



North Santiam River

Trip Guide

1/2 and 1 Day Trips



Oregon River Experiences ^{LLC}

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The North Santiam River

Looking for a quick river vacation? In search of your first whitewater rafting experience? Only an hour's drive from Portland, the beautiful North Santiam River offers easy access to whitewater fun. This three to five hour float combines lively rapids with enchanting cascade mountain scenery. It's a beautiful, thrilling alternative to the more heavily used Deschutes River. The Santiam's rapids are of similar excitement and difficulty, but the river's charm is all its own.

The North Fork of the Santiam River provides one of western Oregon's loveliest yet least known whitewater raft trips. Flowing from its source high in the Cascades near Mount Jefferson, the North Santiam runs swift and cool through a deeply forested canyon.

The Pacific Northwest is home to the most diverse coniferous forests in the world. While houses are seen along the North Santiam, the forest still dominates the landscape. Animal species you may see on your trip include chipmunks and ground squirrels, deer, grouse, and occasionally mink and otter.

Also visible along the way are signs of Oregon's early history, including Mill City, which grew up around a lumber mill founded by John Shaw.

Much of the geology of the North Santiam River canyon is hidden beneath deep soils. But in places along the river the bedrock is in view -- revealing old volcanic rocks that predate the majestic volcanic peaks visible to the east along the Cascade crest.

Weather

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.
Average daytime high temp.	67	74	80	81	75
Average nighttime low temp.	44	49	51	51	48
Average monthly rainfall	2.90"	2.20"	0.80"	1.30"	2.20"

Itinerary

The excitement on the Santiam begins almost immediately, as we encounter a number of small but lively rapids as soon as we push away from our put-in at Packsaddle Park. We'll encounter the day's biggest rapids a few miles downstream (after our lunch stop on 1 day trips): Spencer's Hole and Carnivore are two of the day's highlights. And another mile or so downstream we'll run the day's biggest drop: Mill City Falls. Below Mill City (our 1/2 day trip take-out) the river's pace eases, but a number of enjoyable rapids remain to challenge us.

Pre-Trip Details

How to Sign Up

Call, write or e-mail us. We'll hold your reservation for 10 days while we await your deposit, which confirms your reservation (\$35 per person). (Full payment is required to confirm your reservation if less than six weeks remain prior to your river trip, and for all 1/2 day trips.)

Where and When to Meet

We meet at 9:30 AM * on the day of your trip at North Santiam State Park. (1/2 day trips meet at 9:30 AM* or 1 PM*.) We will make our shuttle arrangements there, before going to the launch site. Please have your breakfast before our meeting time.

From Interstate 5 just south of Salem, take exit #253 and follow highway 22 east (toward Detroit Lake). After about 25 miles take a sharp right onto Santiam Park Rd. (If you find yourself on the outskirts of Mill City you've gone about 4 miles too far). Follow Santiam Park Rd to where it ends at North Santiam State Park. Look for us in the main parking lot.

* - 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.

What to Bring

Please come to the river prepared for all possible weather conditions. The weather in the river canyons of the Northwest is often different from that in surrounding areas, so you won't really know how it will be until you get there. At that time, you may decide that some of the items listed here are not needed; but you need to have them along just in case! In addition, North Santiam River water is usually quite cool, even on a hot day. So please pay close attention to the following information and checklists, and help to insure your enjoyment of the day by bringing along the proper clothing.

Spring (and cool weather) trips: We recommend that guests on our April, May and early-June trips plan to wear a wetsuit while on the river. Wetsuits may be rented directly from O.R.E., and may also be available at windsurf or dive shops in your area.

O.R.E. rents wetsuit/splash jacket sets (\$5 per day) in sizes to accommodate persons from 4'8" and 85 pounds to 6'4" and 240 pounds. Also included are wetsuit shoes (men's sizes 5 to 12). Our wetsuits are a 1/8" thick, one-piece "farmer john" style which fully cover the legs and torso but which leave the arms free. The splash jacket helps to protect your arms and torso from the cold water, and may be worn with a sweater or jacket underneath if needed for extra warmth.

