



5

best things about Desolation Canyon

- Vast and majestic sandstone canyon
- Old West history and hideouts
- Native American rock art
- Spectacular flight to launch site
- Great side hikes and explorations

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 6

Length in miles: 84

Overall difficulty: III

Highest difficulty (#): III+ (3)

Rapids/day: ~5

Gradient: 11 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Cow Swim, Wire Fence, Three Fords

Types of boats:

Oar & inflatable kayak

Minimum recommended age:

6

Rapids:	★★★
Scenery:	★★★★★
Wilderness:	★★★★★
Swimming:	★★★★★
Hiking:	★★★★★
Campsites:	★★★★★
Wildlife:	★★★
Fishing:	★

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



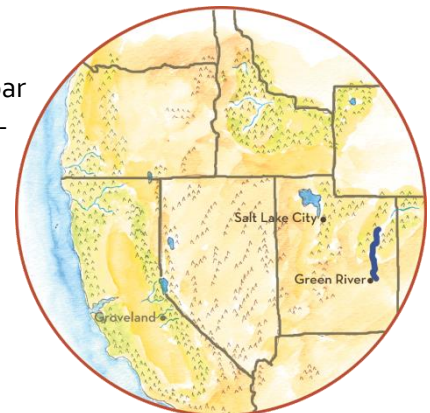
Journey to a faraway time and place

The Green River through Desolation Canyon is the most austere and empty canyon that we float through. If you want to get away from it all, this is where you should come. If you want to spend a week with your young kids and not worry about anything except putting on sunscreen, this is where you should take them. If you want to spend six days in your own inflatable kayak and get comfortable with moving water and self-determination, this where you should find yourself.

There are long, calm stretches of river that lend themselves to conversation and entice us to swim; there are uncountable side canyons that encourage exploration and invite us to wonder; there are short hikes, long hikes and hikes we have never done. We'll visit ancient petroglyphs from Native Americans who dwelled here thousands of years ago, explore abandoned homesteads from early pioneers who lived here hundreds of years ago, and hear tales of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid who hid out here so recently that we'll feel their ghosts. There are sand bars for camping on, cottonwoods for napping under, and views for blowing your mind. There are even a couple of clear creeks that provide a refreshing and welcome mid-trip surprise.

We offer two different types of boats to ride in: oar rafts which are built for lounging and lazy conversation (some guests have been known to fall asleep), and inflatable kayaks which are built for increasing confidence and starting waterfights.

"Your guides were all incredibly professional, easygoing, knowledgeable, fun, tireless, and all went out of their way to make the trip more comfortable and fun for all of us, despite our constant forgetfulness!"
Amanda Metcalf



Desolation Canyon~ logistics



6 day rafting trip

Meeting Place

River Terrace Motel
1740 East Main Street, Green River, UT
435/564-3401

Meeting Time

8:00 pm the day before your launch date.

Return Time

The trip will end in Green River, Utah around 3:00 on the last day.

Pre-trip checklist

- **Complete on-line registration** (follow the directions and link that came with your original reservation)
- **Reserve pre- & post-trip lodging** (most people stay at The River Terrace).
- **Plan for the unexpected** (purchase Travel Insurance through [USI Travel Insurance](#)).
- **Gather and pack your gear** (there is a complete list on the Equipment page; call if you have any questions).

What we provide

- A scenic flight from Green River to the launch site at Sand Wash.
- Transportation from the river back to Green River.
- Friendly, professional guide service.
- All meals from lunch on the first day to lunch on the last day.
- All camping gear (freshly laundered sleeping bag, liner, self-inflating pad, two-person tent).
- Waterproof bags, lifejackets, and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip.
- Camp chair, plate, eating utensils and mug.
- All taxes and government access fees.

What you are responsible for

- Transportation to and from Green River, Utah before and after your trip.
- Meals and lodging before and after your trip.
- Personal clothing and toiletries (see Equipment page).
- Soda, wine, alcoholic beverages (see Details page).
- Guide gratuities (see Details page).

Where and when to meet

We'll meet you at **8:00 pm the evening before the trip begins** at the [River Terrace Motel](#) in Green River, Utah. We'll give you your waterproof dry bags, go over final trip and shuttle information, and answer last minute equipment questions. The following morning, (early!) we will reconvene at the airport in Green River for a scenic 40-minute flight to the actual launch site. The time of the flight and directions to the airport will be given at the pre-trip meeting.

How to get there

Driving: Green River, Utah is located just east of the junction of U.S. Highway 50/70 and State Highway 24 in eastern Utah, about 175 miles southeast of Salt Lake City and 100 miles west of Grand Junction. The River Terrace is located at 1740 East Main Street in downtown Green River, across from the John Wesley Powell River History Museum (well worth a visit). Vehicles will be left at the airport during the trip.

