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Professional River Trips Since 1979!

Lower Owyhee River

(Rome to Birch Cr or Leslie Gulch 55-67 miles)

4-Day Trip Itinerary

Meeting Time: 9AM (Pacific)

Meeting Place: BLM Launch Site in Rome, Oregon! This location Southeast of the HWY 95 bridge over the Owyhee River. Rome will offer little to no cell service, so plan your drive accordingly.

-You can simply type "Rome, Oregon" into your GPS or Google Maps

-Use the a map for Rome, Oregon

-GPS Waypoints: 42.84009, -117.62221

-Be SURE top off your fuel in your car (there is gas in Rome and in Jordan Valley if coming form the east).
If you are lost or late call our office: 800-972-0430

Driving times to Rome, Oregon

From Boise 2hrs, Bend 4.5hrs, Portland 6.5hrs, Jordan Valley 30 minutes.

Local Accommodations:

- Jordan Valley - Basque Motel (541) 586-2244 (very basic)
- Rome – Rome Café (541) 586-2295 modest cabins
- Burns – [Burns Best Inn](#) (541) 573-5295 (1hr 45 minutes from Rome)
- Crane Hot Springs: Campground and hot springs outside of Burns. 541.493.2312 (90 minutes from Rome and great).
- Boise and Ontario are both 2 hrs from Rome.

Camping: You can camp at the meeting site in Rome, Oregon. The small campground is a BLM campground.

Transportation:

Most guest drive to Rome and meet us there but you can also fly to Boise, ID. From Boise you can either Rent a car or call Owyhee River Shuttle service at 541.586.2352. If you charter a trip we will arrange for a Boise transport.

Fuel: You may notice a common theme in this trip packet and that is remoteness of this region. Fuel Planning is important. If you are coming from the East, Jordan Valley is 30 miles away and from the West, the Rome Café should be open.

Vehicle Security: Your car will stay situated at the launch site until it is shuttled to the takeout (usually on the final day). Your car will be shuttled to the take out location. This convenient service allows you to have your vehicle at the take out with your personal items waiting, saving you several hours of out of the way travel to return to the launch site. The additional fee is \$180/vehicle and is what the shuttle company

charges.

At the launch site there is a BLM ranger in residence at this location but is occasionally out.

We have never had an issue here but we recommend not leaving any valuables in your car. Leave the laptop at home and bring your wallets with you on the river.

Overview

A raft trip down the Owyhee River is like no other. Sometimes just getting to the river and back can be an adventurous task by itself! The hearty and adventurous individuals will find a trip down the Owyhee the most rewarding. The river is one of the only ways people can see this desolate and remote area. Often times only one other party is seen on the river!

Your journey will include running through some wonderful whitewater, but remember there are many other attributes which attract us to the Owyhee. Time will be spent exploring side-canyons to witness the scenic beauty along with the delicate but abundant desert wildlife. You may also choose to site by the river and become memorized by its beauty, nap, fish or soak in a hot spring.

The adventure starts by traveling through five miles of open countryside, then we begin to enter our first of a series of gorges and canyons. We will encounter rapids like Bull's Eye, Artillery, Whistling Bird, Montgomery, Squeeze, Bombshell, Rock Dam, Upset, Rock Trap and many more! We will travel by the Weeping Wall, Lambert Rocks (also known as Chalk Basin), Green Dragon Canyon, Pruitt's Castle, the infamous hot springs at Greeley Bar, petroglyphs, waterwheels, Montgomery Gorge, Bogus Creek Falls, Sentinel Canyon, Mahogany Mountains, Birch Creek Ranch, historic cabins & corrals and many other historical and geological points of interest!

The Morning of Your Trip

A lead guide will meet you at the BLM launch site/campground in Rome, Oregon at 9AM. You should have eaten breakfast before this time. A lead guide will give each guest a dry bag and provide some packing tips and instruction on how to seal the dry bag. These dry bags are approximately 16" in diameter by 33" tall.

Packing your dry bag. Many guest find that separating their and belongings into smaller bags (zip lock bags, small collapsible duffels, stuff sacks or even pillow cases) will help in packing and organization. Just like traveling on a plane, you should pack toiletries and any liquids into zip lock bags. Another great idea is to bring a few extra plastic bags to place wet and/or worn clothes into as well. You may not have access to your main dry bag during the day so its important to pack a layer, rain jacket and sunscreen into a small day bay that can be on the raft with you.

A trip orientation and general wilderness/environmental discussion will be made prior to launching. We begin our trip in the ranching community of Rome that looks far from an untouched area but that will soon change within a few miles.

