

# Rafting the Entire 288- Mile Grand Canyon in 8 Days

When: August 5 – 13, 2022

Rafters: Mona and Rick, Lorrie and Larry Winnerman plus about 15 others in two rafts



This definitely qualifies as an adventure trip. Eight days on a raft, camping on strips of sand along the Colorado River running through the entire 288-mile canyon that is bigger than the imagination can grasp. The walls vary from 2000 to 6000 feet high and are multiple layers deep.



The water was muddy from lots of recent rainfall. We recommend Grand Canyon Expeditions – they really have this figured out. About 10 people per raft, two rafts, great food stored on ice under the raft somewhere for the whole 8 days (mahi mahi, steaks for dinners, eggs and pancakes for breakfast, great salads for lunches – amazing. Bring your own booze - the Black Box red wines were surprisingly good.

**Mona and Larry at the very start of the Canyon at Lee's Ferry entry.**





The rafts were tough inflatables with side pontoons for stability and tons of storage underneath where I guess the food for 8 days was kept on ice.

**Even getting on and off the raft took some effort. No docks, no ladders ... just raft.**



We were given tents, sleeping bags, mats and a waterproof duffel for our scant personal effects. We had maybe two pants, 3 shirts, water/hiking shoes, hat and some cosmetics with plenty of suntan lotion. We lugged our own stuff on and off the raft in the mornings and late afternoons. Then it was a rush to pick the site on the beach that was flat, had fewer red ants and, in our case, had some privacy. We became friends with the Israelis, Brits, two U.S. Navy women and an American family with three girls.

They would regularly call the more remote beach site we picked “the honeymoon suite.”

**Mona did more than her share of lugging camp and personal stuff to our campsite. It’s just the kind of girl she is.**





The crew of husband-and-wife team leaders (Duffy and KJ) plus two swampers (i.e. grunts) did everything. Setting up the kitchen for breakfast, lunch and dinner and cooking amazingly good full meals.



**Duffy cooking breakfast. He could do just about everything and so did his wife KJ. Their mom was along too – this is a multi-generational canyon/river family.**





**Rick and  
Larry –  
6 am  
breakfast  
coffee**



Ever present were the Ravens – we were warned they are thieves and will go for whatever is food or shiny objects when you are not looking. The good they do is no matter how clean we think we leave a camp site; they patrol right after we leave to clean up any of our smallest droppings.





As we embark on our raft, usually about 8:30 am, Lorrie and Mona take the “tearoom” central part of the raft – where it was drier, and they could watch the heavier and wetter action others of us took up front.

Behind is KJ – the Leader and driver of our raft. She knew how to pick the lines riding the rapids to get me and the Navy girls flying and wet.



Looks nice and calm and beautiful – until we hit one of the nearly 100 rapids. In some rapids the raft nearly folded in half and those of us in front were up in the air facing a wall of water.

Click here to see how they got exciting: <https://vimeo.com/719179916/d793556507> and we had some we couldn't video because we were immersed in water with only a hand holding us on a strap.





**Mona rejoices in the hikes which were awesome and varied.**

**While Rick wallows in the mud ... that wasn't so easy to get out of.**



On day 4 Larry became concerned about the recurrence of a potentially serious medical condition, so out came the Sat phone, calling up the amazing (and busy) Park Service Rescue guys. This wasn't Duffy's first rodeo and he set about finding an LZ (landing zone) up from camp. Out came the red "X" marking the only spot safe enough for helicopter landing.



**A bunch of us helped Larry and Lorrie up the rocky way ...**





**... and after two passes the heli raised quite a dust storm landing on the “X” ... and off they went. Larry tells us 17 others had been pulled out at various points.**





The very next day we got into hikes to slot canyons and waterfalls that opened even more beauty and depth to this massive Canyon.

Some hikes were on rocks, some in the outflows of waterfalls and some on narrow ledges

**Here Mona is heading into a slot canyon.**

**Leading to a natural water slide!**







### **Big Horn Sheep.**

We saw them in the upper parts of the Canyon which starts at about 3500 feet above sea level, but somewhere around 2500 feet they disappeared. The Canyon bottoms at 1500'. We see the sheep outside Denver at 5000' and in the lower parts of fourteeners at about 10,000 feet so that may be the elevation range they like.



