

Talkeetna River



Description

This is the premier wilderness whitewater river trip in Alaska. It's located within a beautiful seldom floated segment of the upper reaches of the river that starts deep in its' name-sake mountains. Activity on the upper river is light since access for kayakers and rafters is by bush plane only. The white-water segment is famous for its beautiful forested canyon and a 10 + mile class IV rapid with almost continuous uninterrupted whitewater. Because this whitewater segment is in a remote and wild area, NOVA always uses at least two rafts.

The fly-in and float-out format makes access to the Alaskan wilderness affordable. Flights are staged from the community of Talkeetna, home to several famous bush-plane services who not only fly climber drop-off and support but offer premier flightseeing of Mt. McKinley. The vistas seen on our flights are magnificent on clear days. This colorful community has been regarded as the classic model for the TV show "Northern Exposure". Besides the flightseeing, there's sufficient time before or after the trip to explore the establishments and talk to some of the famous and not so famous characters who live here. We recommend the Fairview Inn! The town is a popular staging area for salmon fishing since it is situated at the intersection of three major rivers, the Chulitna, Susitna and Talkeetna. NOVA is not a fishing guide service. However, clients are free to bring fishing equipment and try their luck. Alaska fishing licenses and rental equipment are available in Talkeetna.

Talkeetna can be accessed by driving from Anchorage approximately 100 miles up the Glenn and Parks Highways or by train from Anchorage, Denali Park and Fairbanks. We suggest that you rent a car and leave it at the Talkeetna Airport (free parking). Most of our clients have enjoyed the flexibility that a rental affords them to add the nearby Denali Park to their itinerary.

Meals are always fresh with emphasis on local produce and fish, and the guides have perfected their own gourmet river specialties. Limited wine for dinners is provided, and clients can bring additional alcoholic beverages.

The Talkeetna offers good salmon fishing. Typical runs include Kings from mid-June to mid-July, Reds during July and Silvers from late July to the end of August. Dolly Varden and Rainbows can also be fished from the clear side streams. Because of the salmon, bears are common along the river and are usually seen on the trip. Other wildlife commonly viewed from the rafts are caribou, moose, and bald eagles.



Itinerary

Day 1

We meet at 7:00 AM at Talkeetna Air Taxi at the Talkeetna Airport. Guides will assist you in packing your personal gear, and last minute items can be purchased while the one hour round trip flights are shuttling people and gear. Commonly our morning views of the Alaska Range dominated by Mt. McKinley, are impressive. The early start helps us miss the mid-day cloud buildup in the Talkeetna Mountains and gives us a great view of the river's journey from above. The planes are tail dragger Cessna 185's or DeHavland Beavers all common workhorses of Alaska's bush-pilots. They enable us to land directly on a gravel bar approximately 75 miles up river. By the time you disembark from the plane the rafts inflated, and lunch is waiting. Clients on our 4-day trip land further up river and will spend this day exploring the area. After lunch, we watch for moose, bears, caribou and eagles as we float to Prairie Creek. Fishing here can be good, but an eye for bears must be kept open. Proper bear etiquette will be taught by your guides. This evening, we will camp just down river from Cache Creek. The guides will start dinner and a campfire while you setup your tents and then settle into the sights and sounds of the river and the surrounding landscape. It's a perfect time to kick back by the fire with appetisers, refreshments and conversation.



Day 2

After breakfast, we'll get ready for the whitewater by wearing dry suits and neoprene booties and float a few miles to the entrance of the Talkeetna Canyon. We'll land on shore and take a short hike to a scenic overlook to scout the first rapids, 'Entrance Exam' and the dog-leg of the 'Toilet Bowl'. This is an exciting start to our day of whitewater! Several miles downriver the pace picks up again as we enter the 'Sluice Box' and ride its 10 miles of uninterrupted class IV fun! The adrenaline brings on a healthy appetite, and a lunch stop is usually made in the canyon. The rapid and canyon end at a dramatic natural rock canyon gate that opens up to the huge expanse of the valley outside the mountains. We have several more miles of floating before we reach our camp near Disappointment Creek. Gold mining was popular on many of these creeks, and we suspect this one was aptly named for its poor yield. Hiking can be done here with a guide, fishing is also good, and yes, we do carry a goldpan...just in case you're feeling lucky.



Day 3

Today we'll dress for comfort and put on rain pants, rubber boots and keep the rain jacket nearby in case of wet weather. The final segment of our trip is a mello float with numerous river braids. There's good wildlife viewing in this area of numerous salmon spawning side streams. Our destination is Clear Creek. Although we are not alone at this popular fishing spot, the fishing is generally excellent. We'll depart after lunch, and hopefully enjoy views of Mt. McKinley as we reach our takeout in Talkeetna around 5:00 PM. Earlier takeouts can be made to fit your schedule.



What you need

- Tennis shoes or light hiking boots
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1 pair of wool or synthetic (polyester fleece) sweat pants.
- 3 pairs of wool or synthetic socks
- 1 pair shorts
- 1 T-shirt
- 1 long sleeve shirt
- Wool or synthetic (polyester material) top & bottom long underwear. Medium to heavy weight.
- Wool or synthetic (polyester fleece) sweater, coat or pull over.
- Recommend wool or synthetic cap (recommend ski cap).
- Sunglasses
- Camera
- Binoculars
- 1 Towel & washcloth
- Personal hygiene items
- Rain coat with hood or equivalent waterproof wind breaker and water proof pants.
- Tent, sleeping bag, ground pad - (if you wish to use your own)

*** Please notify us of your height, weight and shoe size so we may provide properly sized neoprene boots and dry-suits.**

What we provide

- Dry bags for personal gear.
- Type 5 life jackets.
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 3 or 4. Inform us of special dietary needs.
- Dry suits with latex socks.
- Neoprene river shoes and rubber boots for non whitewater days.
- Dry storage for cameras and related equipment.
- Tents, sleeping bags and ground pads - (unless you prefer to use your own)
- Aviation radio, satellite phone and medical kits.
- Transportation to and from Anchorage for an additional fee. Please call.
- Arrangement for accommodations before and/or after the trip. Please call

Talkeetna Accommodations

Denali View B&B - 907-733-2778

Latitude 62 Lodge - 907-733-2262

Talkeetna Motel - 907-733-2323

Talkeetna Roadhouse - 907-733-1351

Fairview Inn - 907-733-2423

Talkeetna Lodge - 877-258-6877



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

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