

Cariboo Chilcotin Adventure Guides Spring/99

Cariboo
River

Rec Use:
Rating: Class 4+ skills



At a Glance:

The Cariboo River offers easily accessible white water kayaking for both intermediates and experts.

Overall Length:	12 km Lower Reach /10 km Upper Reach
Elevation Range:	655-709 meters
Average Grade:	Upper - Class IV to IV+ Lower - Class II to III
Best Time of Year:	May-October

The outdoor recreation ratings have been developed through a combination of generally recognized standards for activities such as biking, hiking, kayaking, and local knowledge. The kayak ratings provided in this guide are based on the International Scale of River Classification (7 grades).

Getting There:

From Williams Lake head south 15 km on Hwy #97 to the Horsefly Road and turn left (east). Continue a short distance and turn left again onto the Likely Road. Continue for about 80 km to the town of Likely. Check out the rapids below the Likely Bridge - this is a favourite spot for surfing on the Quesnel River. Continue through Likely on the main road out of town (north) as it turns from pavement to gravel.

1st Put-In (Lower Reach)

About 7 km from Likely, the road crosses the Cariboo River. The north bank (steep) of the river at the bridge crossing is the put-in for the lower reach of the Cariboo River or a take-out for the upper reach. This is also a good spot to scout the water level for future reference. A much better put-in/take-out site exists about 1-2 km downstream from the Bridge. Take the 1st left after the bridge, Pearson Road. Continue a short distance and look for a spur road heading down to the river (about 200 m) to an obvious beach access and parking area.

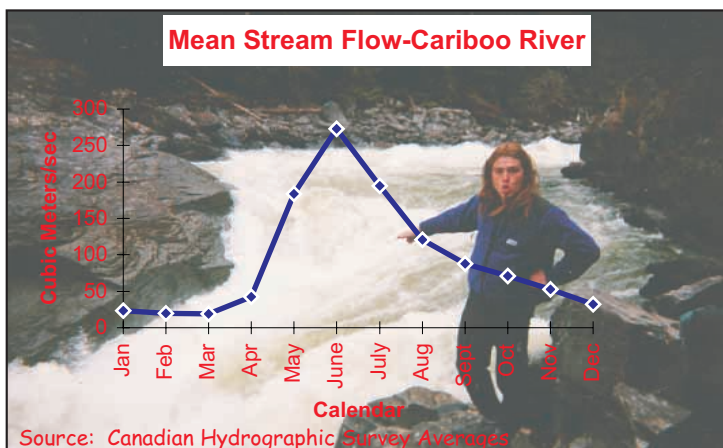
2nd Put-In (Upper Reach)

After crossing the bridge, continue north a short distance and turn right onto the Keithley Creek road. At the 15 km sign turn right onto an old logging road and continue through a cut-block for a short distance (see inset detail). As the road comes closer to the river, it turns left and heads up-stream to the fish ladder at Cariboo River Falls. At this point you likely encounter a locked gate. If the gate is locked you have a short walk on a good road to the river access. Continue until you see a rock cairn on your right. At this point, a trail descends to the river, below the falls, for a safe put-in. If you go too far you'll encounter the fish channel at the falls. The other option is to continue on the Keithley Creek Road a short distance, turning right, crossing the Cariboo River (see map reverse) and heading south along the east side of the river on the "S" Road. The put-in is almost directly across from the put-in on the west bank, noted above.

Be Aware of..

- ▶ Hazards associated with technical sections of river - you are strongly advised to scout the river before descending.
- ▶ All river classes are 1 grade higher during high water.
- ▶ Snags or wood in river.
- ▶ Possibility of bear encounters at camping, take out and put in sites.

Cariboo Falls - Yikes!



