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best things about the Tuolumne

- 18 miles of world-class whitewater
- Idyllic side creeks & swimming holes
- Enchanting riverside camping
- Close to Yosemite
- The legendary Clavey Falls

SPECIFICS

Length in days: 2 or 3

Length in miles: 18

Overall difficulty: IV

Highest difficulty (#): IV+ (1)

Rapids/day: ~15

Gradient: 38 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Nemesis, Clavey Falls, Gray's Grindstone

Types of boats:

Oar, paddle, and combination

Minimum recommended age:

14 before July 1, 10 after July 1

- 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



California's best river trip

There's a lot of whitewater on the Tuolumne, a whole lot. In the 18 miles from Meral's Pool to Ward's Ferry we will run over 14 major rapids rated Class IV or better, and several others rated Class III and III+. In all, there are over 40 named rapids and probably another 40 that would have names if they were anywhere else. In the early part of the season the rapids are big and fast and cold; we wear wetsuits and paddle furiously. Later in the summer, the rapids are tricky and frequent and the water is a bit warmer (and the air is hot); we wear sunscreen and laugh a lot.

Both our 2 and 3 day trips begin at Meral's Pool, a quiet spot in the river about 23 miles downstream from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, and end at Ward's Ferry Bridge 18 miles later. For the first six miles, from Rock Garden to Clavey Falls, the rapids come almost non-stop as the river winds and drops through numerous granite boulderfields. Clavey Falls, at mile 6, is a whitewater event which you will never forget. Below Clavey, the rapids continue but are separated by short pools which allow us a welcome opportunity to enjoy the scenery and solitude of the canyon. Camping is along the river at pristine, wilderness sites, often near beautiful sidestreams which offer great opportunities for hiking, swimming and relaxing.

The rapids will capture your attention but the canyon will capture your heart.



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

The Tuolumne~ logistics



2 and 3 day rafting trips

Meeting Place

The Lucky Buck Restaurant
7647 CA-120 Groveland CA 95321

Meeting Time

8:00 am on the morning of your trip.

Return Time

Between 5:00 and 6:00 pm on the last day of your trip

Pre-trip checklist

- **Complete on-line registration**
(follow the directions and link that came with your original reservation)
- **Reserve pre- & post-trip lodging**
(there are a lot of options, 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 back to the Lucky Buck after your wonderful trip
- Friendly, professional guide service.
- All meals from lunch on the first day through lunch on the last day.
- All taxes and government access fees.
- Lifejackets, helmets and other specialized river touring equipment for the trip.

What you are responsible for

- Transportation to La Casa Loma.
- 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 (Tips are optional. Customarily they range from 5 to 15 percent of the trip cost).

Where and when to meet

We'll meet you at **8:00 am on the morning of the trip starting date** at The Lucky Buck Restaurant - 7647 CA-120 Groveland CA 95321 . Which is 11 miles east of Groveland on Highway 120. If you will be late, please call 209/962-7873. ARTA will provide transportation back to the Lucky Buck; arrival time back to the Lucky Buck should be between 5:00 and 6:00 pm. we will begin our adventure with 3 mile down-hill walk on a gravel Forrest Service Road. The walk has been taking roughly 40 minutes to an hour to complete and is very scenic with sweeping views of the river canyon. Please be prepared with comfortable walking shoes (Teva/Chaco/Keen water shoes or athletic shoes have been fine – water socks, Crocks, flip flops have NOT been fine) and a full water bottle. You will be able to switch shoes once you reach the river as well. At the end of the trip, there is an hour-long boat tow into Don Pedro reservoir, where you will then be shuttled back to the Lucky Buck. This is because wards ferry road is closed on both sides of the canyon.

How to get there

The Lucky Buck Restaurant is on the north side of Highway 120, approximately 11 miles east of Groveland. Driving-time from the San Francisco Bay Area is approximately 3½ hours (through Livermore, Tracy, Manteca, and Oakdale); from Los Angeles approximately 7½ hours (through Merced, Snelling, La Grange, Coulterville, and Greeley Hill - you will bypass Groveland and join Highway 120, 4 mile west of The Lucky Buck). There is some cell phone and gps service at The Lucky Buck, But download the directions or bring a good map. There is also no public transportation available to Groveland. San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and San Jose airports are all roughly 3 hours away.

Where to stay

The elegant Groveland Hotel, (209/962-4000) and the cute Hotel Charlotte (209/962-6455) are both in "downtown" Groveland, (near the historic Iron Door Saloon). Evergreen Lodge, (800/935-6343), a unique collection of cabins on Yosemite's doorstep, is 30 minutes east and is a great option for extending your stay in the area before or after your trip. Another unique option is Sugar Pine Ranch, an old homestead with cabins halfway between Groveland and La Casa Loma (209-962-7823). [Rush Creek Lodge](#) is a luxury hotel just a few more miles east of the Lucky Buck. Availability can be tough in the summers. Additional accommodations are available in Yosemite National Park, one hour away. Rustic camping is available at the Forest Service campground "The Pines" 3 mile west of the Lucky Buck; reserved camping is available 10 minutes away at Yosemite Pines RV Park (209/962-7690) and one hour away in Yosemite National Park (209/372-0200).

