



# Deschutes River

Trip Guide  
3 Day Trips



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## The Deschutes River

Do outstanding whitewater, blue skies, and easy accessibility whet your appetite for fun? Then a Deschutes River whitewater rafting trip is for you.

This is not the river on which to seek solitude — the Deschutes is too popular for that. And with good reason. The river is located near the population centers of western Oregon and Washington, and features both sunny weather and enjoyable rapids along with excellent desert scenery.

In the eyes of many people the best thing about the Deschutes may be the weather. The section we run is located in the rain-shadow of the Cascade Mountains, which results in an enjoyably dry and sunny climate. Yes, it does rain here, as it does almost everywhere else on the planet. But on those Spring days when the Willamette Valley to the west is cloudy, Deschutes rafters often find themselves basking in the sun.

Whatever the weather, the Deschutes numerous thrilling rapids. Some of the bigger drops Whitehorse, Buckskin Mary, the 4 Chutes, Wapinitia, and Oak Springs. But for many the greatest enjoyment comes from lazy time in camp, swimming in the brisk water and taking in the inspiring desert canyon scenery.

### Itinerary

3 day trips meet at 7:30 AM, we ask you to arrive a few minutes early please. We meet in front of the Maupin City Park, on the east side of the river, in the town of Maupin. There is a public parking area outside the park.

(Please have your breakfast before our meeting time, and arrive in your river clothes.) Look for vehicle sporting the O.R.E. logo. We'll show you how to pack your things into our river bags, and you'll park your vehicle here.

We will then drive a little over 1 hr to our launching area, at Warm Springs. Our guides will then conduct a safety and orientation briefing, which will include instruction on paddle and rowing techniques as needed. Afterwards we'll board the boats and begin our journey downstream.

### **DAYS ON THE RIVER**

Each day begin with freshly brewed coffee by 7 AM, and breakfast by 8 AM. After breakfast we'll pack our bags, load the boats and make our way downstream.

We're on the river an average of three to five hours per day. Along the way we stop for a riverside picnic lunch. We may also stop to scout rapids, or to take a short hike up scenic side streams. We usually arrive in camp by mid to late afternoon, and while the guides prepare hors d'oeuvres and dinner, you'll have time to hike, fish, read, or nap.

## LAST DAY

We typically arrive at Sandy Beach, our take-out point, between 2:30 and 3:30 P.M. Once we've unpacked, you'll board a van or bus for the short ride back to Maupin. (On small trips, we will completely de-rig the boats, and our guides will accompany you back to Maupin. On larger trips, you will say good-bye to the guides when you leave the take-out, as they will stay behind to finish de-rigging.) We arrive back in Maupin between 3:30 and 4:30 PM.

\* Please plan your drive carefully so as to arrive at our meeting place on time. Our guides will attempt to wait for you if you are running late, but circumstances typically do not allow them to wait more than 20 minutes. If you miss your intended trip we will most likely not be able to provide a transfer to an alternate trip, and we are unable to provide a refund for missed trips.

\*\* Many factors influence our timetable, including water levels, winds, and the needs and preferences of our guests. Please consider these times approximate.

## Weather

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.
Average daytime high temp.	71	79	87	87	78
Average nighttime low temp.	37	43	46	46	39
Average monthly rainfall	0.80"	0.80"	0.40"	0.50"	0.50"



## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

The Deschutes makes its way North carving out a river canyon full of history and geological wonders. Being inhabited by Native Americans for over 7,900 years the area is still abundant in wildlife. With beavers, osprey, deer and a world famous fishery the Deschutes is abundant in wildlife viewing.

With a clear swift current that never really stops, the days seems to float by quite easily. With rock formations dotting the banks, the riverside campsites are plentiful and often offer some short hikes to a viewpoint. The many class II-III rapids offer a great chance to try out an inflatable kayak on your own.

With challenging rapids like Whitehorse and Buckskin Mary there is plenty of excitement for everyone in the upper section of the river. As we camp riverside in the evening we make our to the popular day trip section through Maupin, here we will all join into the paddle boats and navigate rapids like Boxcar and Oak Springs.

