



river trips

South Fork American River

1 day rafting trips



5

best things about the South Fork

- Lots of fun and exciting rapids
- Everyone gets to paddle
- Suitable for a variety of thrill levels
- Close to Tahoe
- Great for groups of up to 80!

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 1

Length in miles: 10

Overall difficulty: III

Highest difficulty (#): III+ (2)

Rapids/day: ~20

Gradient: 23 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Troublemaker and Hospital Bar

Types of boats:

Paddle rafts

Minimum recommended age:

12 before June, 9 in June, 6 after June

- Rapids: ★★★★★
- Scenery: ★★★
- Wilderness: ★★
- Swimming: ★★★

5

best things about ARTA

- Friendly, fun & gracious guides
- Active, engaging & informal style
- Steadfast commitment to safety
- Over 50 years of experience on the west's most iconic rivers
- We donate our profits back to protecting the environment



This is fun!

Our one day trips on the South Fork of the American River are fun and exciting journeys through the rolling foothills of California's Mother Lode country. Our one day trips run **the best stretch of the river** (the Gorge), during **the best time of the day** (afternoon), when **the river is least crowded** (after the morning rush). We will cover 10 miles of river and tackle over 20 rapids, from small riffles to big drops. This is a really enjoyable adventure for everyone.

We'll meet you right at the launch site at beautiful Camp Lotus where you will meet your guides, get your gear, and receive a thorough safety and orientation briefing before getting in the rafts for some on-river paddling practice. The river starts off gently, allowing everyone to get comfortable on the river and gain confidence in the rafts. We'll warm up and cool off in gentle Class II rapids and peaceful calm stretches and maybe jump in the river, swim through the rapids, and play around on the boats. At some point we'll pull over at a peaceful spot, stretch our legs, and enjoy a tasty riverside picnic. The "big rapids" come after lunch when we pass *The Lollipop Tree* and enter the famous "American River Gorge". Fun rapids with classic names like Satan's Cesspool, Lost Lunch, and Surprise provide plenty of thrills. The highlight of The Gorge is Hospital Bar, everyone's favorite. At the end of the day, we'll take you back to Camp Lotus where you can shower, change, and grab something to eat.

Our one-day South Fork American River trips are great for first-time rafters yet still lots of fun for seasoned veterans.

"I cannot think of one minute I didn't have a smile on my face."
Kimberley Ryan



South Fork American~logistics



1 day rafting trips

Meeting Place

Camp Lotus
5461 Bassi Road, Lotus, CA 95651
530/622-8672

Meeting Time

11:00 am

Return Time

Between 5:00 and 6:00 pm.

What we provide

- Friendly, professional guide service.
- Fresh and hearty picnic lunch
- All taxes and government access fees
- Lifejackets, helmets and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip
- Transportation back to Camp Lotus at the end of the trip

What you are responsible for

- Transportation to Camp Lotus
- Meals and lodging before and after your trip
- Trip cancellation insurance (optional) available from [USI Travel Insurance](#)
- Guide gratuities (optional). Tips customarily range from 5 to 15 percent of the trip cost

Where and when to meet

We will meet you at **11:00 am the morning the trip starts** at Camp Lotus, which is located on the South Fork of the American River near the town of Lotus. Obtain a parking permit from the campground attendant, park in the main lot, and look for an ARTA guide between the main parking lot and the river near the volleyball court.

How to get there

Camp Lotus is located 1 hour east of Sacramento between Highways 50 and 80. Driving time from San Francisco is about 3 hours, from Los Angeles it is about 8 hours.

Coming from the west (Sacramento): Take Highway 50 east 30 miles to the Ponderosa Road exit in Shingle Springs. Cross over the Highway and turn right onto North Shingle Road. Continue for 12 miles following the signs to Coloma and Lotus. Turn left at Bassi Road (stop sign just before entering the town of Lotus), and go one mile to Camp Lotus.

Coming from the east (South Lake Tahoe): Take Highway 50 west to Placerville and then take Highway 49 north through the Gold Discovery State Park in Coloma. Turn left on Lotus Road, (just before the bridge across the river) and go 1 mile to Bassi Road. Turn right on Bassi Road and go 1 mile to Camp Lotus.

Coming from the north (North Lake Tahoe): Take Highway 80 west to Auburn and then take Highway 49 south through the town of Cool to Coloma. After crossing the river in Coloma, turn right and go 1 mile to Bassi Road. Turn right on Bassi Road and go 1 mile to Camp Lotus.

Flying: The nearest airport with commercial service is Sacramento, (1½ hours west of Camp Lotus). If you fly, we recommend renting a car and driving to Camp Lotus. Due to potential delays, please do not schedule a flight out of Sacramento any earlier than 9 pm on the day of your trip.

Where to stay

Camping and cabins are available with advance reservations at Camp Lotus (530/622-8672), which has hot showers and a small store. The Cameron Park Best Western (530/677-2203) is on Highway 50, about 2 miles before the Shingle Springs exit. There are numerous motels in Placerville, 25 minutes away.

Boats

On the South Fork we use 14 foot self-bailing paddle rafts which are powered by 4 to 7 paddlers plus a guide. You will be sitting along the outside of the raft and actively paddling through the rapids.



