



*Twice Named*  
**"Colorado Company of the Year"!**

**River:** Arkansas River

**Trip:** 5 – Day Whitewater Raft Trip. Class III-IV. 90 miles.

**Meeting Place:** Wilderness Aware Headquarters, in Johnson Village near Buena Vista, CO.

**Times:** Meeting time is 8:00am, trips depart daily at 9:00am. Get back to the office at about 4pm. River times outlined below are approximate.

**Closest Major Airports:** Colorado Springs (COS) – 2 hours, Denver (DIA) – 3 hours.

**Meals Provided:** Continental Breakfast, 5 delicious smorgasbord lunches along the river, 4 hearty dinners, desserts and 4 full breakfasts at camp.

**Season:** May 1-Labor Day

**Itinerary:** Combine several of the Arkansas' best whitewater sections into a great multi-day trip and experience the fun of self-contained overnight camping by the river. This trip has it all – exciting whitewater, spectacular views of Colorado's tallest mountain range, and a feeling of getting away from the daily grind. Having specialized in running multi-day rafting trips since 1976, Wilderness Aware has run more overnight trips on the Arkansas than any other outfitter. This experience gives us the competitive edge when it comes to organizing your adventure. The Arkansas offers some of the most continuous whitewater in the West. This is the Colorado Rockies at their finest! It is a perfect trip if you are seeking adventure and excitement without the hassles of logistics, food/equipment packing and clean-up after your trip. Each day offers you something different to experience and enjoy.

**Day 1- 8:00 am:** You will meet at our 7200 sq. foot facility right along the banks of the Arkansas River. Enjoy a free continental breakfast after checking-in with our office staff for a pre-trip briefing. Your guides will be available to help pack your gear (camp clothing, toiletries, sleeping bag and pad) in a water-tight overnight bag. Everyone gets their very own souvenir insulated coffee mug to keep after the trip. Tents are packed away separately. Then you can change into your river gear in our spacious and clean indoor changing rooms. Next, the guides who will outfit you in a Coast Guard approved life jacket, helmet and paddle.

**9:00 am:** Once you are suited up, your trip leader will give you a comprehensive safety orientation with plenty of time for questions. You will have the confidence needed to handle anything that comes up during the trip. You will then be whisked to the river for your five-day adventure.

**10:00 am:** You will start your morning in The Narrows, which doesn't allow much warm-up time as you jump right in to the big stuff. The Class IV Miracle Mile begins just a short time after you launch and really tests your skills with fast moving water and tight moves. The Narrows features a continuous gradient keeping the action moving fast. Other Class IV drops include Frog Rock Rapid, The Silver Bullet, and House Rock where split-second timing is required to avoid a gigantic boulder blocking the channel. Along the way, you will be reminded of Colorado's mining past as you see the Historic Midland Railroad Tunnels, an old miner's cabin or even someone panning for gold!

**PO Box 1550, Buena Vista, CO 81211**

**[www.inaraft.com](http://www.inaraft.com) ~ [rapids@inaraft.com](mailto:rapids@inaraft.com) ~ 719-395-2112 ~ Fax 719-395-6716**

**12:00 pm:** At lunchtime alongside the river, our professional guides will prepare hors d'oeuvres and a hearty deli-style lunch. After eating, you will meet up with our gear boat, affectionately known as the "Pig Rig". Your overnight bags and supplies for the trip will have been loaded up before your arrival. A well deserved lunch break gives you time to stretch your legs and soak in the sweeping mountain views. Enjoy some tasty hors d'oeuvres while the guides prepare a deli-style lunch. Because lunch is by the river adjacent to our office, a clean restroom is available and you have access to your car for final adjustments to your attire for the trip. On cool days, hot drinks are also available at the breakfast bar.

**2:00 pm:** After lunch, you'll help load gear onto the paddle boats and be on your way to camp.

**4:00 pm:** Once we arrive at our riverside campsite, the routine is the same each night as we unload all the rafts and have an opportunity to change into camp clothes and set up tents. Guides will be on-hand to assist with setting up your camp. After a brief camp orientation where you'll become acquainted with the "Groover", our solid waste toilet system and the camp routine, you will be free to take a hike with spectacular views of the 14,000 foot Sawatch Mountain range or a refreshing swim in the Arkansas River.

**7:00 pm:** After unwinding for a couple of hours, the Guides have put on their chef's hats and have a hot dinner ready for you. Some of the dinner entrees we offer are: Grilled Chicken, Steak and Salmon, Stir-Fry, Lasagna, and Enchiladas, followed up with a Dutch-oven cake. This is not pork-and-beans camping! After dinner you can relax with a cup of cocoa or tea next to the campfire under a blanket of stars playing cards, telling ghost stories, and re-living your adventures from the river.

