



The Idaho Rowing School



river trips

7 days of whitewater rowing instruction in the Idaho backcountry

5

best things about the Idaho Rowing School

- A week on the river
- Variety of raft options
- Full but not exhausting days
- Fun but not formidable rapids
- Barth Hot Springs

SPECIFICS

- Length in days: 7
- Length in miles: 90
- Overall difficulty: III
- Highest difficulty (#): IV- (2)
- Rapids/day: ~10
- Gradient: 12 feet/mile
- Signature Rapids:
Big Mallard, Elkhorn, Vinegar
- Types of boats:
Oar boats
- Minimum recommended age:
18

- Rapids: ★★★★★
- Scenery: ★★★★★
- Wilderness: ★★★★★
- Swimming: ★★★★★+
- Hiking: ★★★★★
- Campsites: ★★★★★+
- Wildlife: ★★★★★
- Fishing: ★★★★★

5

best things about ARTA

- Friendly and patient instructors
- Emphasis on expedition-style trips
- Casual and inclusive atmosphere
- Over 50 years of experience on the west's most iconic rivers
- We donate our profits back to protecting the environment



Sore muscles that last a week. Cool tans that last a month. Memories that last forever.

In one glorious week you will float ninety miles of Idaho's beloved Wild and Scenic Salmon River, ostensibly learning about rafts and rapids and whitewater, but more notably learning about yourself. You will scout the rapids; you will row the rafts; you will you will make the decisions. You will fall asleep with visions of whitewater dancing in your head. We'll teach you about currents and eddies and ferry angles. We'll show you throw bags and nut drivers and truckers' hitches. We'll hold your hand while you get your feet wet and we'll let go when you're ready. Every day our instructors will greet you with a supportive smile and the river will greet you with a new challenge. Every day you'll learn something new and every day you'll do something you've never done before (and that you didn't really think you could do). Every day you'll be humbled. Every day you'll be rewarded. In the end, you will never look at the river (or yourself) in the same way again.

We've been offering a version of our Idaho Rowing School for over 40 years. This manifestation is a continuous seven day excursion through the River of No Return Wilderness that focuses on rowing and general river safety and awareness. Some students are preparing for an extended do-it-yourself whitewater expedition and want professional tips and ideas. Other students are looking for a more active and participatory adventure than they might get on a standard commercial river trip. Other students are interested in seeing what it is like to be a guide for a week. Our instructors are the best; chosen for their experience, generosity, and patience. Everyone has a curiosity and openness that creates a wonderful, cooperative atmosphere. The goal of the school is for each student to get as much rowing time as possible so we take a variety of rafts: big heavy ones with instructors and smaller, lighter ones for single students to row by themselves. We have formal lessons each day, impromptu question and answer sessions each evening, and a lot of stories and laughs every night. We create some odd-ball scenarios that test our skills and nurture our teamwork. And we do it all in a low-key, no-pressure, fun manner that makes learning easy and enjoyable.

"The ARTA rowing school was a fantastically fun environment that was also super informative! I'm excited to get out again and apply the things I've learned."

—Jason Ogdahl - 2014

Idaho Rowing School ~ logistics

7 days of whitewater rowing instruction in the Idaho backcountry



Meeting Place

Stagecoach Inn
Salmon, ID
208/756-2919

Meeting Time

In Salmon at 8:00 pm **the day BEFORE** your launch date

Return Time

In McCall at 4:00 pm the last day of the school.

Pre-trip checklist

- **Complete on-line registration**
(follow the directions and link that came with your original reservation; call us if you need help).
- **Reserve pre- & post-trip lodging**
(most students use the Stagecoach, other options are listed to the right).
- **Plan for the unexpected**
(purchase Travel Insurance through [USI Travel Insurance](#)).
- **Gather and pack your gear**
(there is a complete list and lots of helpful information on the following pages; call with any questions).