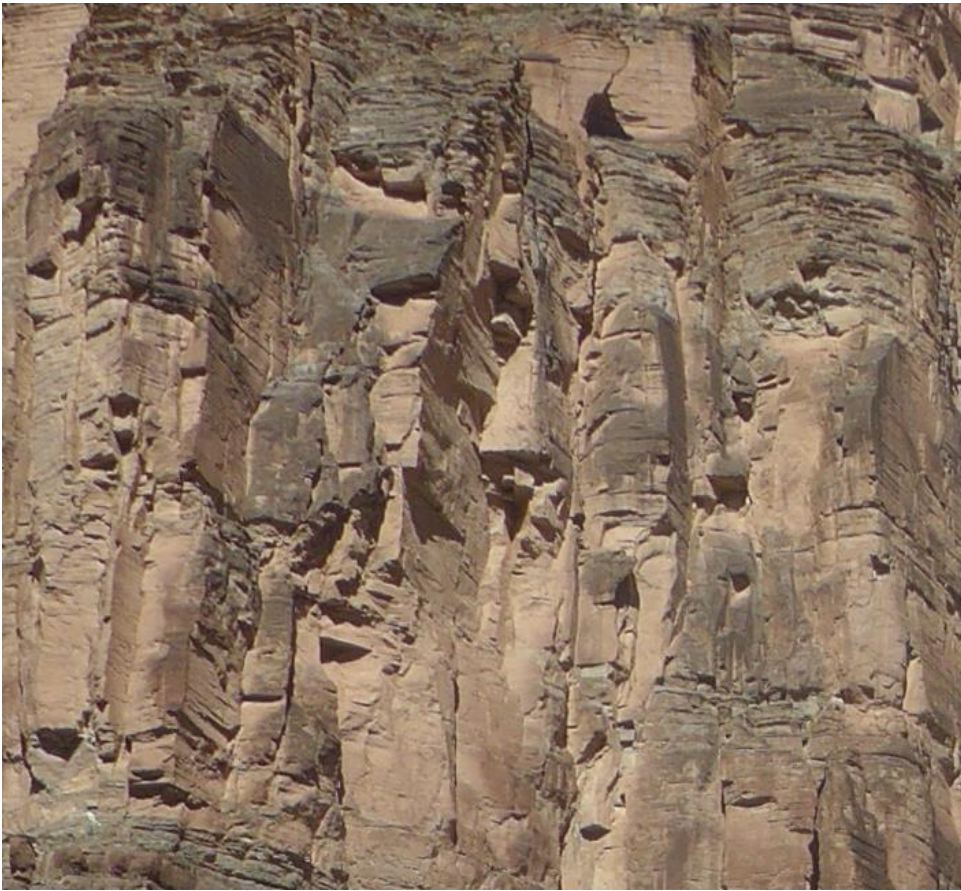
**That's me with the goofy but sun-protective orange hat.**





**This was maybe my best shot of the trip – a beautifully lit slot canyon hike.**





As we passed the endless canyon walls, some of them rising to 6000 feet above sea level, I was convinced I was seeing faces created by none other than Picasso himself – or rather maybe it was he who got this inspiration to create his version of Cubism!





