

3 Amazing New Outdoor Sports

New ways to work out and make the outdoors even more rewarding

Participant sports seem more popular than ever, and new combinations of old favorites are emerging. Three in particular are attracting converts.

Canyoneering. Imagine working your way down a narrow, radically sculpted slot canyon, perhaps going where few people have ever been. Sometimes canyoneering requires rappelling, ropes, and wading or swimming; other times, it is more like a downhill hike. It almost always involves getting past some obstacles. Utah, Colorado and Arizona offer prime canyoneering adventures; spots in New England, the Adirondacks, and the Carolinas call to explorers east of the Mississippi. (Outside of the U.S., the sport is called canyoning.)

Packrafting. Take a small, inflatable boat, a backpack, and hiking and camping gear. These are the essentials to boat into a cove or float a river. Small, tough, and lightweight backpacking boats have emerged to further solo trips and group excursions led by guides. The highest-quality packrafts can even run whitewater. Packrafting gives you a chance to take a wilderness adventure on both water and land.

Bikepacking. Like a dry-land version of packrafting, bikepacking is the art of taking a backcountry mountain bike journey aided by lightweight camping equipment. The core idea is to ride along a trail in an unpopulated or lightly populated area for multiple days. While bikes are prohibited from federal wilderness areas, a mountain bike lets an adventurer cover more ground per day than a through-hiker.¹

Are travel and adventure calling to you? Certain financial moves you make now could allow you to go on more adventures tomorrow.

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¹ChicagoTribune.com, "Bill would end longstanding ban on bikes in U.S. wilderness," August 2, 2016