



P.O. Box 510 • Columbia, California 95310 • 1-800-431-3636 • [www.zrafting.com](http://www.zrafting.com)

## MERCED RIVER TRIP INFORMATION

Welcome to ZEPHYR WHITEWATER EXPEDITIONS and the MERCED RIVER! Although the churning waters of the Merced River do not look particularly "merciful" to today's rafters, it was a different story in 1806, when Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga and his men named the river "Nuestra Senora de La Merced" (Our Lady of Mercy).

The following detailed information and maps are designed to give you a smooth and enjoyable whitewater vacation. If you have any questions about any of the following information, feel free to give our office a call. During periods of high water or inclement weather, it is advisable to call our office to check in 2 days before your trip.

**MEETING TIME AND PLACE:** All trips meet at the ZEPHYR WHITEWATER MERCED RIVER OFFICE, located next to INDIAN FLAT RV PARK on the HIGHWAY 140 entrance into Yosemite Park. The address is 9988 Highway 140, El Portal, CA 95318.

**Full-Day Trips** meet at 10:00 A.M. **sharp!** *NOTE: Late Season trips may meet at 9:30 A.M. (confirm with our office)*

**Morning 1/2-day Trips** meet at 8:30 A.M. **sharp!**

**Afternoon 1/2-Day Trips** meet at 2:00 P.M. **sharp!**

**ONE- DAY TRIP LOGISTICS:** Your head guide will meet you the morning of your trip at our staging area next to the Indian Flat RV Park. After a brief orientation talk, wet-suits will be passed out, cars locked, and we will set out for a great day on the River. We will raft 16 miles, with a stop for lunch along the way. Depending on water levels (the higher the water, the faster the trip!) we will have you back to your vehicles between 3:30 and 5:30 in the afternoon.

**HALF- DAY TRIP LOGISTICS:** Morning trips meet at 8:30 A.M. and return at about 1:00 P.M. Afternoon trips meet at 2:00 P.M. and return at about 6:00 P.M. Your head guide will meet you at our staging area next to the Indian Flat RV Park. After a brief orientation talk, wet-suits will be passed out (if needed), and we will board our bus for a short drive to put-in. We will raft 11 miles, ending at Briceburg where you will board our shuttle for the drive back to your car. LUNCH IS NOT PROVIDED ON 1/2-day trips, only beverages. Late Season 1/2-day trips will raft the 5.5-mile Gorge section.

**MEALS:** One day trips include a full lunch served on the river, as well as cold beverages at the end of the day. No alcohol of any kind is allowed during the day. Half-day trips do not include lunch. **Please bring a water bottle with you on the raft.**

**WET SUITS:** For trips through late May or so (depending on winter snow pack), wet-suits are a must. During the spring, the water is high and cold, and we want you to be comfortable. Wet-suits are provided by Zephyr at no charge. A nylon swimsuit (or other thin material suit) should be worn underneath the wet-suit.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** For low-cost travelers insurance, call (800) 937-1387 or (925) 932-1387. (Mon- Fri, 8:30 am-5:00 pm, PST)

### WHAT TO BRING:

Shorts / Swimsuit

T-Shirt or long-sleeve shirt (for sun protection)

Tennis shoes or sport sandals with heel strap (required to be worn in the boats) No Flip-Flops

Sunglasses with tie-on

Baseball-style hat with brim (to wear underneath your helmet)

Suntan Lotion and/or sunscreen

Water bottle

**TIPPING:** We are frequently asked whether it is appropriate to tip guides. While our guides are well compensated for their skills, if you feel your trip was exceptional, or that your guide or guides went out of their way to make the quality of your experience a notch above the norm, tipping is a nice way of saying thank-you.

**DIRECTIONS:** Our meeting spot is INDIAN FLAT RV PARK, located on Hwy 140, 5 miles west of El Portal. From Mariposa, drive 23 miles east on Hwy 140 and look for the RV Park on your right. Please meet us at the east end of the RV Park. (Look for our office and sign.) Your car will be parked here for the duration of the trip and we will transport you to and from the river.

