

# ADVENTUREX

WITHOUT ADVENTURE... WHAT IS LIFE?

## The Coruh River Rafting Expedition

Far from the traditional tourist resorts of the Mediterranean, in the picturesque North Eastern part of the country, lies the dramatic Coruh river. Flowing in the heart of the Kackar Mountain Range, this river epitomises the word action as we raft what is seemingly an endless wet roller coaster ride. Gorgeous rolling hills littered with alpine flowers frame our view, as we pass villages where friendly and welcoming locals beckon us with invitations to visit. This trip is for those of you wanting a real whitewater challenge! Some of the most challenging whitewater on the planet at high levels... this is certainly one for adrenaline junkies!

### Your Itinerary

#### Day 1:

You will be met at Erzurum's airport, a remote outpost in the spectacular region of far east Turkey by one of our guides who will take you to the hotel. This is the hotel that we will return to after the trip and is also the rendezvous point for those who arrived earlier. Here you are given some of the equipment needed for the river and you can leave behind anything you don't want to take with you. Then it's on to the bus for the start of the drive to your river adventure. The views are absolutely outstanding over the giant plateau as we travel for approximately 3 - 4 hours in to the heart of the Kackar Mountain Range. Bound for our destination of Maden, we wind over glorious mountain passes littered with alpine foliage. By late afternoon we have set up our camp on the banks of the Coruh. (Included: Lunch and Dinner)

#### Day 2:

With fresh brewed coffee to waken us as the sun begins to warm up the day, and a filling breakfast we start to prepare for our river journey ahead. We load our equipment onto our bus and begin our comprehensive safety briefing. We then begin to practice some of the paddle strokes and manoeuvres required to tackle the forthcoming rapids of the Coruh. The first day is flat water with a few rapids to test out our newly learnt skills.

#### Day 3:

Today's trip starts off with a 3km stretch of continuous whitewater until we hit the first Grade V rapid, affectionately known as 'The Bitch!' We have a short section of fast water to the next Grade V called 'Alexis', then down into 'Dynasty' and then finally the 'Stud'! Its not over there as we hit 'Mile Long Rapid', a continuous rush as we get bounced and buffeted by the rolling series of towering waves. This pretty much sets the scene for the next 3 days as from then on the rapids don't stop as we continue on this 'thrill a minute' roller coaster ride towards the first major village of Asku. Our journey draws much attention from the local villagers, as we pass them with screams of excitement. Due to the sheer force and speed of the water we will often stop and look at the larger rapids to check out lines to take and to see if there are any changes in water patterns from the last trip.

#### Day 4:

As we move further downstream the scenery gives rise to fantastic photo opportunities in the form of Byzantine castles which we take time out to visit. The climb up to them always rewards us with spectacular views over the surrounding countryside and of the river below. We also try to stop off at some of the villages that dot the riverbanks. We spend the evenings camped by the river's edge around an open fire, recounting countless stories of the fantastic first days rafting while feasting in the culinary delights that this fertile land offers. By the evening of Day 4 we have reached the campsite of Tekkale where we sample the hospitality of Cemil, the ex mayor of Tekkale who is one of the most charismatic people of the valley.

### Day 5:

Staying in the same camp for 2 days gives us the chance to relax a little and enjoy the picturesque surrounding area. However this is a rafting holiday and so we have a real gem of a river to raft today, the technical Barhal. We drive up to the put in point which is around 25km upstream and then basically raft back towards camp. This river is great fun and will put all those different paddling strokes to the test. We even stop beneath a hotel at the end of the day, climbing up the ladder to have an ice cold beer! Many of the people on the trip may take this chance to go and have a shave at a local barber or a nice massage.

(Included: All Meals Days 2-5 inclusive)

### Day 6:

We put on the river this morning after a wholesome breakfast. We have another fantastic whitewater day ahead of us! We pass the confluence of the Barhal river adding more water to an already 'pumping river!' We plunge through huge waves and manoeuvre ourselves around obstacles and down to our takeout. The 4 hour drive back to Erzurum is spectacular as we meander through the Tortem gorges in an impressive array of twisted rock and turquoise lakes of water. Upon arrival in Erzurum we check into our hotel for the evening and take the opportunity for a look around this intriguing town before a final group dinner. This is a great place to indulge in some Retail Therapy or get cleaner than you would ever think possible with a Turkish Bath - an amazing experience!

(Included: Breakfast and lunch)

### Day 7:

After breakfast at the hotel, we make our way to the airport for our onward journey home or alternatively a few days R&R in Istanbul.

