

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 of what is expected of a man in life. The road isn't easy, and challenges line the road he will follow through 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.

Camping – as it was done 100 years ago.

The Voyagers Canoe Trips are three day trips into the wild and scenic river regions of our state. The rivers chosen are selected for their remote surroundings and for their ability to camp on the river banks. 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. They include foraging for firewood, kindling, kitchen setup, sleeping area set up, water duty and of course the camp fire.

Each canoe team works together similar to the buddy system.

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. It is 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.

Cooking in the 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 Hershey bars (1900) or Moon Pies (1917), which are handed out during the evening camp fires after dinner. Each year we get better at preparing and packing the food, in a way that simulates a bygone era. Why we do this is really due to the fact it makes the trip different, unique and perhaps it even makes it tastier too!

All of the meals are prepared on either the fire or our camp grill. We have a 1923 Kampkook stove we use however, we did convert it to LP for convenience. On occasion we use a 1930's 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 Ritz Crackers (1934). This is typically two types of meat and cheese, and all get a good lunch to get them through till supertime. Supper too is a great meal. We have pork chops, brisket or heater meals along with beans, vegetables and fruit. The grill is placed over the fire and the meat is cooked to preference – the left overs do not exist. Of course there are always some added snack items such as walnuts, pecans, cranberries, raisins, apricots and others similar fare.

Activities or exercises are held throughout the day on Saturday. 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 is 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, positive discussions or comments versus negative tones.

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 devotions. The lessons, stories highlight men throughout history, and their lives. Each member of the group is engaged during this time period, which allows for everyone to share how each story made them feel or think.



Saturday is action packed, and there is something for all. The groups works together, and stays together though 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.

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 sometime tough to call it a night, but even the most resilient man in camp admits he is beat before long.

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

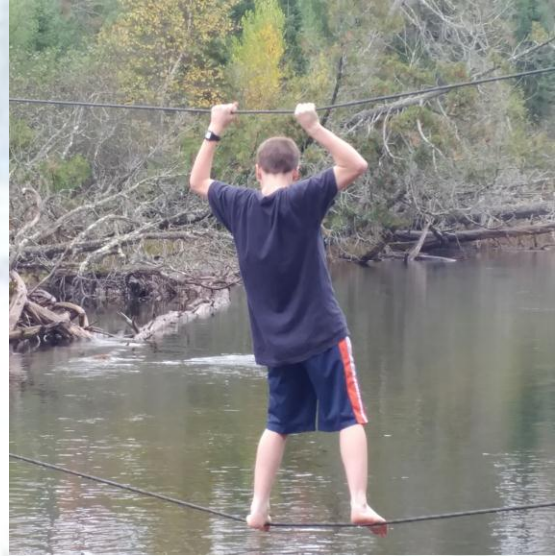
Camp is kept neat and orderly. Each of the items taken with us are stored in wooden crates, which are numbered. There are camp tools, camp Kitchen, Camp kitchen tools, dry food, cold food and the canoe packs which contain the ropes, gear and support gear.

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.

The latrines are for the most part plain old outhouses of the US Forestry Service. In some 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 though).

Staying sanitary? All members of the Voyagers Canoe Trips wash regular. 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 for all young men who attend three consecutive trips (minus organized functions). Those items may all be found on our website.

There is also the chance to work with the US Forestry Service. Another new program may be a scholarship to bushcraft school. We are working each year to do more for those who participate and show they recognize the call.

Finally, what might be expected on the Voyagers Canoe Trip, will be to find a group of men, or 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 new found appreciation for those around them.

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. Likewise, there should be a sense of awareness to 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 forge a road ahead. We hope that it will.

This is the Voyagers Canoe Trips –

