

Wilderness Packtrips

About This Bulletin

A summer horse packing trip into Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness is an authentic experience in the heart of the West. The country we call home is big and beautiful well suited to the iconic nickname "Big Sky Country". There are so many unique aspects to a summer horse packing trip that we feel confident it will fit any outdoor enthusiasts' interests. We hope you find this bulletin fun and informative, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and questions as you plan your trip to Montana!

About Us

Way back in the late 1920's our predecessors established one of the earliest hunting and fishing camps on the North Fork of the Sun River, in what was then the Sun River Primitive area. Since then we've had the privilege of sharing horse packing excursions with people from all walks of life and all corners of the globe. We are full time outfitters focused exclusively on guiding you through this special land.



The Bob Marshall Wilderness

The Bob Marshall Country is big in size, grandeur and legend. It is the second largest wilderness area in the continental US. It comprises almost 1.5 million acres and is larger than Rhode Island. Roads do not cross it and no motorized or wheeled vehicles are permitted. It is also home to almost every big game species in North America, including elk, mule deer, whitetail deer, black bear, grizzly bear, moose, big horn sheep, and mountain goats. The Bob Marshall straddles the Continental Divide and as such rivers, streams, and hidden lakes abound. This area has been relatively unchanged since Lewis and Clark went through Montana on their western expedition 200 years ago. The southern area of the Bob Marshall was explored by Lewis on his eastward journey in 1806. Lewis went on to explore the Rocky Mountain Front northward until his party ran into hostile members of the Blackfoot Indian tribe near the northern reaches of the Bob Marshall. The ruggedness of the mountains and the tenaciousness of the Blackfoot Indians kept this area unexplored and unsettled until well in the late 1800's.

Horseback Riding and Progressive Travel Trips

Part of the mystery and intrigue of a summer horse packing trip in the Bob Marshall is that this country can only be accessed by horseback or on foot. This area is particularly suited to horse travel with good trails and superb camping areas (if you know where to find them!) Riding through this spectacular country will allow you to really see, hear and enjoy all the beauty that is unfolding before you. You will be matched to a horse that fits your riding ability and rest assured that you do not need any prior riding experience. All of the riding stock is well trained and reliable in mountain conditions. We'll pack up all of your gear on strong pack mules as we move about to different campsites along your journey. The distances covered on any given travel day are around 12 miles – about 4 hours of riding time. We take breaks throughout the day to ease the saddle time. Different trips have varying itineraries and give you wide variety



in finding a trip that fits you just right. On trips over 5 days we travel every other day. On the non-travel days you will have the opportunity to explore by hiking or always the option of taking day rides on the horses to interesting points nearby.

Fishing

Fishing in the rugged backcountry of the Bob Marshall Wilderness is an exclusive experience, on par with the quality of fishing excursions in South America and Russia. During the peak summer season (mid-July to late August) the fishing action on these wild rivers is hot, fast, and exhilarating. In a time when truly world class fishing is either on private lands or in the most remote corners of the globe, the rivers of Montana's mountains provide an equally spectacular experience. The waters are absolutely clear, cold, swift and relatively shallow – signature habitat for Rainbow and Cutthroat trout. The fish are excellent fighters. Their sized can range from frying-pan size on up to two feet. The streams are fantastic fly-fishing waters, though a good spin cast fisherman can also do well.



Hiking, Exploring, and Wildlife



There are unlimited hiking opportunities for those that want to stretch their legs after a day's ride. Just pick a direction and go. We can point out some wonderful spots to explore. A nice leisurely hike allows you to see the fine detail of this wilderness wonderland. There are beautiful wild flowers, magical secluded mountain ponds, rare and colorful migratory birds, and tall virgin forests. There is also the chance to glimpse the larger big game species such as a cow elk and her calf or a browsing black bear. There are favorite spots for Bighorn Sheep, Mountain goats, and moose. Grizzly sightings are infrequent and usually at safe distances.

