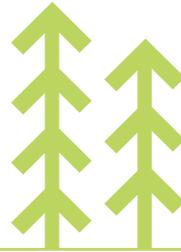




# BOREAL RIVER ADVENTURES



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## COSTA RICA PACKRAFTING

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*Experience a jungle expedition*



## WHY BOREAL RIVER ADVENTURES?

### 3 REASONS TO JOIN BOREAL RIVER ADVENTURES

#### Experience enlightened travel

On every trip, you'll expand your horizons—gaining skills or connecting on a deeper level with local culture and ecology.

#### Easy planning—with every detail dialled

You get a world class river expedition—with all the prep made easy for you.

#### Our business is safety

Your guides aren't just qualified, they're wilderness and white water safety and rescue instructors.

## TRIP DETAILS AT A GLANCE

<b>Meeting location:</b>	San Jose, Costa Rica
<b>Duration:</b>	9 days, 8 nights
<b>Max. group size</b>	8 participants
<b>Activities:</b>	Whitewater packrafting, hiking, learning expedition skills
<b>Activity level:</b>	<b>Remoteness:</b> Backcountry
	<b>Physical activity:</b> Highly active
	<b>Whitewater:</b> Class III (some optional IV's)

See departure dates and details at [adventures.borealriver.com](https://adventures.borealriver.com)

*"Best trip ever, hands down"*



ADENA FRANZ, MAGPIE RIVER ADVENTURE

### TO RESERVE YOUR TRIP

Book **online** or call 866-242-9383  
or 613-503-4717



# IN THIS INFO PACKAGE:

Why Boreal River Adventures?	2
Trip details at a glance	2
Trip description and highlights	4
What's included in the trip	5
Itinerary	6
Getting to Costa Rica	11
What to pack	12
Activity level, conditioning tips and resources	14
Planning checklist	15



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*“Thanks again for such a great trip!  
My three favourite things were:  
A) The food: exceptional, delicious  
and always a surprise — five stars  
B) Being outside in the fresh air  
C) The memories — definitely worth  
spending time with my family.”*

ADAM MARIEN, MAGPIE RIVER ADVENTURE

# TRIP DESCRIPTION

*Are you looking for a travel experience packed with challenge and adventure? On this trip you'll explore true Costa Rican backcountry: the famous Pacuare River (including rarely paddled upper sections) and it's spectacular valley.*

This packrafting trip includes all the specialized gear you need, and you don't have to figure out any planning logistics. Just get your ticket to San Jose, Costa Rica! Keep reading to discover how you'll:

- Enjoy an incredible adventure: learn how to paddle awesome whitewater and trek through the jungle
- Experience 3 nights expedition camping in hammocks, 2 nights at 'El Nido del Tigre' Eco Camp, 1 night at the Turrialba Volcano camp, and 2 hotel nights in San Jose
- Learn about the tropical rainforest and local culture, from our expert river guides and local Indigenous people
- Be led on the river by incredible guides: experienced, knowledgeable, and welcoming!
- Recharge in the evening: eat great food, lean back in your hammock, relax, and take it all in

# TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

*Why choose Costa Rica for your packrafting adventure?*

## **Connect with the land and people**

Learn about life in the rainforest from a Cabecar guide—one of our leaders throughout the trip.

## **Learn skills on a real tropical river expedition**

Challenge yourself and succeed—whitewater paddling, jungle trekking, and lightweight expedition camping. Packraft the famous Rio Pacuare.

## **An incredible adventure—made easy for you**

We put together all the pieces. Experience the challenge, success, and fun of international adventure travel—with easy planning on your part.

## **Expert guides for every part of the trip**

With your local hosts in Costa Rica and your professional river guides, we've put together an **expert team** for your Rio Pacuare whitewater adventure.

# WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE TRIP

## BOREAL RIVER PROVIDES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR TRIP:

- Your professional guides are always available
- We offer a maximum 3:1 guest to guide ratio.
- All ground transportation and flights from San Jose onwards: get picked up (day 1) and dropped off (day 9) at the airport by your guides
- 2 nights (first and last) at a 4-star hotel in San Jose, double occupancy. If you are travelling alone, we'll pair you with another traveler of the same gender. If you would prefer your own room, the single supplement is \$260.
- 2 nights (night 5 and 6) at Nido Del Tigre Eco Camp - you get your own platform tent including mattress and bedding. We stop at this amazing rainforest camp along our river expedition and stay for a layover day.
- 4 nights guided camping (3 riverside on the Pacuare and 1 at the Turrialba Volcano Base Camp)
- All group camping gear (kitchen, tarps, water filters, etc.), safety equipment, (first aid kits, sat phone, inReach device) and repair kits
- All amazing meals and snacks are included from day-2 breakfast through day-9 breakfast
  - Breakfasts day 2 and 9: full spreads at 4-star hotel
  - Dinner day 8: great restaurant in San Jose for our farewell dinner
  - All expedition meals and snacks throughout the trip: you'll eat well!

- At the three camps operated by our Costa Rican partners, Coast to Coast Adventures—Turrialba Volcano Base Camp, El Nido Del Tigre Eco-Camp, and Finca Pacuarito (lunch at end of river trip on day 8)—you'll eat delicious and fresh Costa Rican food prepared by camp staff and your guides.
- On days when we're doing self-supported packrafting, you take part in the cooking and we'll show you how to pack and plan for expedition meals.
- Alcohol: We pack some beer and wine (enough for 2 drinks per person per dinner) for the 2 nights at the Nido del Tigre Eco Camp and the 1 night at the Turrialba Volcano Base Camp. Other than that, if you'd like something special or extra, we'll stop at a super market on our way out of San Jose where you can buy beverages.
- We'll ask you to let us know about your food preferences and needs on your pre-trip questionnaire.

## THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED:

- Travel between your home and San Jose, Costa Rica
- Personal clothing and some camping gear; see below for what you need to bring
- Day 1 dinner in town: sample the local fare—you'll have options from fine dining to fast food within walking distance of the hotel
- Travel Medical insurance and Trip Cancellation insurance
- Any costs associated with your emergency evacuation from the trip
- Optional: Guide gratuities – we recommend \$12 to \$24 USD per day that can be split amongst the guide team.

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# ITINERARY

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## DAY 1

### ARRIVAL IN SAN JOSE



Welcome to Costa Rica! Schedule your flights for anytime this day. Your guides meet you at the airport and we drive you to the hotel. Let us know if you'd like to be picked up elsewhere in the San Jose area (if you are travelling on your own before the trip). Dinner is on your own... we'll give you recommendations.

## DAY 2

### WHITewater SKILLS ON THE RIO PEJIBAYE



Meet the group and guides after breakfast (a huge and delicious spread at the hotel). We'll do introductions and go over the plan.

It's a 2-hour drive to the river. We go through the town of Cartago, which has a lot of history and a historic cathedral. We travel on the flank of the Irazu Volcano. As we come out of the Central Valley towards the Caribbean, the scenery is awesome with mountains in the distance and lush vegetation. We'll drive right by coffee 'fincas' and sugar cane plantations.

Once we're at the Pejibaye River, we'll get into whitewater training. We start with a thorough safety briefing and paddling instruction.

Whether you're experienced and want to learn new skills or you're a beginner looking for the basics, the guides will give you great care, comfort and clear instructions. You'll learn new

skills including how to: paddle your packraft in rapids, read water, swim safely in rapids, walk and cross channels safely in shallow water, surf waves, catch throw ropes, and more!

Lunch is a riverside picnic. Enjoy fresh tropical fruit like watermelon and pineapple, fresh veggies, a delicious lunch spread—all high quality and plentiful. After lunch we'll start higher upstream and paddle the Taos section—a really fun class II-III run.

We'll then drive 45 minutes to Coast to Coast base camp for expedition preparation. Your guides will help you: load your backpack, pack food and equipment (we'll have it all laid out so it's easy), test out our water filters and backpacking stoves, set-up your Hennessey Hammock or tent. We'll have dinner and camp here for the night.

## DAY 3

### TREK THE TALAMANCA MOUNTAINS, PADDLE THE RIO PACUARE



You'll have an early start with another big and delicious breakfast spread—and of course, local coffee. We'll be driven into the mountains past the villages of 'La Suiza' and 'Canada', onto dirt roads and to 'the end of the road'. It feels awesome to put on our packs and hike away from the van. We'll spend the morning hiking on trails, mostly downhill, into the river valley.

