

[Pikes Peak River Runners](#)

Big Bend National Park (Rio Grande River)

Texas/Mexico border



This is a rarely run river trip, usually due to lack of flow. [Check out our story from the 2000 trip](#) for some helpful tips. Typically, it is a four-day trip on the Rio Grande River in Big Bend National park on the Texas/Mexico border. Expect cool nights and 70°F days. Water is cold (dam released) and very shallow. Take a 14-foot boat or smaller. Only one significant rapid called [Rockslide](#) (Class IV, very tight squeeze). The trip is flow dependent and we will only go if flow 400 cfs or greater. [Big Bend National Park flow link](#)

Tentative Schedule: TBD: 14 hour drive from Colorado Springs to put-in near Presidio, TX

1. **Colorado Canyon Put-in: TBD** - arrive and put-in. Camp at the Colorado Canyon campsite.
2. Date: TBD: On the river near [Lajitas](#), Lajitas resort is very expensive!
3. Date: TBD: Camp above Santa Elena.
4. **Santa Elena Takeout: TBD date** - drive home

Directions to the put-in and takeout:

- Put-in: From El Paso, I - 10 to Van Horn, TX. US Hwy 90 SE to Marfa, TX. Then US Hwy 67 to Presidio. Then State Hwy 170 runs parallel to the river. Rancherias Creek, Madera Canyon, Grassy Banks and Lajitas accesses (all apparently comprise Colorado Canyon) are on or near 170 between Terlingua and Redford. The highway out of Presidio is Ranch Road 170. Essentially you take this road, which runs along the Rio Grande until you reach the Colorado Canyon put-in. The put-in is not particularly safe, and if I remember correctly Presidio was a crummy border town.
- Takeout: Santa Elena take-out is in Big Bend NP. Take-out at Santa Elena Overlook (total approx. 41 river miles) is on an improved surface road back to choices of state hwys.
- No vehicles will be left at the put-in because we do not return to the put-in after the trip, plus it is not particularly safe to leave vehicles there. Shuttle cost per vehicle is on your own.

Shuttle Companies:

- [Big Bend River Tours](#)—800.545.4240
- [Desert Sports](#)—888.989.6900
- [Far Flung Outdoor Center](#)—800.839.7238

Links:

- [Big Bend National Park](#) NPS website

Tentative trip participants as of date?: