

# PIONEER EXPEDITIONS

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Do something extraordinary.....

## West Magpie Expedition • Canada 13 Days • 12 Nights • £2595

The Magpie West, in Quebec, Canada offers some of the best expedition rafting in the world with stunning scenery and continuous white water.

Arriving to this untouched wilderness via float plane, we will travel 112 miles and paddle over 100 class III, IV & IV+ rapids, seeing giant waterfalls and gorges. In this northern Boreal forest we will watch out for moose, black bear, caribou and lynx.

So few people have paddled through here that most of the rapids are still unnamed...something we can work on as we relax in the evening recounting the day's adventures

### Highlights

- **Raft** the West Magpie and Magpie Rivers
- Paddle **over 100 class III, IV and IV+**
- Travel through **remote and untouched forest**
- **Camp** on the rivers sandy shores
- Experience the **culture of Quebec's** Cote Nord region

### Overview

If you are after serious adventure and breathtaking wilderness, this trip has it all. The Magpie River flows through the heart of the North Shore region of Quebec, with the Magpie West (West Magpie) flowing through vast stretches of untouched Boreal forest (this is one of the biggest areas of intact forest in the world) which is home to black bear, moose, beaver as well as rare lynx and woodland caribou.

Reaching our starting point on the river by floatplane is one of the highlights of the trip, as apart from the spectacular views, we also get the great sensation of leaving civilization behind. From here our adventure truly begins as we ready our rafts and start on our 112 mile paddle downstream. We spend the next 9 days running fantastic white water, whilst our nights are spent camping under the stars.

The Magpie West offers some of the best expedition rafting in the world with stunning scenery and continuous white water. A challenging but relaxing journey down one of the great rivers of the Americas, this trip is for anyone who has paddled whitewater before and is keen on running challenging rapids and exploring a remote and rarely travelled section of river. Participants should have some experience with wilderness camping, be in good physical condition, comfortable walking on rocks and uneven terrain, ready to spend full days on the water, and be able to swim. Ages 12 and up.



## Itinerary

**Day 1:** Our trip starts in Sept Iles where your guides will greet you at the airport. After checking into our rooms we can go for a walk around town before a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Guides will go over packing tips as well as the plan for the days ahead.

### ***Dinner, Hotel***

**Day 2:** After breakfast, we take a short drive to the float plane docks, where we take our flight to the West Magpie. Flying inland, the terrain steepens as we pass over mountains, rivers, and lakes. The hour-long flight takes us to the upper reaches of the West Magpie. Here, untouched wilderness stretches for vast distances in every direction. Waving goodbye to our pilot, we ready our rafts and start downstream. The river narrows as we approach our first rapid. Today we will get a taste of the excitement to come as we scout and run two class IV's before pulling off to make camp and settle in for our first night under the stars.

### ***Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Overnight Camp***

**Days 3 to 11:** Rafting Descent of West Magpie.

### ***On the River & Rapids***

Before running any rapids we review safety instructions and practice paddling techniques. We use 14-foot paddle rafts that can fit up to six people plus a guide. Safety kayakers lead the way. Our equipment and food is carried in 'gear rafts' that are steered by a guide using long oars.

Over the following days the river drops though numerous rapids. Many are straight forward and we can charge right through them while others require careful scouting and precision. At several spots we line our rafts, using ropes to guide them while walking around on shore



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The last obstacle of the West Magpie is an unrunnable slot canyon that we portage our equipment around. Along the 600 metre trail, we see that the forest has changed as we have moved south and dropped in elevation. The evergreens are bigger and joined by some broadleaf trees. The floor is covered in thick moss and multi-coloured mushrooms. We camp below the canyon before paddling into the lake, marking the next stage of our journey

We paddle into the open space of Lake Magpie which is ringed by high bluffs and cliffs. It looks a bit like an ocean fjord though we are still a long way from the sea. If we have tail winds we can sail down the lake and if not we use a motor to cruise along, soaking in the landscape and letting our muscles rest. We camp on a large beach and settle in to watch the sunset while listening to the call of loons from distant bays. The following day we continue on, reaching the outflow of the Magpie River before lunch.

We now start into this section's many rapids. We spend three or four nights along this classic stretch and we will try to have a lay-over day at one of the camps. The second to last day on the water brings us through the last class IV's of the trip -- Double Drop, Trust Falls, and Borealis -- before arriving at the impressive Magpie Gorge. Our incredible camp sits high on a canyon rim overlooking three thundering rapids.

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## **Camp Life**

Over the course of the trip we camp at a variety of sites, like beaches or rock slabs by big rapids. Everybody pitches their tents and the guides set up a kitchen area and prepare appetizers. People can relax with a book or take photos, go fishing, or chat by the campfire.

Meals are always delicious, plentiful, and made with high quality and fresh Quebec ingredients. We cook sauces on a stove, grill meats and fish over open fire, and use a Dutch oven to bake desserts. Snacks are always available.