Local Attractions

Welcome to Groveland! This is our hometown and we are very proud of it. Things here are rustic, remote and beautiful and even though Groveland is a tourist town (in the summer). Things here are simple: one grocery store, four or five restaurants, half a dozen places to spend the night and spotty cell phone service. Here are the don't-miss attractions:

Yosemite National Park. A no-brainer. Taking a Tuolumne trip and not visiting Yosemite would be like going to Hawaii and not swimming in the ocean. The popular Valley attractions are the Mist Trail (anytime, but particularly in the spring), Yosemite Falls and strolling along the Merced River. A quick drive out to Glacier Point is stunning. A visit to Tuolumne Meadows will give you a new perspective on the Park (meadows vs. cliffs).

Cocina Michoacana. *THE* place to eat in Groveland. Small, rinky-dink, and deceiving, but authentic, friendly, and tasty. If you're unsure of what to get, just say "Number 20. Chicken. Flour." and you'll be happy. Trust us.

The Iron Door Saloon. Groveland's most famous landmark ("the oldest saloon in California"). Full of history, mystery and locals. Live music and dancing on most weekends in the summer. We recommend this for AFTER your trip, if you know what we mean.

The Tuolumne~ details & gear

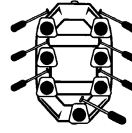
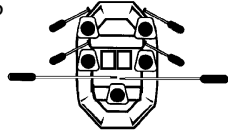


2 and 3 day rafting trips

About the boats

Because of the difficulty of the Tuolumne, we use self-bailing paddle rafts and oar-paddle combination rafts on our 2 and 3 day trips.

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.

About the weather

During the summer, the temperatures in the Tuolumne Canyon often reach into the 90s. Most people are comfortable in shorts and a lightweight shirt, but a synthetic fleece top is advisable if you get cold easily. Springtime temperatures can range from the 60's to the 80's, and rain is more likely. If your trip is before June 15, come prepared for cool temperatures and cold water .

About the water levels

The Tuolumne is a wild river with wide fluctuations in flow. High water conditions last for one to seven weeks and peak around the first of June. During the high water period, the river has many solid Class IV+ and Class V rapids and **everyone should be in good physical condition and ready for a challenging trip.** Please call us if you have concerns about your physical condition.

WHAT TO WEAR ON THE RIVER

During the summer, it is usually warm and sunny on the Tuolumne so you won't need much. You will be getting wet and the water is cold (60 degrees) so things that dry quickly work best. Proper footwear is critical and a water bottle is handy. We will have a small, communal drybag available for odds and ends. Here is what you should wear:

- Sandals with heel strap (Chaco, Teva, Keen, etc.) or old running shoes. **NO FLIP FLOPS OR SLIP-ONS!**
- Swimsuit or shorts. Synthetic, quick-drying shorts are best. Women often prefer to wear shorts over their swimsuit.
- Lightweight fleece top (if you get cold easily) or T-shirt or dry-tech style synthetic shirt (if you want extra sun protection)
- Brimmed hat for under helmet (baseball-style or visor)
- Sunglasses with strap, (maybe not your best pair)
- Small water bottle, 1 quart, (essential - even if it's just an empty plastic Gatorade bottle)
- Waterproof sunscreen/block (SPF 30+)
- 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)

During the spring high water period, (as late as July 1st), the Tuolumne is quite cold and we will provide you with a 3mm "farmer-john" style wetsuit (sleeveless) and a waterproof splash jacket (non-insulated). You are welcome to bring your own if you prefer.

In addition to the items listed above, you should bring:

- **Required:** Polypropylene pile or synthetic fleece pullover or jacket ("polartec", "polarfleece", etc. **NOT COTTON**)
- Second pair of shorts for over wetsuit (comfort and style)
- Fleece cap, gloves, and socks, wetsuit booties (optional).

WHAT TO BRING FOR CAMP

When you arrive at La Casa Loma, we will give you a waterproof bag for your overnight gear. The bags are 17" in diameter and 22" tall - small, but ample if you pack wisely; (think appropriate gear, not more gear) We will also have a communal tent bag for tents and sleeping pads that are more than 22" long. **In addition** to the clothes you will be wearing on the river (above), you should bring:

- * Compact sleeping bag, (down or synthetic, rated to 35 degrees)
 - * 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)
 - * Compact, lightweight tent, (free-standing preferred, no wall tents please) or small tarp or ground cloth.
 - Your favorite small, lightweight pillow
 - Camp clothes. 1 complete change of clothing (versatile pants and shirts, cotton is fine)
 - Camp shoes. Our guides wear flip-flops or lightweight trail-running shoes; you don't need boots.
 - Small towel, soap and shampoo
 - Personal hygiene items, including medicine, dry-skin lotion, etc. Bring twice the amount needed of any essential medicine
 - Small flashlight with extra batteries, (headlamps are great)
- * These items are available to rent. Sleep Kits (35 degree Polarguard Bag, cotton liner, self-inflating pad and ground cloth) are \$25 per trip and two-person, free-standing tents are \$25 per trip. Please reserve rental gear when completing your on-line registration.

Professional Tip

Proper footwear will make your trip much more enjoyable. On the river, you should wear shoes or sandals that won't come off if you go swimming. Old running shoes are fine; outdoor sandals with a heel strap (Chacos, Tevas, etc) also work well. Wearing wool, fleece or neoprene socks (not cotton) under them will help keep your feet warm. Wetsuit booties keep your feet the warmest, but can get a bit clammy after a full day on the river. Aqua shoes are great for the water park, not so good for walking on rocks. In camp, most people wear flip flops or running shoes, not boots.