



THE RIO GRANDE LOWER CANYONS

~ BIG BEND ON THE TEXAS / MEXICO BORDER ~



2006 - Springtime in the Desert Canyons

MARCH 5 - 11 • MARCH 18 - 24 • MARCH 26 - APRIL 1

The legendary RIO GRANDE - an icon of the American Southwest - flows through some of the most beautiful and remote desert canyons on the continent. Forming the long, wild Texas/Mexico border and cutting through the intensely rugged Big Bend Country, the "Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande" is truly one of America's premier wilderness river trips. Not fully surveyed in its entirety until very late in the nineteenth century, the Rio Grande is still regarded as one of the country's last real frontiers.

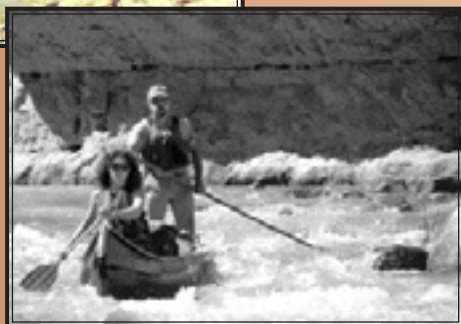
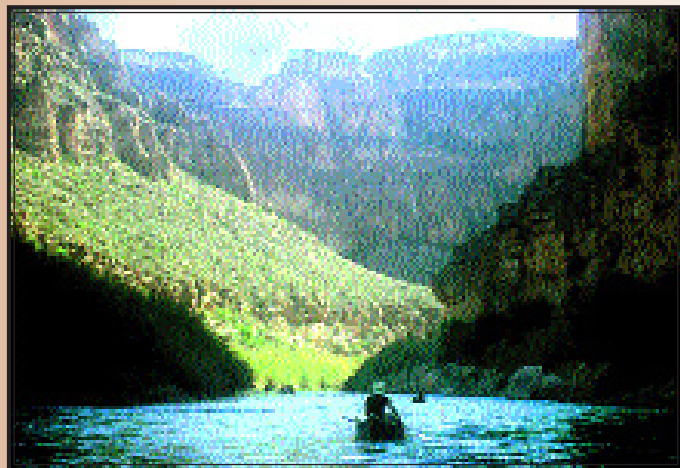
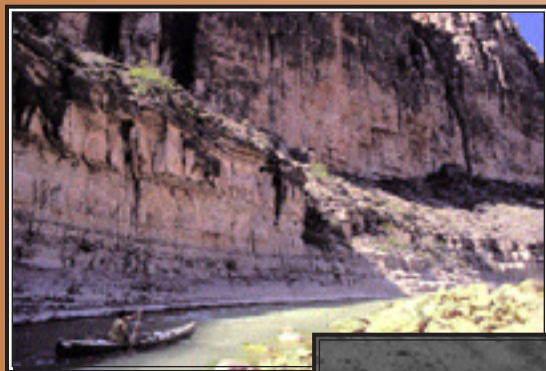
For 28 years we have run what is known as THE LOWER CANYONS - the most isolated and spectacular section of the Rio Grande. Flowing eastward out of Big Bend National Park, the river is first characterized by massive buttes and peaks rising off the desert flats, which eventually give way, to the Rio Grande's most commanding feature; the succession of canyons - miles of sheer, subtly hued walls, at times thousands of feet high. Wild horses and burros roam side canyons; vultures, falcons and hawks fly overhead.



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www.SunriseExpeditions.com



Essentially a mellow trip, placid water and easy current alternate with short, somewhat technical rapids (mostly class II), virtually all of which are runnable. Whitewater technique, especially solo paddling and poling, has always been our specialty. Given the proper coaching, most people can be taught to run whitewater gracefully and skillfully within a few days' time. We run the river at optimum season — late March through April is “springtime” in the southwestern desert. Cacti are flowering and the climate is perfect; fairly hot and dry, with an abundance of sunshine, no bugs and perfect swimming. Highlights include dramatic hikes up adjoining bluffs and side canyons, bathing in natural hot springs, and Southwestern cuisine. Campsites reflect the diversity of the landscape; each one is different — seemingly more beautiful than the last. Although tents are provided, many just simply choose to sleep under the stars.