What we provide

- A flight from Boise or McCall to Salmon before the school OR a flight from McCall to Salmon after the school.
- Ground transportation from Salmon to the river and from the river to McCall.
- Friendly, professional instructors.
- All meals from lunch on the first day to lunch on the last day.
- Waterproof bags, lifejackets and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip.

What you are responsible for

- Meals and lodging before and after.
- Personal clothing and toiletries (see Equipment List).
- Camping equipment (sleeping bags and tents can be rented from ARTA - see Equipment List).
- Soda, wine, alcoholic beverages (see Meals and Drinks).
- Guide gratuities.

Where and when to meet

We'll meet you at **8:00 pm the evening before the trip begins** at the Stagecoach Inn (208/756-2919) on Highway 93, in Salmon, Idaho. The Stagecoach is located at the north end of town, just across the bridge over the Salmon River. At the pre-trip meeting your instructors will distribute waterproof dunnage bags, give trip and shuttle information and answer any last-minute questions.

How to get there

There are three transportation options for the school. Please select the one that best fits your travel plans and let us know your choice when you complete your on-line registration form

Meet in McCall Option: Meet at 5:00 pm on **the evening before the trip begins** at the airport in McCall and fly to Salmon before the school. If you are driving from the west, this is probably your best option; you can leave your vehicle in McCall airport and ARTA will arrange and pay for your flight from McCall to Salmon before the school. The Stagecoach can provide airport shuttle service when you arrive in Salmon; we will return you to the airport in McCall on the last day of the school.

Meet in Boise Option: Meet at 5:00 pm on **the evening before the trip begins** at the Gem Air desk at the airport in Boise and fly to Salmon before the school. If you are flying to Idaho for the school, this is probably your best option. ARTA will arrange and pay for your flight from Boise to Salmon before the school; you will need to arrange your own flight from McCall back to Boise for after the school by contacting Gem Air(208/756-7382); the cost is about \$200. The Stagecoach Inn can provide airport pickup service when you arrive in Salmon.

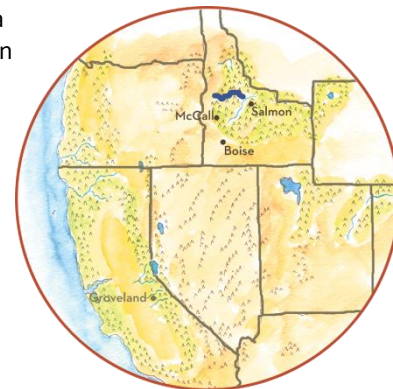
Meet in Salmon Option: Meet at 8:00 pm on **the evening before the trip begins** at the Stagecoach Inn in Salmon and fly back to Salmon after the school. If you are driving from the north or east, this is probably your best option; you can leave your vehicle at the Stagecoach (free) and ARTA will arrange and pay for your flight from McCall back to Salmon on the last day of the school. The Stagecoach Inn can provide airport pick-up service.

Where to stay

Lodging before the trip is good at the Stagecoach Inn (208/756-2919) or at the Sacajawea Inn (208/756-2294). After the trip, lodging is available in McCall at the America's Best Value Inn, (208/634-6300), or Hotel McCall (208/634-8105). Pre- and post- trip accommodations are not included in the trip and reservations should be made well in advance.

Weather

The weather in the mountains of Idaho is difficult to predict; we have encountered hailstorms and heatwaves on the rowing school (sometimes both on the same school), so please come prepared for a variety of conditions. Generally, the Main Salmon canyon enjoys mild and comfortable conditions in the late summer, however afternoon thunderstorms are common; (you'll wear your rainshell). For the most part, temperatures range from the 70s to the 90s during the day and the 40s to the 50s at night, with extremes being 10 degrees warmer. The water temperature is comfortable by mid summer; ideal for working on our swimming and rescue techniques.



