



The Yampa



river trips 5 day rafting trip

5

best things about the Yampa

- Free-flowing river with few visitors
- Native American rock art
- Prehistoric fossils
- Spectacular side-hikes
- Tiger Wall

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 5

Length in miles: 71

Overall difficulty: III

Highest difficulty (#): IV- (1)

Rapids/day: ~4

Gradient: 13 feet/mile

Signature Rapid:

Warm Springs

Types of boats:

Oar, paddle & inflatable kayak

Minimum recommended age:

12 in May & June, 8 in July

- 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



Undammed, unequalled, unforgettable

The Yampa is the last major free-flowing tributary in the entire Colorado River system. From its origins high in the Rockies, the river flows uninterrupted for nearly 300 miles down forested slopes and through sandstone canyons to its confluence with the Green River in Dinosaur National Monument. Our trips travel the Yampa's last 46 miles and another 26 miles of the Green.

The canyon has a mysterious history. It has been home to a number of Indian cultures whose rock art and granaries still remain, but about whom little is known. Few settlers inhabited the canyon and it was only briefly explored by Major John Wesley Powell during his famous exploratory trip down the Green and Colorado Rivers in 1869. Even today few people visit the area, as impassible terrain and the short, snow-melt river season provide limited access.

Our trips offer the special opportunity to see the softly colored, exotically streaked, sandstone walls for which the Yampa is well-known. Throughout the trip towering cliffs crowd the river, then open up into large, amphitheater-like parks which are alive with spring growth and color. Hidden throughout the journey are intriguing side-canyons and grottoes which beckon and astound the explorer and offer us numerous hiking destinations.

The Yampa is mostly placid with long stretches of calm current. The most significant rapid is Warm Springs which we encounter on day 3 or 4. Below the confluence with the Green the combined rivers flow through Echo Park and the beautiful Whirlpool Canyon before making a wild dash through the numerous rapids of Split Mountain Canyon.



*"Bliss!!! Simply bliss."
Amy Valens*

Yampa River~ Logistics



5 day rafting trip

Meeting Place

Dinosaur Inn and Suites
251 East Main Street, Vernal, UT 84078
435/315-0123

Meeting Time

8:00 pm the day before your launch date.

Return Time

The trip will end at Split Mountain Boat Ramp 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 Dinosaur Inn other options are listed to the right).
- **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

- Transportation from Split Mountain Boat Ramp to the river.
- Friendly, entertaining and professional guide service.
- All meals from lunch on the first day to lunch on the last day.
- All taxes and government access fees.
- Waterproof bags, lifejackets, and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip.

What you are responsible for

- Transportation to Split Mountain Boat Ramp (30 minutes from Vernal).
- Meals and lodging before and after your trip.
- Personal clothing and toiletries (see Equipment page).
- Camping gear (see Equipment page for information on renting equipment from ARTA).
- 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 your trip begins** near the swimming pool at the [Dinosaur Inn and Suites](#) (435/315-0123) in Vernal, Utah. We'll give you your waterproof bags, go over final trip logistics and answer any last-minute questions. The following morning, we will re-convene at Split Mountain Boat Ramp in Dinosaur National Monument for the shuttle to the launch site. Your lead guide will have directions and times. The trip will conclude at Split Mountain around 3:00 p.m. on the last day.

How to get there

Driving: Vernal is on State Highway 40, approximately 180 miles, (3 hours), east of Salt Lake City. The Dinosaur Inn is next to the museum in the heart of downtown. Directions to Split Mountain Boat Ramp, (30 minutes outside of town), will be given at the pre-trip meeting. There is a fee to enter the Park and vehicles will be left at the Boat Ramp for the duration of the trip.

Flying: You can fly into Salt Lake City and rent a car for the three-hour drive to Vernal or fly directly into Vernal through Denver on United/SkyWest. For transportation between the airport and your motel contact your motel or Vernal City Cab (435/414-1779). If you fly directly into Vernal and do not have a car for the drive to Split Mountain Boat Ramp, contact us so that we can help you arrange this transportation.

Where to stay

There are many lodging options in Vernal, most of them unremarkable. The [Dinosaur Inn](#) is the most convenient; nearby are the [Ledgestone Hotel](#) and the [Days Inn Vernal](#). Camping is available in Dinosaur National Monument, 30 minutes from Vernal; campsite reservations can be made through www.recreation.gov.

