

General Information about **River Trips**



To help you get the most out of your trip with NAVTEC Expeditions, we'd like to tell you a little about what to expect on the river. Any river trip is sure to generate a lot of excitement and anticipation, as well as a lot of questions. We hope the following information helps answer some of those questions and concerns. This guide is in no way a substitute for the wealth of information provided by your river guide, but it will introduce you to the general routines you can expect on your trip. Of course, if you do have any questions concerning your trip, you can always give us a call and we'll be happy to talk with you. Please remember to stop by our office the day before your trip so you can pick up your river bags so you can start packing. Bright and early the next morning, it's off to the put-in.

The Put-in

The put-in or launch ramp is a busy place, since other groups are usually launching too. The guides will get their boats unloaded as quickly as possible. Occasionally, we may need your help here, although you are not required to help. Once your personal river bags, ammo cans, beer and soda are accounted for and placed near the boat, sit back, relax, and enjoy watching the excitement. Soon we will issue and adjust life preservers, answer last minute questions, and be off on our river trip. A note on river bags and ammo cans: They go a long way in keeping their contents dry, but they are not 100% waterproof. Placing valuable items inside trash bags or ziplock bags before putting them in our river bags and ammo cans is a good idea.

Life Preservers

For your safety, life preservers should fit tightly. Once wet, fastening straps will loosen, so help your friend keep his or her life jacket tight. In other words, use the buddy system. If you end up in the river, the preserver could work itself around your neck and come off if not properly fitted.

Each preserver is given a name, usually of a special person or place that has made the Colorado River and its surrounding canyons unique. After your preserver is properly fitted, make

friends with it and remember its name. This will be your personal preserver, ready for use during the entire course of the river trip.

Utah state law requires life preservers to be worn at all times while on the river, except in designated areas. Your guide knows these areas. Even in these designated areas, preservers are to be worn: by all children 12 years old and younger, when swimming from the boat, while using inflatable kayaks, and during water-related activities such as a water fight.

Boat Safety

When in whitewater, hold on to boat lines to keep in place and on-board. Interior lines can be very reassuring and are most effective for keeping you secure. Your guide will go over this in detail before running rapids. If you have questions, please ask your guide to show you proper hand-holds. Keep hands and feet free of loose lines. After you run a few rapids you'll get a feel for the pitch and roll of the boat as it navigate a rapid. As your comfort level rises so does your enjoyment. If you feel uncomfortable, please let your boatman know. He'll be more than happy and answer additional questions, help you with your hand holds and body position, or even move you to a different location in the boat. NAVTEC's mature veteran guides are experts at whitewater navigation and assisting you in enjoying your river experience. We have 34 years of professional guiding experience to our credit. You will be in good hands.

If You Should Fall Out of the Boat

Although it is rare, it is possible to go overboard. If you fall out of the boat, assume a sitting position facing downstream and hold your life preserver at the neck line. The sitting position allows you to use your feet to ward off oncoming obstacles and it keeps dangling feet from becoming entrapped in submerged rocks. Grabbing the preserver at the neck will provide positive flotation and more importantly — keep it on.

The retrieval process involves your guide moving the boat toward you and/or throwing you a safety line called a "throw



bag.” Watch for either the boat or the brightly-colored bag and be prepared to swim a couple of strokes to assure rescue by boat or safety line.

When rescued by a “throw bag,” grab the bag and keep it close to your chest. Float on your back. This will make it easier to breathe while you’re being pulled in. Continue to keep your back to the boat as you’re being pulled into the boat so that those helping you can quickly and easily pull you up and in. They will pull you in by grabbing the collar of your life preserver. Once again, be sure to hold the neck of your life preserver — this will keep those helping you in from pulling it off you. If possible, it is best to re-enter the boat from the upstream side.