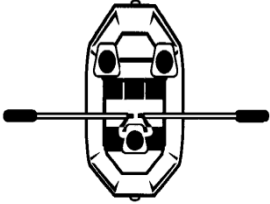
Idaho Rowing School ~ details



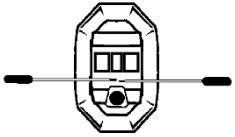
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Types of boats

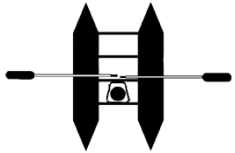
We'll try to bring a variety of boats on the Rowing School so you can get experience with a lot of different equipment.



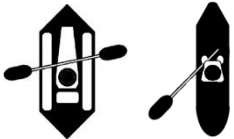
18 foot oar rafts will be the primary boats on the school; we'll probably have 4 or 5 of them. They are big, brawny, and beautiful; if you can row one of these, you can row almost anything. We'll try to have 2 or 3 students and one instructor per raft.



A **14 foot oar raft** will give solo students a platform to gain independence and to work on skills in a more responsive boat. Students will rotate through as their skills and confidence allow; (that first morning is always exciting!)



A **14 foot cataraft** will give solo students a chance to row a super-responsive boat and to get a feel for what is a very common type of raft on private trips. We'll bring one and use it for demonstrations and rescue practice.



Inflatable kayaks and stand-up paddleboards will be included if there is interest. They are handy for scenarios and fun to play around in when you need a break from rowing.

Meals and drinks

ARTA meals are well-balanced and consist of quality foods with fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables. The menu includes a wide variety of dishes with lots of flexibility, but if you have a special dietary request or allergy, please let us know in advance so we can accommodate you. We will provide water and juice during the day and hot coffee, tea and cocoa in the morning. If you would like soda, beer, wine, or liquor with your dinner, please bring your own in unbreakable containers, (beer and soda in cans, wine in bags/boxes or plastic bottles and liquor in plastic bottles).

Camping

Camping will be at beautiful riverside beaches or flat benches along the river with spectacular views of the canyon. There is usually a central kitchen area and you will pick out a spot nearby to pitch your tent or lay out your sleeping bag. We provide portable toilet facilities in camp.

Wildlife

We will be traveling through the heart of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and visiting the home of a variety of wild animals. On the Main Salmon it is common to see otters, deer, and bighorn sheep as well as osprey, eagles, and other birds of prey.

Fishing

The fishing on the Main Salmon is fairly good. Rods should be protected in sturdy cases, and only a small amount of tackle is needed. Dry flies and small spinners with single barbless hooks work well; you do not need waders or nets. If you want to fish you must have a valid Idaho State Fishing License. Licenses and gear can be purchased on-line or at the Ninety-three Mini Mart and Sports (208/756-3002) in Salmon.

Suggested Reading

River of No Return by Cort Conley gives a detailed, mile-by-mile description of the history of the river and canyon. *The Last of the Mountain Men* by Harold Peterson, *Thousand Pieces of Gold* by Ruthanne McCunn and *Merciless Eden* by Doug Tims are great books about the canyon's colorful past. A good map and guide is available locally in Salmon or from blackcanyonguides.com.

Itinerary

The day BEFORE your launch date: Pre-trip meeting at 8:00 pm at the Stagecoach Inn in Salmon.

Day 1: We will reconvene at the Stagecoach Inn and travel by van to the launch point on the Main Salmon, (2-3 hours). After a thorough safety orientation, we will head downriver. The first day has a few small rapids (Killum and Gunbarrel) and plenty of places to practice basic skills. We will make camp in the evening, distribute camp chores, and have time for relaxation and exploration as well as some education.

Days 2 - 6: We will continue downriver, traveling about 13 miles per day, plenty of distance to work on ferrying, pivoting, and catching eddies. Each day will present new challenges, both in terms of whitewater and instructional topics such as rigging, safety, repair, self-rescue, interpretation and swiftwater swimming. The most difficult rapids (including Split Rock, Big Mallard and Elkhorn) will come on days 4 and 5. As the school progresses, students will take a more active role in the day-to-day logistics and decisions; instructors will offer advice and encouragement and will present challenging scenarios but leadership and judgment will be emphasized.

