



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### SOUTHWEST RAFTING & KAYAKING - 16 DAYS

**In General** - Welcome, you're in for an experience of a lifetime! Imagine paddling through towering canyon walls, passing by bighorn rams, taking a quick dip in the refreshing waters, and at the end of the day pulling over



to a riverfront beach to cook a big dinner and lie under a blanket of shimmering stars each night. Each day you will be getting to know your newfound community better, learning about the area and yourself, laughing with your expedition mates, and exploring some of America's most scenic river stretches. You don't need to have previous rafting or kayaking experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on individual growth and community. On the river, you will learn both the basics and the fine points of managing a paddle raft through some of the best whitewater in the West, as well as camping underneath the dark night skies of Southern

Utah. You will paddle a raft and kayak, descend through deep canyons filled with both calm and wild water, and often stop to explore many awe-inspiring viewpoints.

Your instructors are highly-qualified river runners and dedicated educators. They will serve as teachers, trainers, and mentors as you learn the skills required for wilderness travel. Through daily discussions, they will also help you and your group to discover the larger meaning to be found in these activities. You will discover much about yourself: how you adapt to change and deal with stress or challenge, how you work with others, and your potential as a leader.



Wilderness travel is demanding. This course may be the hardest thing you have ever done; you should be aware of what you're getting into and be excited about tackling the challenges. It can literally take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. From waking up early to pack your dry bags and cook breakfast, to paddling a raft for miles in the wind or through turbulent rapids, traveling in the wilderness can be hard. Past students agree that arriving physically fit and mentally prepared to take on challenges will enhance your experience and ability to do well on your course, ultimately allowing you to take full advantage of your expedition.

The Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) is indeed a school, though it will likely look radically different from schools you have attended in the past. Our "classrooms" are beautifully inspiring and rather than memorization for tests, our curriculum focuses on skills for the wilderness and most importantly for our students' everyday lives when they return home. Through challenge and adventure in a supportive environment your instructors will use teachable moments, experiential learning, and time for reflection to create progressions of skills and responsibilities. Many traditional schools may teach to specific mathematical or linguistic hard skills, but in addition to teaching whitewater rafting, backpacking, climbing, and canyoneering, COBS aims to develop the character of each student; building resilient, optimistic, compassionate, and resourceful leaders. We explore, role model, highlight the merits of, and encourage examples of our values:

- Tenacity in Pursuit
- Readiness for Sensible Self Denial
- Indefatigable Spirit
- Enterprising Curiosity
- Compassion



## ITINERARY AND COURSE ACTIVITIES

### Whitewater Rafting in Dinosaur National Monument on the Green River, Colorado and Utah –



Whitewater on the Green River begins at our course start where the river enters the imposing Gates of Lodore Canyon. Red sandstone escarpments rise up 2,000' above the river as it carves a 45-mile course of placid flat-water and raging rapids through three dramatic canyons—Lodore, Whirlpool and Split Mountain. This section of river is enclosed within Dinosaur National Monument, and you will be privileged to witness the towering cliffs as well as rock art from the Fremont Indians, who called these canyons home over 1000 years ago.

While on the river, each day is spent learning to recognize and navigate various obstacles and hazards in the river, and how to anticipate the forces of the current from far enough upstream. You and your companions will work to become a team; coordinating your powerful paddle strokes and captaining your raft through Class II – IV rapids. Interspersed between the rapids are flat-water sections where there is a current, but no whitewater. At times, you will take advantage of this calm water to hone your skills and enjoy the view. Time in a raft is ideal for getting to know each other and forming boat pride, laughing your way downriver as you relax into the simplicity of river life.

During this initial phase of your course, your instructors will introduce you to the most important elements of the river life: environmental stewardship, outdoor cooking, first aid, natural history and geology of the river canyons, the night sky, and of course, paddling and captaining skills.

**-AND-**

**Whitewater Rafting and Sit-on-top Kayaking in Desolation/Gray Canyons on the Green River, Utah –** When legendary outlaw Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch gang needed to escape from the eyes of pursuing posses, they would head to the vast and beautiful wilderness of Desolation Canyon. Midway through its journey through Utah, the Green River flows through Desolation Canyon, a truly wild location where spectacular rock formations, impressive ancient rock art, and abandoned 19<sup>th</sup> century ranches await explorers.



After completing the first leg of the journey, you will step into our small craft fleet, a combination of sit-on-top kayaks and rafts. Sit-on-top kayaks combine stability with maneuverability. You will take your experience predicting whitewater and hydrology from the last river section and apply it to a smaller, yet more responsive watercraft. In a kayak you move, predict, and react with every movement of the water and are met with exhilaration as you charge through crashing waves and negotiate the river's obstacles. You will learn the new skills specific to kayaking: eddy turns, bracing, surfing, and self-rescue. You will travel close together and support one another through rapids and share the stories of each rapid with an ear-to-ear grin on your face. With these boats, everything depends on you: your effort, your planning, and your decisions. Each day brings a new level of confidence and greater sense of accomplishment as the 60+ rapids continue to grow in size. At its greatest depth, Desolation Canyon plunges to carve a gorge deeper than the Grand Canyon. The towering rock



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walls of Desolation give way to the earthy bluffs of Gray Canyon, creating a sudden contrast of scenery for the last 25-miles of the canyon. Desolation and Gray Canyons offer a perfect blend of fun and challenging rapids with off river hikes to jaw-dropping destinations.

**Day Hiking** – As you travel down the river, you will stop along the way to stretch your legs, explore side trails, canyons, and historic or geologic points of interest. These hikes will take you through rough terrain to incredible, remote places that are only accessible by river travelers. The hikes are always well worth the effort to see both ancient and turn of the century artifacts as well as stunning natural beauty.



**Solo** – Solo provides an important break from the rigors of both the expedition and the distractions from everyday life. This is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With sufficient food and equipment, you'll spend time alone at your campsite to journal, rest, reflect on the past and look ahead to future goals. Your solo site will be close enough to the sites of others that you in case of emergency, but far enough removed solitude. You will not travel during this time will check on you occasionally, but you will be the duration of your solo. Many students are about solo, but many later recall solo as one of their entire course. This activity may be eliminated depending on weather or other



can get help quickly to assure your and your instructors primarily alone for initially nervous the highlights of abbreviated or factors.

**Final Challenge Event** – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, Outward Bound purposefully and gradually transfers certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Final Challenge Event”. Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving, and wilderness living skills, you may participate in such an event. There are no “set in stone” final challenges, as each challenge throughout course has been tailor fitted to the current conditions and participants, but it may take the form of a run or team challenge amongst many options. This event is your personal challenge to finish successfully and with style, by embodying all the lessons you have learned during your Outward Bound course. You may be surprised by how far you have come in 16 days and how far you can go.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

The following is an example of what your 16-day itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities, and instructor preferences.

<b>Day 1</b>	Course Start
<b>Day 2-6</b>	Whitewater Rafting in Dinosaur National Monument, Day Hikes, Transfer
<b>Day 7-15</b>	Rafting & Kayaking Desolation & Gray Canyons, Solo
<b>Day 16</b>	Course end and transportation home