(Included: Breakfast)

## Holiday Options

### Trekking The Kackar Mountains

What a fantastic way to conclude your holiday, by going trekking in the Kackar and Mescit mountains. Apart from fresh mountain air, and wonderful scenery you can explore many of the numerous churches built between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the great aspects to trekking around this region is that you are able to keep your personal equipment to a minimum and stay predominantly in Tea Houses and sample not only their fantastic hospitality, but also their amazing array of fresh food. For those wanting more information, please contact us - we have a great extension for 3 nights.

### Exploring Istanbul

This ancient city has so many contrasting faces and is fascinating to explore. Formally the ancient city of Constantinople, this remains a regular treasure chest for those wanting to wander about investigating all the many nooks and crannies! Highlights include going to Old Istanbul and visiting Aya Sofya, the spectacular Blue Mosque, the Mosaic Museum, The Hippodrome, the Sunken Palace Museum, Topkapi Palace, and the Grand Bazaar to name but a few! Please contact us if you want further information such as great places to stay and eat. This is an option that many of our guests really like as they have the opportunity to relax for a few days before they return home.

### Retail Therapy Options

Turkey is a fantastic nation for those of you with shopaholic tendencies. Wonderful crafts such as carpets, leatherwear, copper, clothing and jewellery adorn shops everywhere and formidable bargaining is a must for almost everything! Prices may well be set in certain establishments, but don't let this stop you trying your luck, especially if you are purchasing several items. Please note that Turkey is full of antiques, often sold by locals and this is frowned upon somewhat by government officials. They may if they suspect you, inspect your luggage on departure from airports throughout Turkey.

# The Details

## What Is Included?

- Transfers to and from Erzurum Airport. If you provide us with your arrival details we will meet you at the airport. We request that you are there on Day 1, the day your rafting trip departs.
- Hotel accommodation the night the river trip ends (Day 6) in a tourist hotel. This will be on a share twin basis with somebody else on the trip.
- Tented accommodation whilst on the river.
- All transfers to and from the river.
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7 (excluding dinner on Day 6). We can cater for any dietary requests.
- All rafting equipment, including the best in buoyancy aids, helmets, wetsuits and spray jackets.
- All camping equipment including thermarest style mattresses (*excluding sleeping bags*).
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers. We have a mixture of local and overseas guides who are extremely professional and are some of the most experienced guides in the world. These guys and girls make every effort to make your trip memorable and fun for you whilst at the same time ensuring your safety. They all hold up to date advanced first aid qualifications and in the unlikely event of an injury they have the expertise and professionalism to deal with it.
- All necessary permits and licenses.
- A very cool AdventureX T-shirt!

*Please Note:* Not included are flights, visas, departure taxes, travel insurance, inoculations, sleeping bags, dvd of your trip, alcohol, personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in town which are not included in the price and any extra accommodation outside what is provided.

## Getting There:

If you have any queries or problems with your flights please do not hesitate to call us and we will advise on the best option to tie in with your trip. To give you an idea Turkish Airlines run out of Heathrow Airport. These flights leave around 11am the day prior to Day 1, arriving into Istanbul that evening. The next day there is an early morning flight getting into Erzurum around 9.30 am on Day 1. The return flight is 10.00am departure out of Erzurum with an early evening arrival into London. There are many other options available so give us a call and we will give you advice on what is the best deal around. We can also arrange accommodation for you for the stopover in Istanbul, if applicable.

## Visa Requirements:

A visa is required by all British Residents entering Turkey and you may pay for this on your arrival. The normal cost for this is GBP £10 although prices do change. All other countries of the European Union do not require visas nor those from the antipodean nations of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Canadian citizens do require a visa but this can be obtained at the airport at a cost of USD\$20. Please also ensure that at your time of departure, you still have 6 months validity left in your passport.

## Jabs:

As always we recommend you consult your Doctor or local immunization centre before departing to Turkey. Bear in mind that many of the immunizations required can take weeks or even longer for the full course, so please leave plenty of time. We recommend that you are immunized against Hepatitis A, Typhoid and have a Tetanus booster.

## Exchange Rates:

The exchange rates for the Turkish Lira can be subject to some huge bouts of inflation. Present rates are around 1.49 Turkish Lira to US\$1 and 2.78 to GBP£1. The Euro is currently 1.90 to 1 Euro. You will find it to be no problem to change most major currencies in banks, hotels, post offices and shops. The smallest denomination is a coin of 50 Lira and the largest is 10,000,000. A point to note is that if you are travelling with Travellers Cheques (very advisable), they can take slightly longer to change and are subject to higher commissions. It is recommended that you check what the commission is going to be before commencing the transaction. To give you an idea as to how far your money will go - an average meal in a restaurant will cost you around £4, and a bottle of beer about 90c from the local

shop. You are able to convert some currency upon arrival at Istanbul Airport (cash only) if you would like to. Credit Card and ATM facilities are available.