\$1650 (\$3090 per couple)

incl. Shuttle from Midland/Odessa, all permit fees & taxes,

FAMILY & GROUP RATES AVAILABLE

See following pages for specific logistical details



GUIDES & OUTFITTERS SINCE 1973

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RIO GRANDE: LOWER CANYONS



ITINERARY & LOGISTICS

DATES & LOGISTICS: 2006

Participants should plan on arriving in **ODESSA, TEXAS** (fly to Midland/Odessa Airport) anytime during the day or evening **PRIOR** to the published starting date; (*e.g. 3/4, 3/15, 3/25*). Please bear in mind that in the event luggage is lost or delayed, we have very little leeway on the following morning. Thus, as always, we recommend that you try to carry-on as much critical clothing and gear as allowed, and, if possible, not to take the very last flight of the day into Midland. That evening we will do a final briefing, review personal gear, distribute packs, etc., and take care of any last minute preparations.

After an early breakfast the following morning, we will drive to the river (approximately 5-6 hours) through the heart of the West Texas oil and ranch country. Six nights will be spent on river; you will be arriving back in Odessa early in the evening on the published ending date in time for a late dinner. Thus, arrange for a morning flight out on the day **AFTER** the published ending date; (*e.g. 3/12, 3/23, 4/2.*) We provide meals starting with lunch upon reaching the river, and ending lunch the last day on river.

AIRLINE RESERVATIONS:]

Sunrise International operates in conjunction with a travel agency and we can assist you in obtaining the most economical fares available. We strongly recommend that you try to in Midland/Odessa on a morning or afternoon flight - in case of luggage delays. We can not delay our trip departure the following morning. Please contact us for more information.

HOTEL:

We meet at the:

**QUALITY INN & SUITES
3001 East Business 20
Odessa, Texas 79762
(915) 333-3931**

We have a block of rooms set aside for you to make your reservations. Notify the hotel that you are with Sunrise to obtain our group rate. You must guarantee your reservations with a credit card. The hotel is a 15 minute taxi ride from the Midland airport. Travel gear/luggage may be left in our locked storage room at the hotel during the trip; vehicles may be parked at the hotel.



**4 UNION PLAZA - SUITE 2 • BANGOR, MAINE 04401
800-RIVER-30 • 207-942-9300 • (Fax: 207-942-9399)
www.SunriseExpeditions.com • sunrise1@adelphia.net**



BALANCE OF PAYMENT:

Trip balances are due in our Maine office **three weeks prior to the trip start date.**

FORMS & INSURANCE:

Unless already submitted, a trip form is enclosed. ***KINDLY FILL OUT ALL THE FORMS PROVIDED AND RETURN THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.*** This will enable our guide to prepare for your trip properly.

Also enclosed is an **optional** travel insurance application - should you desire short term traveler's insurance for yourself and your baggage. Baggage is carried entirely at owner's risk. Trip cancellation insurance will also cover your losses on non-refundable air and land costs on trips cancelled due to illness or logistical changes due to natural conditions, etc..

INCLUDED: 7 Days & 6 nights on river, with all meals, equipment, & the service of a minimum of two professional Sunrise guides (add. guides at a participant/guide ratio of approx. 5:1.) Plus all park/river corridor fees, permit and access fees, & taxes. Shuttle from Odessa, Texas to/from the river. Personal packs and tents (if you opt not to bring your own).

NOT INCLUDED: Hotel accommodations off river in Odessa, TX (see above), transfer from airport to hotel, meals off river, personal liquor & beverages, gratuities.

PACKING CONSIDERATIONS:

Essentially, one should be prepared for a **desert climate**. Daytime temperatures usually range from the sixties to the nineties; nights start off warm, with gradual cooling towards the early morning hours, perhaps as low as the forties on the March trips. Sun protection is a very important consideration.