You get to start your trip on a section of the Pacuare with no road access (here or anywhere upstream). Hiking is the only way here and

we call this section of the river ‘The Pacuare Headwaters’.

We’ll pump up our boats and start floating downstream. We’re going to work as a team to scout and paddle rapids. You’ll carry your pack in your boat. You’ll always have guides ahead of you and behind you. At this point we are truly expedition-river-running!

By mid-afternoon, we’ll pull over at a good spot to set up our first camp. We’ll all work together to set up hammocks/tents and tarps. We collect firewood and set up a kitchen area.

Here’s one important thing to know about camping and river running in the tropics: the sun sets at around 5:30pm and rises at 5:30am all year long, with little fluctuation. Also, unlike what you might be used to back home in temperate zones, there’s almost no ‘dusk’ and ‘dawn’—it goes from light to dark quickly. Because of this, the most important risk management decision we can make is to get up early and get off the river early.

## DAY 4

### PADDLE THE RAPIDS OF TOP PACUARE AND UPPER-UPPER PACUARE



You’ll wake up in the jungle on the side of the river. We’ll eat and pack up camp as the mist lifts through the trees. This is an awesome day on the river: the rapids are non-stop. Today we paddle the class II-III ‘Top Pacuare’ and class III+ ‘Upper-Upper Pacuare’. You’ll be able to paddle most of the rapids. There might be 2 or 3 that we’ll scout and maybe portage. We’ll run 12+ miles of river. We stop for breaks and lunch on beaches and rock shoals.

As we head downstream, other creeks come in and the river gets bigger. Everywhere you look is just lush, tropical nature. Your guides will point out and explain the things you’re seeing. Check out leaf-cutter ants who ‘farm’ fungus, or sloths who sleep for 21 hours a day in tall skinny Cecropia trees.

The Cabecar people live here. They live in small family settlements throughout the Talamanca mountains. The right side of the river—the south side—has no road access and is one of the biggest wilderness areas in Central America. This backcountry stretches all the way into Panama. It is really beautiful—but it’s a tough place to live. The terrain is full of steep ridges and lots of rivers. There are no roads so the Cabecar walk everywhere on trails. Some live a 5-day walk from where we’ll be paddling. Our Cabecar guide, Ariel, will be able to tell you about life in this area—how his people fish, hunt, and subsistence farm. After an awesome day on the river we’ll camp near the end of the ‘Upper Upper’.

## DAY 5

### JUNGLE TREK AROUND THE UPPER PACUARE



Today we’ll arrive at the Upper Pacuare. This is a 9-mile class V section that’s sometimes paddled by expert kayakers. It’s too steep for us and would be dangerous to paddle. We roll up the packrafts and hike on trails through the jungle. We’ll spend the whole morning trekking.

We’re now on the famous Lower Pacuare. Back in our boats—the river here has a bit of a bigger feel—we’ll paddle about 5 miles of Class III and III+ rapids on our way to our new home. We arrive at El Nido Del Tigre Eco Camp. Staying

here is sure to be one of the highlights of your trip. We'll give you a tour of the camp, one of our favourite places in the world.

## DAY 6

### RELAX AT EL NIDO

We'll be staying at the El Nido camp again this night so you won't need to pack up! You can have a relaxing morning with your coffee and book in a hammock, or watch birds and the jungle come to life. You can choose from several activities for the day including: hike in the rainforest, walk up a side creek for a swim below a waterfall, go for a run, relax at camp, or any combination!

## DAY 7

### PADDLE THE HUACAS CANYON

This is our biggest whitewater day—and we'll be ready for it. The class III-IV 'Lower Pacuare' is considered one of the top whitewater rafting sections in the world and the #1 in Central America—and you get to paddle it in your own packraft. As we float downstream leaving the camp, we'll again have a support raft to carry our backpacks and food.

After a few hundred meters of warm up in easy rapids we get to the class III-IV 'Huacas Canyon'.



This place is truly spectacular: everywhere you look you'll see steep walls of primary rainforest, tall waterfalls tumbling into the river, and rapid after rapid of great whitewater. We'll take our time and pick our way through running rapids like 'Upper Huacas', 'Lower Huacas', 'Doble Piso' (double drop), 'Pin Ball' and 'Guatemala'.