Flying: Delta, United, and American serve Grand Junction, Colorado, about 100 miles east of Green River. Transportation is available between Grand Junction and Green River by renting a car or by chartering a flight with Redtail Aviation (800/842-9251). Ground transportation in Green River should be arranged with your motel, (the River Terrace has been accommodating in the past).

Where to stay

Lodging before and after the trip is good at the [River Terrace](#), (435/564-3401) and other motels in Green River. Camping is available at the Green River State Park just south of town (435/564-3633).

Itinerary

Day 1: We will reconvene early in the morning at the airport in Green River and take a scenic 40-minute flight to the launch site at Sand Wash. We'll land on a mesa above the river and take a short downhill hike to our rafts at the boat ramp. After a thorough safety briefing and trip orientation, we will launch and begin our adventure down the Green. The first day has no rapids, giving us time to get accustomed to our boats and ease into the rhythm of the trip.

Days 2 - 5: A typical day on the Green starts with coffee and a hearty breakfast before we pack our bags and load on to the boats. We will float an average of 12 - 18 miles, (4 - 5 hours), each day, stopping for a picnic lunch and perhaps to take a short hike or look at an historical site. The canyon contains extensive petroglyphs and a couple of abandoned ranches and was a favored hideout for Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch; there are plenty of places to explore. The rapids build in frequency and difficulty as we head downstream, with the biggest rapids coming on days 4 and 5. Camp will be made in the late afternoon with early evening available for hiking, swimming or relaxing.

Day 6: Our last day on the Green will bring us slowly back into civilization. We'll run some rapids in the morning and then have lunch before an early afternoon take-out at Swaysey's Boat Ramp and a short van ride back to our vehicles at the Green River airport.

Local Attractions

Make sure to visit the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River. Within a day's drive of Green River are Canyonlands, Arches, Capital Reef, Canyon de Chelly, and Mesa Verde National Parks as well as the town of Moab, the outdoor recreation capital of southern Utah. Desolation Canyon trips make a nice, slow-paced addition to an extended road trip to the area's iconic parks.

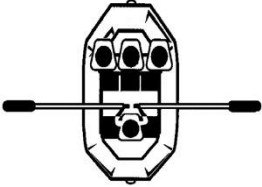
Desolation Canyon~ details



6 day rafting trip

Types of boats

On our Desolation trips we offer two types of boats in which to ride:



Oar rafts are 18 feet long, carry all of the overnight gear and up to 5 guests. They are rowed by a guide using oars attached to a metal frame. Guests ride in the front, hang on through the rapids and relax in the calm stretches.



Inflatable kayaks are 10 - 12 feet long and are paddled by 1 or 2 people using double-bladed paddles. They are fairly stable, require no previous experience and allow you to feel the thrill of independently paddling the river.

The number and type of boats that we bring depends on the water levels and the size of the trip. A full Desolation trip of 15 people will usually have 3 oar rafts and 8 inflatable kayaks. Please note that we do not guarantee space in inflatable kayaks. If there are more people who wish to ride in the kayaks than there are spaces, we will rotate so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

Meals and drinks

ARTA meals are well-balanced and consist of quality foods with fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables. Guides double as camp chefs and the menu includes a wide variety of dishes. Lunches consist of hand-foods and are served picnic-style at riverside stops. Dinners and breakfasts are cooked over an open fire and often include tasty Dutch Oven baked treats. If you have special dietary requirements or are celebrating a special event during the trip, please let us know in advance. We provide fruit drinks (lemonade, juice, etc.) and water at meals. If you would like soda, beer, wine, or liquor with your dinner, please bring your own in unbreakable containers (beer and soda in cans, wine and liquor in plastic bottles). Due to weight and space restrictions on the flight in, you must limit the amount of canned drinks to 1 six-pack per person.

Camping

Camping will be at beautiful riverside beaches or flat benches along the river with spectacular views of the canyon. Upon arrival at camp each afternoon our guides will set up a central area with chairs, a snack and beverage area, an assortment of camp games, and a complete kitchen. You will pick out a spot nearby to pitch your tent or lay out your sleeping bag. Our guides are happy to assist you in setting up your tent and finding a good spot. Camp-life varies from hiking and exploring the area, to relaxing along the river with a drink and a good book, to playing "koob" (you will learn). If you enjoy helping out, you are welcome to pitch in as much as you desire in camp. A portable toilet will be set up away from our central camp area. "The Groover", a sturdy metal box with a comfortable toilet seat and minimal odor, and a hand-wash station and will be set up in a beautiful and isolated location; going to the bathroom in the wilderness is surprisingly pleasant.