Itinerary

Day 1: We will reconvene at the Split Mountain Boat Ramp 30 minutes east of Vernal where we will leave our cars for the duration of the trip. We will then take a two-hour bus ride into Colorado and to our actual launching point at Deerlodge Park in Dinosaur National Monument, stopping at a liquor store in Colorado on our way. After a thorough safety briefing and trip orientation, we will launch in the morning and float into the Yampa canyon.

Days 2 - 4: A typical day on the Yampa starts with coffee and a hearty breakfast before we pack our bags and load on to the rafts. We will float an average of 15- 18 miles, (5 hours), each day, stopping for a picnic lunch and perhaps to take a short hike or explore an historical site. There are rapids every day; the biggest, Warm Springs, usually comes at the end of day 3. Camp will be made in the late afternoon with early evening available for hiking, swimming or relaxing.

Day 5: An early morning prepares us for our longest day on the river as we float through Island and Rainbow Parks then run the many rapids of Split Mountain Canyon. We usually arrive at Split Mountain Boat Ramp, (where we left our vehicles), around 3:00 on the last day.

Local Attractions

Dinosaur National Monument has a museum where you can touch real dinosaur fossils; plan a trip to the Visitor's Center before or after your river trip. Also within a day's drive of Vernal are Canyonlands and Arches National Parks as well as Flaming Gorge Recreation Area.

Yampa River~ details



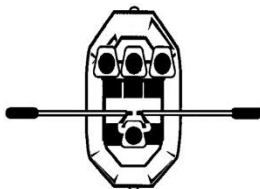
5 day rafting trip

Types of boats

On the Yampa we usually have three types of boats in which to ride:



Paddle rafts are 14 feet long and carry 6 or 7 paddlers who actively paddle through the rapids and down the river. Everyone has a paddle, sits on the outer tube of the raft, and follows the instructions of the paddle captain who sits in the back.



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 Yampa trip of 25 people will usually have 2 paddle rafts and 4 or 5 inflatable kayaks. Please note that we do not guarantee space in paddle rafts or inflatable kayaks. If there are more people who wish to ride in these boats 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. If you would like soda, beer, wine, or liquor with your dinner, please bring your own, (beer and soda in cans; wine in boxes or bags. Hard liquor in glass bottles is fine).

Camping

Camping will be at beautiful riverside beaches or flat benches along the river with spectacular views of the canyon. Our guides will set up a central area with chairs, a snack and beverage area, 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 help). Camp activities vary from hiking and exploring the area, to relaxing along the river with a good book, to playing "koob" (you will learn). If you enjoy helping out in camp, you are welcome to pitch in as much as you want. A portable toilet will be set up away from camp. "The Groover", a sturdy metal box with a comfortable toilet seat and minimal odor, and a hand-wash station will be set up in an isolated (and usually beautiful) location; going to the bathroom in the wilderness is surprisingly pleasant.

Weather

The high desert country of the Yampa River canyon enjoys daytime temperatures in the 80's and 90's, cooling off into the 60's at night, with occasional thunderstorms. The early summer weather is unpredictable. It is common to wear sunblock AND a fleece jacket on the same day; come prepared for a variety of conditions. The water is snowmelt and quite cold, although it does warm up a bit by July.

Wildlife

Bighorn sheep and mule deer inhabit the Yampa and Green River canyons 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.

Fishing

Due to the flow fluctuations and water clarity, fishing in the Yampa is not that good; however, Jones Hole Creek, where we arrive on the third day, has very good fishing opportunities. A Utah license is required and can be obtained in Vernal. Light spinning or fly gear works best, (artificial lures and flies only); please bring the minimum and protect your rod in a sturdy case.

Suggested Reading

The Yampa trip takes place within Dinosaur National Monument and there are numerous books available about the area. Some of the more interesting ones are Buzz Belknap's *Dinosaur River Guide*, and *Run River Run* by Ann Zwinger. *Explorations of the Colorado River* by Major John Wesley Powell details his historic first exploration of the Green River 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.)



Yampa River~ equipment



5 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 early in the season), but you probably shouldn't skip anything.

