



# SAN JUAN RIVER

## Itinerary



<b>MEETING PLACE:</b>	Recapture Lodge, Hwy 191, Bluff, Utah
<b>MEETING TIME:</b>	7:00 PM, the evening before your trip
<b>RETURN TIME:</b>	10:00 AM -12:00 PM (2½ Day) 4:00-5:30 PM (6 Day)
<b>RIVER RATING:</b>	Class II
<b>RIVER MILES:</b>	27 miles (2½ Day) or 83 miles (6 Day)
<b>SECTION:</b>	Sand Island – Mexican Hat/Clay Hills Crossing
<b>AGE LIMIT:</b>	Minimum age is 4 / 7 at high water levels
<b>TRIP LENGTH:</b>	2½ days / 2 nights or 6 days / 5 nights
<b>BOAT TYPE:</b>	Oar Raft, Inflatable Kayak

The San Juan River twists and turns through the most convoluted canyon in the Colorado Plateau. Its home in southeastern Utah is a place of surreal beauty and vibrancy, hundreds of millions of years in the making. Eons of wind and water erosion have left an intricate wilderness of sun-baked red rock cliffs, canyons and monuments, strangely interwoven with cool, shady alcoves, lush grottoes, and side canyons where diverse vegetation grows near trickling streams. A bottomless archeological treasure chest, this area encases numerous remnants of ancient civilizations—most prominently, the Prehistoric Puebloan culture. For unknown reasons this intriguing Native American group abandoned the area around 1300 A.D., leaving behind their granaries, cliff dwellings, kivas, watchtowers, and panels of unique rock art.

### AWARD-WINNING NATURE-BASED ADVENTURES SINCE 1969

O.A.R.S. has been in business for over 40 years and that is no accident. Great trips on some of the world's best rivers and coastlines are the recipe for this success. Always focused on our clients and their vacations, it is our genuine belief that river trips and nature-based adventures are extremely valuable life experiences. With that as our foundation, we have committed ourselves over the years to providing the best trips available, always with an eye on improvement.

## **BOAT SELECTION**

- On our San Juan River trips, we bring oar rafts and inflatable kayaks. Oar rafts carry our camp gear along with 2 – 4 passengers and are rowed by our guides using a long pair of oars. Inflatable kayaks are 1- and 2-person boats that get you up close and personal with the rapids of the San Juan.

## **WHITewater**

- A major tributary of the Colorado River, the San Juan is a watery path through some of the world's most splendid wilderness. A calm, congenial river, the San Juan offers a relaxing float trip livened up by fun Class II rapids.

## **SPECIALTY TRIPS (6-day trips only) & occasionally a combination of the two: "Archeoastronomy"**

- **Archeology:** For the Indiana Jones in all of us, O.A.R.S. offers a selection of archaeology adventures throughout the Desert Southwest and abroad. Several cliff dwellings, as well as gorgeous Prehistoric Puebloan rock art, still adorn the San Juan River canyon. Many centuries later, gold miners, explorers and river-running pioneers added an Old West flavor to the San Juan's history. Explore the fascinating Ancestral Puebloan ruins whose early civilizations all but disappeared from the planet centuries ago with the expert guidance of a guest archaeologist and knowledgeable O.A.R.S. guides.
- **Astronomy:** With access to clear, dark skies undiminished by urban light pollution, witness a star display as you've never seen before. O.A.R.S. astronomy trips are scheduled around the new moon to allow for optimal stargazing opportunities. Our astronomy experts put laser pointers to good use and provide informal educational discussions each evening on such topics as the history of constellations and Native American interpretations of star movements and groupings.

## **Sample Itinerary**

We pride ourselves in running a relaxed and always flexible schedule. Every trip is different depending upon the group, other trips on the water and sometimes the weather. The following is a sample of what your trip may be like.

### **The Day Before Your Trip...**

- We'll meet at 7:00 PM at the Recapture Lodge in Bluff, Utah for a pre-trip meeting. This is an opportunity to meet your fellow travelers and guides and ask any last-minute questions. Your guides will give you a thorough trip orientation and pass out your waterproof river bags so that you can pack your belongings that evening.