The pace of the West Magpie Expedition is faster than that of our other Boreal River trips. We wake up and break down camp early to give ourselves lots of time on the water. Some days we will be on the river until late afternoon. However, while we won't have many hours of downtime every day, there will still be opportunities to relax and to explore the forest. We can take side hikes to get views from up high, learn about local plants, and look for wildlife and their tracks.

## ***Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Overnight Camping***

**Day 12:** Depart from last camp at Magpie Gorge, stop for lunch at Magpie falls, and paddle to the take out by the St. Lawrence Gulf. Overnight lodging in coastal village. Farewell Dinner.

## ***Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Overnight in Lodge***

**Day 13:** Breakfast and airport drop-off.

## ***Breakfast***

## **EXPEDITION SCHEDULE**

16<sup>th</sup> August – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011



## OTHER INFORMATION

### Small groups

Maximum ten participants per trip.

### We take care of the details, it's your vacation!

Specialized equipment provided making your packing list simple.

Trip price includes accommodations before and after expedition and airport pickup and drop-off.

### The most professional

From your first contact with us to your complimentary trip DVD, our service will exceed your expectations. Our local guides, safety standards, and equipment are the best in the industry.

### What's included?

- All ground transportation and float plane flights from meeting points onwards.
- All accommodations for twelve nights. (two nights shared hotel room, ten nights individual tent).
- All delicious food from day one dinner through day thirteen breakfast.
- Some wine and spirits for evenings at camp.
- High quality camping equipment: large drybag, expedition tent, inflatable mattress, sleeping bag and sleeping bag liner, pillow with pillow case.
- River equipment including personal flotation device, helmet, and splash jacket.
- Basic fishing equipment.
- Professional guide staff always available.

### What's not included?

- Airfare or ground transportation to and from trip meeting points.
- Personal items. See packing list.
- Alcoholic beverages for evenings in Sept Iles and Riviere Au Tonnerre (nights one and twelve).
- Quebec fishing permit (can be purchased at local convenience store before float plane flight).
- Travel and medical insurance.
- Optional guide gratuities.

### What type of experience do I need?

To join the West Magpie Expedition you should have tried whitewater rafting before and have some experience with wilderness camping.

### What type of physical condition should I be in?

Expect six to nine hours of activity per day. You should be comfortable walking on rocks and uneven terrain, ready to spend full days on the water, and be able to swim.

### What kind of insurance do I need?

Participants will need to have appropriate Medical Evacuation insurance as any emergency evacuation costs will be billed to the injured person. Medical insurance should cover emergency air evacuation from the river to a local hospital, medical treatment within Canada, and repatriation to a medical care facility in your home region.

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 due to illness, accident, or family emergency.

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If you have insurance coverage from a credit card or an existing plan, please make sure that it will cover you for the aforementioned emergency situations and that you are covered while participating in whitewater activities and remote wilderness travel.

## **I am an experienced kayaker/canoer. Can I paddle the whole river in my own boat?**

Yes. If you are a confident class IV kayaker or canoeist you will love this river. A kayak guide will lead the way down every rapid. Please contact us for more information.

## **Who will my guides be?**

Your guides are professionals who have years of whitewater experience, and are excellent instructors, talented chefs and knowledgeable about the area. They love their jobs and want to share their passion for the river with you. Visit the about us page for more information about our guides.

## **Besides rafting and kayaking, what other guided activities can I do?**

Fishing, side hikes, photography, forest interpretation and looking for edible plants. Those interested in expedition cooking learn how to bake delicious Dutch Oven desserts.

## **How much 'downtime' per day to relax, pursue other activities, and fish?**

The West Magpie Expedition has a faster pace than our other trips. On some days there won't be much time at camp before supper. Over the course of the trip however, we will definitely have downtime and guides will try to work in a rest day if the schedule permits. Keen anglers can always fish in the early morning and at dusk.

## **How is the fishing?**

Excellent. This area is very rarely visited let alone fished. The river is clean as can be and the Speckled Trout populations are very healthy. You can also catch Pike, Ouaniche (Landlocked Salmon), and Lake Trout.

## **Will we eat well?**

Meals are plentiful, delicious, wholesome, and freshly prepared. Snacks are always available. Our guides love to cook and eat well.

## **How do we go to the bathroom while on the trip?**

We carry a portable toilet that is set up at each camp, usually with a great view.

## **Getting There**

### **Traveling by Air**

Arrival rendezvous: Sept-Iles Airport, Sept-Iles, Quebec. Flight arrival prior to 7pm Day 1. Look for your Boreal River guide holding a paddle.

Departure point: Sept-Iles Airport, Sept-Iles, Quebec. Flight departures from 9:30am, Day 13.

Air Canada, Provincial Airlines, and Air Labrador offer daily flights to Sept-Iles connecting through Montreal and Quebec City.

Note: Trip participants will likely need to plan for a night in either Montreal or Quebec City in order to make it to Sept-Iles for the 7pm rendezvous time. We will be happy to help you with booking your hotel and activity recommendations for stopover destinations.