



*Sharing Nature – Enriching Lives.™ Since 1979.*

## ***Canoeing the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail on Montana's Wild & Scenic Upper Missouri River 5-Day (60 Miles). Easy Floating (no rapids) and "Luxury Style" Camping***

*"The expert help of strong, young canoeists who prepared our camps and doubled as cooks extraordinaire made the trip as enjoyable as it was easy. Lewis and Clark's "scenes of visionary enchantment" came alive once again, and I'll carry memories of my own days of enchantment thanks to ROW's accomplished services."*

Gary Moulton, Editor, Lewis and Clark Journals, University of Nebraska.

If rivers could talk, the Missouri would tell a story few other rivers could match. Upon its waters and banks was played the drama of every major theme of people's history on the Western Plains - the Indian cultures, white man's exploration, the fur trade, gold fever, the steamboat era, the collision of white expansion with the Indian's last stronghold and the resultant military occupation, and finally, the establishment of permanent white settlements, the range-cattle industry and farming. To help everyone learn about these themes in a fun, informative manner most departures are designated as "Journeys of Discovery" and are accompanied by talented authors and historians with specialized knowledge of the area. This factor alone sets ROW's Missouri River trips a world apart from most others.

To help bring a part of the river's history alive, you travel in 34' canoes that replicate those of the early voyageurs, or fur traders and are similar in size to the dugouts used by Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery. Each will carry up to 14 paddlers and two talented ROW guides, making the perfect platform for spinning yarns and pointing out the many points of interest along the way. For those who prefer a smaller craft, we offer the option of paddling a 17' Mad River canoe. The smooth and pleasant current with no rapids makes this a trip anyone in reasonable physical condition can enjoy.

Your adventure begins when we meet you in Great Falls, Montana. (The series of five Great Falls required nearly a month-long portage for Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery.) We recommend that you arrive early enough on the day prior to our trip to visit the superb U.S. Forest Service Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center. The lifelike exhibits are arranged in the chronological order of the Corps of Discovery expedition and highlight many of the Indian Tribes encountered. Visiting the Center is critical to understanding the history we encounter and is an inspirational beginning for our own adventure.

The evening before your departure we have an orientation meeting at the hotel. The next morning we depart from Great Falls for a one-hour drive to the charming and historic town of Fort Benton, located on the banks of the Missouri. Here we make a quick stop to see the town and then drive to a scenic viewpoint of the confluence of the Missouri and Marias rivers (a critical decision point for Lewis and Clark). We arrive at our put-in point at Coal Banks Landing, have a safety talk and begin paddling downstream. We enjoy lunch on the river and stop to hike to various points of interest along our way. ROW's camp boat has traveled ahead\* and set up a luxury camp including all tents. We arrive in time to enjoy hors d'oeuvres as the low-slung sun casts golden hues on sandstone cliffs. After a bountiful dinner, the day ends with stories and songs around a crackling campfire. (\*Trips with 8 or less guests will not have a camp boat that goes ahead of the group.)

On day two, as the sun rises, your guides prepare a hearty breakfast, we break camp and launch. The river carries our canoe from its wide, meandering valley into the famous White Cliffs area - a deep, rugged gorge that the Missouri has cut through the sedimentary floor of an ancient inland sea. Steep, eroded cliffs reach a depth of nearly a thousand feet and reveal 10 million years of geologic history. Wind and water have eroded the sediments, creating massive rock crags and magical castles of dazzling white sandstone looming above the river. The journals of Lewis & Clark are filled with superlatives describing these wonders. As we continue downstream, our itinerary allows plenty of time ashore to explore. We hike the Eagle Creek area, where Lewis & Clark camped on May 31, 1805, viewing the alcoves, amphitheaters and sandstone cathedrals of the White Cliffs. Further on, we gaze upon Citadel Rock, a massive igneous intrusion, immortalized by German Prince Maximilian's artist Karl Bodmer in 1833. We hike to the Hole-in-the-Wall and surrounding coulees where some locals claim Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid hid with Kid Curry in the late 1890's. As we explore, we also see evidence of the Indians who lived here - the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre. We see their teepee rings - circles of stones that were used to hold down buffalo hide tepee covers - from over a century ago. We talk about the other tribes - the Salish, Nez Perce and Shoshone - who came here from the Rockies to hunt buffalo. We learn the story of Chief Joseph's band of the Nez Perce who crossed the Missouri in September of 1877, near the end of their tragic 1200-mile flight for freedom. As the Indians were moved to reservations, white settlers began to homestead the land. They struggled in a harsh, lonely environment. Today, almost all these homesteads have been abandoned, but as one walks through the empty corrals, tool sheds and cabins, it seems as if these pioneering souls left only yesterday.

Summer days on the Missouri are typically hot and dry and the cool river water welcomes swimmers. Above us soar golden eagles, hawks and falcons. Feeding from the river we see osprey and herons. Cottonwood, juniper and pine grow along with sagebrush, cactus and wildflowers, providing food and shelter for beaver, antelope, deer, elk and bighorn sheep. After several dream-like days, we reach our take-out shortly after lunch, returning to our hotel in Great Falls by late afternoon. Our unique 5-day itinerary goes beyond the point that most other trips end, adding 12 miles of river beyond Judith Landing to give you a look at the stunning Missouri River Breaks, also known as "the badlands." This added length allows us to visit several more Lewis & Clark campsite locations and more homesteads. We invite you to float the Upper Missouri with ROW, a place where every paddle stroke and footstep resonates with history and wonder.

