



river trips

South Fork American River

2 day wilderness camp rafting trips



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best things about a South Fork Wilderness Trip

- Lots of fun and exciting rapids
- Secluded & peaceful on-river camp
- Great meals served along the river
- Everyone gets to paddle
- Suitable for a variety of thrill levels

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 2

Length in miles: 20

Overall difficulty: III

Highest difficulty (#): III+ (4)

Rapids/day: ~20

Gradient: 23 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Troublemaker, Satan's Cesspool

Types of boats:

Paddle rafts

Minimum recommended age:

12 before June, 9 in June, 6 after June

- Rapids: ★★★★★
- Scenery: ★★★★★
- Wilderness: ★★★★★
- Swimming: ★★★★★
- Hiking: ★★
- Campsite: ★★★★★
- Wildlife: ★★
- Fishing: ★★★

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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

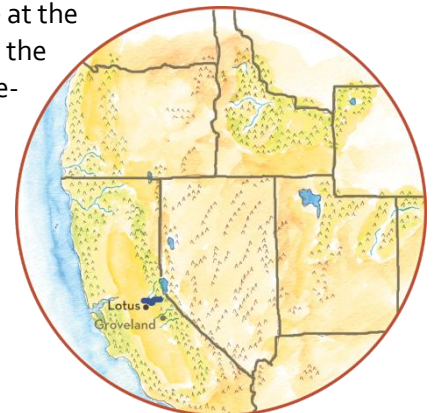
We donate our profits back to protecting the environment



This is fun!

Our two 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. We will cover 20 miles of river and tackle over 40 rapids, from minor riffles to big drops in small paddle rafts. Each raft has a guide and everyone will be actively paddling, but previous experience is not required. Our Wilderness trips camp right along the river at a secluded beach that is only accessible by river; there is no vehicle access and we are usually the only people there. There is a cool, two-story, composting toilet, a great big beach, and a gentle, serene stretch of river; it is a really nice place to spend the night. Meals are prepared by our guides at our outdoor kitchen and you will be serenaded to sleep by the sound of the river.

The best thing about the South Fork of the American River is that you can share it with everyone. We've taken fearless 7 year olds and their fretful grandparents and we've taken world adventurers and their neighbors who've never rafted before. We've taken company groups, scout groups, church groups, and single people who have cats and live alone in studio apartments in the big city. We've been joined by people celebrating birthdays, weddings, graduations, family reunions and just life in general. Some folks were at the upper end of their thrill threshold, others were at the lower end, but they all kept talking about Troublemaker or Hospital Bar. Everyone was in a paddle raft, (with a guide), participating and holding success in their own hands, unnerving at first, but unforgettable in the end.



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

South Fork American~logistics



2 day wilderness camp rafting trips

Meeting Place

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

Meeting Time

8:30 am

Return Time

Between 4:00 and 5:00 pm.

What we provide

- Transportation from Camp Lotus to the river and back
- Friendly, professional guide service.
- Four fresh and hearty meals prepared by our guides
- All taxes, camping charges, and other access fees
- Lifejackets, helmets and other specialized river touring equipment for 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 **8:30 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.

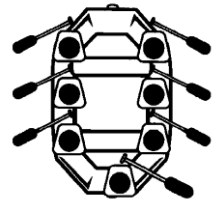
Flying: The nearest airport with commercial service is Sacramento, (1½ hours west of Camp Lotus). If you fly, we recommend renting a car and driving to Camp Lotus. Due to potential delays, please do not schedule a flight out of Sacramento any earlier than 9 pm on the day of your trip.

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.

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~ details & gear



2 day wilderness camp rafting trips

Welcome!

We're glad you can join us for a trip on the South Fork of the American. Our 2 day "wilderness" trips run 10 miles of river each day and camp at a secluded beach with no vehicle access. You should come ready for two days on the river (which means you will be in the sun and getting wet) and a night outdoors (which means you won't have electricity). The wilderness campsite is very pleasant and it is a magical feeling to be self-contained, but you do have to be a little more efficient with what you bring. There is a lovely, self-composting toilet at the campsite, but no showers or facilities. If you are interested in a more developed camping option, ask about our 2 day Camp Lotus trips that stay at a very nice vehicle-accessible campground right on the river.

Meals & Drinks

ARTA meals feature fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats and our guides double as camp chefs. Dinner is usually grilled chicken, pasta, green salad, and a baked Dutch Oven dessert. Breakfasts usually include eggs, bacon or sausage, and melon as well as bagels, granola, oatmeal, and plenty of coffee and juice. Lunches are served picnic-style along the river and feature deli meats, cheeses, vegetables, chips, cookies, and lemonade. If you have special dietary needs, please tell us in advance so that we can accommodate you. If you want alternative beverages in camp, (beer, soda, wine, etc.) please bring your own in non-glass containers. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed at lunch or while rafting, but are welcome in camp.

WHAT TO WEAR ON THE RIVER

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:

- 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 plastic 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 an Otter Box or EscapeCapsule)

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.

In addition to the items listed above, you should bring:

- Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece pullover or jacket ("polartec", "polarfleece", etc. NOT COTTON)
- Waterproof rainshell or dry-top (NOT WATER-REPELLENT)
- Neoprene wetsuit (3 mm farmer-john works best; rent from The River Store, 530/626-3435 or Sierra Nevada Sales, 530/401-0088)
- Fleece cap, gloves, and socks, wetsuit booties

WHAT TO BRING FOR CAMP

When you arrive at Camp Lotus, we will give you a waterproof bag for your overnight gear. The bags are 17" in diameter and 22" tall - small, but ample if you pack wisely; (think appropriate gear, not more gear). We will also have a communal "tent bag" for tents and sleeping pads that are more than 22" long.

- Compact sleeping bag, (down or synthetic, rated to 35 degrees)
- Closed-cell foam or self-inflating sleeping pad, (ensolite, Thermarest, or air mattress)
- Sleeping bag liner or flat bed-sheet (perfect for hot nights and will add warmth on cold nights)
- Compact, lightweight tent, (free-standing preferred, no wall tents please) or small tarp or ground cloth.
- Your favorite small, lightweight pillow
- Camp clothes. 1 complete change of clothing (versatile pants and shirts, cotton is fine)
- Camp shoes. Our guides wear flip-flops; you don't need boots.
- Small towel, soap and shampoo
- Personal hygiene items, including medicine, dry-skin lotion, etc. Bring twice the amount needed of any essential medicine
- Small flashlight with extra batteries, (headlamps are great)
- Book, games, musical instruments, etc. (things you enjoy doing)

Professional Tip

Proper footwear will make your trip much more enjoyable. On the river, 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, 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. In camp, most people wear flip flops or running shoes, not boots.