safety and the safety of others, alcoholic beverages are limited to camp.

**Boat Selection - see photos at [http://www.oars.com/our\\_adventures/river\\_ratings.html](http://www.oars.com/our_adventures/river_ratings.html)**

- **Oar Raft**—The O.A.R.S. flagship, oar rafts carry the bulk of the gear on most of our multi-day adventures. Your guide pilots the raft with long oars from a center-mounted aluminum frame. Ample deck space allows for lounging in calm stretches, sturdy weight and width give your guide confidence to hit the big waves head-on. (Three to five passengers)
- **Sea Kayak**—The ultimate flat water explorer—at home in open seas or inches from shore. Stealthy, quiet and quick, sea kayaks are the premier platform for wildlife viewing. From alpine lakes in Wyoming to island hopping in Baja or Galapagos, sea kayaks are a low-impact way to get out on the water. Generally two-person kayaks are provided, single kayaks may be available upon request.

**Please Note:** A motorized raft is used as a support boat on the lake.

### **Hikes**

Each day varies, but on an average you'll spend 4-6 hours a day on the boats. The rest of the time will be spent hiking and exploring, eating, or just relaxing in camp. While we generally plan at least one guided hike on each trip, we try to provide ample opportunity for the curious to explore the area at length. Because these trips are in bear country, we limit the amount of exploration clients can do on their own. Please let your trip leader know if you are an avid hiker, and plan to bring extra water bottles and good

shoes. Remember, however, that all hikes are optional and you can choose to lie on the beach and take in a few tanning rays or read a book instead.

### **Fishing**

The fish of Grand Teton National Park are plentiful and include brown, cutthroat, Mackinaw and rainbow trout. A Wyoming fishing license is required to cast your line in the abundant streams, creeks, rivers and lakes and *fishing is limited to camp* (by the terms of our permit). You can purchase a non-resident Wyoming fishing license in Jackson or at the Signal Mountain Lodge store for approximately \$14.00 per day. Children under 14 years of age and accompanied by a person possessing a valid Wyoming license may fish free (and their fish are included in the accompanying adult's creel limit). You'll need to provide your own fishing gear. For local fishing information call Orvis Jackson Hole (307-733-5407), Jack Dennis' Outdoor Shop (307-733-3270) or Snake River Anglers at Dornan's (307-733-2583).

### **The "Privy"**

While the idea of an outdoor trip is appealing to most people, many are inhibited or reluctant because of modesty or uncertainty. Perhaps a few facts will relieve (pardon the pun) your concerns. We use what is called a "porta-potty" system that is set up each day at camp in a secluded location that assures privacy. It is essentially a toilet without plumbing and is available from the time you pull into camp each afternoon until you leave camp the next day.

### **Bathing**

Bathing is not allowed in the lake, river or any of the side streams. You're welcome to bring a solar shower as a bathing option or you can borrow a bailing bucket from camp to rinse off if you soap up after a swim. Both are used away from the water source in an area that will absorb the runoff. We recommend using a liquid biodegradable soap such as *Campsuds* or *Dr. Bronner's* ([www.drbronner.com](http://www.drbronner.com)), which can be purchased in most stores that have a camping section and can also be used to wash clothes. Disposable anti-bacterial towelettes (*Coleman Swash Cloths*, *baby wipes*, etc.) can also be purchased and are especially convenient for spring and fall trips.

### **Something Voluntary**

In reviewing your statement, you'll note a \$1/person/day donation to Waterkeeper Alliance, a non-profit conservation organization that connects and supports Waterkeeper programs to provide a voice for waterways and their communities worldwide. This donation is voluntary and may be removed from your invoice if you choose not to participate. Please notify our office if you would prefer to delete the donation from your balance.

### **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 "Thank you" and 10% of trip cost is a general tipping guideline. If you plan to tip, remember to bring a personal check or cash—ATMs are hard to find in the backcountry!

### **Contact Information**

•For more information on this or any of our over 75 rafting, sea kayaking, or multi-sport adventures, please call 1-800-346-6277 in the USA or Canada or 1-209-736-4677 if outside the USA or Canada or email us at [info@oars.com](mailto:info@oars.com) and one of our knowledgeable adventure consultants will be happy to help you.

## **A Few Important Details**

### **Reservations & Deposits**

- A \$250/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.

### **Cancellations, Transfers & 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).
- Cancellations 60 days or more prior to the trip earn a full refund less \$100 person. Cancellations 59 days or less, prior to your trip are not refundable.
- If you transfer from one trip to another, there is a \$50/person charge up until 60 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 heart trouble and pregnant women should have their 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 a river 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.

### **Acknowledgement of Risk**

- Everyone is required to sign a standard Acknowledgement of Risk 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 sea kayaking and whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. The water can be very cold. 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 are subject to change without notice.