At this point in the trip you'll be comfortable reading water. With your guides you'll scout the bigger rapids and decide for yourself which route to take or if you want to walk around. All the rapids can be walked and we'll work together to make great decisions, set up safety, and keep things fun.

As we emerge from the canyon, the valley opens up. There are big beaches to pull over and enjoy breaks and lunch. There are some long, fun sections of class II that separate our final big rapids for the day: 'Cimarrones' and 'Los Indios'.

Here we'll pull over and walk about 20 minutes up the hill to visit with the family of our guide, Ariel. This is where Ariel grew up and where he still lives when he's not guiding. After the visit, we'll head back to the riverside for our last night of camping under the stars.

## DAY 8

### PADDLE DOS MONTANAS AND RETURN TO SAN JOSE



On day 8 we break down camp, pack up, and get ready for a final morning of enjoying the river. We'll run rapids including a few technical ones. The highlight of the day is Dos Montanas: a big rapid followed by a spectacular slot canyon. The current pushes gently through the canyon so it is a great place to jump out of your boat, float along, and enjoy the view.

After a few more turns, we'll round a corner and see a railroad bridge, followed by a busy highway bridge. Passing under the bridges, you'll notice the geography also changing quite a bit. The terrain flattens out and the river valley widens as the Pacuare enters the Caribbean lowlands.

We'll float and paddle and enjoy our final rapids. We'll see other bird life that we may not have seen yet such as herons and snowy egrets that live closer to the coast. We'll paddle up to our take-out—another eco camp called Finca Pacuarito— where we'll meet our driver and support vehicles.

Finca Pacuarito has showers and change rooms where we can clean up a bit before the drive. We'll have another awesome Costa Rican lunch made by the local family who runs the camp, before loading up for the 2.5 hour drive back to San Jose.

This is yet another spectacular drive, first along the highway with great views of the Turrialba Volcano in the background and pineapple plantations in the foreground. Then we cut through Braulio Carillo National Park, up into a cloud-forest-covered mountain pass back into the Central Valley.

You'll check back into the hotel in the late afternoon, with time for a hot shower and to look for souvenirs in town. Then we'll meet up for our farewell dinner at a great restaurant

## DAY 9

### BREAKFAST AND GOODBYES



You'll have breakfast at the hotel. Then, we'll drop you off at the airport for your flight home... or continue your travels!

# GETTING TO COSTA RICA

Our trip starts and ends in San Jose, Costa Rica. The airport code for San Jose is SJO. There are many international flights throughout the year.

Your Boreal River guides will pick you up and drop you off at the airport. If you are arriving on an earlier day, we'll meet you at our hotel on Day 1.

Contact us if you'd like some advice or have any questions at all as you book your travel. And be sure to let us know if you'd like recommendations for other travel plans.

# INSURANCE

Guests on Boreal River trips need to have appropriate Medical insurance. Any evacuation costs will be billed to the person that is leaving the trip. Insurance should cover emergency air evacuation from the river to a local hospital, medical treatment within Costa Rica, and repatriation.

We also strongly recommend obtaining Trip Cancellation insurance, which will reimburse you for the unused portion of your Boreal River trip if you must cancel prior to departure or leave your trip early. If you have insurance coverage from a credit card or an existing plan, please make sure that it will cover you for the above mentioned emergency situations and that you are covered while participating in whitewater activities and remote wilderness travel.

For an insurance package that will cover you for the specific situations encountered on our trips, we recommended something similar to what **World Nomads** offers.



# WHAT TO PACK

See the **online packing list** for links with suggested items. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email. We're here to help.

Some of the group items can be packed separately to meet us at the Lower Pacuare on day 5. You'll also be able to leave items like your personal travel clothes in secure storage during the expedition.

The Pacuare River is in the tropical rainforest on the Caribbean side of the continental divide. Being so close to the equator, temperatures don't fluctuate too much throughout the year. The average daily high is 28°C/82.4°F and the average nightly low is 19°C/66.2°F.

Synthetic materials such as polyester, polypro, and nylon are great as they dry quickly. Merino wool is a natural fiber that dries quickly and works well too. Avoid cotton and down—once they get wet they won't ever dry on this trip.

Bring two sets of clothes and footwear: one for on the water and hiking, the other for evenings at camp.

