



OVERVIEW

Starting just outside Hopetown in the Northern Cape, this section of the river flows through an historic area which was first settled by Europeans in 1850 when Sir Harry Smith extended the northern frontier of the Cape Colony to the Orange River. Hopetown was a quiet farming area until several large diamonds, most notably the Eureka Diamond and the Star of South Africa, were discovered there between 1867 and 1869. Once the diamond rush had passed, the region returned to agriculture – today, there are several game farms in the area along the river, which makes for great game viewing! The river is fast flowing and fairly constant as it is below the Van der Kloof Dam which releases water for electricity. It offers many class 1, 2 and Class 3 rapids and we usually portage around the only class 4/5 rapid, the infamous Hells Gate!

THE TRIP

We use two-person inflatable boats that are easy to paddle and steer. Our standard trips are four days and five nights long – we spend the first and last nights on a local game farm and then wild camp for three nights along the riverbanks. Note: Our start and ends points are both in South Africa so **NO border crossing or passports are required.**

We cover around 55kms during the trip, so we spend a large portion of the day on the river, but we like to get to camp early to allow time for fishing, hikes and some downtime. Each trip is run as a self-contained wilderness expedition – we carry everything we need with us and take everything back out again at the end. This trip will provide you with a complete break from reality – no electricity, cell phones, computers and no stress. It is truly an opportunity to recharge your batteries and reconnect with yourself, your friends, family and nature. All you need to provide is your personal camping gear and drinks of your choice. All meals are included, as are IRF qualified guides, boating and safety equipment.

We use Witfontein Game Lodge as our base, and you'll spend the first and last nights of the trip here. Witfontein is a game and cattle farm with lovely views across the bush. Note that it is not on the river banks. Your guides will meet you here on the evening before your trip begins. You'll be transferred to the put in on the morning of your trip. In high season and with big groups and if Witfontein is not available, we may use Klok Inn at the start point. Depending on which spot we start from, there will be a bus transfer at the start or the end of the trip.



STANDARD ITINERARY

Your first evening will be spent at base camp. You'll enjoy a light supper under the starry night sky around the campfire and the next morning, after breakfast, your guides will give you advice on how best to pack your dry bags for your trip down river. Before getting on the water, you'll also have a thorough safety briefing and some paddling instruction.

Day 1: Paddling consists mainly of flowing channels, small rapids and flat water which takes you under the 'old Hopetown bridge', dated back to 1871. This is a cast steel bridge, the first built over the Orange river. We camp under trees on a grassy bank where the fishing is good.

Day 2: Brings bigger rapids and we enter the 'Lava Gorge' through 'Hell's gate', a short compulsory portage. We camp on a black beach named 'Full Moon' beach.

Day 3: Is full of excitement with lots of class 2 – 3 rapids which are loads of fun. You spend most of the day in the shallow Lava Gorge. We camp above the gorge with a pool which offer great fishing.

Day 4: Opens up with fast flowing sections and ends off with fun rapids before take-out. We normally take out around lunch time at Witfontein where you can relax and have a hot shower! The last meal is enjoyed around the campfire and you'll leave after a light breakfast the following morning.

PRICELIST

We have various packages available, including a low season discount and various optional add-ons - let us know if you have questions. Ask about our school and student discounted rates.

1. Premium Package: The most popular option with our legendary menu – join a scheduled trip or get a group together		
4 day, 5 night trip	High season (school holidays)	Low season
Adults	R8,350 pp	R7,500 pp
Children under 18	R7,500 pp	R6,750 pp
3 day, 4 night trip	High season (school holidays)	Low season
Adults	R7,500 pp	R7,200 pp
Children under 18	R6,750 pp	R6,500 pp
Family of 4 high Season Special!		
4 day, 5 night trip	R29,700 per family	
3 day, 4 night trip	R27,500 per family	
Minimum group size of 12. Maximum group size of 26. Includes camping, all meals, qualified guides, boating and safety equipment and VAT. Private group – min 22 in high season and 16 in low season.		

2. Group Package: discounted trip with a simpler menu – the best value option if you have a group of <u>22 or more</u>		
4 day, 5 night trip		
Adults	R7,500 pp	
Children under 18	R6,750 pp	
3 day, 4 night trip		
Adults	R6,950 pp	
Children under 18	R6,250 pp	
Minimum group size of 22. Maximum group size of 40. Includes camping, all meals, qualified guides, boating and safety equipment and VAT.		