A Typical Day

The water time may vary from day to day. We generally spend between four-five hours on the water each day (depending on water level, wind and overall group dynamics). The actual water time will vary with side hikes to historic sites, take a dip in hot spring, visiting old homesteads, or any other point of interest.

Day 1: The first five miles of the Lower Owyhee meander through some agricultural areas and homesteads. Each mile we travel downstream there will be small hints of some of the amazing features we will see downstream. Lunch will be served riverside and usually before entering the first series of canyons. After lunch we will run some very fun rapids such as Bullseye and Upset. We will arrive at camp with ample

time to enjoy a hike, fish or simply relax and enjoy the sounds of the river while your guides prepare a great dinner.

Day 2: You will travel through a mix of canyons and mini gorges and have the opportunity for an amazing hike at Pruitt’s Castle in the Chalk Basin. Many fun and playful rapids will encountered throughout the day as well. If we are lucky and river levels are just right we will have an opportunity to stop at the first of a handful of hot springs for a quick warm up.

Day 3: The third day is an absolute highlight of the trip, many fun rapids and some of the most dramatic gorges on the river (Iron Point, Montgomery and Sentinel Canyon) just to name a few. Many of these gorges rise from 1000-1500’ straight from the river.

Day 4: The final day of your astonishing journey will great you with an opportunity for another great hike, a possible hot springs dip and waking up to some amazing scenery. The leisurely float to the take out will offer some incredible views, soaring birds of prey and some final reflections on an amazing trip. We will try to be at Birch Creek (take-out) by **2-3:00pm** on the final day.

Weather and Climate

The Owyhee Region is in Oregon's high desert, with elevations ranging from 2600-3600', the weather can be extreme and change quickly. With a little rainfall and a mixture of warm and cool days are likely, temperature swings can vary as much as 40 degrees or more during the day. It is very important that you are prepared for any condition and bring both warm and cold weather clothes! It’s not uncommon to wear shorts in the day and a puffy jacket in the evening. Eastern Oregon Weather Motto: “If you don’t like the weather, wait ten minutes”

	April	May	June
Avg Temp Day	65°F	73°F	81°F
Avg Temp Night	40°F	43°F	46°F
Rainfall	1”	.75”	.5”

The Eastern Oregon Desert is truly unique, it is one of the driest regions in the state and usually will boast both of the state’s highest and lowest temps of the day. Translation: warm days and cold nights.

Proper Clothing for the Owyhee

With the possibility of big temperature swings on the Owyhee region it’s important to be adequately prepared. Veteran outdoorsman all dress in layers. You should include several layers of NON-Cotton tops and bottoms made from wool, polypropylene or fleece. These materials wick moisture from your body and maintain body heat. Clothing should vary in thickness and we advise having three layers.

We will have wetsuits, splash tops and fleece but extra garments will aid in your preparedness. Wool socks and some inexpensive neoprene gloves are extra insurance for warmth. We also recommend that you bring a windproof jacket for camp. Please don’t hesitate to call us if you have questions about clothing.

USE THE LAYERING SYSTEM

Loose, quick-drying, durable clothing is ideal for river trips. Bring clothes that can be worn under or on top of other clothes (i.e., can be layered).

B_a_s_e_L_a_y_e_r_— Long underwear (tops and bottoms) made of either wool or synthetic materials such as polyester wick moisture away from the skin and are quick to dry. Long underwear is an essential first layer for both the river and camp.

M_i_d_d_l_e_L_a_y_e_r – Fleece, which is also made of synthetic materials, or a heavyweight wool shirt or sweater both made an excellent middle layer in wet and/or cool weather. Both are great insulators and are quick to dry.

O_u_t_e_r_L_a_y_e_r – We recommend that guests bring a rain jacket and pants, even if there is absolutely no rain being forecasted. That’s because rain gear makes a great windbreaker and insulator in cooler weather and at night. Coated nylon or breathable fabrics (like Gore- Tex) are best. We will provide you with a splash jacket for on-river protection from wind and cold water.

WETSUITS

Wetsuits are recommended for spring and fall trips, and for people interested in spending time in inflatable kayaks. River Drifters provides guest with 2.3 mil “farmer John” style wetsuits, which can be combined with a splash jacket to provide full-body coverage. If you are a cold person, you can choose to wear synthetic or wool long underwear underneath your wetsuit.

COTTON

Cotton should NOT be worn on the river during wet or cooler weather because it’s slow to dry and will lower your body temperature. There is a wide range of affordable shirts and pants made of synthetic materials. We recommend you avoid cotton.

