

# Westwater Canyon

## *On the Colorado River*

### *Proposed Wild and Scenic River & Wilderness Area*

### **2 Days / 1 Night and 3 Days / 2 Nights**

**What's Special:** Best short whitewater trip in the West. World-renowned rock formations. Favorite of National Geographic.

**Mindset:** Looking for a brief, but comprehensive river trip experience

**Rapids:** II - IV (depending on water levels)

**Hikes:** Easy to Moderate (your choice)

**Rafts:** Oar boats, paddleboats (by request) and inflatable kayaks (depends on water level)

**Ages:** 10 years and up

### **Westwater has all the components of a classic river trip:**

Great whitewater, wonderful camp sites, lots of good hikes, remote wilderness canyon, excellent opportunities for water fights and mud baths, lots of flat water to practice inflatable kayak skills.

This legendary canyon of powerful rapids and outstanding canyon scenery is remote, a place to leave day-to-day life behind and take on a playful and adventurous attitude. The upper canyon is surrounded by sandstone spires, and as you progress, the river cuts into the black granite, polishing it to a reflective shine.

There is great contrast between the serene solitude of the upper canyon and the drama of the powerful rapids in the lower canyon. As we drift towards the rapids, the river cascades through the ever-deepening sandstone monuments. Entering a narrow black granite gorge, the river meets opposition from the canyon walls, creating the fast and furious rapids that give Westwater its reputation.

### **A Journey Where the River Sets the Pace.**

This proposed Wild and Scenic River is totally isolated from modern civilization by the deep cut of the Colorado River - only blue sky and star-filled nights on the edge of roaring rapids. Take the time to absorb the beautiful scenery, unwind, and enjoy the company of people with similar interests and values. Each season in the canyons reminds us that nature still sets the rhythms of our lives.

### **Is this trip for me?**

You don't have to be experienced to take this river trip, just be looking for some adventure and a little challenge. There is one day of fast and exciting rapids, through the Black Granite Gorge. The other day(s) is slower moving with smaller, fun rapids. The river invites swimming and water frolicking, as the water is warmer than in other western rivers. Each day includes time for hiking, exploring, swimming and relaxing.

### **Never rafted or camped before?**

Those new to the river and first-time campers are encouraged to join us. Our campsites along the riverbank are rustic. However, we bring everything we need with us on the rafts and set up a new camp and kitchen each evening. We take care of you and make it all easy. The guides prepare fresh meals while you relax and enjoy hors d'oeuvres. We'll teach you about living in the great outdoors, setting up camp and moving at the pace of the river. You chose us because we're at home in the outdoors, in fact, it's our way of life.

## Everyday You'll Enjoy:

**The River:** The towering red sandstone cliffs change to shiny black granite walls as the Colorado River plunges into Black Granite Gorge. Here are the incredible rapids you have been waiting for: *Little Hummer*, *Funnel Falls*, *Last Chance Rapid*, and of course, the infamous *Skull Rapid*. On the three-day trip, there are more miles on the river and through different canyons but both trips include running through the famous Westwater Canyon. (The additional canyons run depend on water level.) The last afternoon on the river there's some slower moving water, with time to swim, lounge and absorb the canyon beauty.

**Hiking and Walking:** Time is set aside to walk to historical and geological sites. We explore the wonders of these canyons every day.

**Learning and Interpretive Time:** Our guides are Naturalists with great depth of knowledge about these Canyons, the history, the geology, the wildlife, and the legends. They know the 'secret' places that only exploration and experience reveals. They share it all, connecting you to this incredible country too.

**Dinner Time and Camp Time:** Camp along the riverbank, deep within the Canyon walls. A portable kitchen and dining area is set up where abundant and tasty dinners are prepared fresh by the crew as you relax by the river's edge. Stargazing is a favorite evening activity as the clean air and remote setting provide a star show usually reserved for astronomers and their telescopes. Remote campsites and hiking trails offer unparalleled photographic opportunities.

**Motion Picture History:** Many production companies have used Westwater Canyon to shoot rafting footage for their movies, documentaries and commercials. In fact, the Moab/Monument Valley area is the motion picture capital of the great Southwest. From John Wayne to Indiana Jones, from *Thelma and Louise* to *Independence Day*, the stars have played out their escapades here. They've left wagon wheel to starship tracks on the red sand and slickrock.

**Historical Features:** A few white men settled here, and even fewer wrote anything about it. There's lots of legends leaving questions about the facts. We'll spend time exploring some of these sites: the gold miner's cabin, the outlaw cave and the secret grave a half mile downstream from the cave. The Old West comes alive as we walk through these sites and contemplate the legends.

**Geological Features:** This unique canyon attracts geologists and rock hounds alike. Massive faults have distributed tons of settled rock, leaving fascinating formations and exposed rocks that are seen few other places in the world. The black, uplifted rocks in the canyon (metamorphic granite gneiss) represent the oldest exposed formations in eastern Utah (pre-Cambrian: 1.75 billion years old.) The highest pre-Cambrian gneiss cliffs reach approximately 200 feet above Skull Rapid. Above the black rock are the multi-colored layers of the Chinle formation and the massive, smooth, reddish brown cliffs of the Wingate sandstone.

**Wildlife:** The wildlife is abundant here, though in the heat of the day you'll only see lizards sunning themselves while the eagles and hawks play on the thermal airstreams as they rise along the canyon walls. In early morning and late afternoon, deer, muskrat, beaver, coyote and the great blue heron move along the river's edge. Too warm for trout, the endangered Colorado Squawfish and the Humpback Chub thrive here. *National Geographic* chose us to navigate them through Westwater Canyon to photograph and write of the dramatic scenery and its unique wildlife habitat, which are highlighted in their *Wild and Scenic Rivers* book.