## EQUIPMENT THAT WE WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU

If you have any of these items and prefer to bring your own, you can do that. Just let us know and we will make sure it is right for this trip. Remember everything for this remote adventure needs to be expedition-worthy and lightweight.

- Expedition packraft and break-down paddle
- Whitewater helmet and flotation device
- Wind and waterproof paddling jacket
- 50L Drybag for you to line your backpack
- Hennessy Hammock, or lightweight expedition tent with inflatable camping mattress—you decide!
- All group camping equipment such as cooking and eating utensils, dishes, group shelters, etc.
- All group safety equipment including first aid kits, satellite phone, and InReach device

## GENERAL PACKING LIST

- Clothes for the trip home and a warm sweater / hoodie for evenings in San Jose (we'll store these securely while you're on expedition)
- Passport and travel documents
- Medical insurance cards or policies



## FOR HIKING AND PADDLING

- Sunscreen and lip protection
- Water bottle, 1 litre
- Sunglasses with strap
- Prescription glasses with strap or contacts (bring an extra pair of glasses & a copy of your eyeglass prescription)
- A suspension backpack like this one.** We recommend 100L or even more, so you can fit all your camping gear, food, and packrafting gear. Rent from us for \$115.
- Several small stuff sacs, mesh bags, or lightweight drybags to organize your gear inside your backpack
- Small (10L or less) drybag to have accessible in your packraft—so you can have quick access to items while paddling (like snacks, which we'll provide). **Something like this** or **this** or if you want to get fancy and have something totally dry, most of our guides have **something like this**
- Nice to have: **3 or 4 locking carabiners like these** to clip things into your packraft or onto your backpack—carabiners with locking gates are much safer for using in and around whitewater
- Optional: insulated drink bottle **like this one** for keeping your coffee or tea with you on the river or trail. Must have 100% leakproof screw-on lid if you want this to work for you on the river

## FOR CAMP

- An inflatable sleeping mattress\* – **high quality and lightweight like this.** Rent for \$35.

\*You'll need a sleeping mattress if you opt for a tent. If you opt for one of our Hennessey Hammocks, you don't need a mattress.

- Expedition (lightweight) sleeping bag. Rent from us for \$85 or make sure yours:
  - is rated to 10 to 15°C (50 – 60°F)
  - weighs under 900g (2 lbs) and is highly compressible
  - is filled with synthetic material, not down.

Here's an example of an **appropriate sleeping bag for this trip.**

- 1 pair of shoes (old running shoes or closed toe clogs—something to keep your feet safe and dry)
- 2 pairs of sports socks (Merino wool or synthetic)
- Undergarments (Merino wool or synthetic)
- Lightweight t-shirt (Merino wool or synthetic)
- Lightweight quick-drying long-sleeve shirt
- Lightweight 'quick dry' long pants
- Rain jacket
- Sun hat
- Small quick-dry pack towel
- Headlamp with extra batteries
- Toiletry kit with biodegradable soap and shampoo as well as personal medications – pack everything into small spill-proof containers
- Large ziploc bags
- Optional: reading material, journal, binoculars
- Optional: camera (waterproof or with waterproof case)
- Optional: sandals or flip flops (these need to be in addition to closed shoes)
- Optional: sarong

## FOR THE RIVER

1 pair of closed-toe shoes for the river. The ideal river shoe is lightweight and draining yet supportive enough for walking on portages, hiking on trails in the jungle, and scouting rapids, with a grippy sole. These can be lightweight running shoes or trail running shoes. There are some special models out there made for water use that drain well and dry quickly, just make sure they have a supportive and grippy sole.

**Should you bring hiking boots?** We'll be hiking with heavy packs so some people prefer to bring hiking boots. Hiking boots are too heavy and clunky to wear in the river, so you'll have to find a way to fit them in your backpack while paddling and switch to your river shoes. Most of the guides for this trip find that hiking in the jungle (on trails) with their closed-toe river shoes, rather than boots, works really well—but they are used to it.

Before the trip, you should try out hiking with a heavy pack with shoes and see how you feel about it. If you decide not to bring hiking boots, please train to strengthen your ankles—and get used to walking technical terrain in shoes.

