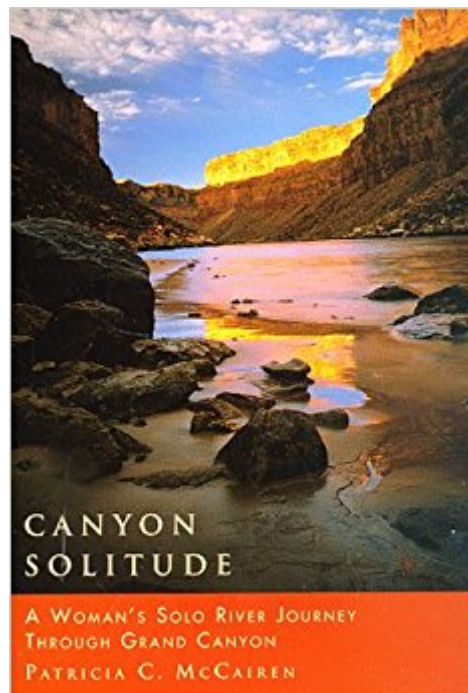


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Canyon Solitude: A Woman's Solo River Journey Through The Grand Canyon (Adventura Books)



Synopsis

"It's well known that Mother River doesn't like a smart aleck," says Patricia McCairen. Accordingly, she plies her oars with reverence and skill on a sometimes hair-raising solo rafting trip along the Colorado River that winds through the stupendous stone valleys of the American Grand Canyon. Like the waters of the Colorado, which change from long, still stretches to boiling white water that barely clothes sharp rocks and hides holes that can suck down a raft, McCairen's moods--and even her name--change as the miles unwind. One moment, she's the cocky, athletic river guide Babe; the next, she's an earthier, more spiritual woman who answers to the name of Patch. Hours later, she seems more vulnerable, less convinced of her strength and joy in the solitude she so zealously courts. Canyon Solitude records these shifts and beautifully limns a journey that tests McCairen's mettle and shows that determination, grit, and the will to spurn conventional rewards offer their own deep satisfactions.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Experienced river-runner Patricia McCairen was suddenly faced with a choice when she found herself without companions for a trip through Grand Canyon. She could give up her permit and hope to get another at some point or she could go it alone. Certain she would be saved from her bravado she called the National Park Service to get special permission for a solo trip and was both surprised and terrified when permission was granted. Thus did McCairen enter into a trip that would allow her

to delve into the differences between solitude and loneliness and eventually come to grips with her course in life. Canyon Solitude is more about a personal journey of the mind than a journey through Grand Canyon. Reading as she struggles with her history (with men, with her mother, with her professional goals) provides insight into how we all allow our direction to be shaped by others, only convincing ourselves that we are truly independent. As we find McCairen actually achieving independence it is easy to understand as she swings from exhilaration to terror and back to exhilaration, finally achieving contentment. The book is a bit slow at times, but as with the actual river, it has periods of intense excitement that more than make up for the lulls. Perhaps without the calms between the rapids, it wouldn't be possible to really understand what has been accomplished.

This is a wonderful read. It gracefully mixes adventure with honest self-revelation as it explores the potentials and pains of a woman at midlife. Especially meaningful to me were McCairen's meditations on solitude versus loneliness and her wrestling with fear of intimacy. Going alone into the wilderness is a radical act for a woman, and McCairen engages it with consciousness and skill. I was sorry when the book ended, I had grown to so look forward to curling up with it at the end of the day. I would welcome a sequel.

Having rafted the Colorado with a tour group not long ago, and I am in awe of what this woman did. The book is wonderfully written, and a page-turner for anyone, women in particular, who is a Grand Canyon/Colorado River enthusiast. I felt like I was right back there with every page...

I am so enjoying this book - half way through so far. As a woman who also enjoys the outdoors, was a river guide, climber and avid trekker I love reading about women who have challenged themselves both physically and mentally and have succeeded in both. And I so relate to the Canyon in ways she describes, having run it myself as part of a private trip quiet a few years ago now. It's a totally awe inspiring place that allows one, if you listen, to find an inner self. I too was changed forever by its spirit and beauty. I found this book to mirror much of my own struggles with living in central society vs in the wilderness. I envy Patricia McCairen for the strength to make the choice she did but I don't regret the choices I made.

I read this book practically cover to cover... Patricia McCairen captures the spirit of all adventure women. Whether running rivers, living in a Tipi, or climbing a massive rocky ledge, I was spellbound by the journey into self and the discovery of her own strengths. The real topper for me was

Patricia's realization that the wilderness, the river, was her place in the world, contrary to what her family and friends told her. She is my hero for being courageous enough to be lead by something other than popular opinion about who she is!

This is a beautiful book, one in which the author goes beyond her river journey to do some soul-searching into her own truths. Patricia tells the story of how her adventurous side comes alive through one Grand Canyon trip, motivating her to abandon her corporate urban life in NYC for the wild rivers of the American West. The book details the pinnacle of her river experiences, a solo journey through Grand Canyon, with insight into the core of who she is and what the rivers have helped her become.

This book conveyed the spirit of a solo journey without pop style sound-bites or excruciating detail. Its a relief to read a book about a technical adventure that isn't filled with second-by-second accounts of every action, re-action, and re-re-action. "Patch"s style is easy to read and draws the reader in. If you have ever done a real solo adventure, you will likely relate to her. If you haven't, this is a nice book to let you feel like you have.

I have a large collection of Grand Canyon books, but somehow this one never came across my path until recently. I first doubted if it were any good because I hadn't heard of it, but was I ever wrong! It is more than just good stories of experiences in the Grand Canyon. She shares her personal life and growth with the reader in a way that I found stimulating to my own experiences and life. Well written and a great read for anyone, but especially anyone who is either going to go on a Grand Canyon trip or has been on one.

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