



# THE DESCENT CANOE EXPEDITION

*'An adventure of a lifetime'*



THIS IS A CLASSIC CANOEING ADVENTURE TRIP IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

The River Spey descends through the Cairngorms National Park all the way to the North Sea. Our Expedition covers over 70 Miles of the River Spey, travelling through a huge variety of environments and conditions. The expedition starts on small meandering river bends surrounded by some of the most picturesque mountain environment in the UK, travelling through loch Insh; then leading onto the famous grade two rapids of the Spey descent and eventually onto the River mouth and the North Sea.

## WHAT TO EXPECT?

The canoes we use are paddled as a tandem, so you won't be on your own in the boat. They are 16th long and very stable (it may not feel like that when you first get in) and the boats are reasonably straight forward to control after a few instructions and practice.

We run an informal trip where the emphasis is on you having a great time. You don't need any canoeing experience as we coach you on the paddle techniques required throughout the first day and throughout the trip. You are accompanied throughout the journey by experienced canoe instructors so you are in safe hands.

The rapids and speed of the river grows as it flows to the sea and there are some great fun rapids and waves to conquer as you travel from the mountains to the sea.

We camp on the river bank in tents or hammocks once we start out on our second day on the river, we cook breakfast and dinner for you on the river and each evening we reflect and talk about the journey around the camp fire.

As experienced bushcraft instructors we can also teach show you the techniques used to start the camp fires and survive on the river bank. We can show you how to carve your own spoons to take home as a souvenir.

JOIN US FOR AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME.

## ACCOMMODATION

For the first, second and last evening we use a comfortable Lodge or bunk barn accommodation, allowing everyone to relax before and after the canoeing. The three nights spent on the river will give us the opportunity to wild camp, this can be in a tent or a hammock (the choice is yours), for more accessible camp sites we will also have use of a large bell tent.

## CATERING / FOOD

We do not provide catering on the first or last day. The first and last day we are travelling to and from Scotland, where we can stop for food and snacks on route. For the canoe days we will provide you with a breakfast, lunch and dinner. We do not provide you with personal snacks and luxury's; however we would recommend you bring these yourself.

## EXAMPLE MENU:

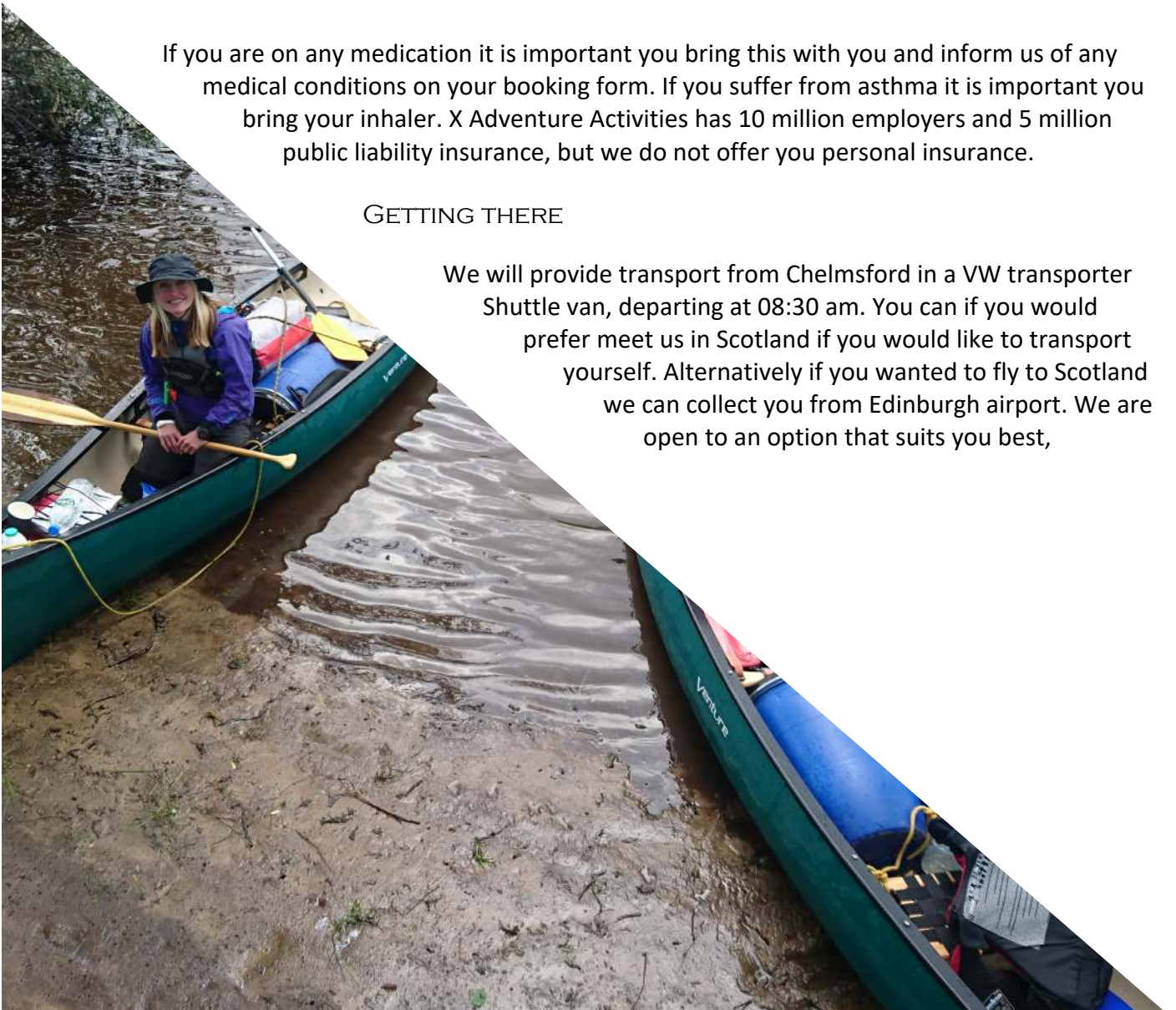
- Breakfast - Porridge, flat bread and spread, cereal bars, tea and coffee
- Lunch - freshly made rolls (choice of fillings), fruit, chocolate bar and a drink
- Dinner - Spaghetti bolognese, Vegetable Curry or wraps
- Coffee, tea and hot chocolate are available throughout the trip

