

Ocoee River



Distance	200 miles from Nashville
Directions	Take I-24 South to Chattanooga. Once in Chattanooga, take I-75 northeast towards Knoxville until you reach the first Cleveland exit, Exit 20. Turn right onto Bypass 64/74 East. This road is also known as Highway 311 and should NOT be confused with US 64/74. Once on this bypass, travel roughly seven miles until US 64/74 – Highway 40 intersects it. Turn right, following signs to the Ocoee River. Continuing down US 64/74, you will first encounter the Ocoee Rafting Companies. There are several to choose from. After the road becomes two lanes, you will see Ocoee Lake on your right. The river and its rapids begin just prior to the Ocoee Power Plant No. 2. Right below the bridge, you can scout out the biggest playhole in the southeast, “Hell’s Hole.” At this point, the river begins in reverse. Continue following the winding “Old Copperhead Road” until you reach the put-in 5 miles later.
Description	The Ocoee River features continuous Class III and Class IV whitewater with very few stretches of calm water along this scenic river. Not only does this provide numerous playspots, but also provides a true test for those trying to improve their skills. The kayaker or open-boater will encounter rapids such as “Double Suck,” “Tablesaw,” “Diamond Splitter,” and “Cat’s Pajamas.” “Cat’s Pajamas” is also known as “Maypop Place” because people have been known to be sucked out of their kayaks from the force of the water. Be sure not only to scout these rapids, but also to save energy for “Hell Hole.” This rapid is the best ender spot on the entire river. Although you should concentrate on the many formidable rapids, take time to enjoy the spectacular scenery while you wait in the eddies. Because the Ocoee River is one of the three dam-controlled rivers in the area, water is only released during 116 days per year. Ask the Outdoor Recreation Center for times.
Campsites	Besides rafting, two National Forest Campgrounds are worth the drive. Chilhowee is on the left, up FR77 from Lake Ocoee. Thunder Rock is on the right, across the river and above the put-in.
Cautions for Kayakers	RAFTS!! Because of the many advantages of the Ocoee River, several rafting companies have emerged providing rafts for thousands of people per year. On summer weekends, they are simply everywhere. Because of the volume of people on this river, river etiquette is very important. Outdoor Rec. suggests that you not venture down this river in a kayak unless you are at least a strong intermediate or an advanced paddler. Also, we recommend any inexperienced Ocoee runner, no matter what level, to follow an experienced Ocoee River runner as several rapids require set-up during the preceding rapid.
Cautions for Rafters	Most of the kayakers on the Ocoee will already be familiar with river etiquette, whereas most river rafters are not. For this reason as well as for your own safety, follow every direction your guide gives you. Most importantly DO NOT panic. Your guide will only be able to get you back into the boat if you have a level head. Also, there are times when you can have fun and splash your friends, but there are also times when you need to concentrate on what you’re doing.
For More Information	Nealy, <u>Whitewater Home Companion, Volume 1</u> ; Rafting Companies: Ocoee Outdoors (1-800-533-PROS), Outdoor Adventure Rafting (1-800-OARSMAN). Most outfitters also provide camping facilities or spots.