### **Transport Services:**

There are plenty of options for getting around Turkey and all remain relatively cheap compared to those experienced in Western Europe or North America. Due to the country's size from West to East and the large distances involved, most travel is best undertaken using the comprehensive air services that are offered. Turkish Airlines link all of the major cities and popular destinations. Their competition is in the form of smaller local based airlines, whose services may well be cheaper, but their services also less frequent. If you are in any sort of a hurry then a train journey is probably not a viable option for you. These trips however are relatively cheap and although not so quick they are a great way to travel and will generally offer you a non smoking option. Buses on the other hand provide an environment that quickly submits you to a thick fog of tobacco! We advise that you check the bus before you get your ticket and try and organise a window seat or one beside an air vent. Buses are very cheap though and a very effective means of moving around the country. Quality of buses will vary however in general the standard is relatively good. You will pay around £2 per 100km for their services which are also quite frequent. Whilst in Eastern Turkey you will find taxis that have fares set by the town. Unfortunately these are relatively hard to establish unless you speak fluent Turkish! We recommend that you negotiate a fair price before embarking on your journey. In the larger cities such as Ankara or Istanbul, taxis have metres and it is illegal to not use them although they will try their best!

### **River Flows:**

The Coruh is a large volume river and services a huge catchment area which can mean that there are dramatic changes to the water level when it rains. To maximize these peak flows we choose to offer this river trip at this time in May / early June when the whitewater is HUGE but there is also the possibility of rain. Our later trips still enjoy fantastic whitewater but weather wise this is an optimum time to be out there with rain being not so common and the days long and sunny. This also means that it is a great time to be trekking if you decide to extend your trip with a jaunt in the mountains. However seasons vary from year to year due to snow fluctuations and rain patterns so while we can give you a reasonably accurate indication of water levels - water does do what it wants!

### **Climate:**

Weather in general remains hard to predict, but especially in this area of Turkey due to its mountainous nature. In May and early June cold snaps can hit without warning while then again temperatures have also been known to soar to a pretty tropical 40 degrees during the day. As a general rule though we find that weather is far more settled from mid to late June, so if you have an aversion to getting rained upon, may we suggest a later scheduled departure. The one drawback of this is that the water levels may not be quite so high. The evenings remain somewhat cooler, ranging from 15 to 20 degrees, so if you feel the cold make sure that you pop in a fleece sweater and pants. The days as we mentioned, get fairly warm, so we suggest plenty of sunscreen and lip balm as these items are hard to procure in this area of Turkey. Due to the unpredictability of rain we suggest a good raincoat as well. You are well equipped on the river with spray jackets however it is always good to have something for camps in the evening.

### **Fitness And Safety:**

We recommend prior rafting experience for this trip. Swimming ability is essential as is a sense of adventure. This is truly wonderful trip for those of you wanting a real adrenaline rush! The minimum age for the trip is 16 years and there is no upper age limit providing that you are in reasonable physical shape and you are aware of the rigors of a whitewater expedition in a foreign country. Please make a point of telling us if you have any medical condition or are on any medication that you think we should be aware of, plus any allergies. Safety is our foremost consideration at all times whether on or off the river. We are out there for a great time and we want you to feel comfortable in your new environment.

### **Dress Code:**

Due to Turkey being a predominantly Muslim nation (99%) we ask you to dress relatively conservatively around our camping areas or in town. This only involves making sure that you cover your arms and legs which is especially necessary for the women. At most times on the river, a pair of swimming shorts or a bathing costume with shorts over the top are perfect river wear and we recommend that if you feel the cold, a thermal top is not a bad idea to wear under your spray jacket and short wetsuits. Please refer to our list of suggested equipment to bring with you for the rafting portion of the journey.

### **Personal Equipment:**

After years on the river we have a thorough understanding of what is necessary to feel comfortable on the river by day, cosy around the camp at night and totally in style in town. A recommended list will be sent to you upon booking confirmation. We find that most people already have in their possession what is needed for a rafting trip and very little if anything in specialised equipment needs to be bought.

### **Finally:**

Please remember that things do change, prices go up and down, activities stop running or change format and weather can send the best laid plans out the door. AdventureX will do its best to provide what is described above but please take into consideration the nature of the journey that you are embarking on and the country that you are in and understand that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary. The Coruh abounds with exhilarating and inconceivable whitewater, masses of fun and a multitude of culture. This is an unbelievable river journey and an unforgettable country. See you there!