Weather

The high desert country of the Green River enjoys daytime temperatures in the 80's and 90's, cooling off into the 60's at night, with occasional thunderstorms. There is ample shade at camps and lunch stops, however while we are on the rafts, the sun can be direct. Sunblock and lightweight cotton clothing (such as surgeon's scrubs) will help you to avoid sunburn and a hat and bandanna will help keep you cool. Although the Green River flows through arid country, it does rain. We recommend that you bring good rain protection (waterproof rain jacket and good tent). The water temperature is chilly in June, but warms up pleasantly by late July and August.

Wildlife

Bighorn sheep and mule deer inhabit Desolation canyon and we often spot them along shore or while hiking. Birdlife is also fairly abundant and we usually see hawks, falcons, geese and a wide assortment of smaller birds; binoculars are fun to have along.

Fishing

Fishing in the Green River is not very good. There are two notable sidestreams, Rock Creek and Range Creek, where we may stop and have an opportunity to fish for small trout. A Utah fishing license is required and should be obtained in Green River before the trip. Ultra-lightweight spinning or dry fly gear works best. Bring the minimum in a sturdy case.

Suggested Reading

Some of the more interesting books about the Green River include Buzz Belknap's *Desolation River Guide* and *The Outlaw Trail* by Charles Kelly. *Explorations of the Colorado River* by Major John Wesley Powell details his historic first exploration of the canyon in 1869 during which many of the rapids and side canyons were named.

Tipping

If you truly enjoy 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 with the entire crew. And the entire crew will appreciate them and put them to good use. (And thank you.)



Desolation Canyon~ equipment



6 day rafting trip

Get ready!

One of the joys of life on the river is how simple it is. We will be carrying everything we need into the wilderness with us and leaving a lot of stuff behind; bringing the proper gear will make your trip much more enjoyable. The basic rule of packing is: **the right stuff, not more stuff**. One synthetic fleece pullover is much more compact and versatile than six cotton sweatshirts; a good raincoat is better than twenty ponchos. You should be able to find most of the gear you need in your closet, garage or neighbor's basement and what you can't find or borrow, you can rent from us. Your guides will help you make last-minute decisions at the pre-trip meeting, but please feel free to call us if you have any questions as you go through this list; we want you to have the best trip possible.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

This list has everything we can think of for a trip in May OR July.

You can adjust it to fit your departure date (more and thicker fleece on June trips), but you probably shouldn't skip anything.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

CAMP ITEMS:

- Your favorite pillow (an extra pillow-case is handy for organizing stuff in your bag)
- 2 complete changes of clothing (versatile pants and shirts, cotton is fine - something exciting for dinner is welcome!)
- Extra swimsuit or shorts and T-shirts for on the river and in camp
- Extra socks, (wool or fleece are best), and underwear
- Camp shoes, (flip-flops, trail running shoes, tennis shoes; something you can walk and hike in comfortably)
- Small towel, soap and shampoo (*Campsuds* & *Dr. Bronner's* are the most environmentally friendly, Ivory is fine)
- Sarong (great for quick changes and sun protection)
- Personal hygiene items, including medicine, insect repellent, dry-skin lotion, etc. Please bring twice the amount needed of any essential medicine.
- Warm jacket, (thick fleece is great - will work on-river as well or compact down coat)
- Rain gear, (can double as on-river gear); top is essential, bottoms are advised before July 1
- Small flashlight with extra batteries, (headlamps are great)
- Book, sketch pad, journal, etc.

RIVER ITEMS:

- Sandals with heel strap (Chaco, Teva) or old running shoes
NO FLIP FLOPS OR SLIP-ONS
- Swimsuit or shorts and T-shirt, (nylon, quick-drying shorts and synthetic "tech-dry" type shirts are best - women often prefer to wear shorts over their swimsuits)
- Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece top (**essential**)
- Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece pants (encouraged)
- Brimmed hat, (baseball-style or visors work well; you will be wearing a helmet)
- Lightweight cotton clothing, (synthetic long-sleeved or old cotton dress shirts) for sun protection
- Waterproof sunscreen/block (SPF 30+), lip balm
- Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
- Small water bottle, 1 quart, (**essential** - even if it's just an empty plastic Gatorade bottle)

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- Waterproof camera, (if you want to bring your cell phone to use as a camera, we strongly recommend getting a sturdy case such as an Otter Box or EscapeCapsule)
- Beer, wine, liquor, or soda in unbreakable containers, (cans or plastic bottles). We will try to keep it cold
- 1 or 2 plastic garbage bags & gallon size zip-lock bags for organizing gear

WHAT WE WILL PROVIDE

- Freshly laundered sleeping bag and liner
- Thick self-inflating sleeping pad
- Small tarp
- Free-standing, two-person tent*
- Camp chair
- Plates, eating utensils and mug
- Waterproof splash jacket
- Neoprene wetsuit (if necessary)

*We will bring one tent for one- and two-person reservations; two tents for three- and four-person reservations; three tents for five- and six-person reservations, etc. Please let us know if you need alternative tent space or if you prefer to bring your own tent.