**WHEN TO GO?** We offer these trips from June to September. July and August are the most popular months as the weather is generally hot and dry with ideal camping conditions. The river is also fairly busy during this time with other paddlers (expect to see three to eight other groups each day). In June the weather is less predictable, yet generally very nice. Higher water creates a swifter current, which allows for more time on shore for hiking and exploring. September is a wonderful time to be on the water as few other people are around, trees are beginning to show their autumn colors and the air is cooler.

**WHY CHOOSE ROW?** Every outfitter takes a little different approach to running the Upper Missouri. We'd like to explain ours. First of all, most trips are accompanied by a guest historian who brings a level of educational enlightenment that complements the knowledge of our guides and allows us to delve deeper into the rich history and culture of the region. Please request a sample list of previous guest historians that may accompany our "Journeys of Discovery" or visit our website for a link to this list. Beyond this enrichment, you should know that our philosophy is to provide you with the kind of trip you want. So let us know if you have any special interests or requests. If you like to hike a lot, we'll make extra stops and provide that opportunity. If you have something special you want to bring - a cello? A case of your favorite wine? Whatever - we'll make room. Our aim is to please. And we do our best, while maintaining a lively, fun atmosphere in camp and on the river.

**ROW GUIDES:** There is no question that on any trip, the guides are the most important factor in terms of your safety, enjoyment and ultimately, the success of the trip. For this reason each of our guides is an exceptional person, willing and eager to share, teach, listen, learn, laugh, play, discuss, and above all, work hard to provide you with a safe, relaxed, spontaneous adventure. With one guide per four to five guests, you're sure to get the attention you deserve. In order to provide you with the richest experience possible, we divide ourselves into meal crews, meaning that while two guides are preparing dinner, the other two or three guides are free to spend time with you. To go hiking with you, help identify flowers or trees, give you a lesson in Dutch oven cooking, or just sit and visit. They are the main reason many of our guests return to ROW time and time again and wouldn't even think of traveling with another river company. (References gladly provided.)

**GUEST HISTORIANS:** ROW has gathered a talented cadre of noted authors and historians who accompany our trips. Please note that guest historians are guaranteed only on those trips with 10 or more paid guests. Past historians have included authors Gary Moulton, Landon Jones, Ella Mae Howard, David Peck, Verne Huser, Stuart Weir, etc.

**BEYOND THE RIVER:** One of the reasons that the Missouri is such a fabulous trip is the incredible variety of things to do and see along the way. ROW makes a point of stopping and taking advantage of as many of these things as we can. As we float we tell you about the early pioneers who lived here and we stop to hike to at least one of their old homestead cabins. We talk about the Indians and take you to at least one of their encampments. We plan our trip so that there's plenty of time for these explorations. Not only do we show you these places, but we help you understand them better. If you're interested, we'll tell you about the geology, plants and animals. We believe strongly that deepening understanding builds greater appreciation. And we're hoping our love of this canyon will be contagious.

**LUXURY CAMPING:** In order to make your trip run as smoothly and comfortably as possible, we run a "camp boat" ahead of the group to carry the bulk of the camping gear, food, etc. This allows our voyageur canoe to be lighter and more maneuverable which makes for easier paddling. The camp boat arrives early to camp and gets the kitchen set up as well as the spacious 2-person tents that ROW provides. When we arrive in camp all you have to do is carry your personal gear (stored in a ROW-provided easy-to-use waterproof bag) to the tent of your choice and roll out your sleeping bag, flannel liner and thick, self-inflating foam sleeping pad (also provided by ROW). This gives you an extra half hour of time for doing something you'd enjoy rather than setting up a tent. (Note: In rare circumstances we may have a trip on the Missouri with 8 or less guests. In this case, due to economic and logistical reasons, we may not run our camp boat. On these smaller trips guests and gear travel together down river. Our guides are still happy to set up your tent if you like, or you may enjoy doing it yourself.)

**CAMP TIME:** To give you the opportunity to explore on your own, we generally arrive in camp no later than 4:00 each day so you have time to go hiking, read a book, or whatever you might want, before hors d'oeuvres are served, usually around 5:30.

**CAMP LOCATION:** While most groups on the Missouri stay at sites which the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) has developed with outhouses and metal fire rings, we prefer to take you to less-crowded, more primitive sites. Thus, more often than not, we're camping alone as opposed to sharing a site with several other groups. At these primitive sites, we take every possible precaution to minimize our impact. Everything we carry in, we carry out. We build our fires in metal fire pans and carry out the ashes. Using portable toilets (set up inside a privacy tent) we carry out all human waste.