### **Day 1**

- We begin our day with a 4-mile drive from Bluff to our put-in at Sand Island, where your boats and your O.A.R.S. crew await you. After a thorough safety talk, our journey begins. We'll peacefully float for a few hours, getting to know our fellow travelers and soaking in the majesty of our surroundings. Our first stop is Butler Wash, where we'll be amazed by petroglyphs dancing across a sheer rock wall. The figures depicted here are believed to be "Kachinas," or gods. This is an excellent introduction to rock art we'll see as we head downstream. We'll also see "moki steps" that were carved into the cliffs at least 800 years ago.
- Not much farther down river we stop for a short walk to River House, a well-preserved prehistoric cliff dwelling. We have time to explore this multi-room structure and admire the rock art including human

hands, sheep and snake figures that adorn the overhanging walls and ceiling. We might also explore the Hole in the Rock on the famous Mormon Trail.

- Our first day generally sets the pace for our river trip. Typically, we spend a few hours on the water in the morning, sometimes stopping for a great hike, a visit to a waterfall or a prehistoric ruin, or a refreshing swim.
- At lunchtime, we pull over to a sandy beach and enjoy a delicious picnic. After feasting and relaxing on the beach (or perhaps swimming, a game of Frisbee or a nature walk), we get back in our boats and watch the desert panoramas slowly develop and change as we peacefully float down the river.
- Mid- to late-afternoon, we stop and make camp; you grab your bags and set up your tent while we take care of the kitchen and “living room”—camp chairs and the site for tonight’s campfire (if permitted). This is the perfect time for you to lounge on the beach with that book you’ve wanted to finish forever. Before long you’ll be savoring pleasing hors d’oeuvres and the beverage of your choice—delicious as these refreshments are, they always taste better after a day on the river! Read, nap, or just sit back and laugh with friends and family as we prepare dinner.
- After a satisfying feast, the evening is yours to spend however you wish. Maybe music, stories, or jokes will bring us together tonight; maybe the popping of the fire, the whisper of the river and the clarity of the big, star-filled sky will encourage silent reflection on the amazing wilderness that is, for now, our home.

### Days 2-3

- Your day begins with the morning light turning the cliff walls the colors of sunrise. Fresh coffee and tea are waiting for you when you get up; grab a cup, sit back and take in the glory of the awakening river. Soon breakfast is served—omelets made to order, blueberry pancakes, sizzling bacon, fresh fruit, toast and juice are among the treats you will indulge in each morning. Once you’ve eaten your fill, you pack up your things as the guides break down camp, then our new day’s adventure begins.
- As the San Juan carries us further into this majestic geological corridor, we begin to see evidence of the earth’s activity—slow and steady or sudden and violent—over the course of the river’s 300-plus-million-year existence. Within the first 10 miles, the river crosses the Comb Ridge monocline, a gigantic upwarp that extends unbroken for over 50 miles. A hike to the Mule Ear diatreme reveals an eruptive ground vent and a rubble mass of rocks from the earth’s mantle. Then it’s back to our boats to begin our descent into the upper San Juan canyon, where we meet our first whitewater, Four-Foot Rapid. Eight-Foot and Ledge Rapids also spice up our tranquil float as we enter the upper “Narrows,” a particularly tight gorge carved out of the brilliant rocky layers by the very river upon which we drift.
- On Day 3 we reach Mexican Hat. This is the ending point of the 2½ day trip. Those leaving will return to Bluff — while the rest of us stay on for the remainder of our 6-day trip. Having enjoyed the camaraderie of past days and the magnificence of the river corridor, we say our goodbyes and head downstream.
- The more aggressive hikers in our group may tackle the steep and strenuous climb up the Raplee Anticline. No matter the effort involved in reaching the top, the views that await us are well worth it, and we’ll take some time to soak up the incredible landscapes of Monument Valley and Mexican Hat

rock. Back on the river, we'll float past the town of Mexican Hat and enter the Mendenhall Loop, the beginning of the famous Goosenecks of the San Juan River. This snake-like stretch of river twists and turns so tightly, we cover seven river miles through a section measuring just two miles as the crow flies! Winding back and forth, we'll pass exquisite works of water and rock like the Tabernacle and the Second Narrows.

- We may have time to stop at Mendenhall Loop for a short hike. In 1893 prospector Walter Mendenhall staked a claim at the first gooseneck in search of gold. The remains of his stone cabin rest on the plateau overlooking the river.

