

How to Choose Your Payette River Rafting Trip



A Boise adventurer's guide to picking the perfect whitewater trip

Only an hour from downtown Boise, the Payette River offers everything from splashy family floats to heart-pounding Class IV whitewater. This guide walks you through every rafting trip we run, who each one is best for, and exactly what to expect — so you can book the right adventure with confidence.



Why Raft With Cascade

The oldest and largest outfitter on the Payette, family-run since 1985, with Idaho state-licensed guides and a 5.0-star rating across roughly 1,670 Google reviews. Our private riverside River Center has a café, gift shop, changing rooms, free parking, and a professional photo team.

Family-owned and deeply rooted in the Boise community

All ages welcome — trips for kids as young as 5

Chill or Thrill? Start Here.

Every rafting decision comes down to one question — how much adventure does your group want?

Choose CHILL if...

You're bringing kids (as young as 5), it's your first time, or you want fun, splashy rapids with calm stretches to swim and soak in the scenery. This is the Main Payette and North Fork Cabarton (Class II–III).

Choose THRILL if....

Everyone in your group is 12 or older and at least 100 lbs, and you want bigger, more technical whitewater and a real physical challenge. This is the South Fork (Class III–IV).

Compare Our Payette River Trips

Trip Name	Class	Duration	Min Age	Starting At
Main Payette “Splash”	II-III	3 hours	5 years	\$52/children (4-12) \$69/Adults
North Fork Cabarton “Escape”	II-III	6-7 hours	5 years	\$89/children (4-12) \$119/Adults
South Fork Half-Day “Rush”	III-IV	3 hour	12 years / 100lbs	\$89/person
South Fork Canyon “Plunge”	III-IV	6-7 hours	12 years / 100lbs	\$149/person



Which Trip Is Right for You?

👨‍👩‍👧 Families with young kids

Go with the Main Payette. We take rafters as young as 5, and the Class II-III rapids are splashy but forgiving, with plenty of calm water to swim and relax.

First Time Rafters

The Main Payette is the perfect introduction — genuine whitewater excitement without the intensity. Nervous? Our guides make safety and fun their top priority.

Groups wanting a scenic full day rafting trip

Choose the North Fork Cabarton: warmer water, remote canyon scenery, wildlife, and a riverside lunch across a relaxed full day.

Thrill-seekers, teens & adults

Head to the South Fork. The half-day “Rush” packs punchy Class III-IV rapids into three hours; the full-day “Plunge” through the South Fork Canyon is Idaho's premier day trip — 13 miles of near-continuous whitewater, a portage around Big Falls, and a riverside lunch.

What to Expect on Trip Day

Check in at our River Center (7050 Highway 55, Horseshoe Bend) at least 15 minutes before departure. You'll meet your guide, get fitted with gear, and hop on the bus to the launch point for a safety briefing before hitting the water. Afterward, change clothes, browse your action photos, and grab a snack or a microbrew on our riverside deck.

What to Bring

- Swimsuit or quick-dry clothes
- Secure shoes
- Sunscreen (reef-safe preferred)
- Sunglasses with a strap
- Towel & change of clothes
- Water bottle
- Sense of adventure!

What We Provide

- Coast Guard-approved life jacket
- Helmet (Class III+ trips)
- A fun, professional, Idaho-licensed guide
- Wetsuits and splash gear when water or weather calls for it
- Unforgettable memories

Wear quick-drying clothes you don't mind getting wet — swimsuit, board shorts, a rash guard — plus water shoes, river sandals, or old sneakers that stay on your feet. Avoid cotton except in peak summer heat. Bring sunscreen, water, a hat, and a glasses strap if you wear glasses. Anything you carry will get wet, so keep it simple; free lockers are available at the River Center. No glass or alcohol on the river.



Planning Tips

Beat the heat

When Boise bakes in July and August, our afternoon and evening departures are the perfect way to cool off — ask about evening rafting near Boise.

How far is it?

About one hour from downtown Boise, roughly 1 hour 45 minutes from McCall. Our River Center is on Highway 55 between mile markers 70 and 71 — a tan building with a blue roof.

Booking & cancellations

Reserve online or call 208-793-2221; full payment holds your spot. Cancel 10+ days out for a full refund; 3–9 days out for a 50% refund or 100% Cascade credit; within 48 hours is non-refundable.

Ready to Book Your Adventure?

Call us today or book online. We're happy to help you pick the perfect trip for your group.

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