Weather

The California Foothills enjoy warm to hot temperatures for most of the summer with very little rain. Summertime highs can reach the 100's, however, it is usually cooler along the river. In the spring, (April, May and early June), it is generally cooler and there is a greater chance of rain. A fleece top and a good rainshell are advised during the early part of the season. The water on the South Fork is a chilly 60 to 65 degrees most of the year.

Alternate Section and Timing

If you've already run the Lower Gorge stretch and want to try a different section or if you need to get off of the river earlier in the day, contact us and we can meet you earlier and run the Upper Chili Bar stretch. That trip starts at 8:30 in the morning and is done by about 3:00 in the afternoon.

Water levels

NOTE: El Dorado County requires that we print the following notice: *Water flows in the South Fork of the American River result from releases from hydro-electric facilities located upstream. Such water releases are not subject to the control of El Dorado County or commercial companies operating under permits from the county of El Dorado.*



South Fork American~ gear



1 day rafting trips

During the summer, it is usually warm and sunny on the South Fork so you won't need much. You will be getting wet and the water is cold (60 degrees) so things that dry quickly work best. Proper footwear is critical and a water bottle is handy. We will have a small, communal drybag available for odds and ends. Here is what you should wear:

WHAT TO WEAR IN THE SUMMER

- Sandals with heel strap (Chaco, Teva, Keen, etc.) or old running shoes.
NO FLIP FLOPS OR SLIP-ONS!
- Swimsuit or shorts. Synthetic, quick-drying shorts are best. Women often prefer to wear shorts over their swimsuit.
- Lightweight fleece top (if you get cold easily) or T-shirt or dry-tech style synthetic shirt (if you want extra sun protection)
- Brimmed hat for under helmet (baseball-style or visor)
- Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
- Small water bottle, 1 quart, (essential - even if it's just an empty Gatorade bottle)
- Waterproof sunscreen/block (SPF 30+)
- Waterproof camera, (if you want to bring your cell phone to use as a camera, we strongly recommend getting a sturdy case such as a waterproof Otter Box)

If you get cold easily or if you are going in the spring, (as late as June 15th), you should bring rain gear and some extra insulation. You may also want to rent a 3mm "farmer-john" style wetsuit (sleeveless) and a waterproof splash jacket (non-insulated) from The River Store (530/626-3435) which is 1 mile from Camp Lotus. In addition to the items listed above, you should bring:

WHAT TO ALSO BRING IN THE SPRING AND FALL

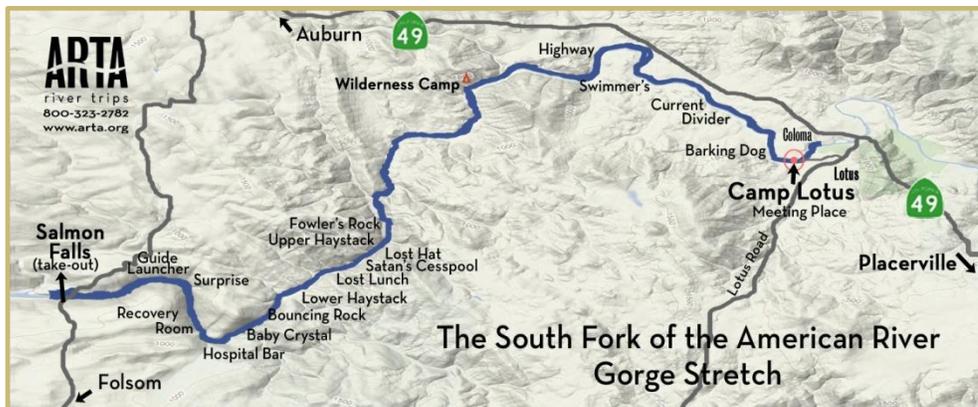
(or if you get cold easily)

Required

- Synthetic fleece or polypropylene pile pullover or jacket ("polartec", "polarfleece", etc. NOT COTTON)
- Waterproof rainshell or dry-top (coated nylon, gore-tex, etc. NOT WATER-REPELLENT)

Optional

- Neoprene wetsuit (rent from River Store, 530/626-3435 or Sierra Nevada Sales, 530/401-0088)
- Fleece cap, gloves, and socks, wetsuit booties



Professional Tips

Proper footwear will make your day much more enjoyable. You should wear shoes or sandals that won't come off if you go swimming. Old running shoes are fine; outdoor sandals with a heel strap (Chacos, Tevas, Keens, etc) also work well; wearing wool, fleece or neoprene socks (not cotton) under them will help keep your feet warm. Wetsuit booties keep your feet the warmest, but can get a bit clammy after a full day on the river. Aqua shoes are great for the water park, not so good for walking on rocks.

You will be wearing a helmet that doesn't have a visor, so a **baseball cap** (without the button on top) or a **visor** is nice (and will work better than a big floppy sunhat).

Our guides all wear **sunglasses** (and they keep them all summer by using a Chums **strap**).

"Fleece" is a generic term for a spun, polyester fabric developed for outdoor use. It is thick and fluffy and does not absorb water, making it ideal insulation on a river trip. It is commonly called Polartec or Polarfleece. "Polypropylene" is a thinner, stretchier, woven variation used predominately for long underwear. A fleece pullover is the most versatile insulating layer you can bring on a river trip.

Layering your clothing is an effective way to adjust to the daily weather changes that you will encounter. A light polypropylene layer under a heavy fleece top under a rainshell will get you going on the chilliest of mornings and allow you to shed layers as the day warms up.