



Overview

The Salmon River Rafting course offers students an opportunity to join with a team of others in challenging themselves while exploring the renowned “River of No Return.” The journey begins the moment you are picked up at the Lewiston airport. You will head straight to the river where the first days of your trip will be spent building a sense of community with your teammates and learning essential rafting and camping skills. This will serve as a foundation and carry over through the remainder of your journey. While on the river, your team will learn paddling methods, river hydrology, raft captaining, and self-rescue techniques.

You do not need to have any previous experience. We will teach you the necessary skill sets for each activity and each course area. The course also includes an emphasis on leadership, character development, and an ethic of service.

Wilderness travel is demanding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. Rafting includes numerous challenges, such as navigating through rapids, swimming in cold water, paddling into headwinds, and more. Additionally, expeditionary travel can pose significant mental and emotional challenges as students must work within a group of diverse individuals, developing their skills as team members and leaders. Past students and instructors agree that arriving physically fit and excited for the opportunity for personal development will enhance your experience and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Course Area

LOWER SALMON RIVER, IDAHO – Starting in Whitebird, Idaho, the Salmon River has created the second deepest river gorge in North America (deeper than the Grand Canyon!) and is also the longest free-flowing river in the United States. Because there are no dams, sand is carried downstream from high creeks and tributaries and deposited in beautiful white sand beaches in the river corridor. The Salmon meanders through the Frank Church Wilderness, the second largest wilderness area in the contiguous United States. Your group will travel over 73 river miles and end on the lower end of the Snake River in Hell’s Canyon, the deepest canyon in the country. Our 7-day trip allows you to explore the many historical and cultural sites along the Lower Salmon including homes of Chinese miners from the late 1800’s and Native American pictographs.

Course Activities

WHITEWATER RAFTING – Students will travel on the river in four to six person paddle rafts, and learn to “captain” (maneuver) their paddle raft team through Class II to IV rapids. After lessons in basic river travel and safety, students will progress into learning to read currents, anticipate obstacles, scout rapids, and negotiate technical portions of the river. Students will also learn river hydrology, swimming in currents, paddle techniques, and expeditionary travel. While on the rafting expedition, there may also be an opportunity for short day hikes.

SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, there must be time to reflect on the experience. Within course, the solo is that opportunity. It is a chance to experience solitude in the wilderness without distraction while also taking a break from the physical rigors of course. Students experience time away from their group for short periods of time throughout the course. These “mini-solos” are at solo sites chosen by instructors to provide as much solitude as possible (within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). Participants have all necessary equipment, food and water. On this course, solos range from 30 minutes to no more than 24 hours.

SERVICE – Service to others and the environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Participants follow Leave No Trace ethics as service to the environment and do acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. Students develop a value of service, seeing the impact of their actions firsthand, and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.

OUTCOMES – This course will introduce students to the ideas of leadership, character development, and service that are integral to Outward Bound. Students will begin to develop these skills in an expedition setting so that they can continue to grow once they return home. Instructors will work to challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. As a team, each group will work together to complete difficult tasks necessary for backcountry travel.

Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your course itinerary might look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities and instructor preferences.

Day 1	Course Start, welcome and introductions, duffle shuffle, course overview
Day 2	Whitewater rafting: Use of PFD, safety topics, captaining a raft, reading water, swim assessment, navigation, and camp-craft skills.
Day 3	Whitewater rafting: Break down camp, practice with captaining a raft, flip drills, scouting, throw bag drill, swimming activities.
Day 4-5	Whitewater rafting: Cultural and natural history lessons. Exploration of the Lower Salmon River. Depending on length of course and instructor outcomes there is the possibility of a multi hour to overnight SOLO.
Day 6	Whitewater rafting: Float the Snake River to course end. Clean and de-issue river gear. Course closing and celebration.
Day 7	Travel Home