Day 7: We will take-off the Main around mid-day, de-rig, load the trailer and drive to McCall. Due to the unpredictable nature of the school and the potential for delays, we recommend spending this last night in McCall, Salmon, or Boise (it can be risky and nerve-racking to try to fly out of Boise on the night that the school ends).

Idaho Rowing School ~ equipment



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Get ready!

One of the joys of life on the river is how simple it is. We will be carrying everything we need into the wilderness with us and leaving a lot of stuff behind; bringing the proper gear will make your trip much more enjoyable. The basic rule of packing is: **the right stuff, not more stuff**. One synthetic fleece pullover is much more compact and versatile than six cotton sweatshirts; a good raincoat is better than twenty ponchos. You should be able to find most of the gear you need in your closet, garage or neighbor's basement and what you can't find or borrow, you can rent from us. Your guides will help you make last-minute decisions at the pre-trip meeting, but please feel free to call us if you have any questions as you go through this list; we want you to have the best trip possible.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

CAMP ITEMS: These will be packed in your dry bag and will generally not be accessible during the day.

- *Compact sleeping bag, (down or synthetic, rated to 35°)
- *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)
- *Small tarp or groundcloth
- *Compact, lightweight tent, (free-standing work better, no wall tents please)
- Your favorite pillow (an extra pillow-case is handy for organizing stuff in your bag)
- 2 complete changes of clothing (versatile pants and shirts, cotton is fine - something exciting for dinner is welcome!)
- Extra swimsuit or shorts and T-shirts for on the river and in camp
- Extra socks, (wool or fleece are best), and underwear
- Camp shoes, (flip-flops, trail running shoes, tennis shoes; something you can walk and hike in comfortably)
- Small towel, soap and shampoo (*Campsuds* & *Dr. Bronner's* are the most environmentally friendly, Ivory is fine)
- Personal hygiene items, including medicine, insect repellent, dry-skin lotion, etc. Please bring twice the amount needed of any essential medicine.
- Warm jacket, (thick fleece is great - will work on-river as well or compact/down coat)
- Rain gear, (can double as on-river gear); top is essential, bottoms are advised before July 1
- Small flashlight with extra batteries, (headlamps are great)
- Book, journal, musical instrument or game you enjoy sharing

RIVER ITEMS: These will be worn or packed in your personal semi-dry day bag and **WILL be accessible during the day.**

- Sandals with heel strap (Chaco, Teva) or old running shoes
NO FLIP FLOPS OR SLIP-ONS
- Swimsuit or shorts and T-shirt, (nylon, quick-drying shorts and synthetic "tech-dry" type shirts are best - women often prefer to wear shorts over their swimsuits)
- Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece top (essential)
- Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece pants (encouraged)
- Waterproof rainshell (essential) and rainpants
- Brimmed hat, (baseball-style or visors work well; inflatable kayakers and others at certain water levels will wear helmets)
- Lightweight cotton clothing, (synthetic long-sleeved or old cotton dress shirts) for sun protection
- Waterproof sunscreen/block (SPF 30+), lip balm
- Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
- Small water bottle, 1 quart, (essential - even if it's just an empty plastic Gatorade bottle)

OPTIONAL ITEMS: These are not absolutely necessary, but you are welcome to bring them.

- 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)
- Beer, wine, liquor, or soda in unbreakable containers, (cans or plastic bottles). We will try to keep it cold
- Fishing gear, (compact, lightweight, minimalist)
- Fingerless biking/sailing gloves to minimize blisters
- Locking carabiner, handy for securing your day-bag
- 1 or 2 plastic garbage bags & gallon size zip-lock bags for organizing gear

* These items are available to rent from ARTA and can be reserved when you fill out your on-line registration.

