

The Coruh River

Turkish Kayaking Spectacular!

Far from the traditional tourist resorts of the Mediterranean, in the picturesque North Eastern part of the country, lies the dramatic Coruh River. Flowing in the heart of the Kackar Mountain Range, this river epitomizes the word action as we kayak and surf what is seemingly an endless wet rollercoaster ride. Gorgeous rolling hills littered with alpine flowers frame our view, as we pass villages where friendly and welcoming locals beckon us with invitations to visit. This trip is for those of you wanting a real whitewater challenge! This is 120km of some of the best whitewater on the planet at high levels and at lower levels..... a play boaters' dream!

Your Fun Filled Itinerary!

This is our "planned" itinerary, but the beauty of this river, is the road access. Even though very little traffic is on the road, it gives us the chance to run any section of the river we want to. If we have a brilliant day on one particular section of the river, then we can paddle part or all of it, the following day.

Day One

What a great sense of adventure dawns on all who land at Erzurum's airport, a remote outpost in the spectacular region of Far East Turkey. You will be met by one of our guides who will take you to the hotel which you will return to after the trip (this is also the rendezvous point for those who arrived earlier). Here you are given some of the equipment needed for the river and it is where you can leave behind any thing you don't want to take with you. Then it on to the bus for the start of the drive to your river adventure. The views are absolutely outstanding over the giant plateau as we travel for approximately 3 - 4 hours in to the heart of the Kackar Mountain Range. Bound for our destination of Maden, we wind over glorious mountain passes littered with alpine foliage. By late afternoon we have set up our camp on the banks of the Coruh, usually under the watchful eye of the local villagers who seem somewhat intrigued at our range of equipment! (Included: Lunch and Dinner)

Day Two

With fresh brewed coffee to awaken us as the sun begins to warm up the day; we start to prepare for our river journey ahead. After a filling breakfast, which is a wonderful introduction to the diversity of fresh food that this region offers, we take on a great warm up section below camp. We put in Maden, and paddle the 35 km section to our takeout in the Ispir gorge. Today we take on "The Bitch, Alexis, Dynasty and the Stud". This river has a spectacular amount of whitewater! For those of you with a little more energy left, we paddle the ultimate surf wave at the bottom of Dynasty Rapid, which just happens to be at camp..... how convenient!

Day Three

Depending on how you guys are feeling after your paddling yesterday, we will paddle from camp, down to Tekkale..... plenty of whitewater to stop and surf. In addition to some of the fun stuff we paddled yesterday we head down to Perfect Portage and on to Petrakale! This is a seriously fun day! We camp at a gorgeous camp below an ancient Georgian Church! We enjoy a great meal under the stars, and take a walk up to Cemil's Pension..... Cemil is the ex local mayor of the town, and will entertain you with his stories, playing the Turkish Guitar and enjoying a beer or two with you.

Day Four

We have a great whitewater day ahead of us today! We take you from camp up the Barhal Valley and paddle a brilliant creek today amongst stunning surroundings. The Barhal is a river which is just a blast for 32 km down to Yusefeli! For lunch we take out at a "pub" in the middle of town! Don't miss the eddy! After a sumptuous lunch in the pub over looking the river, we put back on and run down into the Coruh and the big fun Yusefeli Gorge. With Donald's Beanery, Sculptured Rock, Mile Long Rapid, Busted Gonad and JD's..... this is as good as it gets anywhere on the planet! Or if you feel like the afternoon off, just take it easy in Yusefeli with a cup of tea and a shave! We head down to camp, or enjoy paddling the bridge wave, just above camp!

Day Five

We spend the day paddling below camp, honing our play skills in some fantastic rapids such as Narlik, Demirkent, Yarbasi and The Wall. We also get to check out the amazing Lava East and watch from the road as perhaps some of the guides run it! This will be the last chance to paddle this section before it goes under water on the completion of the dam in Artvin.