Number of Guests on a Trip

The normal size trip is between six and eight guests. Typically, we provide around four crew members to support each trip so you get the benefit of a lot of personal attention. It is not necessary to have a large group to take a trip. We commonly provide smaller trips that may have only three or four guests. We will match up people with the same trip interests onto a single trip. Small families, couples and singles also frequent the trips and have a great time. We will take larger trips up to 10 people, though these trips are typically arrange by special request. Because there are so many different options on a trip, everyone can usually find an activity that fits their interests. The common denominator is a love of the outdoors.



Trip Duration

Our standard trips range from 5 to 8 days. The 5 day trips go to our popular Gates Park camp on the Sun River. This is a beautiful camp with a plethora of options for the horse back riding enthusiasts as well as fishermen. The longer trips are what we call progressive travel trips where we ride to different campsites every other day. On specific request we can do shorter trips of 3-4 days.



Our Base

Our summer headquarters is just outside of Choteau, Montana on the Teton River. We are 55 miles west of Great Falls and about 100 miles north of Helena (our state capitol). As the summer progresses our successive packtrips will use various trail-heads (starting and ending points). This gives our repeat guests a great opportunity to experience different parts of the Bob Marshall. We have private facilities at several of our more heavily used trail heads.

Equipment

We are confident you will find the equipment well maintained and in excellent condition. The camps are fully furnished and we provide all the necessary camping gear including spacious waterproof tents, kitchen equipment, and riding gear. We carry everything we need for the trip with us. That way we do not have to come out of the mountains for the entire trip. We try to conform to the wilderness environment instead of making it conform to the rest of the world. Literally, the only equipment you need to bring is your sleeping bag, personal belongings and fishing gear.



Camp and Food



Our commitment to quality and service applies to everything we do. We do not cut corners with equipment, livestock or supplies. We think you would be hard-pressed to find cleaner, more comfortable, more professional wilderness camps or packing services. There is a limit to comfort in the backcountry, but we make every effort to furnish the essentials for a high-quality trip. These include comfortable and spacious sleeping tents, a large covered kitchen area and tables for buffet style meals. We also have stools for sit-down dining and campfire tales. On top of all this, we serve you the best food in the mountains. A full day of riding and exploring seems to invoke larger appetites than many are used to having. Therefore, we make it a priority to serve hearty, filling meals with lots of meat, vegetables and delightful desserts.

Crew

We employ some of the finest packers, guides and cooks so that we can provide you the caliber of packtrip you expect from us. We're always on the hunt for great people to help us out, and we're sure you'll really enjoy them on your trip as much as we do.

What's included

The areas we visit, our excellent service, the diversity of our trips and our commitment to quality create an adventure package superior to other outfitted summer packtrips. A Montana packtrip vacations is a unique

and special experience. You will find our packtrips are top-shelf in all aspects. Rate sheets are supplied with this bulletin. The summer packtrips are all inclusive and include:

- Average party size of between six and eight per trip
- One day of travel into and one day out of the mountains
- A saddle horse matched to your abilities for the duration of the trip
- Best food in the mountains. All meals provided.
- All camp equipment exclusive of personal belongings
- All livestock and camp chores attended to by the crew
- Private trip requests and special requests are welcome



Reservations and Deposits

We require a 30% deposit to confirm your summer packtrip adventure. We accept a variety of payment methods and details are provided on the rate sheet.

Transportation to the Ranch

If you choose to drive to Choteau, we will provide a map to you before you arrive. For those fly, commercial airlines (United, Delta, and Alaska) provide service to Great Falls (GTF), Helena (HLN) and Missoula (MSO). Shuttle service is available for a nominal fee. Should you fly your own plane, you may choose the Great Falls or Choteau airport. If you are combining a summer packtrip with another outstanding Montana destination, you may decide to depart or arrive from different airports, particularly if visiting Glacier or Yellowstone National Parks. Arrival and departure details are provided in accompanying documentation. Guests must arrive the day before the trip goes into the mountains.

References

We have some outstanding people join us over the years for an incredible Montana mountain experience. If you would like to speak with some of these folks, just let us know and we're happy to provide references.

We hope you agree this looks like an amazing western vacation. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Until then, we'll keep a horse saddled for you!

