

# Packrafting in Remote Places

Modern packrafts were designed specifically to explore the most remote reaches of our planet, enabling access to areas rarely seen by human eyes. They offer a lightweight, efficient and creative means of travel far from roads and civilization. Free flowing rivers wind through seemingly endless mountains, magnificent deserts, and impenetrable jungles. Pristine lakes dot vast tracts of wilderness landscapes, and deep fjords lead to tidewater glaciers flowing from colossal icefields. From Alaska to the Himalaya, the Amazon to New Zealand, opportunities for packrafting adventures are endless.

## Being Self Sufficient

Remote packrafting is a serious endeavor. It may be difficult to estimate the number of miles that can be traveled per day through unknown terrain and conditions. Unexpected circumstances may force a route change that adds unplanned time to a trip. Weather can be severe, and many rivers change suddenly and dramatically due to heavy rains, high temperatures, or sudden freezes. It is essential to understand the local hazards and how to prepare for and mitigate them. Plan to be completely self-sufficient as rescue resources may be scarce, expensive, or simply not a viable option.



Photo by Parker Anders

## Watch Your Weight

When the trip involves both backpacking with packrafting, you will need to carry the right gear to do both. Carrying too much gear is just as much of a problem as carrying too little. A good target is to keep the weight of all your gear (minus food) under 35 lbs.

Remote parts of the world can be a paradise for packrafting. They can also be challenging places to adventure, where severe consequences await the unprepared, including potential loss of life. However, if you travel properly trained and equipped, your next packrafting adventure could prove to be the beginning of a long and healthy packrafting career.



AMERICAN  
PACKRAFTING  
ASSOCIATION

## Before You Go

**Spend the time required to become proficient in packrafting and wilderness travel before setting out for remote regions.** The margin of error in packrafting is small; remoteness and changeability of conditions reduces that margin even further.

Before setting out on a packrafting adventure in a remote area, you should:

- Seek out mentors, instructional courses and swiftwater rescue training. Also, keep in mind a course certificate is no substitute for hard-won experience.
- Be properly equipped and familiar with necessary safety equipment, especially personal floatation devices, thermal protection, footwear, helmet, and repair kits.
- Hire a guide, or travel with people who are already experienced with the region.
- Complete shorter, more accessible packrafting routes before attempting longer trips.



Photo by Brad Meiklejohn



## R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Strive for the highest possible standards of conduct and safety. It is critical that we protect resources and opportunities to packraft for future generations. When traveling internationally, we are not only representing the packrafting community to others, but our country and our values.

We ask that you:

- Be fully self-contained and able to complete a self-rescue in the event of emergency. Satellite communications (e.g. satellite phone, inReach, Spot) are recommended, but they are also not a rescue plan.
- Respect wildness, wildlife and the wilderness. Know and practice Leave No Trace ethics appropriate for the region. Provide a good example for others.
- Before publishing a detailed route description of your trip, think about the impacts of bringing more people to the region. Geo-tagging and posting GPS tracks may be harmless in well-established regions with developed infrastructure, but can be harmful when it attracts and concentrates future visitors in undeveloped areas and sensitive habitat. Being mindful of our digital footprints can help preserve areas and experiences for future generations.
- Respect local culture and history by researching the region prior to traveling. Be aware of the effects of our culture on others. Respect private and public lands and obtain all necessary permits.
- Do not rely on trip reports or packrafting routes published on the Internet. Many of these accounts were written by highly skilled athletes and adventurers with decades of packrafting experience and extensive local knowledge.

