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Canoeing the Colorado River

July 29, 2015 • 2 Comments

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Canoeing the Colorado River

Back in January I had the good fortune to be contacted by Marty Genereux, owner of Centennial Canoe Outfitters Inc., to shoot images for their 2016 marketing campaign.

I had never paddled a canoe down river, in fact, I'd never stepped foot in a canoe, on a river or otherwise. But, intrigued by the idea of shooting a landscape that could not be seen by any other means, I agreed to take the job and plans were made for a July 2015 canoe trip on the Colorado River.

I had never slept on the ground either, but I didn't tell Marty that until I got there. There's always been a motel within a reasonable distance of my destination, so

sleeping on the ground just seemed completely unnecessary.

I'm pretty sure at this point Marty was wondering what he'd gotten himself into, but I'm nothing if not committed, and as always, anywhere I have a camera in my hand is a good place to be.

We met for put-in at Loma, Colorado, about thirteen miles or so west of Grand Junction. Twenty-eight people introduced themselves, had a lesson in paddling and safety, and ate breakfast prepared by our river guides, Ward, Lindsay and Richard. We were instructed in how to pack our canoes with all the gear necessary, (personal belongings, camp gear, tents, etc.), for a three day float downriver.

You can get a surprising amount of gear in a canoe. Relatively speaking, two people take up very little of the space.

My concerns, like what would happen if we capsize, (yes, the thought crossed my mind), slowly faded away as the hush of the river settled over us. We moved into the great sandstone canyons of the Ruby-Horsethief section of the Colorado Plateau where the ancients carved snake petroglyphs into the rock at river's edge and swallows built their mud homes under the canyon ledges.

I did my best to paddle properly, but I'm pretty sure Marty was doing all the work.

Before I knew it, we were taking out at the first campsite. By now all twenty-seven of my companions were well aware this was my first camping experience, and thanks to my friend Karen, they were also aware I had searched the internet for a battery operated hairdryer before leaving the comfort of my home.

Laugh if you must. For the record, as far as I could tell there is only one brand made in the world and the price was ridiculous, so I didn't buy it. That knowledge didn't keep my companions from asking if they could borrow it. The teasing the first morning in camp was merciless.

After setting up camp, where I learned putting up a tent is really not all that complicated, we were treated to a very good dinner of grilled salmon and fresh veges, topped off with strawberry shortcake and whipped cream. Three meals a day were prepared for us. We ate very, very well.

Water guns are standard equipment on the river, and the second day out a massive water fight ensued. No one was spared. We were all of us soaked to the gills by the time we maneuvered the *2 billion* year old Black Rock granite narrows where it was important to pay attention to avoid overturning the canoe. Not that we could get any

wetter.

A herd of bighorn sheep were in the near distance when we stopped for lunch and a hike to a natural amphitheater. Along the way we had sightings of great blue heron, peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and golden eagles.

Clouds obscured the stars our first night in camp, but the second night was clear and the Milky Way presented itself in all its glory for our viewing pleasure. On the other side of the river, trains passed from time to time, conductors blowing the horn by way of greeting, and we fell asleep to the soothing sound of the rushing Colorado River. As I lay in my tent, I remember thinking, "This is the best water feature ever!"

There are no roads along this 25 mile stretch of river to Westwater, Utah– it is a true wilderness experience, and Marty and his crew of experienced, fun and friendly guides went way out of their way to ensure we had the best possible canoeing experience.

My first camping adventure was such a success Centennial Canoe and I are planning a beginner photography workshop on the river next summer. I'd love to see you there.

Stay tuned for more information to come this winter!

Debi

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2. **DBoucher Photography**

30-Jul-15 20:28

Steve - no doubt about it! And I loved sleeping on the ground :) With the air mattress and sleeping bag of course!

1. **Steve Kenemore (non-registered)**

30-Jul-15 19:01

Debi, you are truly experiencing the best of God's blessings. The memories and experiences will be with you the rest of your life and there will always be times when a little smile or grin will appear when one of those memories JUST come into being. How's that sleeping on the ground??????