

# Raft the Deschutes River

## New Student Trip (NST)

### About the Location:

The Deschutes River Basin is found in the “rain shadow” of the Cascade Mountains where the high desert landscape provides outdoor enthusiasts with nearly endless opportunities for recreation, education and pure enjoyment. In 1855 the Wascoe, Paiute, and Warm Springs peoples were forced onto reservation lands, which now forms the largest reservation in the state and borders much of the upper Deschutes River. The Deschutes River is known for its exciting whitewater, as well as peaceful flatwater floating opportunities. You'll be rafting through canyons of golden hillsides with green alder trees lining the riverbanks. While sagebrush and juniper trees are common companions, there are also occasional glimpses of ospreys, mergansers, beavers, and deer. The Deschutes offers a great setting for a rafting trip. Listening to a coyote howl at night, being serenaded by a colorful oriole in the trees above your raft, watching a red tail hawk circle in the blue desert sky, and being splashed by a huge native trout jumping next to your boat are things not easily forgotten.

### What to Expect:

The first day of the trip we'll drive 3.5 hours to camp the first night beside the river at the launch site. Participants will all get the chance to enjoy the calm serenity of central Oregon and get some sun, as well as gear up for the fun Class III (and the occasional Class IV) rapids. Along the way, we'll be camping along the river route. A typical day will include lots of time on the river as well as many opportunities to participate in the everyday activities of camp: preparing meals for the group, setting up camp, loading and unloading the boats, journal writing, hikes up to the rimrock cliffs, and, of course, just hanging out. On the last day of the trip, we'll arrive at the pickup point and head to Portland the night before New Student Orientation begins. Weather is generally warm and dry, but desert nights will get cool. Rainy days are possible, even though this is the desert.

### New to rafting?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners and led by experienced raft guides.

### How to Prepare:

- **Break in your boots:** Since we'll be day-hiking remember that new boots can cause painful blisters. It is *very important* to break in your boots by wearing them for extended periods prior to your trip. If you borrow hiking boots from College Outdoors, our boots are synthetic leather, fairly lightweight, and tend not to cause many blisters.
- **Get moving:** it's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape. If you have the chance to paddle, do it! It's great to start getting those muscles ready for the river.

### What will we eat?

Rafting trips are well stocked when it comes to food--you may never have eaten this well on a camping trip! Some examples of typical meals include: curry, pizza, mac & cheese and much more. This trip can accommodate most dietary restrictions and allergies, as long as you let us know about them ahead of time. For vegan and other non-medical specialty diets, there is an additional \$5/day meal charge. *There is no extra cost for vegetarian diets or medical diet restrictions.*

### What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?

No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. We provide all the group gear such as tents, stoves, and water filters. If you don't have your own outdoor clothing or personal equipment, we provide what you'll need for free, as long as you *request the equipment ahead of time* using the online form found on our website.

### What are the policies?

Participants on College Outdoors trips are expected to follow all [Lewis & Clark College conduct policies](#). All trips are tobacco, drug, and alcohol free, including vaping, medical cannabis, and tobacco products. Nicotine patches and gum are permitted.

College Outdoors has specific policies and procedures to mitigate risks on trips, which are outlined in the [policy brochure](#) and will be explained by your trip leaders. These policies include: Respecting others, food sanitation practices, requiring the use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs, sometimes referred to as lifejackets), requiring close-toed shoes, staying 6 ft. away from cliff edges, practicing "leave no trace" in the outdoors, and not engaging in exclusive or sexual relationships during trips. Policy violations may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from trips.

### What are the risks?

The most common injuries which could occur on this trip are blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots) and burns from not applying enough sunscreen. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.* Yellow jackets (wasps) can be pests at this time of the year, and *people with the potential for severe reactions to stings should plan to bring their own anaphylaxis kits (EpiPens).*

The Deschutes is an extremely high fire danger area due to the dry grass and brush everywhere at this time of the year. No open flames are allowed on shore, with the exception of white gas and propane stoves and lanterns. Swift water and rapids present hazards, and the river is a force to respect. Participants should be comfortable swimming and are required to wear lifejackets at all times when on the water. Trip leaders will cover river safety issues at the beginning of the trip, and repeat them as needed. Participants will learn how to paddle rafts and what to do in case they fall out. [Learn more about possible risks here.](#)

Please note that our hikes will sometimes go to remote areas and medical help could be hours away. Our trip leaders generally carry cellphones or satellite phones, but remember service is not always available in remote areas. Trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

**More questions? Just ask! We LOVE to talk about trips!**