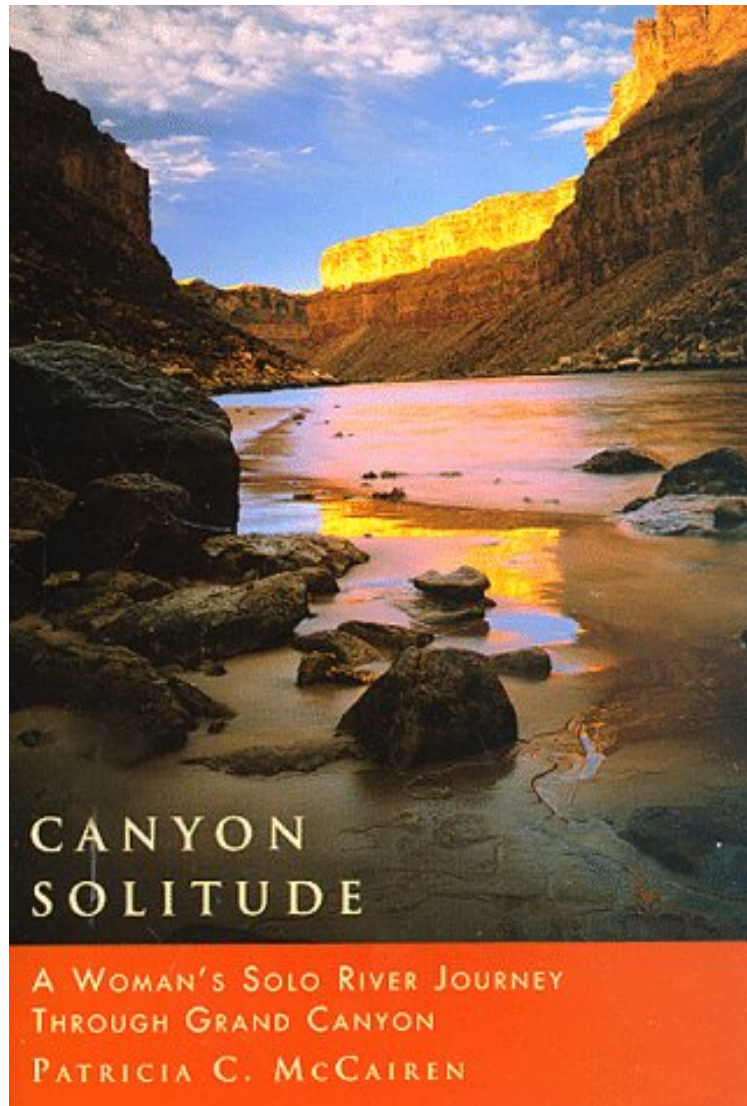


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Canyon Solitude: A Woman's Solo River Journey Through the Grand Canyon (Adventura Books)

McCairen

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McCairen : Canyon Solitude: A Woman's Solo River Journey Through the Grand Canyon (Adventura Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Canyon Solitude: A Woman's Solo River Journey Through the Grand Canyon (Adventura Books):

"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.

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From Publishers Weekly
Navigating the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon is usually challenging or at very least momentous. This honest, firsthand account by McCairen, a veteran rafter on a 25-day solo journey, describes a trip that was the culmination of McCairen's decision to change her life. Her keenly observant eye and finely detailed descriptions recreate the magnificence of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River in all their danger and beauty. Her trepidation at the outset of the trip and in some of its more alarming moments show the true vulnerability of a woman alone in the wilderness trying to accomplish a "man's" challenge. McCairen is a former city-dweller who fell in love with the Grand Canyon on her first group river trip, and wanted to experience it solo. As the book, and trip, progress, McCairen as writer and subject emerges as an ever more confident woman who discovers that the solitude she has simultaneously craved and feared has diminished as canyon and river sustain her. "Solitude has a sound all its own, a feeling, a special vision. With each stroke on the oars, I draw myself deeper into its realm.... Yes, I'm terribly small and vulnerable, minuscule compared to this deep, green river and the walls growing up around me." McCairen's experience reflects a complex array of emotions, but it is her fear, joy and ultimate elation that come through most vividly. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist
McCairen fell in love with rafting early, but it was only after white-water school (in which she broke her leg the first day out), years of river guiding, and many unsuccessful attempts to get work as a river guide on the Colorado that she became the first woman to solo the river through Grand Canyon since Glen Canyon Dam was built in 1963. She undertook that endeavor by default, when one after another of her rafting friends bowed out, leaving her to seek special permission from the park service for her solo exploit. The journey was one of personal growth as well as geography, in which she found the ability to look deeply, uncompromisingly within--something she had never before achieved despite months and years of living alone in a wilderness tepee. In scouting and running the rapids, sunning nude on a rock, and laboriously unbeaching her craft, the 42-year-old discovered life metaphors and lessons that only union with nature can provide. Must reading for white-water rafters and hikers of both the active and the armchair varieties. Whitney Scott