

Trip Types

GRAND CANYON RAFTING



Rivers & Oceans



It's easy to get confused about the different rafting sections on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon. We have created this document to break them down for you so that you can rest assured that you are signing up for the right trip.

We believe that each section of Grand Canyon has it's own character and qualities, offering a unique rafting experience. As you learn more about each section of the Canyon, keep in mind that every day spent on the river is an adventure. Our advice is to spend the longest amount of time going the shortest distance. When a trip averages less river miles per day, that extra time goes toward more exploring off-river, allowing you to become more intimately acquainted with the many views of Grand Canyon.

NEED TO KNOW: RIVER TERMINOLOGY

Before we begin looking at the different sections, we would like to clarify a few essential river terms:

- **Put-In:** This is the point on the river where your rafting expedition will begin.
- **Take-Out:** This is the point on the river where your rafting expedition will end.
- **Exchange:** For partial trips, this is the exchange of one group for another. Example: When Upper Canyon passengers hike out of the Canyon to finish their trip, Lower Canyon passengers are hiking in to begin theirs.
- **River Mile (RM):** The number of miles at any given point on the river, measured from Lee's Ferry, River Mile 0.

NEED TO KNOW: RAPID CLASSIFICATION

Grand Canyon rapids are rated on their own scale (Class 1-10), which was created before the more widely known international scale. The international rating labels rapids as Class I-VI. This is simply a different form of classification and does not mean the rapids are twice as difficult.

Please see our *Types of Whitewater Boats* document for more information about Grand Canyon rapid ratings.



THE RULE OF 4

There are four possible put-in points:

Lees Ferry (RM 0)

Phantom Ranch (RM 88)

Whitmore Wash (RM 188)

*Diamond Creek (RM 225) **

* The Diamond Creek put-in is only for one and two day commercial trips.





There are four possible take-out points:

Phantom Ranch (RM 88)

Whitmore Wash (RM 188)


Diamond Creek (RM 225)

Pearce Ferry on Lake Mead (RM 280)



The Upper Canyon





The Upper section begins near the Arizona / Utah border at Lees Ferry. The trip travels 88 rivers miles through the Grand Canyon, running whitewater and hiking in side canyons every day. The trip finishes in the Phantom Ranch area where guests will hike the Bright Angel Trail for 7.5-9 miles out of the Grand Canyon to the South Rim.

Put-in: *Lees Ferry (RM 0)* | **Take-out:** *Bright Angel Trail (RM 88)*

WHY WE LOVE THE UPPER CANYON

- **Welcome to Whitewater.** The Upper section is a great introduction to whitewater as the rapids (Class II-IV) start out smaller and less technical, building in complexity and intensity as you near the end of your trip with Hance & Sockdolager.
- **Geology.** The Upper section starts at the topmost, youngest layer of the sedimentary rock sequence. As the river travels downstream and deeper into the Canyon, rafters get to experience how the Canyon was formed. As you near the end of our trip, the river takes you to the deepest part, revealing some of the oldest exposed rock on Earth.
- **Archaeology.** The vast majority of the pre-historic sites in the Grand Canyon are found in the Upper section
- **The Hike Out.** For some, hiking the Bright Angel Trail out of the Canyon is a rite of passage and the perfect ending to an unforgettable adventure. People who choose the Upper section are better equipped for a hike out of the Grand Canyon than the majority of visitors to the park because they have acclimated to the climate and learned their body's needs in the harsh desert.





HIGHLIGHTS

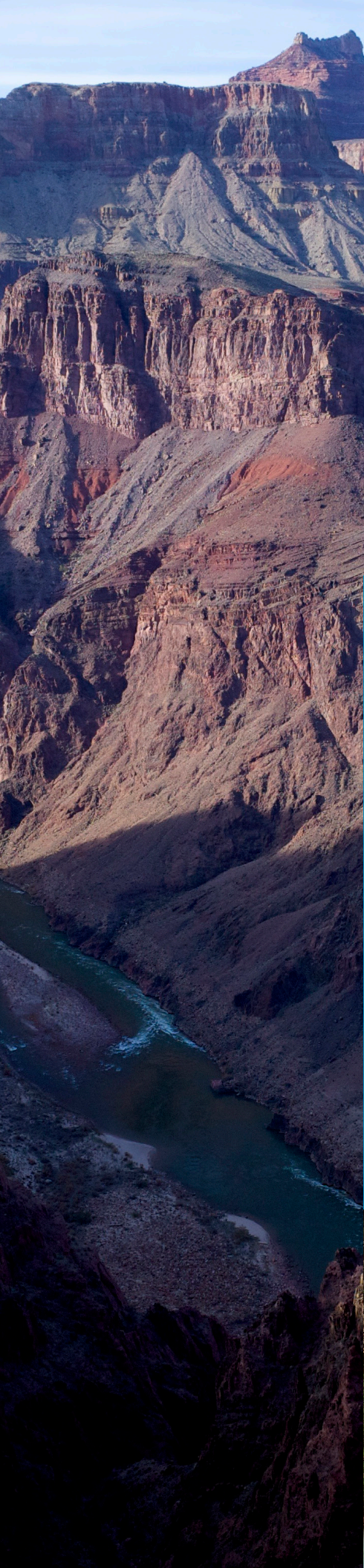
- Off river explorations into intimate side canyons and upward treks to wide-open Canyon views.
- Waterfalls and tributaries bring childlike exuberance and wonder to an Upper Canyon adventure.
- At the end of your trip, you will be dropped off near Phantom Ranch to begin your hike out on the Bright Angel Trail. The hike covers a 5,000 foot vertical elevation change. Please read our *Hiking the Bright Angel Trail* document for more information about this strenuous and rewarding experience.