Optional Add-ons		
Porter Boater	Maximum 2 per group	R3,950 each for trip
<i>The porter boater will help carry extra gear, help to set up and break down your camp and help to pack and unpack your boats. This is a participative trip, so it is important to note that the guide will HELP you, not do everything for you...</i>		
Upgrade to lodge accommodation		POA

3. River Safari Trips: Our River Safari is an all-inclusive and upmarket trip for small groups who'd like to do the Orange River in a certain amount of style and comfort.



The trip includes lodge accommodation for first and last nights and canvas tented accommodation with mattress, sheet, pillow and sleeping bags on river. Meals are served at table, under a stretch tent and include freshly made breakfast, lunch, sundowner snacks and dinner with a glass of wine. There is a guide team who looks after your meals as well as a team who carries all your tents and camping equipment and sets them up each day. Please request more details and a personalised quotation (Q&A's below refer more to the Premium and Group packages)

*Priced From

R17,000 per person | 3 day, 4 night (minimum 6 maximum 12)

R18,000 per person | 4 day, 5 night (minimum 6 maximum 12)

- *Please mail us for a bespoke quote for your group.
- We can advise on airport transfers etc.





Why Gravity?

Gravity has an unwavering attitude towards quality and safety on all our trips. We also offer excellent value – we include the last night in camp AND dinner in your trip fee! Some of the aspects which make Gravity one of the leading adventure companies in SA include the following.

- Only IRF qualified and trained guides, in the recommended guide: client ratios. 1:8 for the Gorge AND 1:10 for Thunder Alley
- SAMSA Approved
- Top notch equipment
- The best in bush cuisine – all fresh prepared on river
- Undiscovered sections of river – no crowds
- All inclusive – 2 nights in base camp and ALL meals – no hidden extras
- No border crossings or passports needed
- Public Liability insurance

Are you a member of an association?

Yes, we are members of SATSA and SA AIA and our guides are IRF registered, trained, qualified and experienced.

Do you have your SAMSA Licence to Operate?

Yes, we do, we were the first rafting operator to become compliant with the law.

Why are your trips more expensive than some other operators?

We use only qualified guides – they are professionals and we pay them accordingly. Our Guide: Client ratio is 1:8 on the Gorge and Thunder Alley sections and 1:10 on the Thunder Alley section. We invest in top notch equipment and keep everything well maintained – it's all about safety!

What does the trip include?

It includes all of your meals, from the evening of your arrival, to a light breakfast on the morning of your departure, hot beverages, camping accommodation at Witfontein Game Lodge on your first and last nights, 4 full days and 3 nights on river (3 days and 2 nights if doing a 3 day, 4 night trip), qualified and experienced guides, all boating and safety equipment.

How do I get up to the river?

You can self-drive or we can put you in touch with a transport service. The road is a good tar road all the way up from Cape Town and takes around 9 hours. The road is also good tar coming in from the Gauteng direction. The last section of +/- 50 kms to the camp is usually a good dirt road. This road does, however, become difficult after heavy rain. Full directions will

be supplied on confirmation of booking. You can also fly in to Kimberly Airport, 1.5 hours' drive away.

We would like something to commemorate our trip – what do you suggest?

We can offer you a personalised Gravity T-Shirt with the name and date of your trip in a choice of T-shirt colours for R195.00 per shirt. You will need to book this in good time to ensure that the T-shirts can be handed out on the trip itself.

Do I need my passport?

No, you don't. The trip starts and ends on the South African side, so no border crossing is required.

What are the facilities like?

Witfontein is a family owned and run game lodge with expansive lawns for camping, comfortable, air-conditioned rooms and lovely common areas. On river, we'll be wild camping.

What about ablutions?

On river, your guide will give you a thorough briefing regarding ablution procedures. Generally, you will wash in the river. We usually use the environmentally friendly 'cat hole' toilet method (don't worry – your guide will explain!), depending on the season and the size of your group.

What do I need to bring?

A full kit list will be supplied on confirmation of booking. Remember that whatever you choose to bring will get very dirty so don't bring your new clothes! You'll be able to leave your bags behind at the lodge.

Will my clothes & sleeping bags get wet?

There are no guarantees on a river trip but it's extremely unlikely - you will be supplied with a dry-bag, which will keep your clothes dry even if the bag lands in the water. You can also pack your clothes into black bags inside the dry bags to make sure. Your guides will explain to you the best way to pack your bags. Space is sufficient but limited so don't bring too much with you.