**MEALS:** The quality of our food reflects the quality of the wild and remote environment of the Upper Missouri. We hand-select the freshest fruits and vegetables we can find and pack them carefully in huge ice-coolers. Likewise, these coolers carry fresh dairy products and meats. From these ingredients we prepare bountiful, healthy meals. Cornish game hens stuffed with wild rice and served with broccoli with Béarnaise sauce. Baked Idaho trout, served with green beans and Idaho mashed potatoes. Juicy Montana rib-eye steak, fajitas, or made-on-the-river lasagna are a few other possible entrees. Big salads of vegetables and fruit add color and variety to every meal. Desserts are made each evening in our Dutch ovens and range from double fudge brownies to pineapple upside-down cake. We serve juice each morning and moderate amounts of bottled wine with dinner. We also provide two beers and two sodas or juices per person per day. There's always plenty of cold water, lemonade mix, tea, coffee and cocoa. As well, you're welcome to bring your own beverages or alcohol. We always have plenty of ice to keep your drinks cold.

**YOUR CHOICE OF CRAFT:** In addition to the "camp boat" that carries all the camping gear, we use two other kinds of river craft. We are proud to be the first outfitter on the Missouri to introduce voyageur canoes, which replicate the experience of the early fur-traders. These canoes are very stable and allow passengers to sit in a normal seating position, as opposed to having to kneel uncomfortably on the floor of a small canoe. Their broad beams make them stable enough to climb in and out of while on the river, so a quick dip in the cool water is possible. We take a maximum of 14 passengers and two guides in these 34' canoes and a maximum of two canoes (28 guests) per trip. We also offer the option of paddling a smaller 17' Mad River canoe. Since the voyageur canoe travels rather fast, only experienced canoeists can keep up effectively. On our reservation form you can indicate if you're interested in this option on a full-time or part time basis. If several people are interested in paddling a smaller canoe on a part-time basis, we bring one or more along to share.

**THE LAST SUPPER:** Another small touch ROW adds is the inclusion of a farewell dinner on our last evening in Great Falls with ROW guests and guides. This dinner brings a nice "closure" to the week of adventure everyone has shared. (All inclusive except for alcoholic beverages.)

**ROW PROVIDES:** Full course meals from lunch the first day through dinner the last day. Professional river equipment including: canoes and their accessories; Coast Guard-approved personal floatation devices; waterproof bags for personal gear; waterproof boxes for cameras; tents and ground cloths; sleeping bags, pillows and thick foam self-inflating sleeping

pads. Transportation to and from the river from Great Falls and a farewell dinner. Prior to your trip, we'll send you a complete packing list of appropriate clothing and optional items such as cameras, water bottles, etc.

**SIGNING UP:** Call our office first. We're happy to tell you who else is on the trip. Then, complete our trip application form and send it along with your nonrefundable deposit.

**MEETING POINT / ENDING POINT:** We meet you the evening before the trip in Great Falls, Montana at the Holiday Inn (400 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. S). ROW will book your accommodations for you before and after the trip. If you drive, you can leave your car in their parking lot during the trip. If you fly, several airlines serve Great Falls including Northwest and Delta (flights arrive late morning, late afternoon and late night.) Regional carriers include Horizon and Big Sky. The hotel offers a free transfer service to and from the airport. At 7:30 PM Mtn Time we meet you for a one-hour orientation, to answer last minute questions and give you your waterproof bags to pack. This is an important meeting, so please be on time. The next morning, we meet at 7:30 AM to begin our adventure. At the end of the trip, we return you to the Holiday Inn between 4:30 - 6:00 PM where we encourage you to spend the night and enjoy our hosted, relaxed "farewell dinner" with other trip members and the ROW crew.

**LAST MINUTE PHONE NUMBERS:** If you need to reach ROW at the last minute, call our office at 800-451-6034 or 208-765-0841. If you need to get a message to the Holiday Inn in Great Falls, the number is 800-257-1998 or 406-727-7200.

**SUGGESTED READING:** A complete reading list will be sent upon receipt of your reservation.

**GRATUITIES:** Here are some helpful guidelines on tipping. Your guide is a paid professional. Tips are appropriate and accepted only if we exceeded your expectations. Whether you tip and how much you tip should depend on your satisfaction with the trip, your feelings about tipping, and your financial means. If you believe your guide deserves a tip, a suggested range is from 7-12% of your trip cost. If you had the time of your life, then the sky is the limit! We also appreciate your comments. We use your feedback to recognize extraordinary guest service and to discover areas where we can make improvements. Our goal is to exceed your expectations! (P.S. Let us know if you found these guidelines appropriate or helpful.) Tips can be given to the ROW "Team Leader," who will distribute it equally among the crew.

ROW Inc. is an Equal Opportunity recreation service provider under permit from the Bureau of Land Management, Judith Resource Area. Member of America Outdoors, Montana Outfitters & Guides Association, Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association, American Rivers and The Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation. Licensed and bonded. Established 1979.

***“For people of all ages interested in Lewis and Clark, River Odysseys West offers the ultimate experience: an excursion through the Missouri River’s Wild and Scenic White Cliffs area. It is a journey of stunning beauty that puts you in the explorers’ moccasins – but with the kinds of high-quality treatment that Lewis and Clark could only envy.”***

- Landon Jones, author of William Clark and the Shaping of the West.