High Siding

If the boat is going to hit a rock, let the boat take all the punishment of the blow. It is easier to repair a boat than a broken arm or leg. When the boat hangs up on a rock, the upstream side of the boat is going to be pushed down by the current. It is very important to place the weight of your body on the rising side (the side against the rock). This interesting technique is called “high siding.” Listen for your guide’s command, using these very words. “High side,” this must be done as promptly as possible to be effective. Keeping your body weight on the low side will flip the boat.

If the boat capsizes, it is best to stay with the boat unless you are in a rapid and on the “down stream side,” or if the river is shallow and rocky. Remember, if you suddenly find yourself outside of the boat, it is important to always be on the upstream side. This prevents you from placing yourself between the boat and a downstream obstacle (you’ve heard of “a rock and a hard place...”). If you find yourself under the boat after a capsize, move in only one direction until you see light and break the surface. You may find yourself in the boat bilge (the open compartment), this area will have a pocket of air, and you will be able to breathe. If you become entangled in rope or rigging, calmly free yourself. Try to get yourself on top of the boat and help others to do likewise.

Motorized Whitewater RIBs

NAVTEC uses the motorized Whitewater RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) for many of its river trips. When moving about in a boat with the motor running, even on calm stretches, proceed with caution and announce your intentions. It is easy to lose your balance in a moving boat and go flying into the drink. If you did fall into the water, the propeller could cause serious injuries. Your guide will discuss this with you before the rapids. Because of the motor boat’s mass and ability to negotiate vigorous whitewater, it is especially important to hold on to safety and rigging lines. If you feel you do not have an adequate safety line, please bring this to the attention of your guide, and he or she will place a comfortable hand hold for you. It is also necessary to secure all personal belongings and spare rigging (straps and ropes). Articles of clothing and loose ropes can become entangled in the propeller if they were to fall out of the boat and disable the boat.

The inflation valves for the rubber boats are sometimes exposed. It is unsafe to use these valves as hand holds, because they are not designed to handle such stress and could pull out. All whitewater boats are multi-chambered and will float even when one of the independent chambers is damaged, but that tube will deflate immediately and may compromise the maneuverability of the boat. Such damage can be repaired, but it takes several hours.

Watch Out

Going barefoot or wearing thongs can be hazardous. On a slippery, wet rubber boat, it’s easy to lose your footing. On shore, sharp rocks, snags, cactus, etc., lurk — ready to get those exposed toes.

Please don’t get in the boats after dusk. In the cool evenings the boats get soft and can be tricky and/or hazardous to walk on. Also, lines, boxes, and coolers are loose and unstable. If you tripped, became unconscious, and fell into the water, we could be unaware of your plight. If you need to find something, please ask your guides. They will be happy to assist you.

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When on shore be careful when walking in front of and around the bow area of the boat. Bowlines securing boats are hard to see and easy to rip on, especially at night. They often jump up and grab un-suspecting feet.

Snakes, bees, scorpions, or poison ivy can be in the canyon, but they are usually not a problem if you stay on the trails. Ask your guide's advice if you are concerned about them. Snakes are shy and avoid human contact. Poison ivy in Canyonlands is very localized and grows in moist areas only. Again, ask your guide what it looks like, as it can be easily identified from shore. When in doubt, ask your guide.

Camping

Upon reaching camp, please do not wander off. The trip leader needs your attendance to hear camp etiquette procedures.

When camp is reached, the guides will untie all the gear and unpack their boats. If you are able, everyone pitches in and helps unload the boats and set up camp. Your help is welcomed, but is not required. If you have a health problem that prevents you from lifting heavy objects, please ask a guide to help you with your gear and refrain from straining yourself. Once the boats are unloaded, you will be able to find your personal bags and ammo can.

Your guide will give a brief demonstration on how to properly set up your tent and ground pad. It's probably not a good idea to set up your tent immediately upon reaching camp. Generally, the best time to set up tents is during the last half hour of light. In this time period, the winds have settled down and there is less likelihood of unwanted pests exploring your unattended sleeping quarters. To help keep these heinous critters from entering your sleeping bags and shoes, make sure they're sealed and secured. In the middle of summer, tents are too hot to sleep in unless it's rainy. Most nights you will be most comfortable sleeping out under the stars.

