



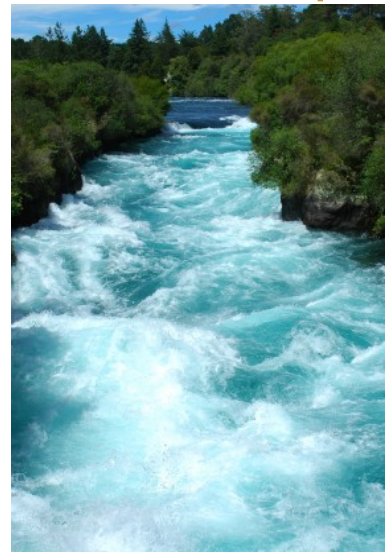
KNOW Before You Go!

River Safety

Even if you're just enjoying the river from the bank, fishing or wading, rivers can be dangerous. Always be within arm's reach of children if they are playing on the bank or wading, because there may be drop-offs and swift currents.

BEFORE YOU START:

1. **Be honest with yourself when evaluating your skills** (and skills of others in your party). You will have a safer and more enjoyable trip if you choose sections of the river that match your ability. If you are uncertain about how much you can do, start with a short trip.
2. **Check on current water levels before embarking on your trip.** *The difficulty level of certain sections of river can change dramatically with changes in water level.* Gentle stretches can become dangerous with high water levels. At extremely low levels, you may find yourself paddling through puddles, dragging the canoe over rocks, or portaging. Check the USGS for ["Real-time" streamflow](#) data on rivers.
3. **Take time to find out which lands along the river belong to private landowners.** The Forest Service has [USGS](#) quadrangle maps that have national forest boundaries marked on them.



General Tips

- Tell someone where you are going, when you expect to return, and where to call if you don't.**
- Be sure your white water skills and experience are equal to the river and the conditions. **NEVER RAFT ALONE.**
- Wear a properly fitted Personal Flotation Device (PFD) at all times** when you are in or near the river.
- Be prepared for extremes in weather, especially cold.** Know about the dangers of hypothermia and how to deal with it. Know early signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and dehydration in hot weather.
- Reduce threat of injury by wearing protective footwear and proper clothing.**
- Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it.** Learn or review medical aid responsibilities and CPR.
- Never run a rapid unless you can see a clear path through it.** Watch out for new snags after winter and spring floods.
- Allow the craft ahead of you to pass through the rapid before you enter it.** This will avoid a double disaster if the leading boat blocks the channel.