

## Buying A Kayak

Kayaking is a popular sport involving a long, canoe-like boat and a paddle with blades at both ends of the shaft. To navigate the kayak, you simply dip the blades in the water and propel your craft. That's the easy part. What's really tricky about kayaking, is buying one.

There are many factors to consider when shopping for a kayak. It can be overwhelming, so you're best to figure out exactly what you need before you leave home. Here are a few steps to make your kayak-buying experience a little easier.

### Relaxed or Extreme?

Before you head to the outdoors store in search of the perfect model, be sure to ask yourself how you plan to use the kayak. Are you a leisurely paddler, or a hardcore whitewater kayaker? The kayak you purchase depends solely on how you will use it. Athletic and competitive kayakers need more rugged and lasting models. Beginners and moderate kayakers can safely choose a more basic (and less costly) kayak. Knowing what kind of kayaker you are will make it much easier to choose from the virtual sea of selection that's out there.

### Well Equipped?

Buying a kayak is like buying a car. You need the accessories to make it worth cruising. Once you have the kayak, it's time to pick out the right tools and equipment. Make a checklist of everything you'll need, and be sure to pick up every item on your list. Paddle, lifejacket and wetsuit are all important accessories you should purchase when you're buying a kayak. Don't scrimp on the accessories#especially the lifejacket. Spend a little more if you have to, but be sure to get the safest products available.

With literally hundreds of models available, choosing a kayak is a lot harder than learning to paddle one. Identify your needs, know the style of kayak and type of equipment you want, and then venture out to shop. Don't be pressured into buying the most expensive kayak, or be tempted into buying a kayak because of a cool name or celebrity endorsement. Some tried-and-true companies, like Coleman, offer excellent quality at a fair price.

Investigate, shop around, and then buy your kayak and accessories. Shopping smart can mean the difference between buying a kayak, and buying a kayak you love.