## BOAT OPTIONS

Guided oar raft



Our 14 to 18 foot-long guided oar rafts are the most stable of river boats. They're ideal for young children and anyone who wants to hang on while the guide rows the rapids, and they're a great boat to choose if relaxation and enjoying the scenery are your primary interests. (1 to 5 guests plus guide, your guide does all the rowing.)



Row-your-own cataraft



"Row-your-own" catarafts are small and lively. They're the boat to choose if you're looking for excitement, freedom and a sense of accomplishment combined with a high degree of comfort. (1 to 3 guests per cataraft. O.R.E. guides provide instruction and supervision but are not present in the boat with you.)



We outfit you and a boat partner with one of our custom designed craft, rigged with frame and oars. We provide coaching and encouragement, and while your guides lead the way you float "follow the leader" style down the

river. You trade off rowing with your boat partner and have ample time to relax, take pictures, or take in the passing scenery. Oregon River Experiences pioneered row-your-own river vacations. This is the ultimate "hands-on" rafting adventure.

Prior rafting experience is highly recommended for those considering this boat option. We also recommend either prior rowing experience or a moderately high level of physical fitness. However you do not need to be a daredevil or an athlete to pilot your own cataraft under our supervision.

### Paddle raft

Paddle rafts are fast and exciting. Each paddle crew consists of 4 to 7 guests plus a guide. Each crew member gets a canoe type paddle and works as a team under the direction of the guide. For those who want to combine excitement with group involvement, a paddle raft is the boat of choice.



### Inflatable kayak

Inflatable kayaks are small, highly maneuverable one-person craft that are sporty yet also surprisingly stable. We bring along 2 to 4 inflatable kayaks to be shared by the group.



## **A few important details about boat options**

- Paddle rafts are available only when a minimum of six adults want to paddle.
- Inflatable kayaks are available on a shared basis, and may be reserved for exclusive use by special arrangement only.
- You are welcome to switch between boat types, but because of the need for training and practice prior to substantial rapids, restrictions will apply.
- Paddle raft, inflatable kayak, and cataraft availability is subject to water level limitations.

## **PRE-TRIP DETAILS**

### **Where and When to Meet**

We will meet at 7:30 AM on the day your trip begins, at the parking area just outside of Maupin City Park. In Maupin, Oregon. Maupin is approximately 2 hours east of Portland.



## **Trip Shuttles**

Your trip fare includes transportation from our meeting point to our launch spot and from our take out back to your car in Maupin.

## **Accommodations** (before and after your trip)

Lodging is available in Maupin at Imperial Lodge. Accommodations are limited, so advance reservations are advisable. Call 1-800-395-3903.

There are many motels available in Madras (50 miles from Maupin) and in The Dalles (40 miles from Maupin). In Madras try the Leisure Inn (541-475-6141). In The Dalles consider the Day's Inn (541-296-1191) or the Best Western (541-296-9107).

Camping is available at the Maupin City Park and at numerous BLM sites along the river near Maupin.

## **What to Bring**

Most of the time the weather in the Deschutes River canyon is hot and dry. But cool, wet weather can occur on any trip, particularly early in the spring. It can be quite chilly when it's overcast, breezy or rainy, especially when you're in a raft. Please pay close attention to selecting your clothes and gear for your river adventure. Hopefully, you'll never need most of the cool-weather gear we recommend that you bring. But it is vital that you do bring it, just in case!

## **What to Wear**

On cool or rainy days: Appropriate clothing for these conditions is clothing that dries quickly, and keeps you warm even when the garment is wet. Modern high-tech synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene and polyester fleece do both. (Wool provides warmth when wet, but does not dry quickly and is less comfortable. Wool is often less expensive, however, especially when purchased from Thrift or Military Surplus stores, and wool/synthetic blends can be a good choice.)

Think in terms of layers of clothing for changeable and cool weather. As conditions change you can add or subtract layers as needed. The first layer in cool weather should be long underwear made of synthetic materials such as polypropylene, which provide warmth and wick moisture away from your skin. The middle layer(s) should consist of polyester fleece (or wool), and will provide further warmth. The outer layer consists of a rain jacket and rain pants. Rain gear made of modern water- proof, breathable fabrics such as Goretex are best. But for a less expensive option coated nylon will work, too.

