

Dirk Rohrbach Q&A: Dr. Dirk Rohrbach is a German physician, radio journalist, and National Geographic author and photographer. With his award-winning live presentations, he is one of Europe's most renowned inspirational speakers. He circumnavigated and crossed America by bicycle and paddled the entire Yukon River source-to-sea in a birch bark canoe. Both journeys have been turned into very successful tv-mini-series for the Franco-German public tv channel arte in Europe. In the summer of 2018 he became the first European and only the 12th person to complete the Missouri River source-to-sea.

#1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did) the situation?

Getting into the flow, appreciating the river for what it is and stop comparing it to the pristine Yukon ;-). Also, water was very high, hardly any good camps on beaches or islands. Figuring it out by taking a 7-day break and talking to river angels, listening to how much they love their river.

#2 What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefited from?

Getting to the source by hiking to it with you. Getting infos from you and the previous paddlers and the book. (Not sure if that answers your question?)

#3 What was the 5-most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? Explain.

cart - to pull fully loaded boat out the water and launch fast

hat - against sun

Garmin device - to stay in touch and share progress

cameras & recording device - to document

stove - to cook

#4 Prior to your trip, what was your weakest asset or least skilled or qualified trait for the trip and how do you overcome this?

paddling and loading a kayak, gain experience

#5 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for?

neoprene clothes, expect for one or two days

#6: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate.

how much I would struggle and how much I actually enjoyed the Mississippi (sandy camps and remoteness despite traffic) while not expecting much

#7 What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it?

wooden kayak I had built, very stable and relatively fast, but challenging to load

#8: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this?

carry food for at least a week before restocking, never any troubles

#9 What was your system for obtaining drinking water and what were the benefits as well as the disadvantages you had dealing with water?

carry 6-7 gallons of water in jugs and foldable bottles, refill in towns or at campgrounds, worked really well after finding out where

#10: If you were going to give advice for someone planning the same journey what do you feel would be best advice and things to consider that you now know about this journey?

Take your time, relax, stay patient and embrace the river for what it is

#11 Worst weather day? What happened?

July on Peck and Sakakawea, extreme winds, lost gear through waves on shore