Can I bring my camera?

Yes. Although there can be no guarantees on a river trip, we do provide watertight dry buckets for cameras, binoculars etc. It is also worth considering buying a disposable waterproof camera.

Do I need to be fit? What if I'm not a strong swimmer?

Although we cover around 55kms on the trip, the river here has good flow, so you don't have to be an athlete to do the trip. A reasonable level of fitness and good health is required, though. Temperatures can be extreme, especially in summer so please bear this in mind. There is no age limit, but you should familiarise yourself with what the trip entails and make an informed decision on your ability to participate, based on your own fitness. Our general recommendation is a minimum age of 8 years and a maximum of 70. Each client is issued with a PFD ('Lifejacket') and is instructed on how to handle themselves in the water, you don't need to be a strong swimmer but please let us know if you are not confident in the water.

There is always the option to walk around rapids you are not happy to do. You also have the option of requesting a very stable raft, which is steered by a guide (dependent on water level and guide availability)

Is it difficult to steer the boats? Will I fall out?

We use 2-person inflatable 'crocs' that are very stable and easy to paddle, even for beginners. This section of river has lots of flowing water and a few challenging runs. There is therefore quite a good chance that you'll have at least one swim! You will be equipped with a PFD ('lifejacket') and will have been given instruction on exactly how to behave if you fall out of your boat. We also use only highly trained guides who will be on hand to rescue you if required. You also have the option of requesting our very stable 5-person raft, which is steered by a guide (dependent on water level and guide availability).

Is it safe? What about if I hurt myself?

Whilst there is an inherent element of risk in every adventure, running rivers with our professional guides should not be considered dangerous. Our guides are all trained in First Aid and we carry a First Aid kit. It is your responsibility to inform the guides about any allergies or medical conditions you may have and to make sure you have any personal medication with you (e.g. asthma pumps, allergy medication etc.). We do not always carry a sat communicator as there is cell coverage from high points at various locations along the river so please request that it be taken along if you prefer. In general, evacuation by helicopter is not possible due to the rough terrain and the distance from the nearest helicopter but in our 20+ years of operation, we have not needed it! We have comprehensive Public Liability insurance and access to a 24-hour crisis call centre with evacuation coordination support.

What about my drinks?

Gravity provides all meals, but you should bring your own choice of drinks. We will supply you with cooler boxes and ice. It's also a good idea to bring drink mix such as Game, which can be mixed with water - water purification tablets will be supplied. You can use this to keep your drink bottle full for during the day.

Is the water safe to drink?

Generally, the water is clean enough to drink but we use water purification tablets to be on the safe side.

What will the weather be like?

In summer (September-April), days are very hot (30-40 degrees) and the nights are also warm. In between seasons, the days are still warm, but the nights can be quite cool - a change of warm clothing and a good sleeping bag are required. In winter (June-August), days are warm (20-25 degrees) and nights are cold. The rainy season is late summer with thunderstorms occurring often.

What will the meals be like?

We pride ourselves on providing our clients with the best in bush cuisine. All meals are prepared fresh on the river and consist of hearty, healthy ingredients.

I have specific dietary requirements; can you cater to them?

We are very happy to cater for specific dietary requirements for example, vegetarians and those requiring halaal meats. For other dietary requirements and preferences, we will supply you with our menu so that you can advise us or bring along additional items or substitutions. We'll advise if there will be any additional charge for this, depending on your needs. You can also chat with your Trip Leader and discuss how you'd like him/her to prepare your food if necessary. If your food requirements are complicated, we ask that you consult with us before the trip so that we can come up with the best solution for you.

Why restrict group sizes?

We generally limit our trips to 26 or less (more for group packages).

Any other restrictions?

Our code of safety requires us to warn you against consuming alcohol or drugs in the 8 hours preceding the trip as well as on the water.

How do I book?

To book, we will need a completed booking form as well as a 40% deposit into the following account: Gravity River Tours, First National Bank, Claremont branch #204209, Business Cheque Account: 623 790 739 60. Your booking is NOT confirmed until we have received both completed the form and payment. Please make sure to reference your deposit with your name and the dates of your trip e.g. "Smith Thunder Alley Dec 12-15".



More Questions? Give us a call!

Tel: (021) 683 3698. WhatsApp: 082 692 4399

E-mail: adventure@gravity.co.za; www.gravity.co.za