CAMP ITEMS: *These will be packed in your dry bag and will generally not be accessible during the day.*

- *Compact sleeping bag, (down or synthetic, rated to 35°)
- *Closed-cell foam or self-inflating sleeping pad, (ensolite, Thermarest, or air mattress)
- *Sleeping bag liner or flat bed-sheet (perfect for hot nights and will add warmth on cold nights)
- *Small tarp or ground cloth
- *Compact, lightweight tent, (free-standing works better; tents will be packed in a separate communal bag)
- 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)
- 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: *These will be worn or packed in your personal semi-dry day bag and WILL be accessible during the day.*

- Sandals with heel strap (Chaco, Astral) 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)
- Waterproof rainshell (**essential**) and rainpants
- Brimmed hat, (baseball-style or visors work well; inflatable kayakers and others at certain water levels will wear helmets)
- 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: **These are not absolutely necessary, but you are welcome to bring them.**

- 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
- Fishing gear, (compact, lightweight, rods protected in a case)
- Sarong (great for quick changes and sun protection)
- Locking carabiner, handy for securing your day-bag
- 1 or 2 plastic garbage bags & gallon size zip-lock bags for organizing gear

* These items are available to rent from ARTA and can be reserved when you fill out your on-line registration.

Underlined items are the preferred choice of our professional river guides!

ARTA WILL PROVIDE: a chair, cup, plate and eating utensils for each guest.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING: Valuable jewelry, radios, guns, or any irreplaceable items!

Yampa River~ life on the river



5 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). Compact sleeping bags are much more convenient, and 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

Every day is full. Every day is different. We encourage you to leave your watch behind and find the natural rhythm of life on the river. Mornings will begin with our revered "COFFEE" call, your invitation to join us for a hot breakfast and warm conversation. After breakfast, we'll gather, plan the day, then head downriver for an adventure. Generally we'll spend about 4 or 5 hours "on the water" each day with stops for a hike, a swim, or a visit to an historical site, as well as a break for a healthy picnic lunch. Throughout, we'll make sure to tell you what's coming up so that you can find yourself in the appropriate boat. We usually arrive at camp in the late afternoon and have some unstructured time for relaxing before we serve scrumptious appetizers and a wonderful riverside dinner. Evenings are magical, with beautiful lighting, great stories and anticipation of another day on the river. You'll drift off to sleep to the enchanting sound of 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, an old cotton dress shirt and maybe even lightweight long pants or capris).

On cool days you will want a thick, synthetic fleece top, (pullover is best; "polartec" or similar) and a sturdy, fully-waterproof rainshell. You may also want fleece pants or polypropylene long underwear bottoms and rainpants, particularly before mid-July. Don't bring a cotton sweatshirt and a windbreaker; 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 (Texas, Chacos) work well, (buckles are better than velcro). Old running shoes 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.

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 and one for camp.

How to pack

Camp items will go in a watertight dry bag provided by ARTA, (one per person). These are generally not accessible during the day. The bags are roughly 17 inches in diameter and 24 inches tall, (the size of a large duffel bag; plenty big, but you should try to limit all of your gear to about 25 pounds). Plastic garbage bags, zip-locks, stuff sacks, and pillowcases are good for keeping track of small and/or wet things inside your bigger dry bag. Tents will be packed in a separate, communal dry bag.

River items will go in a semi-watertight, personal dry-bag provided by ARTA, (one per person). These bags are 9 inches in diameter and 12 inches tall, perfect for rain gear, fleece, sunblock, and other things you want to keep handy during the day. The bags are marginally waterproof so for expensive cameras or other things that must stay dry we recommend a Pelican Box which can be found online and at outdoor stores. If you want to bring your cell phone to use as a camera, please get a sturdy waterproof case.

How to find it

Bring it: Local mountaineering or sporting goods stores should have everything you need. Great selections of river gear are also available on-line through REI and Patagonia.

Rent it: We have good equipment available to rent. Reserve and pay for it in advance, pick it up at the pre-trip meeting, leave it behind when you're done. Simple.

Sleep Kits (polarguard bag, liner, self-inflating pad & tarp) are about \$10 per day.

Tents (two-person, free-standing, comfortable) are also about \$10 per day.

Call us or reserve your rental gear when you register on-line.