



Dip into outdoor adventure in Yuma

There are only a few places in the world where you can spend a day traveling the cool waters of a mighty river while viewing the natural wonders of a desert. Here are a few great ways to sample some iconic sights of the Southwest.

Yuma River Tours / Colorado King sternwheeler

The Knowlton family has been introducing visitors to some of the most remote and natural stretches of the Colorado River for decades. Choose a jet boat tour upriver from Martinez Lake for a close-up view of birds and wildlife, with stops at a miner's cabin, ancient petroglyphs, plus a picnic at an old steamboat landing, or enjoy a leisurely narrated lunch or dinner cruise aboard the Colorado King, a real sternwheeler. Launch point is Fisher's Landing, a 45-minute drive through farms and desert from Interstate 8. Group prices available; allow three hours for Colorado King cruise, five to six hours for jetboat tours.

Imperial National Wildlife Refuge

Before or after a Yuma River Tours trip, this is a great spot to take in the desert landscape. The visitor center offers educational exhibits, a nature walk and an observation tower. Located about 15 minutes from Fisher's Landing, with free admission. Allow one hour.

Colorado River canoe or kayak trips

Paddle the calm waters of the Colorado close to town with local guides from the City of Yuma Parks and Recreation Department. This leisurely trip will give you a look at birds and wildlife, as well as the historic Yuma Crossing and the revitalized riverfront. Five minutes from Interstate 8, group rates available. Allow three to four hours.

Yuma River Tubing

Get even closer to the Colorado River with a fun float trip on a customized inner tube. Choose from five-, 2.5- or one-mile floats, all available April through October (depending on weather), then relax and let the river do the work. Five minutes from Interstate 8, group rates available, allow from one to five hours depending on float length and river volume.

Yuma West Wetlands

Once used as the town dump, West Wetlands Park is a model for environmental restoration. Within walking distance of the takeout for the canoe and tubing trips above, there's a hummingbird garden and a burrowing owl habitat, plus a peaceful pond with picnic ramadas. Five minutes from the interstate, free admission, allow one hour.

Imperial Sand Dunes National Recreation Area

The largest mass of sand dunes in the country is just 15 minutes west of Yuma, bisected by the interstate. Famous as a filming location since the days of Rudolph Valentino, you might recognize this as the setting for a story that began in a galaxy far, far away (*Star Wars*). Now a favorite with offroaders, as many as 150,000 people camp here on winter weekends to enjoy motorized mayhem. Two minutes off the interstate (rest area provides view, but no dunes access), BLM user fees can be waived for a quick picture stop. Allow 15-30 minutes for photos opportunities.

For more information about this and other Yuma tours, contact Leslie McClendon at 928-318-6539