Day Six

After a wholesome breakfast we hit Yusefeli Gorge which is definitely worth another paddle. This is one of the most classic sections we do anywhere! Great waves, brilliant play holes..... Enjoy yourself! The four hour drive back to Erzurum is as spectacular as the trip to the river is, as we meander through the Tortem gorges in an impressive array of twisted rock and turquoise lakes of water. Upon arrival in Erzurum we check into our hotel for the evening and take the opportunity for a look around this intriguing town before a final group dinner. This is a great place to indulge in some "Retail Therapy" or get cleaner than you would ever think possible with a visit to the local Hamami for a bath Turkish style! It's amazing how much dirt then can get off! (Included: Breakfast and lunch)

Day Seven

After Breakfast at our Hotel, we make our way to the airport to make our onward journey home or for a few days R &R in Istanbul. (Included: Breakfast)

Holiday Options

Trekking The Kackar Mountains

What a fantastic way to conclude your holiday, by going trekking in the Kackar and Mescit mountains. Apart from fresh mountain air, and wonderful scenery you can explore many of the numerous churches built between the 10th and 12th centuries. One of the great aspects to trekking around this region is that you are able to keep your personal equipment to a minimum and stay predominantly in Tea Houses and sample not only their fantastic hospitality, but also their amazing array of fresh food. Trout anybody? For those wanting more information, please contact us or refer to the Lonely Planets Guide To Trekking In Turkey. We have a great extension for 3 nights.

Exploring Istanbul

This ancient city has so many contrasting faces and is fascinating to explore. Formally the ancient city of Constantinople, this remains a regular treasure chest for those wanting to wander about investigating all the many nooks and crannies! Highlights include going to Old Istanbul and visiting Aya Sofya, the spectacular Blue Mosque, the Mosaic Museum, The Hippodrome, the Sunken Palace Museum, Topkapi Palace, and the Grand Bazaar to name but a few!!! Please contact us if you want further information, such as great places to stay and eat! This is an option that many of our guests really like as they have the opportunity to relax for a few days before they return home.

Retail Therapy Options

Turkey is a fantastic nation for those of you with shopaholic tendencies. Wonderful crafts such as carpets, leatherwear, brass and copperware, clothing and jewellery adorn shops everywhere. One point should be noted that if you have Scottish blood then shopping will be much easier, as rather formidable bargaining is required for almost everything! Prices may well be "set" in certain establishments, but don't let this stop you trying your luck, especially if you are purchasing several items! Please note that as Turkey is full of antiques, these are often sold by locals and this is frowned upon somewhat by government officials. They may if they suspect you, inspect your luggage on departure from airports throughout Turkey.

The Details

What Is Included

- Transfers to and from Erzurum Airport.
- If you provide us with your arrival details we will be happy to meet you at the airport and ease that transition into controlled chaos! We request that you are there the day your kayaking trip departs (as described above), as chasing the bus over the Turkish countryside is not a pleasant start to your journey!
- Accommodation the night the river trip ends in a tourist hotel. This will be on a share twin basis with somebody else on the trip, but we will do our utmost not to hook you up with an axe murderer!
- All transfers to and from the river.
- All meals from lunch on Day One to lunch on Day Five. We can cater for any dietary requests, just let us know!
- All kayaking equipment, including the best in buoyancy aids, helmets, wetsuits and spray jackets. We recommend you bring your own boat and equipment. A dry top is recommended if you are a wuss. We have just Dagger Redlines available as boats. Please ensure your kayak buoyancy aid is under 2 years old and floats!
- Tented accommodation whilst on the river.
- All camping equipment including thermarest style mattresses and chairs.
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers. The crux of our trips, we have a mixture of local and overseas guides who are extremely professional and are some of the most experienced guides in the world. These guys and girls make every effort to make your trip memorable and fun for you whilst at the same time ensuring your safety. They all hold up to date advanced first aid qualifications and in the unlikely event of an injury they have the expertise and professionalism to deal with it.
- All necessary permits and licenses.

Please Note: Not included are visas, departure taxes, travel insurance, inoculations, sleeping bags, personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in town which are not included in the price and any extra accommodation outside what is provided.

