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Recreational outdoor activity

Rafting in Ladakh, India Rafting in Alaska

Rafting on the Tara river, Bosnia

Rafting and whitewater rafting are recreational outdoor activities which use an inflatable raft to navigate a river or other body of water. This is often done on whitewater or different degrees of rough water. Dealing with risk is often a part of the experience. This activity as an adventure sport has become popular since the 1950s, if not earlier, evolving from individuals paddling 10 feet (3.0 m) to 14 feet (4.3 m) rafts with inflatable rafts propelled by single-bladed paddles and steered by a person at the stern, or by the use of oars. Rafting on certain sections of rivers is considered an extreme sport and can be fatal, while other sections are not so extreme or difficult. Rafting is also a competitive sport practiced around the world which culminates in a world rafting championship event between the participating nations. The International Rafting Federation, often referred to as the IRF, is the worldwide body which oversees all aspects of the sport. Equipment [edit] Rafting equipment has continuously evolved and developed significantly from old rubber WW II era military surplus rafts. Modern whitewater rafts are typically made with advanced nylon or Kevlar infused plastics like PVC or urethane; though many of the more entry-level low-cost manufacturers still use a glued rubber. Plastic is generally more durable, longer-lasting, and just as easy to repair compared to older rubber rafts. Paddles and oars are the typical means of propulsion for rafts and come in many sizes and varieties with specific river conditions in mind. Paddles [edit] Paddles are a combination of layered wood, plastic, aluminium, carbon fiber, or other advanced composites. There are many types and combinations of these materials with lower-end entry-level paddles being composed of cheap aluminum and plastic. Higher-end models are constructed of high-end composites and are mostly utilized by professional rafting guides, raft racers, and expedition paddlers. The basic paddle design for rafting consists of 3 parts: Sing