Wetsuits are generally not needed. However, they do make inflatable kayaking more comfortable, given the river's cool water. For this reason O.R.E. provides wetsuits on a shared basis for kayakers. If you'd like to bring your own suit, look for an 1/8" thick "farmer john" style (which can be worn in conjunction with a sweater and raincoat). Thicker, full-body scuba style suits are warm but they're less comfortable, and their bulk makes paddling more difficult.

On warm or hot days: Synthetic fabric shorts and bathing suits are worn, as well as a hat to keep the sun out of your eyes. Cotton shirts may be worn to keep cool and to ward off sunburn. But cotton clothing is recommended for hot weather only. Wet cotton will lower your body temperature. This is great for keeping cool during a heat wave, but cotton provides no warmth when wet the fabric gets wet.

On your feet: For footwear while on the river we recommend nylon or canvas tennis shoes, hard soled wetsuit boots, or sports sandals such as Tevas or Alps. For extra comfort you may want to wear nylon or polypropylene socks as a first layer. Wetsuit boots do a good job keeping your feet warm in the Grande Ronde's cool water. Sport sandals and shoes also work well, when combined with a pair of thick wool socks or neoprene wetsuit socks. Sport sandals are comfortable for rafting, and are preferred by many of our guides. But they're generally more expensive, and do not protect your feet as well as do shoes.

In camp: You may want a change of shoes as well as comfortable clothing for lounging about or hiking. Cotton clothing may be worn on shore in dry weather. But in order to be prepared for rainy weather we recommend that you have camp clothing available made of synthetic or wool fabrics.

### **Where to find it**

Check with local sporting goods stores. If they cater to outdoor sports (hiking, backpacking, etc.) rather than team sports, they should have most of the items you need. Gear is also available through mail order and online, for instance by contacting REI (800-426-4840, or [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)) or L.L. Bean (800-341-4341, or [www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com)).

### **How to pack it**

Pack your gear in a manner appropriate for your journey to Minam. When we meet we will supply you with a watertight river bag into which you will pack your clothing. This bag is roughly 14" in diameter and 24" tall. We'll also provide you with a second, larger river bag (roughly 16" in diameter and 33" tall), which you will share with one other person. Into this second bag will go your tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, and other bulky items. These bags will be transported from camp to camp by raft but generally will not be accessible

during the day. For items that you want to keep handy during the day bring a small daypack or dry-bag. Items that you want to keep handy during the day but which absolutely must stay dry (camera, binoculars, a book, etc.) go best in a 50 caliber military surplus ammo box. O.R.E. provides these boxes on a shared basis. If you would like your own, they are available at most surplus and some outdoor stores. (Note: boxes cannot be carried in paddle rafts or inflatable kayaks.)

The river bags and boxes we provide are watertight under most conditions, even when submerged. But for extra security we recommend that you wrap your sleeping bag and clothing in heavy-duty plastic garbage bags for extra protection. We also recommend that you pack your camera, binoculars, reading material and similar items in large zip-lock bags.

## Rental Equipment

O.R.E. offers camping equipment for rent to those who do not own this gear (or do not wish to transport it from home). High quality, 3 person dome style tents are available for \$24 per trip. Sleep kits (synthetic-fill sleeping bag, cotton liner, self-inflating sleep pad, and ground cloth) are also available for \$24 per person per trip. Reservations and advance payment are required. To place a reservation for a tent or sleep kit please call our office at 1-800-827-1358.

## Equipment Checklist

### ✓ River Gear

- \_\_\_\_\_ swimsuit or shorts and T-shirt (avoid cotton shorts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ tennis shoes or sport sandals, or hard-soled wetsuit boots
- \_\_\_\_\_ wool or synthetic "ski" hat — for cool/rainy days
- \_\_\_\_\_ wide-brimmed hat (preferably with chin-strap), or baseball cap — for sunny days
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 pair socks (wool or synthetic)
- \_\_\_\_\_ waterproof rain jacket and rain pants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Polypropylene or similar long underwear tops and bottoms
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 warm sweater or jacket, polyester fleece or wool
- \_\_\_\_\_ water bottle or canteen
- \_\_\_\_\_ waterproof sunscreen and lip balm
- \_\_\_\_\_ sunglasses, with strap