Reservations and advance payment are required for O.R.E. rental gear. To place a reservation for a wetsuit/splash jacket set please call our office, at 800-827-1358, at least 24 hours in advance.

Summer trips: Wetsuits are not required. But be sure to bring along warm clothing just in case the weather is cooler than expected.

Clothing tips: The best clothing is that which retains your body heat while wet, or one that dries quickly. Modern high-tech synthetic fabrics like Polypropylene, Capeline, and Polyester fleece do both, and are readily available at stores like REI and L.L. Bean. But if you don't want to spend a lot on a rafting wardrobe look for wool clothes, which provide some warmth even when wet. Thrift stores and military surplus stores are good places to find inexpensive wool clothes. On all but the hottest days you should avoid wearing cotton clothing while on the river. When wet, cotton sucks warmth from your body at an amazing rate. (An exception to the "no cotton" rule: cotton shorts may be worn over a wetsuit to reduce slippage while sitting on a raft.)

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 on-line by contacting REI (800-426-4840, or www.rei.com), L.L. Bean (800-341-4341, or www.llbean.com), or Northwest River Supply (800-635-5202, or www.nrsweb.com).



Equipment Checklist

For Spring (and Cool Weather) Trips

To wear in the raft:

- swimsuit, or shorts and a T-shirt
- sunglasses with strap
- wetsuit socks or thick wool socks worn with athletic shoes or sport sandals (such as Tevas or Chacos), or hard-soled wetsuit shoes (available for rent from O.R.E.)
- wetsuit and splash jacket (may be rented from O.R.E. or from windsurf and scuba shops), **or** a light weight rain jacket **plus** synthetic or wool (medium to heavy weight) long underwear tops and bottoms.

To bring on the river:

- wool or synthetic sweater or jacket
- wool or synthetic "ski" hat (for extra warmth as needed)
- wide brim hat or baseball cap (for sun protection)
- water bottle or canteen
- waterproof sunscreen

To leave in the car:

- a towel and complete change of clothes, including dry shoes, socks and a sweater or jacket.

For Summer Trips

To wear in the raft:

- swimsuit, or T-shirt and shorts
- sun glasses with strap
- wide brim hat or baseball cap (for sun protection)
- thick wool or synthetic socks, or neoprene wetsuit socks
- athletic shoes or sport sandals such as Tevas or Chacos

To bring on the river:

- water bottle or canteen
- waterproof sunscreen
- light weight long-sleeved shirt (to protect from sunburn)
- wool or synthetic sweater
- lightweight rain jacket or windbreaker

To leave in the car:

- a towel and a complete change of clothes, including dry shoes and a sweater.

* Please note the terms of our license - as well common sense - lead us to insist that you refrain from consuming alcohol during your river trip (even during lunch).

Additional Information

Your trip fare includes the following

- ✓ The services of our professional guide staff.
- ✓ Shuttle service to and from our meeting place.
- ✓ A hearty, freshly prepared picnic lunch at the riverside on 1 day trips. (Special dietary needs may be accommodated with advance notice.)
- ✓ Use of professional quality self-bailing rafts and top-notch river running equipment, including U.S. Coast Guard Approved lifejackets.
- ✓ Waterproof river bags for your personal gear.

Gratuities

Guests sometimes ask whether it is appropriate to tip their guide. Tipping is optional, but if your guide did a great job then feel free to thank him or her with a gratuity. The amount is up to you, but tips between 8% and 20% of trip cost are customary.

Nearby attractions

If you're coming from out of town a Santiam River trip can be included in a visit to nearby Portland. For Portland information contact the Portland Visitor's Bureau at 503-222-2223. A short drive upstream from our put-in at Packsaddle Park is Niagara Falls. (They're not much like the more famous Niagara, but they're still scenic!) Further upstream is Detroit Lake, a popular camping, boating and water-skiing location.



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