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best things about the Merced

- Big, roller-coaster Class III & IV rapids
- Exciting, participatory paddle rafts
- Green springtime scenery
- Less than 1 hour from Yosemite Valley
- Split Rock Rapid

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 1

Length in miles: 14 - 18

Overall difficulty: IV-

Highest difficulty (#): IV (3)

Rapids/day: ~15

Gradient: 32 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Ned's Gulch, Fluffy Bunny, Split Rock

Types of boats:

Paddle and oar-paddle combination

Minimum recommended age:

14 before July 1, 10 after July 1

- Rapids:** ★★★★★
- Scenery:** ★★★
- Wilderness:** ★
- Swimming:** ★★★

5

best things about ARTA

- Friendly, fun & gracious guides
- Active, engaging & informal style
- Steadfast commitment to safety
- Over 50 years of experience on the west's most iconic rivers
- We donate our profits back to protecting the environment



Not just another day in the Park

After plunging more than 1,400 feet over Yosemite Falls and winding gently through Yosemite Valley, the Merced River still has something left for us: namely, great whitewater. This is a free-flowing river and it feels like it; the water is fresh, the rapids are frisky, and the river changes daily as the snow melts. When the flow is high (mid-May to mid-June), there is no better day of rafting: all-forward, straight-shot lines through big, roller-coaster waves. All day. Super fun. When the water isn't high, the rapids are still fun, just a bit tamer; like a little roller-coaster, (perfect for younger kids). If you've got plans to visit Yosemite National Park, you should spice up your vacation with a day of rafting on the Merced.

Itinerary:

The Merced is an uncontrolled and unpredictable river, so our itinerary varies to take advantage of the best whitewater on any given day. We will meet at Midpines, then take a short van ride to the actual launching point on the river. When the water is very high, we will all practice swimming at the launch site. We will get an early start on the river, and will raft between 14 and 18 miles, running numerous rapids including the famous Ned's Gulch.

During the day we will have time to enjoy a wonderful picnic lunch along the river, play in the water and savor the historical sites, scenery, and spring wildflowers along the Merced. We will return to the meeting place around 5:00 pm.



*"We couldn't have asked for better guides.
Don't change a thing!"*
Tom Alles

The Merced~ logistics



1 day rafting trip

Meeting Place

Midpines Park and Ride Lot
Highway 140, Midpines, CA

Meeting Time

9:00 am on the morning of your trip.

Return Time

Between 5:00 and 6:00 pm.

Pre-trip checklist

- **Complete on-line registration**
(follow the directions and link that came with your original reservation)
- **Plan for the unexpected**
(purchase Travel Insurance through [USI Travel Insurance](#)).
- **Gather and pack your gear**
(there is a complete list on the next page; call if you have any questions).

What we provide

- Transportation to the river and back
- Friendly, professional guide service
- Fresh and hearty picnic lunch and snacks
- All taxes and government access fees
- Lifejackets, helmets, and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip

What you are responsible for

- Transportation to Midpines
- Meals and lodging before and after your trip
- Guide gratuities – If you truly enjoyed your trip, tipping is a great way to show your appreciation. Tipping is optional and personal, but since a lot of people ask, a customary amount is between 10 and 15 percent of the trip cost. Tips can be given to the Lead Guide who will share them equally with the entire crew; (and the entire crew will appreciate them greatly – thank you.)

Where and when to meet

We'll meet you at the Midpines Park and Ride Lot at **9:00 am on the morning of the trip**. Midpines Park and Ride is located along Highway 140, 5.1 miles east of the Highway 140-Highway 49 junction in Mariposa and 27.1 miles west of the Arch Rock entrance station to Yosemite. Driving time from Yosemite Valley is about 45 minutes. From San Francisco it is about 3 ½ hours via 120 through the Park or via 140 through Merced. From Los Angeles it is about 5 ½ hours via Highways 99 and 140. If you wish to fly, Fresno is the closest airport, which is about 1 1/2 hours away.

Where to stay

Accommodations in the El Portal area include Cedar Lodge (209/379-2612) and the Yosemite View Motel (209/379-2681). If you are coming via the Northern Yosemite entrance (Groveland), consider Evergreen Lodge (800/935-6343). Camping is available along the river at "first-come, first-served" Forest Service and BLM campgrounds and at Indian Flat RV Campground (209/379-2339). Camping inside Yosemite National Park can be reserved in advance (877-444-6777 or www.recreation.gov).

What to bring

During the spring months, when we offer most of our one-day trips, the Merced is full with snowmelt and is quite cold. Everyone should have a heavyweight, synthetic fleece or polypropylene pile top, (NOT COTTON). Fleece tops (commonly called "polartec") can be found at outdoor, department and surplus stores. If needed, ARTA will provide wetsuits and waterproof splash jackets for each guest, (you will still need to bring your own fleece insulation layer). A non-bulky swimsuit or pair of shorts should be worn underneath and another pair of shorts on the outside will add a little friction between you and the raft and help keep you on board. Our wetsuits are 3mm "farmer-john" style (like overalls) and are designed for paddling; you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.

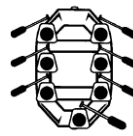
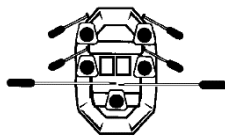
WHAT TO WEAR ON THE RIVER

- Sandals with heel strap (Chacos, Keen, etc.) or old tennis shoes
NO SLIP-ONS OR FLIP-FLOPS!
 - Lightweight synthetic top layer (quick-drying, moisture-wicking work best)
 - Thick synthetic fleece or wool pullover or jacket (NOT COTTON)
 - Swimsuit or shorts (nylon quick-drying are best)
 - Second pair of shorts for over wetsuit
 - Water bottle
- Optional:
- Hat for under helmet (baseball style or visor works best)
 - Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
 - Sunblock, lip balm
 - Long-sleeved cotton or dry-tech style synthetic top for sun protection
 - Waterproof camera
 - Wetsuit booties

About the boats

The Merced is a great river for paddling, so we use oar-paddle combination and paddle rafts. Everyone will be participating.

Oar-paddle combination rafts are 14 to 16 feet long and are steered by a guide using two oars and assisted by a team of 2 to 6 paddlers riding in the front and actively paddling through the rapids.



Paddle rafts are 14 feet long and are powered by 4 to 6 paddlers plus a guide. You will be sitting along the outside of the raft and actively paddling through the rapids.