

# Rapid River Rafting



All rivers are rated on a "class" scale to help you determine the size and technicality of the whitewater. Many who are interested in a rafting vacation are in search of more moderate whitewater — aimed mostly at relaxing and soaking up the beauty of the scenery. Those are great trips to do with the younger children. Others are looking for more intense whitewater. Regardless of your choice, be assured that Western has one of the best safety records in the industry. Western's exclusive **J-Rig raft provides accessibility for first-time rafters** on even the largest whitewater rapids in Grand Canyon and Cataract Canyon, Utah.

**Class I** – rapids are defined by moving water with small waves that tug at the boat in a downstream flow — it's a relaxing way to spend the day. Rafting trips on class I whitewater are generally labeled as "scenic float trips." Most rivers have stretches of calm Class I water, creating a pleasant break between larger rapids.

**Class II** – rapids are easy to navigate, generally broad sections of water moving fast enough to create 1 — 3-foot whitecaps. These

are waves that are readily seen amidst broad channels that can be spotted without scouting the route from the shoreline. Some maneuvering is required to keep boat headed straight into each approaching wave.

**Class III** – rapids feature waves up to 4 or 5 feet tall that will crash over the bow. Currents (hydraulics) will feel stronger, possibly channeling between brief narrow passages such as boulders or cliff wall. Boats will shimmy and jolt with the increased punch of these larger waves, but generally, the jolt is brief, with a calmer and wider recovery area below each obstacle or wave, making the consequences of hitting something askew less severe. Plenty of excitement and fun with a guide at the helm! Non-guided rafters can find themselves in trouble in Class III rapids.

**Class IV** – Larger waves, narrow passages, and multiple obstacles to avoid requiring precise maneuvering to avoid upset. These rapids tend to be longer, steeper, and more "technical" which translates to turns, spins, and lateral moves across the current.

**Class V** – Another deserved level up from Class IV rapids, these look different (bigger and more intense). Expect vertical drops, strong currents, big waves, boulders, and holes large enough to flip or hold boats in their more powerful hydraulics.

**Class VI** – Generally considered "un-navigable" or "un-runnable", these are amplified versions of what you would find in Class V rapids.