#### **Days 4-6**

- After leaving the fascinating Goosenecks, we're treated to glimpses of rocky wonders like Cedar Mesa, Cowboy Hat, and Eagle Rock. Beneath this stretch of river lie extensive oil fields, and at lower water levels, we may be able to see the very oil seeps where the Ancestral Pueblos may have gathered this precious resource for fuel and medicine. All along, we keep watch for bighorn sheep near the water and Native American ruins hidden atop cliffs.
- Our trip is certainly not devoid of whitewater, and this stretch of river delivers plenty of excitement with rapids such as Ross, Government and Slickhorn.
- A favorite activity on the San Juan is a visit to Slickhorn Gulch for a much-needed swim in its natural plunge pools. This beautiful canyon holds many hidden surprises, including fossils, maidenhair ferns, and waterfalls.
- Our trip draws to a close on Day 6 as we reach the Clay Hills boat ramp. Feeling as if we've temporarily left our modern age for the past five days, and having grown so close to our guides and fellow travelers, the shuttle ride back to Bluff and "civilization" is bittersweet. However, it doesn't take long to realize that although we've left the river, the river will never leave us.

#### **What's Included?**

- Skilled, professional guide service
- 2½ days/2 nights or 6 days/5 nights catered camping
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 6 (lunch not included on final day for 2½)
- Expedition equipment, including two person shared tent, and waterproof bags
- High quality inflatable rafts and kayaks and related river equipment including paddle, helmet and personal flotation device
- Transportation from Bluff to the river and back

#### **What's Not Included?**

- Transportation to and from Bluff
- Pre and post-trip accommodations and meals
- Sleeping bag & sleeping pad (these items may be rented from O.A.R.S.)
- Insurance of any kind, including travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature (a packing list will be provided)
- Gratuities

## **SOMETHING VOLUNTARY**

- In reviewing your statement, you'll note a \$1/person/day donation to Utah Rivers Council a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to Utah's rivers and clean water sources. One-hundred percent of these funds go directly to Utah's rivers and your contribution is tax-deductible. This donation is voluntary and may be removed from your invoice if you choose not to participate. Please notify our office if you would prefer to delete the donation from your balance.
- The O.A.R.S. Foundation is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with the express goal of providing opportunities for young people to experience the magic of a river trip. Visit [www.oarsfoundation.org](http://www.oarsfoundation.org) to learn more about how your tax deductible donation can change young lives for the better.

## **Terms & Conditions**

### **Reservations & Deposit**

- A \$250/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.

### **Cancellations, Transfers & Refunds**

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, please notify us as soon as possible. The cancellation fee after you've made your deposit can range up to the entire trip cost, based upon the number of days prior to your trip that we receive your cancellation notice. We regret we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, **we strongly urge you to investigate trip insurance** (see Insurance).
- Cancellations 60 days or more prior to the trip earn a full refund less a \$100/person fee. Cancellations 59 days or less, prior to your trip are not refundable.
- If you transfer from one trip to another, there is a \$50/person charge up until 60 days before the trip. Transfers made after this time will be treated as cancellations.

### **Medical**

- Under most circumstances, if you are of an adventurous spirit and in reasonably good health, you should have no problem enjoying an O.A.R.S. trip. People with medical conditions, including pregnancy, should have a physician's approval before taking an adventure travel trip.

### **Insurance**

- Although every effort is made to insure a safe trip for all, we strongly recommend that you protect yourself, your belongings, and your vacation through the purchase of a short-term traveler's policy. A trip cancellation policy covers your non-refundable payments in most cases, should you have to cancel your trip at the last minute due to illness or injury. Trip participants should realize that in the event of illness or injury on an adventure travel trip, evacuation can be prolonged, difficult and expensive. Personal belongings and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and O.A.R.S. accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged, delayed or stolen property.

### **Liability Waiver**

- Everyone is required to sign a standard release form before the trip, acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety is of the utmost concern on our trips. However, due to the nature of the activities, a condition of your participation is that you will sign this form and return it to our office before the trip begins. Anyone who refuses to sign the form will not be allowed to participate, and consistent with O.A.R.S. cancellation policy, there will be no refund of the trip fees at that time.

### **Responsibility – An Important Notice**

- O.A.R.S. Canyonlands, Inc. and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services, and assume no responsibility however caused for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, force majeure, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations,

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and discrepancies or change in transit over which it has no control. Reasonable changes in itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well being of the participants, including cancellation due to water fluctuation, insufficient bookings (this trip requires a minimum of 4 guests), and other factors. There is risk in whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. Your guide will make every attempt to assist, but you must be strong and agile enough to “self-help” and “float-it-out” without further endangering yourself or others. We reserve the right not to accept passengers weighing more than 260 pounds or with a waist/chest size exceeding 56 inches. We may decide, at any time, to exclude any person or group for any reason we feel is related to the safety of our trips. We are experienced at accommodating people with various disabilities. Please give us an opportunity to make you feel welcome. We need to discuss any special requirements ahead of time. On advancement of deposit the depositor agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. Prices are subject to change without notice.

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