**Day 2 – 7:00 am:** In the morning, you'll wake up to the aroma of freshly brewed "Cowboy" coffee delivered to the door of your tent. When you get up, you'll see that camp is nearly in full swing and an array of fresh fruit, juice and other goodies available for you to nibble on. The smell of bacon in the air tells you breakfast is nearly ready. Our breakfast entrees may include blueberry pancakes, French toast, or Veggie eggs. After you eat, it's time to pack up your tent and overnight bags and re-load the rafts for the day's river adventure.

**9:00 am:** Now you're ready to take on Brown's Canyon. The character of this section is challenging to seasoned rafters, yet forgiving for beginners. Most of the large rapids are followed by a calm pool of slow moving water allowing an opportunity to either catch a quick breath of fresh mountain air or take a picture of the unique Granite rock formations set off against the clear blue Colorado sky. With that kind of scenery, it is no wonder that Brown's canyon has been designated a Wilderness Study Area by the Bureau of Land Management. If you are lucky, you may just catch a glimpse of a herd of Bighorn Sheep or see a Brown Trout shooting out of the water after a quick snack.

Don't look too long – Browns Canyon will demand both your attention and muscles as you challenge rapids like Widow-maker, Zoom Flume, the Staircase and Seidel's Suck-hole. In June, when the river is swollen with snowmelt, prepare for a wet and wild ride with towering waves and powerful currents – a wetsuit is a must for rafting at this time of year. During late July and August, the river changes, requiring technical maneuvers around rocks and dropping through narrow chutes. As the river warms, wetsuits disappear and are replaced by swimsuits, providing opportunities to splash fight with new friends or even swim a rapid!

**1:00 pm:** After lunch, we'll emerge from the canyon into picturesque cottonwood lined pastures with more fantastic views of snowcapped peaks.

**4:00 pm:** Soon after the Arkansas makes its Big Bend to the east, we'll arrive at our 2<sup>nd</sup> night camp, an exclusive Wilderness Aware riverside site. This site features a lush riparian meadow providing extra cushioning under your tent. While at camp, enjoy a game of horseshoes or simply kick back, read a book and enjoy the sunset set off against the Sawatch and Sangre de Cristo Mountain Ranges while dinner is being prepared.

**Day 3** – The river changes its mood for the third day of rafting through Upper Bighorn Sheep Canyon. Although big rapids are still to be found, more time is available in-between to gaze at a red-tailed hawk riding a thermal or to try your hand at catching a trout. Because the river is more forgiving, we break out the inflatable kayak or “ducky”. Paddled with a two bladed kayak paddle, the “ducky” allows you to take on the rapids individually. We have both one-person and two-person “duckies” available on our trips. These boats are stable and easy to learn how to maneuver. Anyone that is interested can take turns in these toys that make a small wave seem huge! After a short training demonstration by the trip leader and donning a helmet, you will be ready to take on Class III rapids like Salida’s F-Street wave, Bear Creek, Badger Creek, and the Flume. We’ll make camp on a wide grassy field, adjacent to a public river access. There is plenty of room to fish and play here before settling in around the campfire.

**Day 4** – We raft 18 miles through scenic Bighorn Sheep Canyon, which includes several Class III-IV rapids like Cottonwood, Texas Creek, Maytag and Three Forks rapids. We use this day to test our rafting skills for perhaps a final day on the Royal Gorge. There are also more opportunities to take out the inflatable kayaks through this great stretch of river. Our camp is located in a shady cottonwood grove near Echo Canyon, a perfect evening walk up the creek to an abandoned homestead.

**Day 5** – Depending on the group, we can have a lazy morning in camp and finish the trip in the large, numerous rapids of Lower Bighorn Sheep Canyon, or we can hustle out of camp and have a giant climactic conclusion as we raft the Class IV-V rapids of the world famous Royal Gorge. The Royal Gorge is the choice of most groups that don’t have younger children and aren’t in a hurry to get on their way home. The canyon walls here are 1000 feet of vertical wonder where we’ll pass directly under the world’s highest suspension bridge. Rapids like Sunshine, Sledgehammer and Boat-eater will challenge the most seasoned of rafters. These rapids are a fast and furious, big-volume adventure sure to knock your socks off!

You will have a chance to reflect on this rapid-filled mountain and canyon trip as we bring you back to our office in Buena Vista by late afternoon. Complimentary drinks and snacks are provided along the way.

**5:00 pm:** At our headquarters, you can change back into your street clothes, unpack your bags for the final time, say good-bye to new found friends and check out several sets of professionally taken photos available for purchase. You may also choose to remember your trip with a T-shirt, hat or small souvenir. There is no better way to spend 5 days!