**Water Levels:** Depending on the snowpack and time of year, river water levels will vary. The character of a river varies with each change in the water flow. Some rapids are most challenging at high water, while others require greater skill at low water. The different flows have their appeal, and we provide specific watercraft that will make the most of each water level.

Westwater Canyon has rapids rated from II - IV, based on the scale of I - VI.

## **What is Included:**

**Orientation** the evening before the river trip.

**Full Days on the River:** We begin early the first day and return you the last day at day's end.

**Highly Experienced Licensed Guides** trained in the art of river running. All guides are licensed, have Red Cross Emergency Response, CPR and river rescue training. Few companies train this extensively.

**All Rafting and Safety Equipment:** Rafts and related equipment, life jackets, safety equipment, personal dry bags and boxes for your gear, kitchen, dining and toilet equipment.

**All Meals** beginning with lunch the first day through lunch the last day. Our menus are healthy, creative and are prepared fresh daily by our guides. Many of our fruits and vegetables are locally grown. Dinners always begin with hors d'oeuvres. The entrées are grilled, the salads freshly tossed and the sides are seasoned to a zesty western flavor. Breakfast and lunch are equally tasty with varieties of foods to choose from. Every meal is balanced and there is always plenty. We can accommodate different diets and food restrictions.

**Transportation** is provided to and from Moab, Utah.

## **Itinerary: (subject to change)**

**Note:** To provide you the best possible river trip we alter our route as the water level changes. On some trips we'll shoot the rapids in Black Granite Gorge on the 1st day and on others it will be the 2nd day (or 3rd on a three day trip.)

**Day 1:** The expedition begins at our river complex in Moab, Utah. We'll drive to the river launch site, load gear on the rafts, have a talk about safety and "river time" and we're off. We'll walk to historical and geological sites. (The 3-day trip has more time to explore the wonders of this spectacular canyon.) The guides prepare a fresh buffet lunch. Camps are on remote beaches, where the evening always begins with hors d'oeuvres. There is time to hike, swim or just sit by the river watching the sun go down. And then comes our special western dinner. Save room for dessert.

**Days 2 and 3:** Spend the days on the river. Hearty breakfast and fresh buffet lunch provided. You'll be returned to Moab around dinnertime. (If you are on a three-day trip, camping is on the riverside again, with another day of rafting. Additional dinner, breakfast and lunch provided.)

## **The Details:**

**Weather** is usually warm and sunny and very user friendly. In May and June the day temperatures are in the 90's. In July and August expect 90's and low 100's. Brief afternoon showers sometime happen, so bring your rain gear. Summer evenings are very comfortable, though cool in the Spring and Fall. It is a very dry climate, so the heat is not the sweltering kind. Besides, the best part about being too warm is getting in the river to cool off.

**Trip Lengths:** We offer 2 and 3-day river trips through famous Westwater Canyon. The two-day trip includes one night under the stars. The three-day trip floats through more canyon country and offers two nights of camping and stars. The actual mileage depends on the water level.

**Type of Rafts:** All of our equipment is top quality, state of the art and carefully maintained and serviced. Each is maneuvered by a highly qualified guide. The rafts are 17 foot inflatable OARBOATS, carrying 4-6 people. The guides maneuver the raft with a set of oars secured to a frame in the middle of the raft. This is considered to be a more stable craft than a paddleboat. PADDLEBOATS are available at certain water levels and by advanced reservation only. Paddleboats are inflatable 15-16 foot rafts manned by people and their paddles. The guide gives instruction and navigates from the back of the raft.

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**Our Guides:** Our service professionals take your safety seriously while they offer you fun and excitement. Each is literally a 'jack-of-all-trades.' They are skilled enough and strong enough to navigate the rapids; have Emergency Medical Training and CPR certification and river rescue training; know how to prepare great meals; and are well-versed in the ecology, geology and history of the Canyon. Most of all they want to show this country to you, and share with you what they have discovered here. After all, this is their backyard.

**Our Office Staff** is personally committed to helping you plan your river vacation to meet all your desires and expectations. Michelle, our Director of Guest Services, has arranged guests' vacations throughout the western United States for four years.

**Custom Trips** of various lengths are available here because we have our choices of launch and pull-out sites. Also, our Westwater trips can easily be combined with a horseback, jeep, or mountain bike trips through Utah's incredible canyon country.

## **We'll make you comfortable in the wilderness:**

- ◆ Your safety and comfort are our # 1 priority.
- ◆ Your days are filled with nature exploration.
- ◆ Exciting and challenging rapids.
- ◆ You'll be with compatible people.
- ◆ You'll learn something new.
- ◆ Portable bathrooms to alleviate concerns of personal hygiene, cleanliness, and privacy.
- ◆ You can bathe in the warm river.
- ◆ We'll teach you everything you need to know to be 'at home' in this natural setting.
- ◆ This Wild and Scenic Area is remote, which means no roads, no phones, and of course, no faxes.

## **Environmental Awareness:**

*We have Proven that Businesses Can Be Socially and Environmentally Responsible*

Environmental responsibility is an ethic that everyone in the company believes in and adheres to. We recycle and reuse all that we can and use recycled products wherever possible. We make our voices heard politically and contribute financial support to many conservation causes. We volunteer for many community boards and service programs. We are actively involved in a number of Conservation Boards, donating hundreds of hours yearly to environmental issues. We incorporate Earth awareness in all our river trips and "take only pictures and leave only footprints."

## **What makes the Expeditions' Difference?**

Professionalism and dedication to excellence. **We are committed to making a difference in your life.** It's your vacation, those valuable days that you dedicate to improve the quality of your life. We are grateful for the opportunity to share them with you.

*Call now to reserve your Summer Expedition*

*Hidden Trails 1-888-987-2457*

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