Underlined items are the preferred choice of our professional river guides!
PLEASE DO NOT BRING: Valuable jewelry, radios, guns, or any irreplaceable items!

Extra luggage can be stored at The River Terrace Motel during the trip.

Desolation Canyon~ life on the river



6 day rafting trip

Professional Tips

Our **dry-bags** are great for keeping things dry but are somewhat awkward for packing and living out of, (they are tall and narrow with a small opening at the top). Small stuff sacks or zip-lock bags are helpful for dividing up your stuff inside the bag. Trying to put your entire duffel bag or rolling luggage into the dry-bag never seems to work.

Our guides say that one of the most versatile things to bring on a trip is a **sarong**. Comfortable and colorful, sarongs get used for quick clothing changes, beach throws, sun screens and dinner celebrations.

Layering your clothing is an effective way to adjust to the daily weather changes that you will encounter. A light polypropylene layer under a heavy fleece top under a rainshell will get you going on the chilliest of mornings and allow you to shed layers as the day warms up.

"Fleece" is a generic term for a spun, polyester fabric developed for outdoor use. It is thick and fluffy and does not absorb water, making it ideal insulation on a river trip. It is commonly called Polartec or Polarfleece. **"Polypropylene"** is a thinner, stretchier, woven variation used predominately for long underwear. Any polypropylene long underwear will work; heavy-weight is the most versatile.

Parents will want to make sure that their kids have at least **two fleece tops and a waterproof rainshell**. Fleece pants and a fleece hat are also recommended. Children get cold more easily, (and wet more often), than adults. Remember, if you don't bring it for them, they will use yours!

A day on the river

One of the joys of our trips is their pace; we're going to encourage you to leave your watch behind and find the natural rhythm of life on the river. Each day is different and will be adjusted to fit the interests of the group but every day will start with our revered "COFFEE!" call, an invitation to rise and shine and join us for hot drinks and warm conversation. A hearty breakfast follows before we break camp, load the rafts, discuss options, and plan the day's itinerary. Options may include a hike, a visit to an historical site, or a dip in an idyllic swimming hole (or all three). We'll stop for a picnic lunch when we get hungry then head downriver for more adventure. All day, we'll tell you about the upcoming rapids so that you can find yourself in the proper type of boat. Typically, we're off the river in the late afternoon, leaving time in camp for games, naps, hikes, swims, fishing, and all kinds of other activities. Appetizers are served at the perfect time and dinner is usually ready after the heat of the day subsides and enjoyed in our natural riverside dining room. Nightfall in the canyon is magical and we'll enjoy it for as long as we can before heading to bed and falling asleep to visions of stars and sounds from the river.

How to dress

On hot days you will want clothing that dries quickly (nylon shorts and bathing suits) and something to shield you from the sun, (a high-tech SPF long-sleeved shirt or an old lightweight cotton dress shirt and maybe even lightweight long pants or capris). Also, a brimmed hat and a bandana will help you stay cool.

On cool days you will want a thick, synthetic fleece top, (pullover are best; "polartec" or similar). You may also want fleece pants or polypropylene long underwear bottoms and rainpants, particularly in June. Don't bring a cotton sweatshirt and windpants; cotton is worthless when wet and won't work for on-river insulation and you need something waterproof over your fleece.

On your feet you will want shoes that stay on if you go for a swim and are comfortable for hiking. Sport sandals with heel straps (Tevas, Chacos) work well, (buckles are better than velcro). Old running shoes also work well and are easy to find. Neoprene, wool or fleece socks will add a bit of insulation. Wetsuit booties work but can be a bit clammy after a full day on the river and "Aqua-shoes" come up a bit short on sole protection.

In camp you will want practical walking/hiking shoes, (flip-flops or trail/running shoes), and versatile clothing, (T-shirts, warm shirts, shorts, jeans or sweats, extra fleece, etc). Cotton is o.k. for camp stuff, but because it is worthless for keeping you warm on the river, many people bring two sets of fleece - one for the river, one for camp - and have a backup in case one gets drenched. Good raingear for camp is essential, .

How to pack

At the pre-trip meeting, you will get two waterproof duffel bags for your personal items.

- A large "Camp Bag" (about 17 inches in diameter and 24 inches tall) will be used to pack your personal clothes and other items that you won't need during the day. There is plenty of room for everything on the equipment list, but you'll need to leave space for the sleeping bag that you will get at the launch site. Please try to limit your gear to around 15 pounds per person (airplane restrictions).
- A smaller "Day Bag" (about 7 inches in diameter and 12 inches tall) will be used to pack anything you want to keep handy during the day, (rain gear, fleece, sunblock, etc).
- If you want to bring your cell phone to use as a camera, please get a sturdy waterproof case such as an Otter Box or an EscapeCapsule)