The guides expertly prepare all meals, mostly with the creative use of a Dutch oven. These ovens are a lot of fun to work with and you may help out if you like, but it is not

required. The guides will wash and clean all the cooking utensils, pots and pans. We do ask that everyone wash his or her own eating utensils and dishes. We clean dishes by what is called the "Five Bucket Method." The first bucket is for scraps, bones, corn cobs, etc.; the second is a soapy pre-wash; the third is a warm soapy wash; the fourth is a warm clear rinse and the fifth a disinfecting rinse (Clorox). Dishes are then air dried in a dish hammock, or designated table and silverware placed in a large plastic cup.

To help control pesky insects in camps, it is very important that we pick up all table scraps that inadvertently fall to the ground. A garbage bag is always set up at the dish washing station and/or in the kitchen. Not all plastic trash bags are for garbage, however. We recycle glass and aluminum cans, which are bagged separately from the garbage. Therefore, please look in the bag before disposing garbage. Garbage has been known to end up in amazing places. Because we like to leave our camps cleaner than when we arrived, we end every morning with the customary "beach patrol" for litter. Be the envy of your group by finding the most interesting item of trash.

No camp is complete without a fire. However, in an effort to protect natural resources, fires are allowed only in a portable fire kit called a "fire pan." Furthermore, only drift-wood may be gathered for burning. It is best to gather driftwood from small shoreline piles. We prefer to leave the high water drift piles untouched, as they may harbor animals and insects. They are also startling reminders of the historic floods that preceded modern dam construction.

Litter

While in the boat, give your litter to the guide. If you smoke, an empty aluminum can, furnished at no additional cost, makes for an ideal ashtray. Butts must be kept and disposed of when a garbage bag is available. These are out at all camps, and meals.

Toilets

At camp, we have a portable toilet set-up called "the groover." The groover politely accepts feces and urine. Sanitary napkins need to go in the garbage. After using the



groover, you'll find a hand washing system set-up nearby. It is very important to use this system to avoid passing bacterial infections to one another. If you prefer, you may use river water and soap to wash your hands, as long as the soap you are using is bio-degradable. The formal set-up works with three containers: 1) a bucket of river water; 2) a bucket to contain waste water; and 3) a small can with holes to provide a stream of water to rinse hands. Your guide will give a demonstration of its use. "Groover" demonstrations upon request. Toilet supplies and extra supplies are available at the toilet site. A signaling device will be used and explained by your guide to ensure your privacy while using the toilet facility.

If you only need to urinate, do so directly in the river. There are four reasons for this: 1) it is a Park Service regulation; 2) it leaves the human body as a sterile liquid and is harmlessly dissipated in the volume of the water; 3) it leaves no odor; and 4) it will not provide nutrients for unsightly algae growth near shorelines (wet sand). When away from the river, it is best to urinate in an area that is not a prospective camping or picnicking site. Using dry water courses (washes or arroyos) is best, as rain water will eventually dissipate odors. Other ideal locations are soil areas with good drainage, such as loose sand and gravel. Rocks and soil with poor drainage are not suitable since exposure to sun encourages urine odor.

When you're not in camp and nature calls for something other than urinating, don't panic. Your guide has a portable toilet system called the "day groover." He will explain its simple use to you. Again, we use this system not only because it is a Park Service regulation, but it's the easiest and cleanest way to care for this need.

Hiking

There are several organized hikes on the trip. Many of them are short walks to pre-historical or historical sites worth a memorable photo. We always welcome and encourage you to participate in any such activities. Ask your guide about the difficulty of the hike, as some are strenuous and some are easy. No hike is mandatory and if you prefer to rest in the shade, this is by all means acceptable.

