

RIO MULATOS/ AROS IN SONORA (Northern) MEXICO

Approximately 40 miles on the Rio Mulatos (Mulatos to Rio Aros confluence); average gradient 22 fpm and 10 miles on the Upper Rio Aros (Rio Mulatos confluence to Natora)

THIS IS NOT A COMMERCIAL TRIP – Far from it!

We are looking for whitewater boating enthusiasts who:

- Have solid Class IV or better skills and the ability to read and run Class IV without scouting.
- Have whitewater rescue training.
- Have multi-day back-country river camping experience.
- Are willing to drive their vehicle into Mexico and possibly to the put-in/take-outs on what can be rough 4x4 roads.
- Are flexible on timing; flows may dictate a later start or longer time on the river than anticipated. There are no dams dictating flows, these are monsoonal rivers. The amount of time on the river is largely determined by MOTHER NATURE. Plan on a few extra days!
- Want to boat in an extremely remote area of Mexico where self-rescue is a MUST and where you are day(s) from medical care of potentially dubious quality.
- Are in excellent health.
- Are willing to do their part to make the trip a success; providing safety on the water, helping during a possible portage or lining, participating in the group's camp kitchen duties, sharing/providing shuttles, and other group responsibilities.

We're not trying to scare anyone or exclude anyone with interest in boating Mexican rivers. We do, however, want trip participants to be aware of the rigors and dangers of a trip like this and the importance of being self-reliant as this is NOT a commercial trip. For those that are up to the task, this will be an adventure to remember!

TENTATIVE ITINERARY:

Meet in the evening at Motel 6 in Douglas AZ and stay the night (~\$45)

DAY 1: *Border Crossing-Sahuaripa*. Early morning border crossing (have your Passport and vehicle documents ready). Final food shopping in Agua Prieta – last chance in a real supermarket. Head for Sahuaripa (5 hours) to consolidate gear into put-in vehicle(s); overnight at Hotel Casa Grande (~\$30).

DAY 2: *Mulatos* – Meet shuttle driver(s) in the morning, head for Mulatos (~6 hours but can take much longer); rig the boats and hopefully launch by late afternoon for a mellow float downstream for about 4 miles. If we run out of time, we will camp at the put-in.

DAY 3: *Barranca Mulatos*. This is the toughest and most scenic portion of the trip. After negotiating a couple of Class II's at the entrance to the canyon, we will likely stop to scout Amargosa (Class III to IV). The next few miles have fun read and run Class II and III rapids until we reach the Boulder Arroyos section with lots of Class III action

leading to the tough stuff. Saucito (III+), the Slot (Class III), Unscathed (Class IV), and Dos Mas (Class IV) along with numerous other rapids await in the next 5 miles. After Arroyo San Francisco, the canyon opens up some and the heavy rapids are over. Today's distance on the water will be around 16 miles.

DAY 4: Lower Mulatos. Boat through the scenic lower canyon of the Rio Mulatos. The rapids in this section should be widely spaced Class IIs. We will probably camp a few kilometers above the confluence with the Rio Aros. Today's distance on the river will be about 15 miles.

Day 5: Upper Rio Aros, Natora. Once we reach the confluence, we will be on the Upper Rio Aros and have two to three times as much water. A quick float down to the take-out in Natora and our river trip will be over. Pack up the gear and drive out to Sahuaripa (about 4-5 hours). Stay the night at the Hotel Casa Grande (~\$30).

Day 6: Border Crossing. An easy morning in Sahuaripa, giving people an opportunity to explore the scene in this non-tourist town. After a late breakfast/early lunch, we will pack up the vehicles and head for the border!

If the group decided ahead of time to continue down the lower Rio Aros/Yaqui, that will be another 4 days or so. See the itinerary for that trip for more details.

IMPORTANT DETAILS

SHUTTLE

We are looking for people who can use their vehicle to help with the shuttle. It is best to leave a few cars at Sahuaripa, then consolidate all the boating/camping gear into as few vehicles as possible to head for Mulatos. The road to Mulatos is VERY rough in spots and requires a 4x4 vehicle. Small, heavy duty trailers can make it in behind an adequate tow vehicle.

Shuttle Cost will depend on the number of participants and how many vehicles need to be shuttled. We have a good shuttle driver in Sahuaripa who knows the roads into and out of Mulatos and can meet us at the take-out in Natora or Rancho El Rio for the lower Aros. We may be able to park the vehicle(s) at their house where they can keep an eye on it.

ADDITIONAL TRIP COSTS

- 3 nights of hotels stays (Douglas, Sahuaripa, Sahuaripa,), about \$100.
- 2 days of food off the river, depends on if you eat at restaurants, taco stands or BYO (figure \$10 per day on average for the cheaper options)
- 3.5 days of food on the shuttle/river. The cost-shared price will be approximately \$75 per person
- Alcohol/other drinks (besides water) will be the responsibility of each person and they will be required to carry them on whatever craft they are paddling/rowing. Keep in mind that liquid refreshments are heavy and we may have to portage at some point.

NOTE ABOUT THE CAMP KITCHEN

The camp kitchen will be supplied. Neil and Lacey will carry the majority of the camp kitchen equipment on their catarafts. The food will be distributed amongst trip participants. Besides their own personal and camping gear, kayakers will also be required to carry some of the group food in their kayak. Because of the nature of this trip, the food will need to be light-weight, so we will be using Lacey's "[no-coolers](#)" philosophy. It is very difficult to accommodate strict diets (Celiac, Vegan, Diabetic, Gluten-free, etc.). Quality ice is unavailable where we are going, so we will not be carrying ice for coolers; therefore, many of the meals will be vegetarian. It will be impossible to keep steak or other meats fresh.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Current Passport (carry copies of your Passport and driver's license in your gear bag)
- If driving your car into Mexico – you will need the title and registration for the vehicle in **your name**. Note that if you have a loan on your vehicle, the lender must supply you with a letter approving you to take the vehicle into Mexico or you may be turned away at the border. Trailers are not recommended, but comparable paperwork is required. It is highly suggested that you purchase Mexican auto insurance as well.
- Water Filter - You will be responsible for filtering your own drinking water. The filter that has served us well for many years is the Platypus brand gravity filter. We do not carry the big Katadyne Expedition filter for these trips because it is bulky, heavy, and may clog easily in the silt-laden waters of northern Mexico. You will also want to carry a collapsible water bottle of at least one-gallon capacity to avoid having to filter the silty river water between water stops.
- Personal 1st aid kit – it should be relatively complete as there will not be a comprehensive first-aid kit for the group.
- Repair kit specific to the boat you will be paddling/rowing. We may be able to consolidate some repair tools and things like glues before the trip to avoid duplication and added weight.