

Selecting Your Future Kayak

Although there are dozens of available designs, consider these three basic classes.

PERFORMANCE Class:

These are sleek, low volume boats, built along the lines of traditional Inuit Eskimo Seal Hunting Kayaks. They are long, low, fast and enjoyed by more experienced kayakers. Fitness paddlers pick this class boat for recreation and cardio exercise. Anyone who enters an occasional race will find a long narrow kayak is capable of speeds well over 6 mph. Even moderately fit paddlers will enjoy cruising along at 5 mph.

Neptune	17' x 20"	Long and fast	Seal Hunter	17' x 18"	Narrow, quiet, rolls easily
Barracuda	15.5 x 20"	Smaller and fast			

TOURING Class:

This class looks like a performance kayak but is wider, deeper, and usually not as long. The added storage space is handy for fishing, carrying extra clothing and for lunch on all-day expeditions. Kayak campers love the extra volume and joke about packing in all the comforts of home – “everything but the kitchen sink.”

Normandy	17.5' x 24"	300 lb capacity	Mermaid	16' x 23"	A Smaller size Windward
Windward	17' x 23"	Wide and Stable	Kingfisher	15' x 28"	Fishing and Family fun

YOUTH Class:

Short lightweight Kayaks are easy for youngsters to maneuver. They don't track as well as longer hulls but are easier to turn. Smaller adults appreciate a lightweight boat every time they carry it to a launching area or lift it onto a car-top roof rack. Weight is often an important factor in selecting the right kayak for you.

Shark	14' x 19"	70-140 pound paddlers	Sun Fish	12' x 22"	50-110 pound paddlers
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Kayak Skills Day

If all goes as planned, the last class day is spent learning to paddle your new kayak. It helps to have some basic instruction to get started. Besides regular paddling strokes, you will learn how to use a paddle outrigger to help enter and exit a tippy boat. You will also learn how to use the safety features that you have built into your boat, how to do a portage, as well as load and unload boats from a car roof rack.