Trip Packing List

CLOTHING

- Hat (for sun protection)
- Sunglass (with strap)
- Water Bottle (very important to be and stay hydrated)
- T-Shirt & shorts
- Lip Balm with spf
- Hydro Silk/Under Armour & other brands that make clothing for water sports. These flexible fabrics keep you warm when wet and can prevent chafing from life vests as well. A nominal investment for comfort.
- Plastic bag(s) for wet clothing

Cooler Weather Suggestions

- Check the weather before your trip!
- Footwear, we provide booties but your feet will be wet. You can wear wool, poly or fleece socks underneath them for added warmth.
- Neoprene gloves (optional)
- Beanie
- Extra Polypropylene or fleece tops and bottoms, have a second for camp.

- Avoid cotton!

Important Items for Camp

- Tent & ground cloth
- Warm Sleeping Bag & pad – You can rent a sleeping kit from us for \$25 but must be arranged in advance.
- Rain Jacket
- Down Jacket (just in case)
- T-Shirts & Shorts
- Long Sleeve shirts (cotton ok here as long as you have a windproof shell)
- Two pairs of pants
- Sweatshirt or Fleece
- Plenty of warm socks
- Long Underwear
- Shoes or light hiking boots
- Small Towel and toiletries (pack those toiletries in a zip lock bag)
- Flashlight or better yet a Headlamp with fresh batteries
- Insect Repellent

Optional Things to Consider for Your Trip

- Camera (water proof digital are becoming very affordable and there are many sights you will not want to miss)!
- Extra batteries for Camera, headlamp ect
- Soda, beer, wine or your favorite spirits (no glass please)
- Small day pack for hikes
- Small travel pillow
- Personal amenities (cards, books journal, Frisbee ect)
- Dramamine if prone to motion sickness

River Drifters Provides the Following:

- River gear including wetsuits, booties, splash jackets, fleece top, life vests and helmets (for those in the inflatable kayaks).
- All meals from lunch on the first day to lunch on the last day
- Beverages include water, lemonade, juices, coffee, tea & hot chocolate. You are

- welcome to bring beverages of choice in non glass containers.
- All group camping gear including tarp/rain fly, fire pans, toilets, camp chairs & tables hand washing stations ect

Toilets & Sanitation

We are in a Wilderness like area where “leave no trace” ethics are crucial. From the campfire ash to the human waste, we must take it all out with us. We bring portable toilets. Your guides will go over the instructions for the toilets (for solids only) and how we establish a system for privacy and letting others know when the “Loo” is in use.

Hygiene is very important on a river trip. We will have multiple hand washing stations (one near the bathroom) so there are several places to wash hands.

Environmental Concerns

The Oregon High Desert can expose you to a wide variety of temperatures and weather conditions. Sun exposure is unavoidable and cool weather are both possible. Please stay tuned with the weather forecast before your trip and be prepared.

In addition to weather, the Owyhee region does have a few annoying insects and plants. Ticks, snakes and scorpions all reside here. Be sure to be thoughtful where you place your clothing and not just toss it on the ground.

The Owyhee Canyon does have poison oak so be mindful when walking through the riverside riparian area. The urushiol oil can be transferred from plant to clothing and beyond fairly easy, so just be aware of the plants you encounter. There are also some stinging nettles in certain areas, so again be careful.

Guest Responsibility

All guests are required to follow the safety procedures and policies. Whitewater rafting is an activity that requires moderate physical exertion and exposure to the elements. All participants must sign an Assumption of Risk Form.

Meals: We mix up the variety of healthy meals; we will always have snacks and water available. Please let us know (*ahead of time*) if there are any dietary needs that we need to know about, such as diabetics or vegetarians. Many of our meals can accommodate a gluten free diet, but not all. If you are gluten intolerant please bring some extra food that we can stow for you.

Adult Beverages: You will need to provide your own alcoholic beverages. Please, no glass containers. There are many great canned micro-brews. We will have a cooler to keep those beverages cold.

Guides: Our guides have a passion for the rivers we run and want you to thoroughly enjoy your trip with them. They are happy to assist if you are an inexperienced camper or have questions about the river. River Drifters guides are accomplished in outdoor skills, trained in first aid, CPR and river rescue. In addition, the guides are fun and interesting people that we think you will enjoy!

Gratuities: We are often asked if tipping is appropriate is appropriate. Tips are certainly appreciated by our guides. Tips normally range from 5%-10% of the trip cost. Whether and how much you tip should be depend on your satisfaction with your trip, your thoughts on tipping and your financial means. At the trips

end, guests usually give their tip to the lead guide, who will split it equally among the crew.

Suggested Reading:

1. The Owyhee Journals - Bonnie Olin (arguably the Owyhee's biggest advocate) 541.998.1291
2. Owyhee Canyonlands - Hiking guide by Steve Stuebner & Mark Lisk (2013) 208.484.0295
3. Owyhee & Bruneau River Boating Guide (google that search and print or download the pdf)

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