Getting There

In order to give you maximum flexibility with your holiday plans, you decide when you want to fly or travel to and from Turkey and we then help make it happen. The flight option that we usually book for our clients is on Turkish Airlines out of Heathrow. These flights leave around midday the day prior to Day One, arriving into Istanbul that evening, your airport transfers and hotel are not included in the price. The next day there is an early morning flight getting into Erzurum around 9.30am on Day One. The return flight is 10.30am departure out of Erzurum with an early evening arrival into London. If you are flying back to Manchester you will need to overnight in Istanbul and fly back the following morning to Manchester. Once again all airport transfers and hotel accommodation is not included. However there are other options available so be it is a flight from

another airport in the UK, or even an overland trip through Europe we will give you advice on what is the best deal around and help you with your booking.

Visa Requirements

A visa is required by all British Residents entering Turkey and you may pay for this on your arrival. The normal cost for this is ten pounds although prices do change. All other countries of the European Union do not require visas or those from the antipodean nations of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Canadian citizens do require a visa but this can be obtained at the airport at a cost of USD\$20. Please also ensure that at your time of departure, you still have six months validity left in your passport.

The Dreaded Jabs

What would be a great holiday without your Doctor inflicting a temporary third butt cheek! Turkey, although situated on the border of Europe is no exception. As always we would recommend consultation with your Doctor or local immunization centre before commencing your treatment, and also bear in mind that many of these immunizations can take weeks or even longer for the full course, so please leave plenty of time. We recommend that you are immunized against Hepatitis A, Typhoid and have a Tetanus booster.

Exchange Rates

The exchange rates for the Turkish Lira, change about as often as most of us change our minds, needless to say the Turkish Lira is subject to some pretty hideous bouts of inflation - 60-80% at times! There is no black market for exchanging money; however you will find it to be no problem to change most major currencies in banks, hotels, post offices and other shops. Present rates are around 1,300,000 Turkish Lira to US\$1! Quite a bargain really! Even better is the rate of exchange to the English pound at 2,400,000 Lira! When you go to check this in another 6 months don't be shocked if it has gone up by another few thousand! Expect to end up with a large pocket full of notes when you visit your exchange dealer! The smallest denomination is a coin of 50 lira and the largest is 10,000,000 - around \$8! A point to note is that if you are travelling with Travellers Cheques (very advisable), they can take slightly longer to change and are subject to higher commissions. It is recommended that you check what the commission is going to be before commencing the transaction. To give you an idea as to how far your money will go an average meal in a restaurant will cost you around US\$5 and a bottle of beer, about 90c from the local shop! You are able to convert some currency upon arrival at Istanbul Airport (cash only) if you would like to.

Transport Services

There are plenty of options for getting around Turkey and all remain relatively cheap compared to those experienced in Western Europe or North America. Due to the country's size from West to East and the large distances involved, most travel is best undertaken using the comprehensive air services that are offered. Turkish Airlines link all of the major cities and popular destinations. Their competition is in the form of smaller local based airlines, whose services may well be cheaper, but their services also less frequent. If you are in any sort of hurry (give or take six months) then probably a train journey is not a viable alternative for you. These trips are relatively cheap and although not so quick they are a great way to travel and will generally offer you a non smoking alternative, something which is incredibly rare in this country! Buses on the other hand provide an environment that only American litigation lawyers suing tobacco companies would dream about! We advise that you check the bus before you get your ticket and try and organize a window seat or one beside a vent! Buses are very cheap though and a very effective means of moving around the country. Quality of buses will vary however in general the standard is relatively good. You will pay around US\$3 per 100 kilometres for their services which are also quite frequent. Whilst in Eastern Turkey you will find taxis that have fares set by the town unfortunately these are relatively hard to establish unless you speak fluent Turkish! We recommend that you

negotiate a fair price before embarking on your journey. In the larger cities such as Ankara or Istanbul, taxis have meters and it is illegal to not use them although they will try their best!

