American River Rafting Guide

A Lifestyle Guide to Auburn & the Foothills

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Welcome to Life in Auburn

Auburn isn't just a place to live—it's a gateway to some of the most incredible outdoor experiences in California. Just minutes from home, the American River offers world-class white water rafting ranging from peaceful scenic floats to adrenaline-filled Class IV rapids.

This guide highlights the top rafting companies and river experiences so you can fully enjoy the lifestyle that comes with living in the Sierra Foothills.

Understanding the American River

South Fork American River
Class II–III – The most popular stretch. Perfect for families, first-timers, and fun group outings.

Middle Fork American River
Class IV – A step up in adventure with iconic features like the Tunnel Chute. Ideal for thrill seekers.

North Fork American River
Class IV+ – Technical, fast-moving water for experienced rafters. Typically spring season only.

Lower Middle Fork
Class I–II – Calm, scenic floats with beautiful canyon views.

Top Rafting Outfitters

Raft California
One of the largest outfitters offering trips on all forks of the American River with options for every skill level.

Tributary Whitewater Tours
Known for high-end, curated rafting experiences with strong safety standards.

American Whitewater Expeditions
Excellent for families and first-time rafters with a wide range of trip options.

All-Outdoors Rafting
Classic South Fork trips with a perfect mix of scenery and excitement.

WET River Trips
Specializes in multi-day wilderness rafting adventures with riverside camping.

H2O Adventures
Local Auburn outfitter offering full-day and specialty trips on both South and Middle Forks.

OARS
Nationally recognized outfitter delivering premium rafting experiences.

American River Recreation
Budget-friendly rafting with flexible half-day and full-day options.