

Hells Canyon of the Snake River

Join Winding Waters on an unforgettable 4-day adventure through the majestic Hells Canyon and relax into "river time". As the Snake River turns north on its run to the Columbia River, it enters Hells Canyon, the deepest river gorge in North America. Float from Hells Canyon Dam to the historic Dug Bar, then take a scenic flight back to Joseph on the 4th day. With a depth of over 7,900 feet, Hells Canyon frames the mountainous border of Oregon and Idaho. This "wild and scenic" designated section of river is the heart of the massive Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. A Snake River whitewater rafting trip in Hells Canyon combines the awesome thrill of class III and IV whitewater with incredible scenery, fun, wildlife viewing and rainbow trout and bass fishing opportunities. Near 70-degree water, perfect for swimming and paddling, rounds out this 4-Day Snake River rafting vacation as a must-do trip for adventurers around the world.

With warm water, exciting rapids, and incredible scenery, this canyon river trip is the perfect adventure for all ages of rafters!

Difficulty: Class III – IV; Beginners to Advanced

Ages: 7 years old and up

Season: June - September

The General Trip Itinerary

(exact camp locations and daily river mileage may vary with water levels and river conditions)

Arrival Day – the day before your scheduled trip launch date: Arrive in Joseph, Oregon and check-in to the Chandlers B&B. Pre-Trip Meeting at Chandlers at 6pm.

Day 1 Launch Day: Breakfast served at Chandlers by 6:45am and departure at 7:30am. Travel in the Winding Waters' van to Hells Canyon Dam through the beautiful Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Stop at Scotty's Market near the Dam and purchase an Oregon fishing license if needed. Meet your guide crew at the Dam. Launch by 11am following a brief risk management discussion. Lunch will be served riverside. Encounter rapids such as Wild Sheep and Granite on this first day with time to relax, fish, explore archeological sites and take in the breathtaking views. Plan to be in camp by 4:00pm today. Expect an evening beginning with a delicious meal, followed by good conversation, campfire, games and music. Feel free to bring a musical instrument.

Day 2, River Day: The morning routine: hot drinks and fruit juice served by about 7am and breakfast by 8am. The guide crew will break camp and after a brief discussion of the day's plan, begin the day's float by 10am. Today's rapids include Bernard, Water Spout, and Rush Creek. Visit ancient pictograph sites, not so ancient homestead cabins, and jump from Sturgeon Rock. Lunch will again be served riverside today with camp arrival around 4pm. Expect another wonderful evening beginning with a delicious meal followed up with good conversation, campfire, games and music.

Day 3, River Day: Morning routine. Today will be spent hiking to the overlook at Suicide Point, floating, scanning the slopes for wildlife, spotting the birds responsible for those beautiful songs, exploring historic Kirkwood Ranch, laughing and playing in the river. Lunch will again be served riverside with camp arrival being around 4pm. There is always time in camp to take a swim, go on a short hike, read a book, catch a fish, play Bocce Ball, or simply lay in a hammock. Expect another wonderful evening beginning with a delicious meal followed up with good conversation, campfire, games and music.

Day 4, River/Take Out Day: Morning routine. Today we pass Pittsburg Landing, the take out for our 3 day trips. Enter the lower canyon, where the canyon walls appear to crowd in, rising as far as the eye can see. The landscape changes every minute as our perspective changes. Big Horn Sheep, Bald and Golden Eagles are often spotted in these tight canyons. Lunch will be served riverside at historic Dug Bar, our take-out point for the trip. Learn why the Nez Perce chose this location to cross the Snake River when fleeing the Wallowa Mountain region while soaking up the last bit of river tranquility before your departure. Scenic flights to the Joseph area with the region's best bush pilot depart between 1 and 2pm if conditions are favorable. Otherwise, enjoy a scenic jet boat ride to Asotin, ID where the Winding Waters van will meet and deliver you back to Joseph generally by 5pm.

What to Bring on the Wet Planet Hells Canyon of the Snake River Trip

Below is a suggested packing list to use for your river expedition. We will provide you with a dry bag to protect your belongings from the water. Feel free to contact us at any time with packing questions. **Always be prepared for changing Idaho weather!**

- Sleeping bag
- One or two pair of shorts for camp and hiking
- Two or Three T-shirts
- Rain jacket & pants
- One set long-sleeved light clothes (for sun and/or camp)
- Synthetic thermal underwear (top & bottom)
- Fleece or pile top & bottom (top can be pullover or jacket)
- Swimsuit
- One pair tennis shoes or river sandals (for on river)
- One pair lightweight hiking shoes (for off river)
- Toilet articles (biodegradable soap)
- Wool or polypro/capilene/fleece socks (try to stay away from cotton)
- Shade hat/visor
- Warm hat (spring and fall trips)
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothing
- Suntan/moisturizing lotion
- Chapstick with SPF
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses with securing strap
- Water bottle with securing strap (1 liter minimum, more if hiking)
- Flashlight/small headlamp & extra batteries
- Personal medications
- Toiletries/towel, etc.

Optional Items: Binoculars, diary, sketchbook, a good paperback book, small daypack or fanny pack for hikes, camera and film, paddling jacket & pants, small travel pillow, musical instrument.

Liquor, beer, and or wine: you will need to provide your own alcoholic beverages!

Getting to the Hells Canyon of the Snake River

Our Hell's Canyon trip begins and ends (our van will be at the take-out to take us back) at Chandlers Bed and Breakfast, in Joseph, OR.

Vehicle Shuttle: While you are on the river, you may wish to have your vehicle shuttled to the take-out point by our shuttle service. We will return to Chandlers after the trip, but if you would like to leave directly from the take-out this is a good option for you. This is a licensed & appropriately insured shuttle service. The shuttle fee is between \$150 and \$175 per vehicle. You will pay the shuttle fee directly to the shuttle service at the start of the trip, but we will take care of facilitating and arranging the service if desired.

Driving Directions To the Put-In for the Hells Canyon River Trip

Portland to Joseph, OR

Chandlers Bed and Breakfast

- Take I-84 East to LaGrande, OR
- Take State Highway 82 (Wallowa Lake Highway) to Elgin
- Follow Highway 82 through Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise on into Joseph
- Go through Joseph to the corner of Highway 82 (S Main Street) and East 7th St
- Chandlers will be on your left at this corner.

Seattle to Joseph, OR

Chandlers Bed and Breakfast

- Take I-90 East out of Seattle to Ellensburg
- Take I-82 East to Yakima
- Continue on I-82 to I-84
- Take I-84 East to LaGrande, OR
- Take State Highway 82 (Wallowa Lake Highway) to Elgin
- Follow Highway 82 through LaGrande, Lostine, Enterprise on into Joseph

- Go through Joseph to the corner of Highway 82 (S Main Street) and East 7th St.
- Chandlers will be on your left at this corner.

Boise to Joseph, OR - about 4.5 hours

Chandlers Bed and Breakfast

- follow I-84 W, entering Oregon / 165 miles
- take exit 261 for OR-82 towards La Grande City Center, Elgin / 0.4 miles
- turn right at Island / OR-82 / 1.4 miles
- turn left at N. McAlister Rd/OR-82/Wallowa Lake Hwy / 17.7 miles
- turn right at Albany St / OR-82 / Wallowa Lake Hwy / 34.2 miles
- slight left at OR-82 / State St. / Wallowa Lake Hwy / 10 miles
- turn right at OR-82/N River Street / 6.5 miles
- Go through Joseph to the corner of Highway 82 (S Main Street) and East 7th Street
- Chandlers B & B will be on your left at this corner