The Lower Canyon





The Lower section begins at the South Rim of Grand Canyon on the Bright Angel Trail. After hiking in, guests will travel through some of the biggest whitewater (class III-IV) that the Canyon has to offer. Everyday is rich with hiking opportunities and new sights. A Lower trip may take out at Whitmore Wash, Diamond Creek, or Pearce Ferry, depending on your trip's pre-arranged logistics.

Put-in: *Phantom Ranch (RM 88)*

Take-out:

Whitmore Wash (RM 188)

Diamond Creek (RM 225)

Pearce Ferry (RM 280)

WHY WE LOVE THE LOWER CANYON

- ***The Hike.*** For some, hiking Bright Angel Trail is a rite of passage and the perfect entrée to their river trip. The first day on the trail allows you to travel through all the rock strata, walking nearly 5,000 vertical feet into the Earth. It is important to note that the hike is frequently underestimated and arguably more strenuous than hiking out. Please see our *Hiking the Bright Angel Trail* document for crucial information about the hike.
- ***The Biggest Rapids.*** Granite, Hermit, Crystal and Lava Falls (all Class IV) are some of the greatest rapids in North America. There are several days where rapids will be the highlight.
- ***Tributaries.*** There is an abundance of hiking opportunities along side streams in the Lower section that provide reprieve from the hot summer temperatures.