Exploring around the campsite after a day on the river is extremely enjoyable. Hiking alone is not allowed, and always explain to the trip leader your intentions and direction of travel. Stay on the trails whenever possible and please do not disturb plants, rocks, or animals. We literally go out of our way to leave microbiotic soil crusts undisturbed. This is the dark, mottled-looking ground cover of the desert soil, and is essential for nurturing and protecting the soil for the native plants. It is a living organism of fungi, algae and lichens, and is easily destroyed when walked upon. Your guide will show you some examples of this amazing organism to help you appreciate it and, thus, prevent damaging it.

Swimming

Always check with the guides first before going into the river for a swim. Never dive into the river from the boat or shore. An undetectable rock, log, or sandbar could be lurking in the river just waiting to injure your neck and back. Always swim with another person if not within 40 feet of the boat. This seemingly arbitrary distance is the range of a boatman's "throw bag."

Bathing

Slow moving, waist deep water with a smooth sandy bottom is the best for bathing. Please use biodegradable soap. If you're in a tributary stream or within 200 feet of a tributary stream's confluence with the Colorado or Green Rivers bathing can not be allowed. This will help to protect the native fish species, four of which are endangered varieties. Also, never bathe directly upstream of a beached boat, as the river's current may tow you underneath it.

Water Fights

Some people find water fights fun. It's a great way to cool down and be comfortable when the temperature is hot.

However, for everyone's safety and comfort we have some strict rules that are taken seriously:

- Respect non-participants.
- If you throw water, your life preserver must be properly worn, and you may hit only those people wearing their preservers.
- Boarding other boats or running around on your boat is



not allowed.

- Grabbing buckets from other people is not allowed.
- Cameras are ruined in water fights. You are responsible for other people's property if you throw water. Make sure that all camera and video gear is stowed away before you throw the first bucket of water.

Being Comfortable

Watch out for the sun. Out here in the desert, it's easy to burn. Keep covered and use sun screen liberally. We recommend sunglasses with ultra violet protection for the sun and a retaining string (Chums) on them for the rapids.

It's easy to become dehydrated. In fact, it's the number one health problem in the wilderness. We carry plenty of readily available drinking water. You should drink at least 3 quarts of water each day, even more if you are hiking a lot. Alcoholic beverages or sodas are popular on river trips and we invite you to bring what you like, however, they are no substitute for water. Alcohol and caffeine are diuretics, therefore, you need to drink more than the recommended 3 quarts of water each day to compensate for the effects of such "alternative beverages."

Alert Us

Before the trip, please alert us! Inform our office and your trip leader of any important medical information about yourself and your group including diabetes, heart complications, seizures, or allergies pertaining to foods or insects. Also, be safety conscious at all times during your trip. We are a long way from hospitals, doctors, and pain-relieving medications.

Inflatable kayaks

Inflatable kayaks (IK) are a blast. Paddling by yourself away from the main boat is a wonderful experience that you will look forward to many times during your trip. The independence is exciting and rewarding, but it is not without its hazards. There are some simple guidelines you need to follow to help make your IK experience safe and enjoyable. Remember, you must follow the guide's instructions.

Always stay between the first boat and the last (sweep) boat.

Stay close enough to a boat to easily communicate with it, but not so close that you interfere with the boat's navigation. When you are too near the first boat, back paddle or turn the kayak around and paddle upstream. As a general rule, kayakers should space themselves about 75 feet upstream of a raft when entering a rapid. This will help prevent running into the rafts in the rapids. This distance will vary depending on water level and the section of river that you are on. Your guide will let you know.

Practice paddling and controlling your kayak before entering whitewater. Experiment with various paddle strokes in calmer water and see what your kayak will do. This will give you confidence in the faster water.

If a guide is pointing in a certain direction, he's telling you to go in that direction. This will mean moving toward the left shore or toward the right shore. It's important to watch for hand instruction from the guide in the lead boat. Wind and the noise of the rapids make verbal communication difficult. You should generally run the rapids in the same place the raft in front of you does. There are exceptions, so watch your guide for hand signals.

