

Have a Devil of a Good Time in North Central Idaho

The names sound ominous: Hells Canyon. The Seven Devils Mountains. The River of No Return. But behind the names are some of the most heavenly family trip opportunities you'll find in the Intermountain West.

The Salmon River (nicknamed the River of No Return) and the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area offers adventure for the entire family — especially if your family's idea of a good getaway involves jaw-dropping scenery, jet-boat tours or whitewater rafting. Early summer is a great time to explore these areas; you'll face less traffic than during the high season later in the summer.

- **Scenery That Will Knock Your Socks Off:** The Seven Devils Range is huge. Really, really huge: This mountain range boasts elevations that jump from about 1,000 feet to the 9,393-summit of He Devil Mountain. You might think that with such stark contrasts the range would be inaccessible, but you can top 8,000 feet by driving up to Windy Gap. If you want to get out of the car and up a mountain, take advantage of hikes ranging from Class 1 to Class 5.

- **Jetting Through the River of No Return:** The Salmon River is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states, winding its way through and between the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and the Gospel Hump Wilderness areas. Riggins, the town that is the gateway to the Salmon, is known as the "whitewater capital of Idaho." Located in the canyon at the confluence of the Salmon River and the Little Salmon River, you'll find a charming small town with great outfitting.

The Salmon is one of the best places for a long river trip, dotted with white sand beaches and some of the best camping in the world. Jet boats are a great way to explore this area and are appropriate for the whole family, and you can choose between 3-, 4- and 5-day trips.

- **History by Boat:** The mighty Snake River carved Hells Canyon thousands of years ago, creating North America's deepest river gorge. Exploring Hells Canyon truly is an adventure — there are no roads that cross Hells Canyon's 10-mile wide expanse, and there is only one road on the Idaho side of the canyon that leads to the Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam and the Oregon-Washington boundary. But Hells Canyon is far from inaccessible; roads to the canyon are maintained year-round.

Hells Canyon starts high in the Seven Devils mountain range, where you will find mountain lakes and great trout fishing. Down in the canyon (where it is often

considerably warmer than up top, even in cooler early summer months), families can enjoy a boat trip that will highlight the unique scenery and history of the area. There are more than 700 archaeological sites in Hells Canyon, with evidence of human habitation going back more than 7,000 years. You'll see ancient petroglyphs and rock paintings as well as pioneer cabins and homes of the Chinese miners who came to the area in the 19th century. Sterling Cabin, located at homestead site Kirkwood Ranch, is open to the public as visitors center.

- **Getting There:** Spanning north to Moscow and south to Riggins, North Central Idaho can be found via US Highway 95, running north-south through Idaho. Drive north from Boise (about 180 miles to Riggins) or south from Lewiston (about 115 miles to Riggins). Lengthier northwest drives include Portland (460 miles) and Seattle (430 miles). Or hop a quick flight into Boise or Lewiston.
- **Best Time to Visit:** The region is beautiful year-round, but for best whitewater conditions, visit spring through early summer before the river flows increase.
- **Where To Stay:** Lodging opportunities include everything from RV campgrounds to rustic cabins, river-side hotels to bed & breakfasts and lodges.
- **For More Information:** (877) 364-3246, info@visitnorthcentralidaho.org, www.visitnorthcentralidaho.org

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