## MEDICATION AND INSURANCE

If you are on any medication it is important you bring this with you and inform us of any medical conditions on your booking form. If you suffer from asthma it is important you bring your inhaler. X Adventure Activities has 10 million employers and 5 million public liability insurance, but we do not offer you personal insurance.

## GETTING THERE

We will provide transport from Chelmsford in a VW transporter Shuttle van, departing at 08:30 am. You can if you would prefer meet us in Scotland if you would like to transport yourself. Alternatively if you wanted to fly to Scotland we can collect you from Edinburgh airport. We are open to an option that suits you best,





## ITINERARY

### SATURDAY

Travel to Scotland, departing Chelmsford at 08:30 am, staying in a lodge or a bunk barn for the evening on Loch Insh. The evening will be spent organising equipment and canoes for the first leg the following day.

### SUNDAY

We will drive up river for the first day learning canoe skills, technique and safety on the water, this will involve a scenic, leisurely paddle from Spey Bridge just above Newtonmore. The stretch to Kingussie can be shallow but offers a variety of small, fun rapids, ideal for a first time experience on moving water. Apart from a couple of minor rapids below the Ruthven Bridge at Kingussie, the river meanders slowly through the Insh Marshes, an important bird sanctuary, and into Loch Insh, a major pool in the River Spey, where we stay in the bunk barn or lodge for a second night.

### MONDAY

Leaving Loch Insh we start our journey towards the sea. This section of river is perfect for introducing you to the canoeing skills you'll need later in the trip. We will paddle through the heart of the Cairngorm mountains and will stop for lunch at Aviemore before running some easy rapids towards our destination near Boat of Garten. We will be wild camping on the river bank for the night.

### TUESDAY

The river moves slowly through flat land towards Grantown-on-Spey, with a tail wind we may get to sail our canoes on this section. On the approach to Grantown-on-Spey the river becomes rocky and once through the road bridge the water starts to move decidedly seaward, with some good easy rapids. We will spend a second evening wild camping on the River bank.

### WEDNESDAY

The Ballindalloch to Knockando section involves the best of the white water on the Spey, which by now you will have the skills to deal with; you still might get wet with the odd wave! There are some interesting grade II rapids; in places providing fast flowing, turbulent water chutes; a real natural roller coaster ride. We are also in an area synonymous for malt whiskey with many distillery's dotted along the river banks. This will be our third and last night wild camping on the river bank.

### THURSDAY

The last day; the rapids start to ease but there are still lots of fun waves and rapids all the way to the sea, this is an extremely pleasant entertaining section. The river passes through steep tree laden banks, past stunning red cliffs and pinnacles of ancient iron rich glacial deposits. The last few miles are strewn with old Scots pine trees until reaching Spey bay and the end to this epic journey. We travel back up river to the lodge or bunk barn used on the first evening to celebrate completing our journey.

### FRIDAY

We depart from Loch Insh at 09:00 and travel home.



## WHAT TO BRING?

All specialist equipment is provided for the canoeing, including; canoes, paddles, waterproof equipment barrels and dry bags, buoyancy aids, helmets, spray cags, wet socks and wetsuits (if required).

We also supply the camping equipment which includes the following: tents or hammocks, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, stoves, gas, outdoor cutlery, mugs and plates, bushcraft knife, head torch and tent lantern.

You will only need to bring your own personal clothing for canoeing on the river and the evenings camping on the river bank. You will also need to bring snacks for the expedition, we do supply the food when wild camping on the river.

### Kit List

- Clothing for 5 days paddling. You need the clothing to be layered from thin layers when it's warm to fleece layers when cold. Jeans aren't suitable to wear canoeing, they can however be worn in the evening. Tracksuit trousers and quick drying layers would be the best. Fleece dry's quickly and would be essential for the colder days. You should have a minimum of 4 complete changes of clothing to include; trousers, t-shirts or base layer, fleece or jumper, underwear and socks.
- Footwear for the canoes, this can either be wellies, wet shoes, a closed toed sandal, even trainers (however they will get wet as sometimes you have to exit the boat and wade in shallow water or you may capsize).
- Waterproof jacket and trousers if you have them, we do supply a spray top, however this is hoodless
- Two towels, one for washing and one for drying river water.
- Black bags to put wet clothes in
- Trainers or footwear for the evenings (completely separate from the canoe footwear). You may want to bring two pairs and keep one for the journey to Scotland and back)
- Warm clothing for the evening (it can be very frosty in October in Scotland)
- You may want to bring a camping pillow
- Wash kit
- Sun glasses and sun cream (lets hope so)
- Woolly hat and warm gloves (sometimes biking gloves can be useful to paddle with to protect the hands as well)
- Torch (if you have one...we have head torches if not)
- A water bottle (minimum of 2 litres) - this can be a plastic water bottle
- A lot of snacks for the canoeing days

If you are unsure of any of the personal kit required or have questions about the trip, please contact us on:

[info@xadventureactivities.co.uk](mailto:info@xadventureactivities.co.uk) or 01603 893200