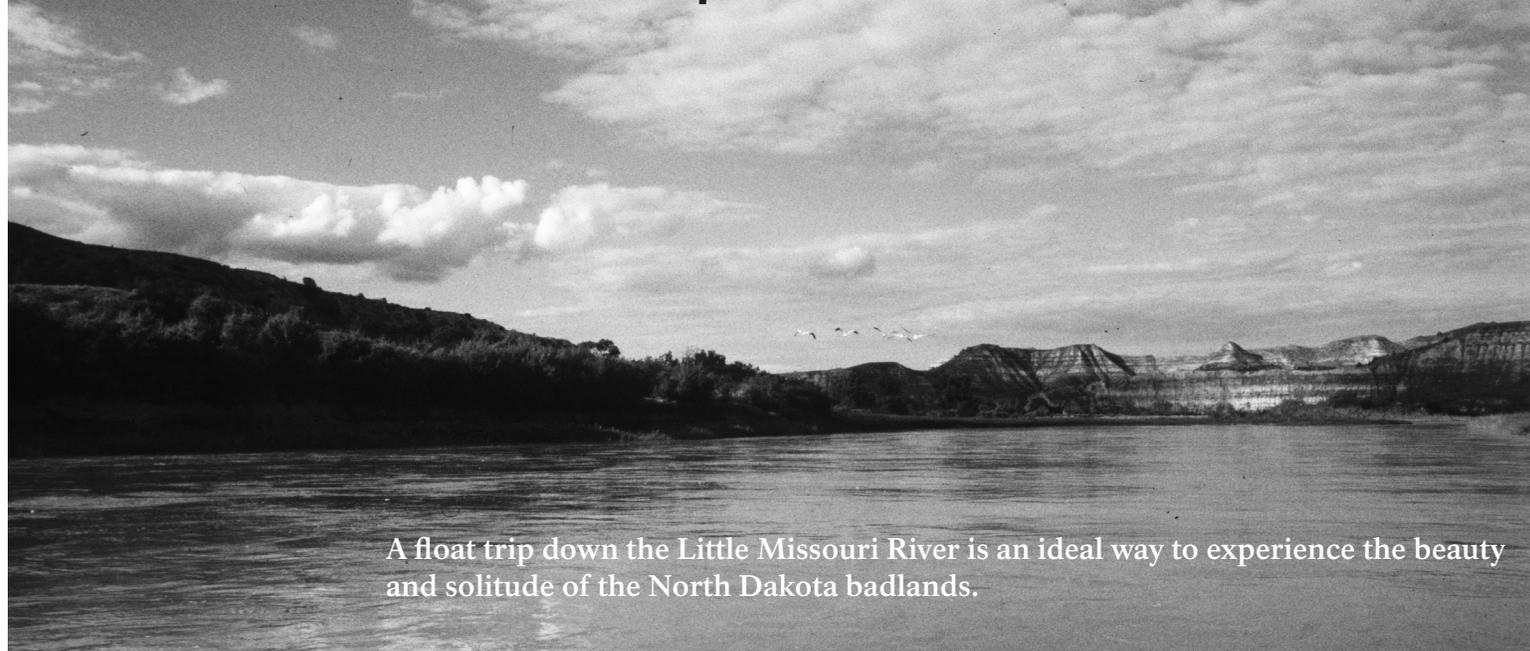




Little Missouri River Float Trips



A float trip down the Little Missouri River is an ideal way to experience the beauty and solitude of the North Dakota badlands.

Pre-trip information

It takes about 5 days to canoe the 107.5 miles from the bridge at Medora to the Hwy 85 bridge near the North Unit. Do not over estimate your ability, most boaters on this river average 1-4 miles per hour depending on flows.

River ice usually breaks up by early April. Moderate temperatures and spring rains may combine to produce satisfactory conditions for float trips with May and June usually being the best months. Using canoes or kayaks is recommended. For much of the year, low water levels require boaters to frequently drag their boats through shallow stretches. Each year is difficult to predict and some years the river is not deep enough for float trips and sections of the river may dry up completely. Water levels vary daily; easy paddling one day can become a trip requiring frequent portages the next. Watching for changing weather is critical. Summer thunderstorms and resulting floods may cause water levels to increase with little or no warning transforming the quiet river into a raging torrent carrying large logs and debris.

Because the river is so variable, contact the park at 701-623-4730 ext 3417 for up-to-date information before launching on the river.

A river depth of at least 2.5 feet (699 cfs) at Medora is required for fair boating and 2.5-3.5 feet (699-1500 cfs) for good boating.

Prior to your trip, check river gauges regularly at these web sites to ensure water level is deep enough: <http://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nd/nwis/uv?06336000> for Medora, [uv?06337000](http://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nd/nwis/uv?06337000) for Watford City, and [uv?06335500](http://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nd/nwis/uv?06335500) for Marmarth.

Mileage along the river from South to North:

Marmarth to Sully Creek State Park	117.5 mi
Sully Creek State Park to Medora bridge	3 mi
Medora bridge to Cottonwood Campground	3.5 mi
Cottonwood Campground to Elkhorn Ranch	36 mi
Elkhorn Ranch to Juniper Campground	62.4 mi
Juniper Campground to Hwy 85 bridge	5.6 mi
Hwy 85 bridge to Hwy 22 bridge	40.5 mi
TOTAL mileage	268.5 mi

Trip planning and preparation

A trip on the Little Missouri River should not be taken lightly as the river winds through remote terrain. Emergency response could take hours or days and cell phones may not work in many areas. There are no reliable sources of drinking water, with the exception of Marmarth City Park, Sully Creek State Park, Medora, and the 2 campgrounds in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Temperatures and precipitation can vary widely in late spring. Plan to carry an adequate supply of water, food, warm clothing, and camping gear. Other supplies should include first aid supplies, maps, trash bags, sunscreen, spare paddles, and approved life jackets. All trash must be carried out with you. Fires are not permitted within Theodore Roosevelt National Park; cooking on a gas-fueled stove is recommended.

Camping on private lands adjacent to the river is prohibited by most land owners. Some years when the river rises high on the flood plain, a thick layer of mud limits campsites to high terraces. All campers must follow Leave No Trace principles including

proper disposal of human waste. Toilet paper must be carried out with you. A free backcountry permit is required for anyone planning to camp overnight in the national park. You can obtain the permit at any park visitor center.

All wildlife should be viewed at a distance. Bison can be found along the river corridor within the park. Throughout the length of the river, fences, including activated electric fences, may be strung across the water. Portaging around these obstacles may be necessary.

Additional web sites:
www.nps.gov/thro
www.fs.fed.us
nd.water.usgs.gov
www.ndparks.com
www.trnha.org (to purchase maps)