**Please note that the Highways in and around Yosemite can be confusing and summer traffic can add driving time to the estimates below. It is important that you key into where you are staying, and are clear on your driving directions. It is your responsibility to get to Indian Flat RV Park ON TIME. If you are late, you will miss your trip and there are NO refunds.**

**FROM YOSEMITE VALLEY:** Take the Highway 140 Exit out of Yosemite Valley heading west toward Mariposa and follow the Merced River downstream. After about 45 minutes, you will pass YOSEMITE VIEW LODGE. Continue through the small town of El Portal (still following the river downstream). Go another 4 miles or so and you will see our office on the left hand side of the Highway. If you see CEDAR LODGE, you have gone 300 yards too far! Driving time from the Yosemite Valley floor is about 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on traffic.

**FROM MARIPOSA:** Take Highway 140 toward Yosemite Valley, passing through the town of Midpines, continuing down into the Merced River canyon. Continue up canyon, following the river all the way to CEDAR LODGE. We are 300 yards past Cedar Lodge. Driving time from Mariposa is about 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on traffic.

**FROM TENAYA LODGE:** Take Highway 41 to OAKHURST. From Oakhurst, take HIGHWAY 49 North to MARIPOSA and follow "FROM MARIPOSA" directions above. Driving time from BASS LAKE / OAKHURST is about 1.5 hours depending on traffic.

**FROM MAMMOTH / MONO LAKE:** Take TIOGA PASS (Highway 120) west towards Yosemite Valley. When you reach the junction with the North/South Highway 120, turn left (South) and head towards Yosemite Valley. Proceed through the tunnels, dropping into the Merced River canyon. You will come to the junction of Highway 140. Turn right on Highway 140, following the Merced River down through El Portal to Indian Flat RV Park. Driving time is about 3.5 - 4 hours depending on traffic.

**IF YOU ARE COMING FROM SAN FRANCISCO OR LOS ANGELES,** please use the town of MARIPOSA as a destination marker and then follow "FROM MARIPOSA" directions above.

#### DRIVING TIMES

Los Angeles	6.5 hrs (319 miles)	Bay Area	4 hrs (195 miles)
Groveland	1.5 hrs (49 miles)	Tenaya Lodge	1.5 hrs (42 miles)
Mariposa	1 hr (29 miles)	Yosemite Valley	40 min (15 miles)



**OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS:** We recommend arriving in the area the night before your trip.

**MOTELS in the MARIPOSA and MIDPINES AREA:**

Yosemite Bug Hostel & Lodge	(209) 966-6666	<a href="http://www.yosemitebug.com">www.yosemitebug.com</a> ( <i>unique accommodation with a great restaurant</i> )
Mariposa Lodge	(209) 966-3607	(800) 966-8819
Mother Lode Lodge	(209) 966-2521	(800) 398-9770
Miners Inn Motel	(209) 742-7777	(888) 646-2244
Comfort Inn	(209) 966-4344	(800) 321-5261
Best Western	(209) 966-7545	(800) 321-5261
River Rock Inn	(209) 966-5793	(800) 627-8439
EC Lodge Yosemite	(209) 742-6800	

**MOTELS in the EL PORTAL AREA (closest to our meeting place and to Yosemite Valley):**

Cedar Lodge	(209) 379-2612	(800) 321-5261 ( <i>Next door to our office</i> )
Yosemite View Lodge	(209) 379-2681	(800) 321-5261
Yosemite Park Information	(209) 372-1000	(801) 559-5000 ( <i>Yosemite Park Lodging</i> )

**CAMPING:** Camping is available at the INDIAN FLAT RV PARK (209) 379-2339. Camping is also available at KOA KAMPGROUNDS in MIDPINES (209) 966-2201. Tent cabin rentals are available at YOSEMITE BUG HOSTEL in MIDPINES (209) 966-6666. For campgrounds in YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK call (801) 559-5000.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

In over 35 years of operation, ZEPHYR has maintained an excellent safety record. However, river trip(s) do involve risk, accidents can occur, and baggage can be lost. We assume no responsibility for injury to trip members, loss of personal baggage, damage to cameras or other equipment or loss of time or expense incurred. All trip members are required to sign a liability release and assumption of risk form prior to trip departure.