

GET OUT and Play!

ON THE OCOEE RIVER

Whether you are stepping into your boat or onto your board for the first time—or have logged enough hours on the water to rival the best of guides—having a little back-pocket information is key. Here is some simple information about some of the Tennessee River Valley's best paddles—where to show up, how to get there and what to bring along for the ride.



One of the most amazing things about the Tennessee River system and its tributaries is how easy it is for you to get to places to relax and recreate. As part of its mission of service, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) manages its public lands and waters to support recreation so that the Tennessee Valley remains one of the best places in the country to live, work and play.

THE OCOEE RIVER

Nestled in the Cherokee National Forest of East Tennessee, the Ocoee River is one of the most popular whitewater rafting adventures in America. From April through October, thrill seekers test themselves on the Ocoee's Class III and Class IV rapids. It takes close coordination between the U.S. Forest Service, Tennessee Department of Environmental and Conservation and TVA to make the fun happen. Paddlers flock to the Ocoee to take on an authentic Olympic whitewater course, but the river has much more to offer, including picnicking, scenic views and, yes, adventurous water.

From its headwaters in northern Georgia, where it is known as the Toccoa River, the Ocoee River runs 93 miles through western North Carolina and east Tennessee before it empties into the Hiwassee River above the town of Benton, Tenn. Whitewater paddling is popular in the river's upper and middle reaches near Ducktown, Tenn. The upper section boasts the 1-mile Olympic whitewater course, while the middle section provides 4.5 miles of rafting downstream below Ocoee Dam No. 2, including Class III-IV rapids. If you're looking for a smoother ride, the river becomes Class I at Parksville Lake, signifying a smooth ride with few obstructions and small waves—perfect, in other words, for kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding and float fishing.

There are eight public access sites to the Ocoee River where you can put in or take out your paddle craft. Check out local outfitters to get in on the action or get at it yourself, but know your limits.

Grab your paddles, your gear and this map, and let your imagination be your guide. All you need to do is get out there and have a good time. Share your own stories and photos on Instagram or Twitter using #TVAfun, or at www.facebook.com/TVA using our #TVAfun tab.

For fishing regulations and license requirements, please check with TWRA or visit www.goodoutdoorstennessee.com.

BE A GOOD STEWARD

The Ocoee River is known for its clean water and pristine rural shorelines. Here's how you can help play a part in keeping the river beautiful:

- **Stay on the path.** Shorelines are fragile ecosystems; please restrict launching and landing to designated areas only.
- **Leave no trace behind.** No littering—whatever you pack in, you pack out.
- **Look, don't touch.** Do not disturb any natural or cultural resources you may encounter.
- **Respect private property.** Do not trespass above the high water mark.
- **Be a happy camper.** Camp only in designated areas.
- **Don't play with fire.** No campfires unless otherwise designated.



TVA PUBLIC LANDS

The public lands entrusted to TVA for stewardship are available for hiking, birdwatching, camping, fishing, hunting and other informal recreational pursuits. Some important regulations to protect the resources and your safety should be followed. You should follow all state hunting seasons and regulations. In addition, motorized vehicles, cutting or removing vegetation, target shooting or removal of cultural artifacts are not allowed on TVA public lands. For more information visit www.tva.com/undeveloped, or call the TVA's Public Lands Information Center toll-free at (800) TVA-LAND.

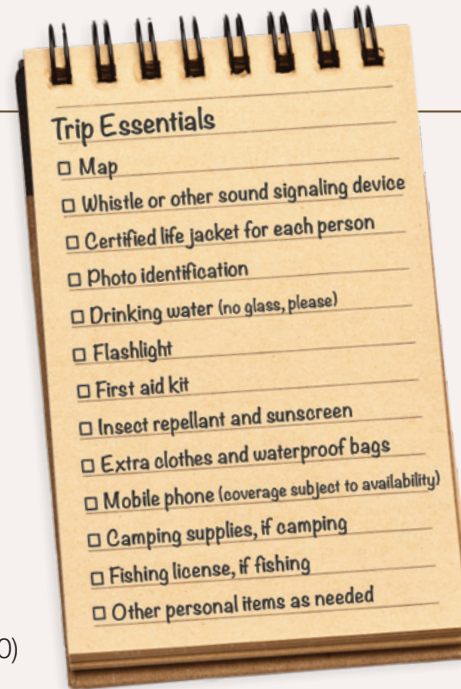
TVA'S DAMS

The Ocoee River is regulated by four Tennessee Valley Authority dams; three in southeastern Tennessee (Ocoee No. 1, Ocoee No. 2 and Ocoee No. 3) and Blue Ridge Dam in Georgia.

Though it feels like a wild ride, the water releases are actually carefully controlled—for world-class competition the water can't vary significantly.

When paddling near a dam, please know: The depth and swiftness of the river can change rapidly. Your safety depends on obeying all posted safety regulations and warnings. Information about the recreation releases can be found on <https://www.tva.gov/Environment/Recreation/Recreation-Release-Schedules>.

It is important to understand the water release schedule before paddling the river as the water's current and depth can change rapidly. Water releases from Ocoee No. 3 and No. 2 are required to paddle these portions of the river.



PADDLE POINTERS

Follow these 12 tips to help keep your next paddle trip safe:

Know Your Limits—Paddle water that is appropriate to your skills. Not sure about where to find it? Talk to a local paddle shop owner about good places to paddle for every skill level.

Keep an Eye on the Weather—Storms can spring up quickly in the south bringing lightning, high winds and choppy water. Point your prow toward shore whenever you hear thunder, no matter how distant.

Follow the Law for recreational vessels of the United States.

Bring Flotation—Always wear a Coast Guard-approved lifejacket, type II or III at minimum. Children under 12 years of age must wear a lifejacket.*

Wear a Helmet—If you fall in, a helmet can protect your head from hard or sharp objects that may be lurking below the surface.

Watch for River Hazards—Watch for fallen tree limbs, barbed wire, bridge piers and other hazards that can snare or entangle you.

Be Visible...and Audible—Keep alert to other boats. If you believe another boat has not seen you, blow your whistle* and wave your paddle to alert the other boat. A flashlight* is required if you plan to paddle after sunset.

Dress for Success—Wear clothing sufficient to prevent hypothermia and/or sunburn.

Wear Sunscreen—The CDC recommends applying a sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 to help prevent sunburn and skin damage.

Don't Paddle Alone—Paddling is an activity that is always better with friends and family, anyway.

Never Drink and Paddle—Alcohol impairs coordination and judgment.

Communicate Your Plan in Advance—Plan ahead, and let someone who's not going to be aboard know your paddling agenda. Be aware that some sections of the river have no cell phone service.

*U.S. Coast Guard Requirement



PARTNERS:



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MIDDLE OCOEE RIVER



DISCLAIMER: The featured map is for illustrative purposes only and is not intended, and should not be relied upon, to provide accurate locations, directions or data. Paddle at your own risk. Fallen trees, built structures, and other hazards are present in the water throughout the Ocoee system. Be alert to weather conditions, water levels and river traffic. Know your abilities. Boating involves some risk of drowning, injury or death. TVA is not responsible for your personal safety or for your vehicle, and is not liable for injury to you or damage to your vehicle, boat or personal property.