

The Best Whitewater Rafting

If you plan to get out in an inflatable this season, you're probably going to have a great time regardless of what body of water you're cruising. But if you're looking for the biggest thrills and the most excitement, consider this your go-to list.

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The Top 10 Whitewater Rafting Destinations

Short of measuring the size of every wave, it's impossible to create an empirical list of the world's best whitewater. In addition to the water itself, we looked at the quality of the company and the immeasurable awe, like how many grizzlies you might encounter along the shoreline. Be prepared to grumble: A few "iconic" rivers didn't make the cut. But one thing is for certain: All 10 will rock your raft—and your world.



10. Tatshenshini River, British Columbia

9. Lochsa River, Idaho

8. Alsek River, British Columbia

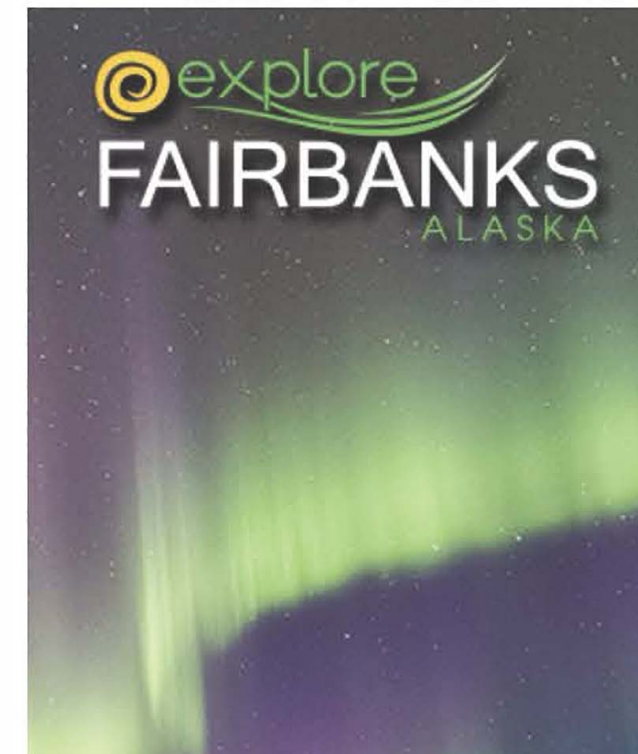
7. Paro Chhu River, Bhutan

6. Futaleufu River, Chile

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The Best Whitewater Rafting: 6. Futaleufu River, Chile

ENJOY THE AMENITIES ALONG THE RIVER



Take in the gorgeous Patagonian scenery from the Futaleufu (EARTH RIVER)

This Class III-V roiling mass of whitewater is one Patagonian river that hasn't been dammed—yet. Raft it before Chilean hydroelectric companies run a massive (and ugly) power transmission line through the valley.

This classic ride is singular not only in Patagonian scenery, but the Futaleufu is also unique in that the guiding company that pioneered it, Earth River Expeditions, has built permanent river camps into cliff dwellings with riverside stone hot tubs, hot showers, treehouses, and beds.

While it's not necessary to portage any of the rapids, a horseback and hiking trail follows the entire length of the river, so at any point the option to walk is always there. And when you're not rafting or kayaking, there's horseback riding, rock climbing, rappelling, and canyoneering.

U.S.-based operators like Earth River Expeditions offer trips on the Fu, \$3,400; best time to go is December - March.