- 2 pairs of thermal socks for the river (medium or lightweight, not too thick): wool, fleece, or synthetic
- Synthetic undergarments / swimwear / sports bra
- Bathing suit / surf shorts
- Lightweight synthetic t-shirt
- Top and bottom medium-weight synthetic or wool long underwear
- Long-sleeved neoprene 'surf' top or long-sleeved medium-weight fleece top



# ACTIVITY LEVEL

**Remoteness:** Backcountry

**Physical activity:** Highly active

**Whitewater:** Class III (some optional IV's)

You don't need any whitewater experience or river expedition experience, but you need to be in good enough physical condition to enjoy the trip.

Hiking with all of your gear requires endurance, strength, and energy. Because of that, if you're joining this adventure, you should be fit enough to jog 6.5 km/4 miles and comfortable hiking with a full backpack for a full day. If you're used to backcountry paddling, hiking in parks and comfortable carrying heavy loads, you'll be fine.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about fitness requirements.

# CONDITIONING TIPS

If you're an outdoor enthusiast who regularly spends long days on the water or trails you should be fine, but it won't hurt to do more. And your enjoyment will only improve the more fit you are. To get in shape for the trip we suggest:

- Do some cardio work, such as a jogging or cycling for at least an hour, 3 or more times a week
- Lift weights 2 or 3 times a week. Alternatively, cross train with activities such as swimming, hiking, climbing or paddling 2 or 3 times a week

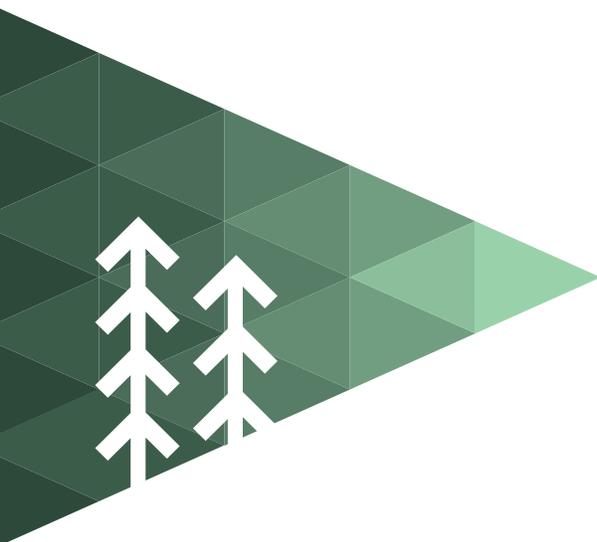
If you'd like a more details program you can ask us, or even join a gym and tell the trainer what you're conditioning for.

# RESOURCES

Please visit our website for additional resources as you prepare for your trip.

You'll find additional information on:

- **our safety and camping systems**
- **your guides**
- and more!



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# PLANNING CHECKLIST

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## 90 DAYS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE

- Reserve** your adventure.
- Plan your travel to and from Costa Rica
- Decide on your travel dates and if you'll be adding other travel in Costa Rica before or after your trip with us. Contact us any time for advice on Costa Rica trip extensions. We can also connect you with a great agent who can book your transport, accommodations, and activities.
- Check your passport expiry date (if you'll be travelling from abroad)
- Purchase medical and trip cancellation insurance\*
- Complete your **pre-trip questionnaire** with menu choices, medical, emergency contact info, flight info, and anything else you'd like us to know.
- Sign your **waiver**
- Decide on your travel dates and if you'll be adding other travel in South America before or after your trip with us. **Contact us** anytime for advice on Costa Rica trip extensions.

*\*Before purchasing non-refundable flights and other travel arrangements, please make sure that our office has let you know that the trip is 'confirmed'—meaning that we have the minimum number of participants to run the trip.*

## 6 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE

- Review your **packing list**, let us know if you have any questions.
- Make sure you have the gear you need and get missing items—let us know if you have any questions.
- Visit your family doctor or a travel clinic for up-to-date recommendations on health and immunizations

## 10 DAYS AND LESS BEFORE DEPARTURE

- Get packing!
- Give family, work, or friends our toll-free number 1-866-242-9383 and email **info@borealriver.com** in case they need to reach you during the expedition — our guides will check messages by satellite each day.

## TRAVEL DAY

- Let us know** if you run into any delays
- Meet your Boreal River Adventure guide at the airport. They'll be waiting for you wearing a Boreal River shirt and hat
- You made it—enjoy your adventure!

**Contact us** anytime if you have any questions at all.