River Description:

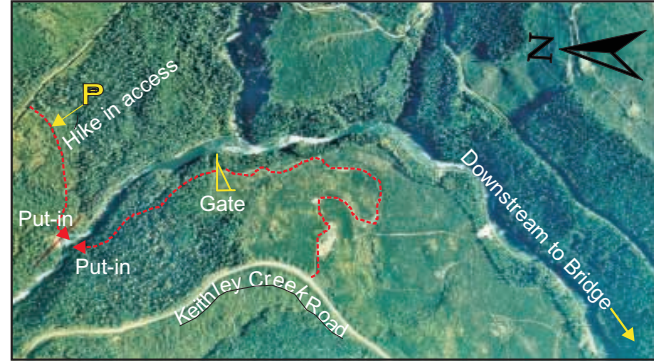
Both upper and lower sections of the Cariboo River pass through historic sites associated with the Cariboo Gold Rush such as Seller Creek, Murderer Creek and Quesnelle Forks. Around most bends in the river are signs of old and new placer mining workings and the occasional derelict cabin.

Upper Section: Falls to Keithley Creek Rd Bridge ± 10 km

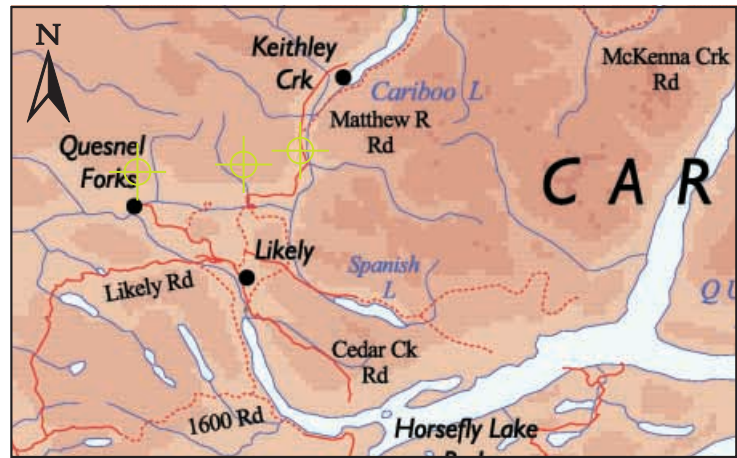
Two put-in options are located just below the falls, which are un-runable! After an initial set of Class III rapids, you encounter 'Bubbleyum'-Class IV; two drops, giant waves, and monster holes. This rapid is best run starting slightly left of center. There is a nice pool at the bottom to pick up swimmers. After a brief respite, the next series of Class III rapids is the 'McGirgitater' with 2 big holes in the center of the river and good surfing on the lower section. The next rapids, 'Best Western', is located about 2+ km down river in an S bend - look for an old cabin on the north shore. The final set of rapids before the bridge, 'Fluffy Bunny'- Class III+, should be run down the right side until below a giant hole. Then run the monster waves down the center. Take out at Keithley Creek Rd bridge or beach 1-2 km down river.

Lower Section: Keithley Creek Rd Bridge to Quesnelle Forks ± 12 km

The lower stretch of the Cariboo River should be considered class II to III. Run center throughout this section. Look for frequent large boulders and standing waves with steep banks on the outside of bends. About 2 km from the bridge the river goes through a narrow canyon with big standing waves. The next rapid occurs at 3 km from the bridge where the river passes over a ledge. At low water, the lower section is suitable for skilled canoeists and intermediate kayakers. High water requires expert kayak skills. The recommended take-out is at the old ghost town of Quesnelle Forks.



Left: Upper Cariboo River Put-ins
Below: Overview Map



The authors of the Cariboo Chilcotin Adventure Guides have tried hard to provide up to date, accurate information. However, no guide is perfect and no responsibility is accepted for any discrepancies or lack of precision. Also, users of the Cariboo Chilcotin Adventure Guides agree to waive any and all claims against the authors and staff for personal injury or misadventure while undertaking any outdoor recreation activity. Make sure you evaluate your ability in relation to the risks and challenges. **Be prepared** for weather changes, bring first aid gear, **go with a friend(s)**, and **leave a copy of your trip plan with someone you trust.**

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