**Here I saw an owl in the rock – and then learned it had been dubbed “Owl Eyes” long ago.**

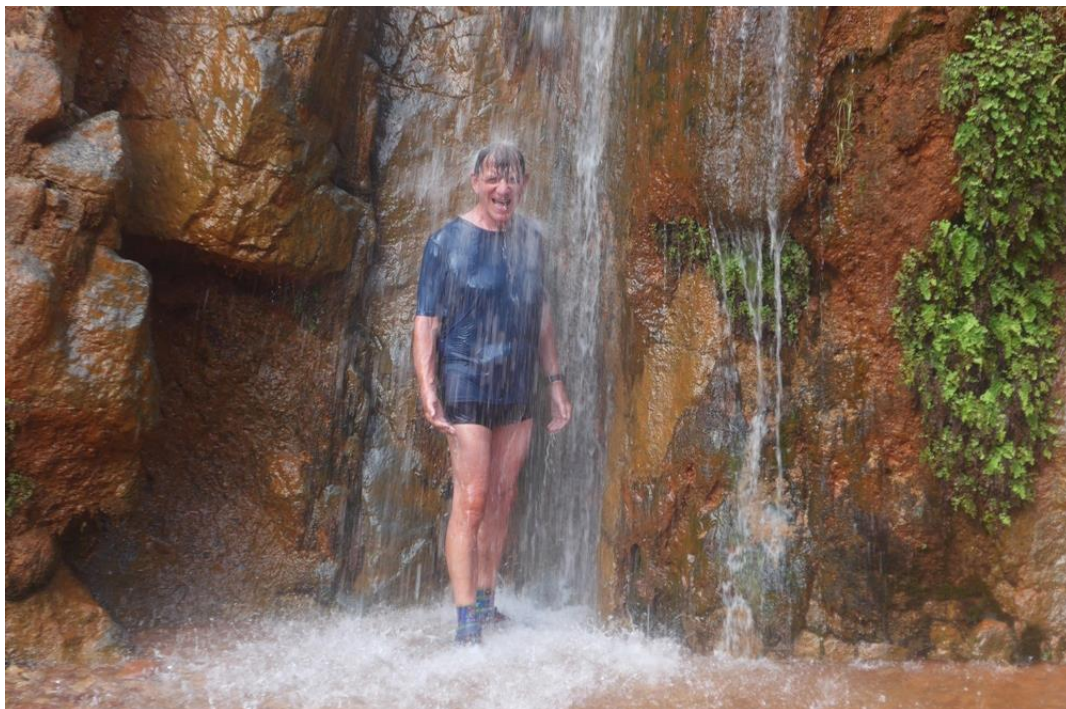


**Look up, look anywhere, and see beauty.**





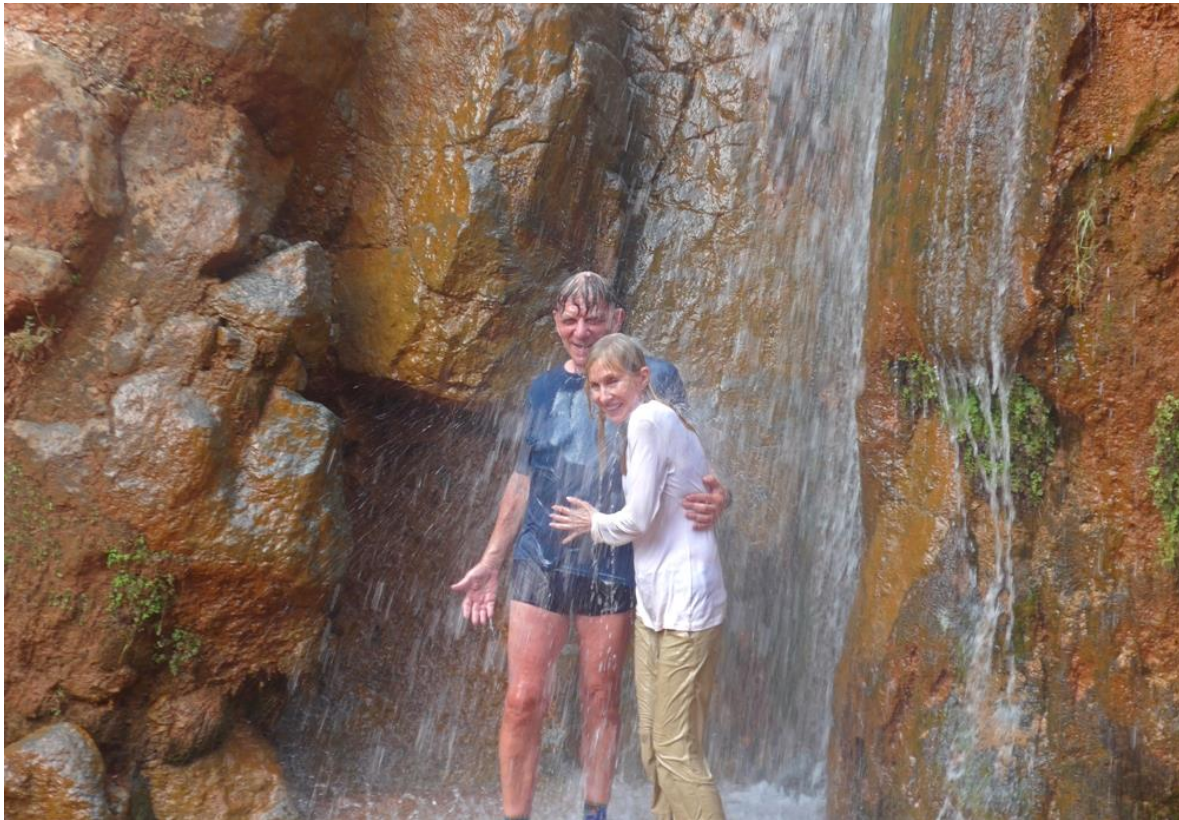
**Oh yes – that waterfall was fresh water, no mud!**



**But showering underneath had a bit more pressure than we get at the house.**



**The prospect of a freshwater shower was too great to resist for Mona – so she joined!**



**And another opportunity for a freshwater (i.e., not muddy) dip in the outflow from Havasu Falls.**





**Of course, I always opted for the more aggressive bits (i.e. my idea of fun).**

No one seems to have gotten a shot of my cliff jump.



**Here is our version of Happy Hour – usually right about 5pm after beaching at about 3:30 and setting up camp.**



**And we await the alpenglow: end-of-day reddish lighting on the surrounding cliffs.**







**At about mile 252 on the morning of day 8, the canyon gets super-hot, the water is slow, and the surrounds are dull brown walls. Grand Canyon Expeditions kindly had arranged our transfer to a jet boat that screamed us along the final 35 miles to Lake Mead. There we got on a bus to Las Vegas and its bewildering flashing lights, traffic, slot machine dinging ... and many soapy hotel-room showers.**

**This is a classic adventure in what must be one of the wonders of the world that is unfathomable seeing it any other way.**