



river trips

# The Tuolumne



1 day rafting trip

5

## best things about the Tuolumne

18 miles of world-class whitewater  
Idyllic side creeks & swimming holes  
Remote wilderness canyon  
Close to Yosemite  
The legendary Clavey Falls

### SPECIFICS

Length in days: 1

Length in miles: 18

Overall difficulty: IV

Highest difficulty (#): IV+ (1)

Rapids/day: ~20

Gradient: 38 feet/mile

Signature Rapids:

Nemesis, Clavey Falls, Gray's Grindstone

Types of boats:

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

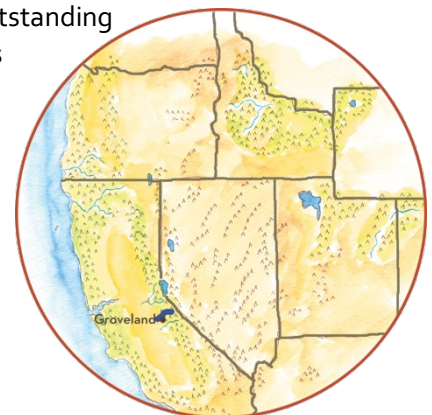


## California's best river trip

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.

Our one day trips focus on having fun on the river. We'll run a lot of rapids, swim a bit, maybe jump off a rock, surf some waves, and take a short break for lunch. Come prepared for a long, full day on the river!

The river is born high in the Sierra Nevada mountains in Yosemite National Park and flows through some of the most spectacular scenery in California. In 1984, the river was protected under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, preserving the unique and beautiful area for future generations to enjoy. For many years, the word "Tuolumne" has been synonymous with outstanding whitewater, and the river has justly deserved this association. Recently, however, the outstanding fishing, the exquisite scenery, the beautiful side creeks, the solitude, and the peacefulness of the canyon have all become recognized as the Tuolumne's equally important assets.



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

# The Tuolumne~ logistics



## 1 day rafting trip

### 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 6:00 and 7:00 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 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
- 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 The Lucky Buck
- Meals and lodging before and after your trip
- 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 7:00 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 pretty 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.

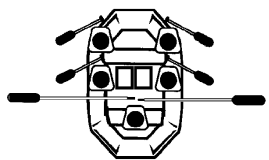
# The Tuolumne~ details & gear



## 1 day rafting trip

### About the boats

Because of the difficulty of the Tuolumne, we use self-bailing oar-paddle combination rafts on our 1 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.

### 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 dam-controlled river, but because it has a large watershed and small reservoirs, it behaves like a wild river in the spring. 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 day on the river. All one-day trips are long and arduous and include two formidable shuttles, an intricate warm-up session, 18 miles of challenging river, at least one extended scout, and only a short stop for lunch. All guests should anticipate and be ready for a full day. As the season progresses we conduct 2 and 3 day trips which are less rushed and allow more time to enjoy the beauty and solitude of the canyon.

## WHAT TO WEAR ON THE TUOLUMNE IN THE SUMMER

**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!**  
Add wool or fleece socks if your feet get cold easily.
- Swimsuit or shorts. Synthetic, quick-drying shorts are best. Women often prefer to wear shorts over their swimsuit.
- T-shirt or lightweight cotton or dry-tech style synthetic shirt. Long-sleeved if you want extra sun protection.  
If you get cold easily, a lightweight fleece top is handy (we'll pack it in the communal dry bag).
- Brimmed hat for under helmet (baseball-style or visors work best)
- 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)

## WHAT TO ALSO BRING IN THE SPRING AND FALL (or if you get cold easily)

**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.
- Fleece cap, gloves, and socks, wetsuit booties (optional).

**WE WILL PROVIDE:** a wetsuit and splash jacket for each guest.

### Professional Tip

Proper footwear will make your day much more enjoyable. 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, Keens, 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.