

## **RIO TUTUACA/ AROS/ YAQUI IN SONORA (Northern) MEXICO**

20+ miles on the Rio Tutuaca (Puente Rio Tutuaca to Rio Sirupa confluence); average gradient 28 fpm

40+ miles on the Upper Rio Aros (Rio Sirupa confluence to Natora); average gradient 15 fpm.

OPTIONAL 70 miles on the Lower Rio Aros (Natora to Rio Bavispe confluence); average gradient 11 fpm

35 miles on the Rio Yaqui (Rio Bavispe to the take-out); average gradient 6 fpm

Approximately 170 miles total

### **THIS IS NOT A COMMERCIAL TRIP – Far from it!**

We are looking for whitewater boating enthusiasts who:

- Have solid Class IV or better skills.
- 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 treasure for the rest of your life!

### **TENTATIVE ITINERARY FOR FULL TRIP:**

**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 supermarket. Head for Sahuaripa (5 hours) to consolidate gear into put-in vehicle(s) and find our shuttle driver. Motel in Sahuaripa (~\$30).

**DAY 2: *Yepechic*** - Drive to Yepechic, stay overnight in Yepechic (~\$35)

**DAY 3: *Walls of the Giants*.** Drive 4 hours to put-in at Puente Tutuaca, below Mina Dolores. Rig and launch in the late afternoon. Boat through the scenic “Walls of the Giants” canyon section. The rapids in this section should be Class III, but we will find out. Camp after approximately 8 kilometers near the S-turn.

**DAY 4: *Lower Barranca Tutuaca*.** Boat through the scenic Lower Barranca Tutuaca. The rapids in this section should be Class II - III, but may be more difficult depending on water levels. We will camp above or near the confluence with Rio Sirupa. Today’s distance on the river will be about 23 kilometers.

**Day 5: *Upper Rio Aros, Cañon El Refugio*.** Once we reach the confluence with the Rio Sirupa, the river’s name changes, we will then be on the Upper Rio Aros and have twice as much water. We will pass a couple of small settlements (El Moquete and El Refugio) on river right and run the initial rapids of Cañon El Refugio; there should be multiple class II and III rapids. We will make camp below El Refugio after traveling approximately 12 miles for the day.

**Day 6: *Aros Fury*.** Today we will run what may be the most exciting rapids of the entire trip. Several rapids will be of class III to IV difficulty, depending on water levels. The hardest rapid for rafts may Aros Fury (IV) but Olas Grandes I was the biggest at high water in 2014. We will enter the Great Bend of the Aros and probably camp in the Obsidian Gorge.

**Day 7: *Great Bend of the Aros*.** Today we will float through the rest of Great Bend of the Aros, where the river travels over 30 km to a point about 5 km (as the crow flies) from the camp! The rapids today should be mostly class II as pass the mouth of the Rio Mulatos, where we begin our descent of the Lower Aros. From here on down, we are familiar with the river, having completed this section 3 times at a variety of flows. We will probably camp downstream of Nátora near Stratified Rapid.

**DAY 8: *El Aliso Slot and Lone Palm Gorge*** - After a leisurely breakfast, we will continue our journey down the Lower Aros. Possible hike up Arroyo El Aliso, an interesting slot canyon and source of water. Depending on water levels, kayakers may be able to paddle 100 meters or so up the slot. In the afternoon, we will enter the very scenic Lone Palm Gorge, with its spectacular sheer walls and constant class II and III whitewater. There are possible hikes today at Arroyo Cebadilla and Arroyo Carrizoso. We will camp near Otates, a “bowtie” bend in the river after approximately 27 kilometers.

**DAY 9: *Arroyo Santa Rosa and Cañon Los Arrieros*** – Another easy day until we pass the Rio Bonito, where we may hike up and float down! After that, get ready for some of the funnest rapids on the Lower Aros. Cañon Los Arrieros is home to Roca Roja (Class III+) and other class II and III rapids. We may stop before the gaging station at Paso de Nacori making for an easy day of around 30 kilometers.

**DAY 10: *Cañon La Bocana*** – In the morning, we will continue downstream, possibly stopping at the Paso de Nacori gaging station before entering Cañon La Bocana, where Morita (Class III-IV), Cajones (Class III) and many other Class II and III rapids await. We may see some military macaws (large parrots) in this canyon. Possible lunch at Las Perdices as we hike the creek to get water and cool off in the pools with the fishes. We might just push on to the shade at one of the caves (alcoves) along the river. There were some curious coatis there last time. Camp will be above the Rio Bavispe after covering about 30 kilometers.

**DAY 11: *Rio Yaqui*** - In the morning, we will pass one of the larger tributaries, the Rio Bavispe, where the river name changes to the Rio Yaqui. We may hike the lower "Golden" arroyo, but more likely will stop and hike to the palm oasis in Arroyo Chitacagui. Since it would be difficult to row all the way out today, we will likely stop around Badesi or Arroyo Los Alisos after about 30 kilometers.

**DAY 12: *Take-out*** - Up early and heading for take-out! Continuing our float through the open canyons of the Rio Yaqui, we may take a short bushwhack hike through the reeds to a small slot and palms in Arroyo Babaco. Continuing on, we will pass the abandoned ferry about 20 km above the take-out and the gaging station at El Cubil, arriving at the take-out by noon. Our shuttle driver should be waiting and we will pack up the gear and get back to Sahuaripa where everyone can clean up and get ready for a farewell dinner. With luck, the carne asada joint will be open! Hotel Casa Grande (~\$30)

**Day 13: *Border Crossing***. The shuttle drivers should return from Yepachic in the afternoon, giving those that stayed behind an opportunity to explore the scene in Sahuaripa. After a late lunch, we will pack up the vehicles and head down the road!

## 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 Yepachic. We will have to find a driver or drivers to ride with us down to the put-in at the Puente (bridge) below the mine. The shuttle driver will be with us for two days and will charge accordingly. We will also be responsible for his hotel room in Yepachic.

Shuttle Cost will depend on the number of participants and how many vehicles need to be shuttled. Shuttle drivers typically charge around \$500 pesos (\$35-\$40) per day, plus some extra for gas. There is an extra charge for parking the vehicle at their house where they can keep an eye on it. We hope we can find someone in Sahuaripa willing to take on a two-day shuttle into Chihuahua. We were able to make arrangements in 2014 with the help of a friend in Sahuaripa.

### ADDITIONAL TRIP COSTS

- 4 nights of hotels stays (Douglas, Sahuaripa, Yepachic, Sahuaripa), about \$130.
- 4 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)
- 10 days of food on the river. The cost-shared price will be approximately \$150 per person
- Alcohol/other drinks (besides wáter) 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 fresh meats.

## WHAT TO BRING:

- Current Passport (carry copies of your Passport and drivers 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 tend to 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.