Specifically recommended for clothing would be lightweight, loose, long-sleeved shirts and pants, two sets, along with bathing suits, shorts, and T-shirts (jeans make very poor river pants). A lightweight jacket/anorak, and sweater/pile is recommended for evening; the jacket/anorak should also afford some protection from possible sand and wind conditions. Typically, there is little rain; although raingear would be considered advisable. Sneakers are perfect for river use, and a slightly more substantial pair of lightweight boots or shoes would be necessary for hiking and camp. Sandals, while a comfortable campsite option, are absolutely NOT recommended as river shoes. One or two protective hats or caps is a must, as well as suntan lotions and creams of personal choice.



Sunglasses, even if you don't normally wear them, are strongly advised. Light cotton gloves are recommended for those who burn or blister easily. As regards sleeping bags, a lightweight "three season" synthetic is sufficient, with a pad/mattress, ground cloth, etc. We ask that you bring spare prescription glasses/sunglasses, and a dual supply of any necessary medications (to be kept in someone else's pack in another canoe). Participants should also have at least one knife on their person. Ideally, a large single-bladed knife on the belt or life vest for safety purposes, and a multi-bladed tool type (Swiss Army or Leatherman) for utilitarian purposes. **A complete packing list will be provided on registration.**

As with all our trips, we will provide you with the proper river packs, tents, and P.F.D.'S (life jackets/vests), although you may provide your own gear, if suitable. We also have waterproof containers available for cameras, binoculars, and miscellaneous small gear. ***(Again, please remember to send back your trip forms, which have an attached gear needs list!)***

Lastly, we do serve wine (and, occasionally, Margaritas) with the evening meal; you are welcome to bring your own supply of beer, liquor, soft drinks, etc. We do carry an ice supply, and are capable of providing a limited amount of refrigerated space daily for personal use.

(cont.)

DRINKING WATER:

The Rio Grande itself is not potable. We bring drinking water with us, which is resupplied from the pure hot springs found periodically along the river banks. Although canteens and small water bottles are handy for hiking, and carrying, we will also provide you with personal gallon jugs of water which can also be replenished throughout the trip.

FISHING:

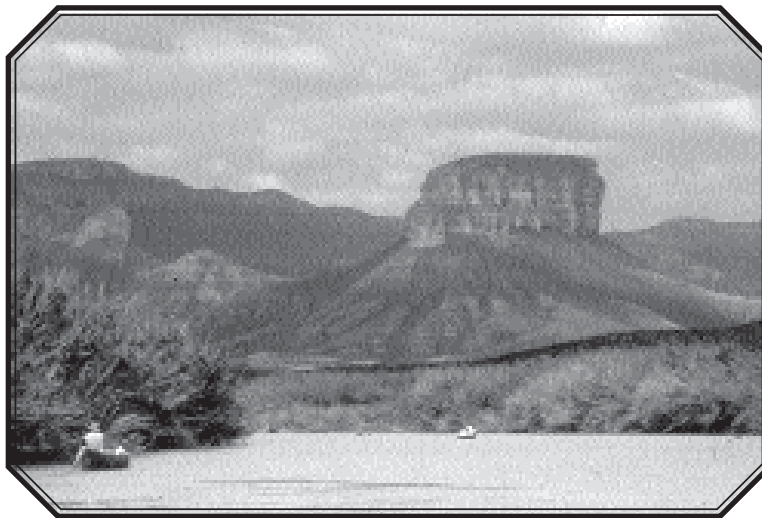
Basically for catfish - big ones. The Rio Grande is not exactly a flyfishing river - - any tackle is suitable, although line should be a minimum of ten pound test. Drop lines, bobbers, and bait is the popular local method. No firearms are permitted as the Rio Grande is a federally managed waterway.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

We check in historic Stillwell's Crossing, near the entrance to Big Bend National Park (Although our section of the river does not fall within the Park boundaries, the waterway itself, for which we are licensed, is administered by the National Park Service.) The store there has a selection of books, pamphlets, and maps on the Rio Grande and surrounding Big Bend Country. If available, we especially recommend that you obtain the #3 River Guide to the Rio Grande, published by the Big Bend Natural History Association. Another excellent general source is the Big Bend Handbook put out by the National Park Service.

THE MEXICAN BORDER:

Technically, we do not cross it; no passports are necessary as of 10/05. In any event, the carrying of some form of photo identification would be advisable.



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