

NORTH FORK AMERICAN RIVER

Class: 4, 9-13 miles / ½ - 1 day , 18-26 miles / 2 days, April – June, elevation: 1100 ft
Location: Meeting in Auburn or Colfax, off I-80, between Sacramento & Truckee

The North Fork American (Chamberlain Falls run), is the most intimate and romantic river trip in the Sierras. This clear, free-flowing aqua jewel makes rafting an inspiration. The rivers polished gray rocks, nearly continuous pool and drop rapids and unsurpassed backcountry scenery provide a wilderness rafting experience you will never forget. Paddle experience and competent swimming ability are requirements for paddle raft participation, particularly important at times of higher water, when eddies are scarce and large holes must be negotiated. Flows are dependant on the snow melt from the Granite Chief Wilderness between the ski areas of Sugar Bowl and Squaw Valley.

The challenge starts right from the beginning. First, we negotiate a Class III-IV gorge with a series of boulder slalom rapids called Slaughter Sluice before crashing over Chamberlain Falls. In short order comes more Class 3-4 rapids named Tongue & Groove, Zig-Zag, Bogus Thunder, Grand Slalom and Devils Staircase. Next, we take a breather, do lunch, and relax a little after more than four miles of intense Class 4 rapids. A picturesque side hike up Indian Creek to the falls may be scheduled. The second half of the trip is mellower, with frequent Class 2-3 rapids in a tranquil, peaceful canyon and you get the opportunity to admire the beautiful, clean water and polished granite as we pass through the Auburn State Recreation Area.

For 2 day trips on the North Fork American, combine with a day on the [South American](#), [Middle Fork American](#) or with another incredible spring run on the [North Fork Yuba](#) (Class 4 or 5).

Other Options: A Double run may be possible for a fit, active and experienced group. On the first trip we will lunch at Shirttail Canyon and take-out at this point. The second run will continue down the 9 mile run to the regular take-out at Ponderosa. **Express runs** are also possible, and you can skip the lunch and side hike, and blast down the whole thing with no stops. **An extended run** can be made for another 4 miles to Lake Clementine, and though this section of the North Fork American is only Class 2, the great scenery continues in this remote canyon. This last section is also a wonderful run on its own for small rafts and inflatable kayaks

Distances/Times for travel:

1hr/36 mi. E. of Sacramento,
1 hrs/95 mi. SW of Reno,
2 hrs/120 mi. NE of San Francisco,
2 hrs/149 mi. NE of San Jose,
2 hr/87 mi. W of S. Lake Tahoe,
2 hrs SE of Chico (96 miles),



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