

## WHAT TO EXPECT ON A VOYAGERS CANOE TRIP

First and foremost, WE believe each canoe trip is about adventure, but one with a sense of awareness to what will be expected in a man's life. The road isn't easy, and challenges face our young men daily... they will require grit, bravado, and intelligence in order to live a successful life. Our intent is to influence and support the correct choices in life's daily challenges, through the practical skills found in the great out of doors.

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We Camp – as it was done 100 years ago. No phones, no electronics.

The Voyagers Canoe Trips are for three days. We select rivers with a wild and scenic character within our state. The rivers selected will be based on their remote surroundings and their ability for us to camp on the riverbank. Each trip begins early Friday, with the primary float into camp. This approach provides the disconnect from the day-to-day hustle and bustle and allows the young men to ease into three days of rough and tumble adventure in the big woods, away from all the noise and distractions.

Arriving at camp, the young men all play a role in landing their canoe, unloading its contents, and carrying them into camp. Camp is set up with sleeping quarters and cooking/eating quarters separated. Each canoe team is given orders to perform certain tasks that get the camp started and functioning. They include foraging for firewood, kindling, kitchen setup, sleeping area set up, water duty, and of course the campfire.

Each canoe team works together similar to the buddy system.

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Sleeping consists of rolling out yards of waxed canvas on the ground, and the sleeping bags laid out on top. The waxed canvas is then pulled back over the sleeping bags – providing protection from dew or frost. The canvas works to add an extra layer of warmth and has been used for centuries as a practical method.



The canoes are tipped on their side so as to provide protection to the person(s) sleeping under them, covering the head and shoulders. This method works well to ensure ol' Jack Frost doesn't bite your nose while sleeping but allows for a wonderful view of the stars. This is true 1915-style camping!



Do not worry about whether you'll stay warm on those nights that get downright cool. You'll sleep soundly under the stars – warm as toast. The young men typically arise in the morning amazed they stayed so warm, that is however if they understand the basics. It is good fun to sleep out in the big woods, as they did centuries ago on the many Voyager trips into the unknown wilderness of North America.

Now, for those doubters out there still worried about the cold. Yes, we pack a few extra wool blankets - just in case and check on the youths during the night. No one has frozen any fingers & toes.

Cooking out-of-doors is another item we enjoy sharing with the group! The foods we pack are those that would have been available 100 years ago. The meat, canned goods, and fruits all are chosen based on their historical accuracy to what would have been available in 1915-1930. We even add Idaho chocolate bars (1900) or Moon Pies (1917), which are handed out during the evening campfires after dinner. Each year we get better at preparing and packing the food, in a way that simulates a bygone era. There are no plastics or hotdogs with the Voyagers! Why we do this is really due to the fact it makes the trip different, unique, and perhaps it even makes it tastier too! Most everyone agrees.

All of the meals are prepared on either the open fire or our camp grill. We have a 1923 Kampkook stove we use however, converted it to LP for convenience. On occasion, we use a 1930s Coleman stove as a backup. Sure, the older gear is heavier, more work, and outdated, but again, we believe it enhances the trips a great deal, and it is fun to ponderate just how many trips into the bush they've been a part of.

Breakfast begins with black coffee, made in percolators (of course) and boy oh boy, is it popular! There is nothing like a cup of hot coffee in the wee hours of the morning. Then comes the griddle favorites. We get the old cast iron griddle heated up for plenty of pancakes and fried mush – Mmmmmm-boy! There is bacon, sausage, and real maple syrup. The fruit includes peaches, pears, and strawberries too! This is by far the meal we all look forward to. And of course, we'll need those carbs for all the daily activities ahead.

Lunch is meat sticks, cheese, and Club Crackers. This is typically two types of meat and cheese, and all enjoy a good lunch to get them through till supper time. Supper too is a great meal. We have Porterhouse steaks or pork chops, brisket, and maybe a heater meal, along with beans, vegetables, and fruit. The grill is placed over the fire and the meat is cooked to preference – the leftovers do not exist. Of course, there are always some added snack items such as walnuts, pecans, cranberries, raisins, apricots, and other similar fare.

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Activities or exercises are held throughout the day on Saturdays. They include rope bridges, team building exercises, compass/orienteering, mock rescues, hikes, and always some competition among the young men. This may include canoe races, pillow boxing, or a game of capture the flag. The day is packed with great adventure, education, and plenty of encouragement for each member of the group.

Voyagers are focused on team building, which means we (guides) do not compete with the attendees. Equally, we encourage the entire team to build one another up, with positive discussions or comments versus negative tones. There is no room for know it alls.



By the time the evening rolls around, everyone is ready to slow it down and sit around the fire. This is a time of discussion, stories, and also a time for devotion. The lessons and stories highlight men throughout history and their lives. Each member of the group is engaged during this time period, which allows everyone to share how each story made them feel or think. We also encourage all to share about themselves also.