If you want to run larger rapids, first practice getting back into your kayak after falling out. IK's are much easier to get into than hard-shell kayaks, but it's still a tricky process in the middle of a rapid. If you do go swimming remember to always hold on to your paddle.

When you are in swift water at shore, always land or take-off downstream of any obstacles such as boats, trees, or rocks. This prevents you and the kayak from being sucked under the raft or obstacle. Properly fitted life preservers and shoes must be worn while using the inflatable kayak.

Don't sit on the splash covers or use them as handles to turn the boats over. This could tear the fabric and compromise the stability. Please take care of equipment so that those on future trips can have as much fun as you did.

Paddle Boats

Paddle boats are another exciting way to run the river. With everyone in the boat contributing to its navigation, there is

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an exceptional sense of accomplishment after successfully running a rapid. These boats will definitely challenge your teamwork skills, and to work effectively as a team, you must listen to your humble guide, other wise known as a paddle captain.

There are four main commands your guide will call: 1) all forward, 2) all back, 3) left turn, 4) right turn. These commands are important to learn, and your team will have plenty of time to work on them before the rapids.

When sitting on the raft, face forward and keep your shoulders square with the raft. There are three variations on how to sit in a paddle boat to reduce your chances of falling or being tossed out the boat:

- 1) In calm water, sit high on the tube and lean out to stroke.
- 2) In small to large waves, sit with your weight in the raft with a toehold.
- 3) For violent waves or holes, your guide may give the command to “hold on.” For a secure hand hold on a paddle boat grab the center line rope with your inside hand and the paddle with your outside hand, tucking the paddle into your chest. It’s important not to lose your paddle. Time your strokes in unison with the forward, right paddler. This will help prevent the boat from going in circles. If the raft hits a rock, cliff, or is caught in a hole, you’ll need to “high side,” which means you move to the side of the boat that is rising. See “High Siding” section.

If someone falls out, they will usually be within a few feet of the boat. If this is the case, reach to them with your hand or paddle, and pull them to the boat where they can be helped back in. Do this while holding on to the center line, keeping your body weight in the raft, otherwise, two people will be in the water instead of just one. Always be prepared to help your fellow paddlers.

The raft, when wet, is very slippery. If you slip, it is better to slip into the boat and onto the floor than to slip out of the boat. Beware though, when on the floor of the boat, it’s possible to bang your knee or tailbone if the boat slides over

a rock. If you are heading for the floor, don’t try to fight it, but return to your position as soon as you can. Points will be awarded for gracefulness of recovery and whether anyone noticed or not.

Anticipate the actions of the boat and be aware of the position of your paddle. It can become a weapon during an unexpected buck, jolt, or sudden stoppage of the raft. Keep the “tee handle” covered by gripping the paddle correctly. If you must let go of the “tee handle” to hang onto a rope, keep the paddle tucked near your chest with your other hand.

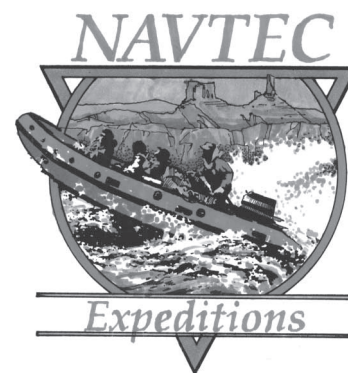
Tennis shoes, tevas, or aqua socks need to be worn at all times while in the paddle boat. Thongs and light weight sandals should not be worn because you stand the chance of loosing them off your feet.

Most Important of All

This is your vacation, so relax! Leave the details to us. If there is anything we can do at NAVTEC Expeditions, please call our friendly office staff.

And, while on your trip with us, please be sure to communicate with your guides. They are all professionals who, through their many experiences, have heard just about everything and have handled a surprising variety of situations. So, feel free to speak up if you have any questions, concerns or comments. They’ll do their best to take care of things.

Thanks, again, for traveling with us at NAVTEC Expeditions.



For more information, call NAVTEC Expeditions at 800-833-1278