### ✓ Extra River Clothing, Camp Clothing

- \_\_\_\_\_ camp shoes (or lightweight hiking boots)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 pair long pants
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 pair shorts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 long-sleeved shirts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 short-sleeved shirts
- \_\_\_\_\_ socks and underwear

✓ Camp Gear

- \_\_\_\_\_ compact, lightweight tent (freestanding is preferred)
- \_\_\_\_\_ compact, medium-weight sleeping bag
- \_\_\_\_\_ compact foam sleeping pad or air mattress
- \_\_\_\_\_ small tarp (to place beneath your tent, or as a ground-cloth for sleeping under the stars)
- \_\_\_\_\_ personal toiletries, including small towel, biodegradable soap, lotion, prescription medicines
- \_\_\_\_\_ small flashlight or headlamp, with extra batteries

✓ Optional Items

- \_\_\_\_\_ gloves (especially if you'll be rowing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ binoculars
- \_\_\_\_\_ camera
- \_\_\_\_\_ reading material
- \_\_\_\_\_ pen and journal or notebook
- \_\_\_\_\_ compact fishing gear
- \_\_\_\_\_ spare glasses, sunglasses
- \_\_\_\_\_ small daypack, ammo box, or small dry bag
- \_\_\_\_\_ beer or soft drinks (up to 2 six-packs per person), wine or liquor —in unbreakable containers. (We provide coffee, tea, and juice; also wine with some dinners).

**Consumption of alcohol is prohibited during the day but okay once we arrive in camp.**

**Please do not bring pets, guns, or valuable jewelry**

### **Additional Information**

Your trip fare includes the following:

- The services of our professional river guides.
- Local transport from meeting spot to launch area and end of trip transport back to your car in Maupin.
- All meals, from lunch on the first day through lunch on the last. Our menu is delicious, varied, and hearty. Meals are freshly prepared by our guides from the highest quality ingredients. Juice and water are available at each meal. Complementary wine is served with some dinners. Special dietary needs can be accommodated with advance notice\*.
- Durable, professional quality rafts and river running equipment, including U.S. Coast Guard Approved lifejackets.
- Waterproof river bags and boxes for your personal gear.
- Cups, plates, and eating utensils.
- Camp chairs.

## **Fishing**

Fishing on the Deschutes is often good for steelhead in the spring and fall, while trout in the summer. If you would like to fish you'll need an Oregon fishing license, which may be purchased at Oregon sporting goods stores. There is many restrictions and regulations on the Deschutes river, you need to be familiar with them yourself. Fishing is not permitted while floating.

## **Camping**

We select beautiful meadows and forest glens for our camp sites. Our guides establish a central kitchen and social area, and trip members select spots in the surrounding area to pitch a tent or roll out a sleeping bag. O.R.E. will set up a portable toilet at each camp, which will be located with privacy and convenience in mind. O.R.E. practices minimum impact camping, and the crew will instruct you on the simple steps we follow to protect the river environment.

## **Gratuities**

Our guests sometimes ask whether it is appropriate to tip the guides. Tipping is optional, but if your guides did a great job then feel free to thank them with a gratuity. The amount is up to you, but tips in the range of 8% to 20% of trip cost are typical. Gratuities are customarily presented to the Lead Guide, and will be shared equally among all guides on your trip.

Nearby attractions

## **Cancellations and Travel Insurance**

The size of our trips is strictly regulated by law, and your reservation means we cannot sell the spaces to others. So we strictly adhere to the cancellation and refund policies we explain in our reservation materials. For this reason we recommend that you consider the purchase of travel insurance, which will (amongst other benefits) reimburse you if you must cancel your trip due to illness.

## **Emergencies**

It may be difficult for family and friends to reach you while you are on the river. In case of emergency they should contact the local BLM office (Prineville, OR) at 541-416-6700. They should also call the O.R.E. office at 800-827-1358.

## **Nearby Attractions**

If you're coming from out of town a Deschutes River trip can be included in a visit to nearby Portland. For Portland information contact the Portland Visitor's Bureau at 503-222-2223.

Rafting the Deschutes can also be combined with hiking on Mount Hood or a tour of the Columbia River Gorge. For more about both Mount Hood and the Gorge contact Mt. Hood National Forest headquarters at 503-667-0511.