Saturday is action-packed, and there is something for all. The groups work together and stay together through all activities.

The young men do get some time each day to roam about the campsite. There is always something to occupy their interests in the woods & and fly fishing seems to be a favorite.

By the time 10-o-clock rolls around, the gang is usually out of steam and the last of us sit quietly around the fire, talking in low voices – the sounds of the night camp all about us. It is sometimes tough to call it a night, but even the most resilient man in camp admits he is beaten before long.

Each man turns in, and another day passes into history.

Camp is kept neat and orderly. Each of the items taken with us is stored in wooden crates, which are numbered. There are camp tools, camp Kitchen, Camp kitchen tools, dry food, cold food, and canoe packs which contain ropes, gear, and support gear.

Each young man is encouraged to put all things back where he found them. Those with no experience are taught to use axes, knives, and cookware. This occurs over the course of the trip, and we are getting better at sharing the knowledge.

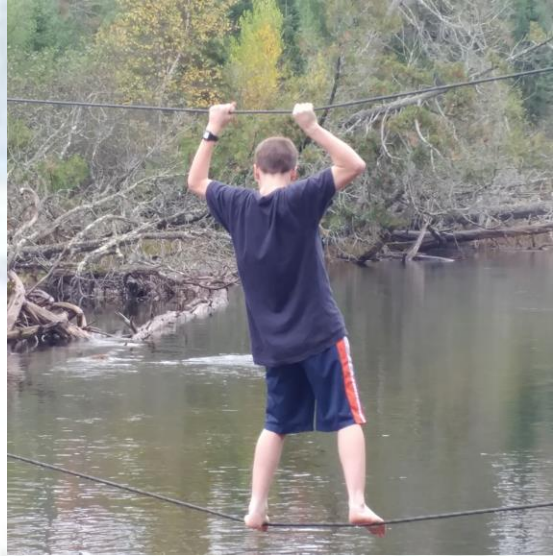
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The latrines are for the most part plain old outhouses of the US Forestry Service type, or those used by the US military, simple holes in the ground. In those cases, where there is no outhouse, we approach the situation with the Army Ranger Handbook. We also carry with us a portable outhouse made of nylon (not historically accurate), which serves to provide ample privacy.

Staying sanitary? All members of the Voyagers Canoe Trips wash regularly. This is before meals, and after using the latrine. We also provide hand sanitizer for convenience (also very non-1915).

Washing up consists of the essentials. A wash rag and soap, to clean up as found to be necessary or essential, but there is no bathing outside of the occasional flipped canoe or misplaced step along the river bank.



Team competition is something we encourage. The rewards keep coming with the Voyagers and all of them yield something of long-lasting value. Throwing hawks, knives, compasses, hats, and of course the badges - hand-made. The badges are for all young men who attend three consecutive trips (minus organized functions). Those items may all be found on our website.


Competition breeds cooperation. We encourage competition and collaboration. Avoided is any activity which enhances or establishes someone's, or something's, superiority, or supremacy over another. While it is true some possess skills or talents different from others, they are not encouraged to leverage those skills or talents over another – but rather to encourage all to do their best collaboratively.

Programs exist for those who do their best. There are chances to work with the US Forestry Service. Another new program may be a scholarship to a bushcraft school or other programs focused on archery or leadership. We are working each year to do more for those who participate and show they recognize the call.

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Finally, what might be expected on the Voyagers Canoe Trip, will be to find a group of men, of all ages, that enjoy the outdoors, and look forward to being the man that God intended us to be. An attendee may find in himself courage, the capacity to be more, and a newfound appreciation for those around them. It is hoped he will also find the true man that resides in himself.

The trips are focused on becoming a better man, and knowing what is expected. Indeed, men should have useful skills that assist in their creating a better community, but a man must also know how to think, speak and plan. Likewise, there should be a sense of awareness of the needs of others, and additionally, a man should be prepared to act when called upon. This is what we hope each man will come home with.



It is understood, however, that many young men will reflect upon their memories later in life. It may be then those experiences on a cold & rainy canoe trip help to forge a road ahead.

Lastly, we also understand that the modern world is working overtime in an effort to weaken young men. Society Factors which work to undermine the passage of our young men into true manhood is all around us today. Television, games, social media and other trivial events limit our ability to rise up and become good men, capable of leading, encouraging and influencing the course of our nation. We do feel strongly about this, so we ask the reader to consider what has been written here. Trips are not easy, and on occasion they're cold, rainy and damp. But those we have found leave the best memories, and those memories will last the longest in those young minds!

We hope that it will.

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**This is the Voyagers Canoe Trips – Au Voir**