



River: Salt River, Arizona

Trip: Upper Salt River Canyon 1-Day Whitewater Raft Trip, Class III-IV, 10 miles.

Meeting Place: The junction of US Hwy 60 and the Salt River, between Show Low and Globe, AZ.

Times: Meeting time is 9:30am, trips depart daily at 10:00am. Get back to the Hwy 60 bridge at about 3:30pm. River times outlined below are approximate.

Closest Major Airports: Phoenix (PHX)– 2 ¾ hours, Tucson (TUS)- 2 ¾ hours

Meals Provided: Custom grilled lunch.

Season: Early March – Mid-May

Itinerary: Full day trips on Arizona’s Salt River are the ultimate springtime getaway, sunny warm days, desert plants in bloom, and a river swollen with snowmelt. The Salt River is one of the most unique rivers in the U.S. Located on the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau, the Salt is at the crossroads of mountain and desert ecosystems. You’ll descend through oak and juniper woodlands into the stunning Lower Sonoran Desert – the most biologically diverse of any of the American deserts. The varieties of cacti along the river are stunning – from the teddy bear cholla to the huge, multi-armed saguaro.

The Salt River Canyon’s Geology is magnificent. The canyon walls extend thousands of feet above river level and give you the feeling of insignificance in this natural rock cathedral.

In March, 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 April and May, 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!

9:00 am: You will meet at our office at the “put-in” which is undeniably the nicest facility available on the Salt River. Our 35’ custom-built office and equipment warehouse trailer holds everything needed to start your trip in style. Our facilities allow for proper cleaning and storage of equipment, which means you start your day clean and comfortable. Our private men’s and women’s changing room trailer has adequate benches and clean linoleum floors that are up and off the ground. It is well ventilated and well lit. With Wilderness Aware there is no longer the need for Salt River trip preparation in makeshift facilities!

9:30: After getting changed and locking your valuables in your car, you will meet with your guides who will outfit you in a Coast Guard approved life jacket and issue you a paddle and helmet. Last minute items like sunscreen, lip balm, glasses straps and waterproof cameras are available at the store in our office facility.

10:00 am: After a pleasant 100-yard walk to the river’s edge, your trip leader will give you a comprehensive orientation and safety talk with plenty of time for questions. You will have the confidence needed to handle anything that comes up during the trip. The whitewater on this trip will not disappoint. Rapids with names like Maytag, Overboard and Mother Rock ensure you will challenge your coordination and muscles while you conquer the river.

11:30 am: At lunch alongside the river, our professional guides will prepare hors d’oeuvres and a hearty custom grilled lunch and may even tell a tall-tale or two. We work out of a custom-built kitchen facility that meets health department standards. It is plumbed with propane that supports lights, a refrigerator and freezer. No more Salt River trips serving food from ice chests! Our lunch site has picnic tables and clean portable toilets.

1:00 pm: After lunch, the giant waves of Exhibition rapid are sure to have your eyes as big as saucers, followed by a giant smile as you are drying off! If there is interest, there's an opportunity to hike up a side canyon and take in a scenic waterfall before encountering the abrupt start to the saguaro forest. Don't stare too long at the scenery as the grand finale to the trip is just around the corner, Mescal Falls. This rapid is the most vertical drop of this trip and will thrill the most seasoned of rafters!

At the conclusion of the trip, you will be transported back to your car at the US Hwy 60 Bridge where you can change clothes, say good-bye to new found friends, and reflect upon this rapid-filled canyon trip. You may also choose to remember your trip with a T-shirt, hat or small souvenir. There is no better way to spend a day!