Underlined items are the preferred choice of our professional river guides!

ARTA WILL PROVIDE: a chair, cup, plate and eating utensils for each guest.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING: Valuable jewelry, radios, guns, accordions or any irreplaceable items!

Idaho Rowing School ~ life on the river

8 days of whitewater rowing instruction in the Idaho backcountry



Professional Tips

Our **dry-bags** are great for keeping things dry but are somewhat awkward for packing and living out of, (they are tall and narrow with a small opening at the top). Compact sleeping bags are much more convenient, and small stuff sacks or zip-lock bags are helpful for dividing up your stuff inside the bag. Trying to put your entire duffel bag or rolling luggage into the dry-bag never seems to work.

Our guides say that one of the most versatile things to bring on a trip is a **sarong**. Comfortable and colorful, sarongs get used for quick clothing changes, beach throws, sun screens and dinner celebrations.

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.

"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. Any polypropylene long underwear will work; heavy-weight is the most versatile.

Getting the most out of your school

This school is designed for students of all abilities and experience levels. We plan for and can accommodate students with a lifetime of boating and camping experience as well as students who have never been in a raft before. The program works because the river offers different types of challenges every day, because we bring a wide variety of boats, and because our instructors are creative, flexible, and patient; every day you will have an opportunity to learn something. The nature of the school calls for participation and involvement; although you will have plenty of time to relax and enjoy the river and canyon, you will also be encouraged to contribute and get involved in all aspects of the trip. While the most lasting skills will be developed in the rafts on the river each day, the most lasting memories always come from sharing time and responsibilities in the kitchen and on shore. Like all things in life, the more you give to the experience, the more you will receive.

How to dress

On **hot days** you will want clothing that dries quickly (nylon shorts and bathing suits) and something to shield you from the sun, (a hightech SPF long-sleeved shirt or an old lightweight cotton dress shirt and maybe even lightweight long pants or capris). Also, a brimmed hat and a bandana will help you stay cool.

On **cool days** you will want a thick, synthetic fleece top, (pullover is best), and a sturdy, fully-waterproof rainshell. You may also want fleece pants or polypropylene long underwear bottoms and rainpants, particularly before mid-July. Don't bring a cotton sweatshirt for on the river; cotton does not work for on-river insulation when it is wet.

How to pack

Camp items will go in a watertight dunnage bag provided by ARTA, (one per person). These are generally not accessible during the day. The bags are roughly 17 inches in diameter and 24 inches tall, (the size of a large duffel bag; plenty big, but you should try to limit all of your gear to about 25 pounds). We will show you how to close the dunnage bag so that it stays watertight even if temporarily submerged, but packing your sleeping bag in a garbage bag provides extra protection. Zip-locks, stuff sacks, and pillow cases are good for keeping track of small and/or wet things.

River items will go in a semi-watertight, personal dry-bag provided by ARTA, (one per person). These bags are 9 inches in diameter and 12 inches tall, perfect for rain gear, fleece, sunblock, and other things you want to keep handy during the day. The bags are marginally waterproof so for expensive cameras or other things that must stay dry we recommend a small Pelican Box which can be found online and at outdoor stores. If you want to bring your cell phone to use as a camera, please get a sturdy waterproof case.

How to find it

Buy it: Local mountaineering or sporting goods stores should have everything you need and fleece garments are now available at most department stores (and our guides find a lot of fleece and other trip clothing at thrift stores). Great selections of river trip gear are also available on-line through REI, Columbia or Patagonia.

Rent it: We have good equipment available to rent. Reserve and pay for it in advance, pick it up at the pre-trip meeting, leave it behind when you're done.

Sleep Kits (polarguard bag, liner, thick, self-inflating pad & tarp) are about \$10 per day.

Tents (two-person, free-standing, comfortable) are also about \$10 per day. Call us or reserve your rental gear when you register on-line.