



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. Once your personal river bags, ammo cans, beer and soda are accounted for and placed near the boat 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 zip lock 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. 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 navigates a rapid. As your comfort level raises 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 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, you'll 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 even if you cannot swim. Guides will go provide an in-depth safety talk which includes pulling swimmers back aboard.

Motorized Whitewater RHIBs

NAVTEC uses the motorized Whitewater RHIB (Rigid Hull 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 you are underway. 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 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.

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 are easy to trip 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 much 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 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.

Our menus and crew are flexible to accommodate dietary requirements, just let the office know ahead of time so we can be prepared. 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. Your guide will give a demonstration of the "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 cleanliest way to care for this need and the desert.

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. A small day pack is nice to have along to carry water, snacks, and camera.

Exploring around the campsite after a day on the river is extremely enjoyable. Hiking alone is not allowed. Always explain to the trip leader your intentions and direction of travel. Stay on the trails and please to not disturb plants, rocks, or animals. We literally go out of our way to leave micro biotic 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 cannot 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 rivers 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. You should carry a water bottle with you that have a good lid or a camelback. A small carabineer to hook it near you on the boat is nice as well. 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."

Glass bottles are not allowed. Please only bring aluminum cans, or plastic bottles.

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 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.

Paddle Boats

Paddle boats are another exciting way to run the river. With everyone in the boat contributing to its navigation, there is 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, otherwise known as a paddle captain.

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.