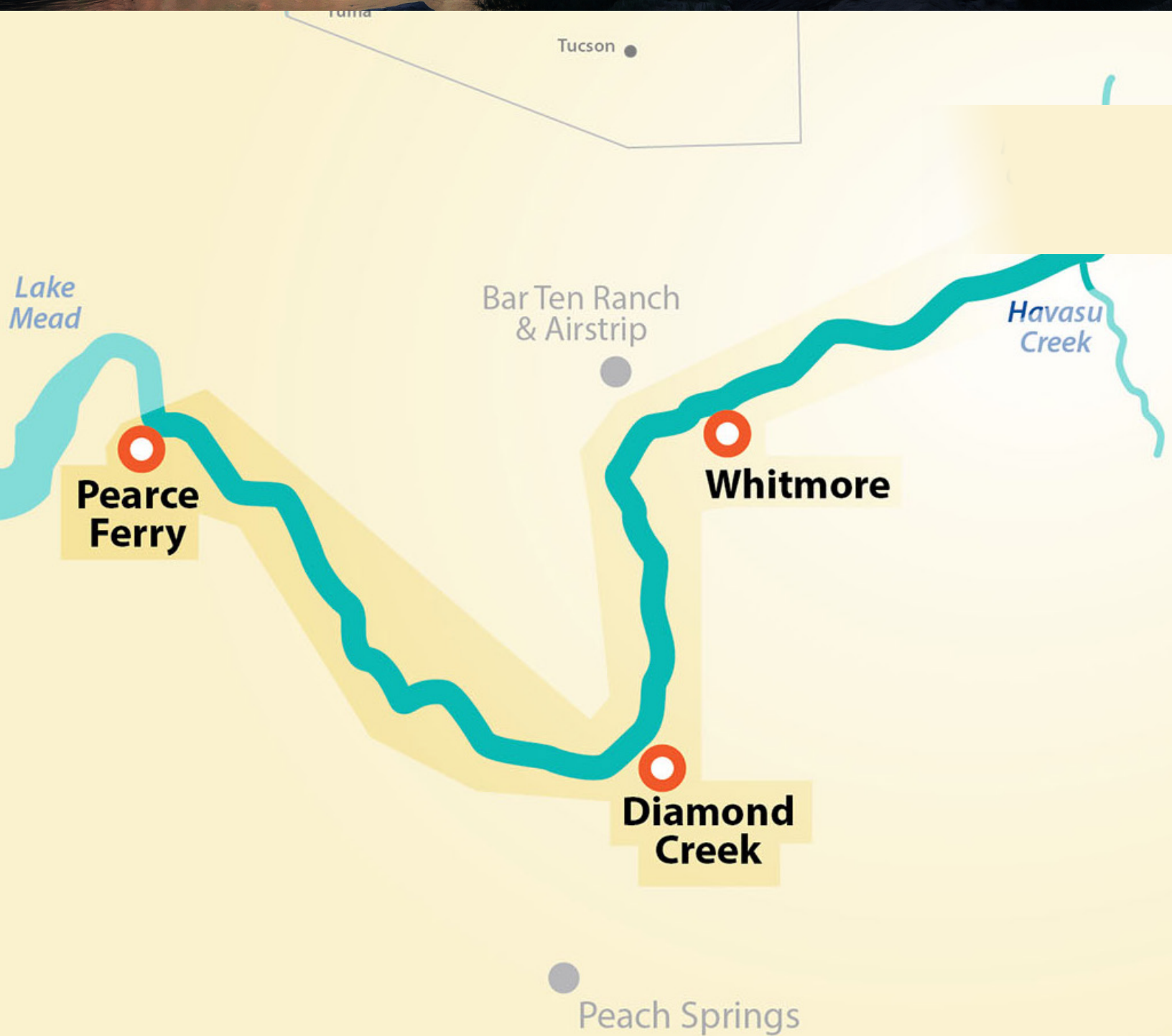



HIGHLIGHTS

- Daily Opportunities to get off the boats for a stretch in an inviting alcove or a ramble up a side stream to find a swimming hole. Awe-inspiring wilderness greets the Canyon voyager at every turn.
- Side streams are a daily gift, offering respite from the hot afternoons and the joy of playing in wild-flowing springs.
- Immediately after hiking in, the river drops into some of the biggest whitewater the Canyon has to offer. The Lower section is home to some of the classic Grand Canyon rapids.



The Western Canyon



A person wearing a hat and a backpack stands in a river, looking up at a towering, textured red rock canyon wall. The water is calm, reflecting the person and the wall.

The Western section begins with a helicopter ride from rim to river at Whitmore Wash (RM 188). With its mild whitewater and shorter duration, the western trip is perfect for families or those hesitant about a week-long rafting experience. This stretch travels through a Mojave Desert ecosystem, rich with cactus gardens, ocotillos, and a wide-open Canyon view.

Put-in: *Whitmore Wash (RM 188)*

Take-out: *Pearce Ferry (RM 280)*

WHY WE LOVE THE WESTERN CANYON

- **Family.** This is the perfect trip for families with children because the whitewater is not as technical in the Western section. Many of the outfitters have a younger age minimum for this stretch of the river.
 - **Introduction to Whitewater.** The Western section is a great choice for those with little rafting experience. The rapids (Class III) are fun and offer just the right amount of excitement for everyone with big wave trains in Kolb & 217 Mile rapids.
 - **Introduction to the River Trip Experience.** Passengers still get the experience of a multi-day river trip without having to camp for a week or more.
 - **Travel Logistics.** All Western trips start and end in Las Vegas, NV with all transportation to and from the river included in the price. The short length of the trip is also more convenient for vacation time from work.
 - **Helicopter Ride.** Although we always inform clients that the helicopter ride is a shuttle, not a tour (averaging on 5 minutes in the air), any opportunity to fly into the Grand Canyon and go below the rim is exciting!
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- A person is walking on a dirt trail that runs along the base of a red rock canyon wall. The wall has distinct horizontal layers of rock. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, and shadows are cast on the ground.



HIGHLIGHTS

- One of the crown jewels is a stop at Travertine Grotto.
- During the hotter summer months, your guides will help you discover fun ways to stay cool in the elements.
- Enjoy some time at a family owned cattle ranch and lodge perched high on Grand Canyon's rim where you can horseback ride, skeet shoot, and play horseshoes.





Are you ready for adventure?

We hope this broadens your understanding of the different trip types offered in the Grand Canyon to help you choose the adventure that is right for you. No matter which section you choose, rest assured that the Grand Canyon never fails to touch the heart and inspire a yearning to return. Whether you choose a full Canyon trip or a partial, there is always more to discover.

Still have questions? Give us a call - we'll guide you through!

(928) 526-4575 | riversandoceans.com

Photos: National Park Service, John Andrew Rice, Paxon Woelber, Robb Hannawacker, Paul Hudson, Jonathan Fox