River Flows

The Coruh is a large volume river and services a huge catchment area which can mean that there are dramatic changes to the water level when it rains. To maximize these peak flows we choose to offer this river trip at this time that is in May / early June when the whitewater is HUGE but there is also the possibility of rain. Our later trips still enjoy fantastic whitewater but weather wise this is an optimum time to be out there with rain being not so common and the days long and sunny! This also means that it is a great time to be trekking if you decide to extend your trip with a jaunt in the mountains. However flows do vary from year to year due to snow fluctuations and rain patterns so while we can give you a reasonably accurate indication of water levels - water does do what it wants!

Climate

Weather in general remains hard to predict, but especially in this area of Turkey due to its mountainous nature. In May and early June cold snaps can hit without warning while then again temperatures have also been known to soar to a pretty tropical 40 degrees during the day. As a general rule though we find that weather is far more settled from mid to late June, so if you have an aversion to getting rained upon, may we suggest a later scheduled departure. The one drawback of this is that the water levels may not be quite so high. The evenings remain somewhat cooler, ranging from 15 to 20 degrees, so if you feel the cold make sure that you pop in a fleece sweater and pants. The days as we mentioned, get fairly warm, so we suggest plenty of sunscreen and lip balm as these items are hard to procure in this area of Turkey. Due to the unpredictability of rain we suggest a good raincoat as well. You are well equipped on the river with spray jackets however it is always good to have something for camps in the evening!

Fitness And Safety

We recommend BCU Grade 3-4 kayak proficiency for this trip. Swimming ability is essential as is a sense of adventure. This is truly a wonderful trip for those of you wanting a real adrenaline rush! Just to recap what is mentioned in the brochure: The minimum age for the trip is 16 years and there is no upper age limit providing that you are in reasonable physical shape and you are aware of the rigors of a whitewater expedition in a foreign country. Please make a point of telling us (quietly if you wish) if you have any medical condition or are on any medication that you think we should be aware of. Any known allergies are also useful before you turn 3 shades of blue and phase in and out of consciousness! Safety is our foremost consideration at all times whether on or off the river. We are out there for a great time on the river and we want you to feel comfortable in your new environment.

Dress Code

Apart from the regulation Black Tie and Ballgown dress for evening meals - ha, ha, river wear remains quite casual! We would ask you to bear in mind though, that due to Turkey being a predominantly Muslim nation (99%) we ask you to dress relatively conservatively around our camping areas or in town. This only involves making sure that you cover your arms and legs which is especially necessary for the women. Speedo swimming trunks are strictly forbidden at all times! At most times on the river, a pair of swimming shorts or a bathing costume with shorts over the top are perfect river wear and we recommend that if you feel the cold, a thermal top is essential to wear under your dry top and short wetsuits. If you are considering doing a trek in the Kackar Mountains, please refer to our list of suggested equipment to bring with you. This also details all the particular material you will need for the kayak portion of the journey.

Personal Equipment

After years on the river the guides have found exactly what is necessary to feel comfortable on the river by day, cosy around the camp at night and totally in style in town before and after trips! Therefore our equipment list will mean that you will be perfectly attired and outfitted for your whole trip and well under the baggage allowance - river guides are famous for being light travellers (one has to be when a kayak is often in tow!). A full list of what we recommend will be sent to you upon booking confirmation. We find that most people already have in their possession what is needed for a kayak trip and very little if anything in specialized equipment is needed to be bought, apart from your own kayak kit. Please note that if our gear is used a deposit is required on the terms, you break it or damage it, and you buy it.

Finally

Please remember that things do change, prices go up and down, activities stop running or change format and weather can send the best laid plans out the door. Splash White Water Rafting will do it's best to provide what is described above but please take into consideration the nature of the journey that you are embarking on and the country that you are in and understand that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary! The Coruh abounds with inconceivable whitewater. But this kayak journey is more than that. Turkey possesses a "character" that gives so much to everybody. Whether it is the small boy swimming out to you for a "hitch hike" downstream or your time spent exploring amongst ancient artefacts in Istanbul this is an unbelievable river journey, an unbelievable country.

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