

Teva started out making the world's first sports sandals in 1984, but later expanded into closed-toe shoes for various leisure activities, usually in and around water.

Teva

BRAND PROFILE: TEVA

Footwear brand Teva feels most at home with people who like to have fun in the outdoors. For its spring-summer 2011 collection there is special emphasis on fun in and around water.

Water everywhere for Teva

Outdoor footwear brand Teva lays claim to inventing the sports sandal after a river guide working on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, Mark Thatcher, felt the need for shoes that he could wear for river rafting with good enough drainage and adequate support in key areas, especially the ankle, to allow him to keep them on his feet in and out of the water. That was in 1984. Just one year later, Deckers Outdoor Corporation (the parent company of footwear brands as diverse as UGG Australia, Tsubo and Simple Shoes) began licensing the new sandals, leading to a surge in sales and popularity. The relationship continued until the end of 2002, when Deckers acquired the Teva brand outright. Development of the Teva product range has been ongoing, including the introduction in the 1990s of closed-toe leisure shoes in mixes of material that include leather. The brand has just launched its spring-summer 2011 collection at the industry's summer exhibitions, Outdoor in Friedrichshafen in mid-July and Outdoor Retailer Summer Market in Salt Lake City at the start of August.

The brand aims itself particularly at people who love to have fun in the outdoors and is still emphasising fun in and around water for spring-summer next year.

Examples of the shoes that feature in the new collection include the Gnarkosi, which the company says is packed full of Teva technologies including Tide Grip for traction, Tide Hydro for drainage and Tide Comfort for protection against the discomfort seams can cause in shoes. Drain frame perforations in the toe and heel ensure water picked up in rivers, lakes and elsewhere will drain away quickly. It also has a Spider Original rubber outsole to offer a high level of grip on rocks and riverbeds. Its wider, flatter sole provides maximum surface contact for high performance grip and stability.



Appealing in and out of the water, the Gnarkosi (top) and the Churn (bottom).

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Drainage everywhere

Deckers Europe's brand co-ordinator, Steve Lime, says of the Gnarkosi: "There is drainage everywhere. This shoe will not absorb any water thanks to the drain frame system. But, at the same time, kayaking shoes haven't typically looked appealing. This is something you can keep on when you've come out of the water, put your jeans on and are having a couple of beers."

The Tirra, a women's shoe for summer travel, trekking or casual use, has been an overwhelming success in the 2010 Teva range so the company has decided to continue with it for 2011 with colour updates. Steve Lime points to other collection highlights that are specifically for women. The Mush is a Teva classic, but he says it's more "women specific" in this latest incarnation. The memory-foam footbed is still there, but Teva's design team has redone the lasts



Glow from below. The new Lumen is a flip-flop with a detachable light on the strap. It allows surfing enthusiasts to find their way safely to the shore before first light.

Teva

it used for Mush this time to make the shape and the fit more appropriate for women's feet and there is a wide enough choice of colours for a Mush display to look like an ice-cream parlour.

The collection also contains the Churn, a multi-sport shoe that houses the same raft of Teva water management technology. The shoe is extremely breathable, quick-drying and perfectly designed to cope in wet environments.

It is one of many Teva products to feature Shoc Pad, a polyurethane-EVA unit in the heel cup that transfers the energy of impact throughout the footbed and away from the heel. The heel folds down, making it easy to slip the shoe on and off and even offering the option of wearing it like a heel-less shoe. The points Steve Lime makes about this are that everything on the Churn shoe is quick-drying and it's a shoe with "a great traction story for grip on the rocks". He also likes its one-handed tightening system.

There are also trail shoes in the range, suitable for light hiking—the Raith for men and the Sky Lake for women. "They are the direct descendants of the Riva and the Dalea, respectively, from our autumn 2010 collection," Mr Lime continues. "Those shoes have been great sellers and we wanted to carry them through." Differences include using Spider outsoles in this model in 2011 instead of Vibram (the company uses technology from both sole providers right across its range), and bringing in some new colours for spring, including the interestingly named ginger root.

Other products to feature are the Forge Pro, which provides downhill traction in the sole and, especially, in a redesigned heel that has reverse lugging, and the Itunda, another carry-over product from 2010. Teva describes the latter as a true amphibian, an epithet that is justified in Steve Lime's book because the Itunda is "a high-performance river sandal and a high-performance outdoor sandal at the same time".

Another highlight is the Lumen, a light sandal in more way than one. The company says the Lumen was inspired by surfers "who can't wait for sunrise to seek the perfect wave" and has a detachable light on the cross-strap of every shoe to let wearers see rocks, stones or other obstacles as they head down to the beach at first light with the power to "glow from below".

The Itunda—a real amphibian and below the Tirra, a women's shoe for summer travel, trekking or casual use.

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Teva's Forge Pro with downhill traction.
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Clarity of purpose

Teva is proud of the fact that, with so many deserving causes coming to our attention all the time, it has stuck to supporting the same cause for its entire history: water. Its charitable work focuses on improving quality and availability of water in different places around the world. It's glad to have this "clarity of purpose".

The non-profit organisations it works with include Waterkeeper Alliance, a global network of 182 member programmes dedicated to cleaning up rivers, lakes and coasts through grassroots advocacy and legal action. Together, the network of programmes patrol and protect more than 100,000 kilometres of rivers, streams and coastlines, and represent the interests of more than 200,000 members.

Teva is also a longstanding member of the Conservation Alliance, a group of outdoor businesses whose collective contributions support grassroots campaigns to protect threatened wild places for their habitat and recreation values. The Conservation Alliance launched ConservationNEXT in August 2008 to connect individuals in the outdoor industry with the work of organisations that receive financial support from the Alliance. In March 2010, Teva partnered with Patagonia and Horny Toad on a clean-up of the Ventura River in California which resulted in the removal of four tonnes of waste.

But the company still focuses on fun too. Steve Lime explains that Teva is currently offering a trip to Fiji for two visitors to the brand's UK website over the coming months. The official images for the new collection were shot in Fiji and the company wants the competition winners to experience the South Pacific island country for themselves, complete with water sports, hiking and meetings with Teva-sponsored athletes. There's a wide world out there to discover, and 71% of it is covered in water.

