

Purchasing the Right Kayak and Equipment

A kayak allows you to explore waterways, enjoy views you can't see from the shore, and get some exercise or just experience nature from the water.

When purchasing a kayak, how do you know which option is best for you? Consider your preferences when deciding:

Where do you want to paddle? Are you interested in paddling a lake, seacoast, or river? How you use the kayak will help narrow your options.

Sit-in or sit-on-top? Do you prefer the protection of a traditional sit-in kayak or the openness of a sit-on-top kayak?

Kayak weight and your budget: What a kayak is made of, which directly impacts the boat's price, is the biggest factor in weight, durability, and cost.

Shape and size considerations: These considerations affect stability, handling, and cargo space.

Before you go...

- Take a class from a certified instructor.
- Check weather and water conditions.
- Dress appropriately for the air and water temperature.
- Prepare appropriate safety equipment.
- Gauge your skill level, assess your risk.
- Leave a plan behind as to where you will be and when you plan to return.

Recommended:

Take a course from a certified instructor before you take your kayak out for the first time.



Kayaks should stay 6 feet apart, and everyone should have their own personal safety equipment.

Personal Flotation Devices or PFDs

Anyone using a kayak in Indiana waters, including children, must wear a life jacket or other U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD). Type I, II, III, and V PFDs are acceptable. Life jackets and other PFDs should always be worn but can be stored on the kayak in an easily accessible location.

Flotation devices should be used as directed. PFDs can save lives when used correctly.

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*Brochure developed by Leslie Dorworth.
Photos courtesy David Klein and Dan Plath.*

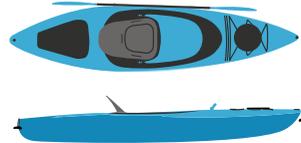
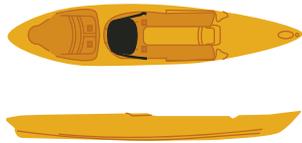


Southern Lake Michigan
Water Safety Task Force

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Let's Go Kayaking





Sit-On-Top Kayak

Pros:

- ✓ Entry/exit: open seat, easier to get in and out
- ✓ Stability: wider hull, less likely to capsize
- ✓ Storage: easily accessible space for gear, good for fishing
- ✓ Portability: shorter length, easier to store and carry

Cons:

- ✗ Protection: open seat, more likely to get wet from waves and wind
- ✗ Turning: larger size, harder to maneuver

Sit-Inside Kayak

Pros:

- ✓ Protection: sheltered cockpit usually comes with a spray skirt, more likely to keep you and the inside of the kayak dry
- ✓ Stability: wider hull, less likely to capsize
- ✓ Portability: shorter length, easier to store and carry

Cons:

- ✗ Entry/exit: cockpit, harder to get in and out
- ✗ Safety: if kayak capsizes, you will need to bail water from the hull; lessons are suggested to learn how to exit the kayak if it flips
- ✗ Turning: larger size, harder to maneuver

Touring Sea Kayaks

Pros:

- ✓ Protection: sheltered cockpit and internal bulkheads, more likely to keep you, your cargo, and the inside of the kayak dry
- ✓ Turning: kayak is fitted with a rudder or skeg, easier to maneuver and steer
- ✓ Stability: built to handle waves and heavy winds

Cons:

- ✗ Portability: longer length, harder to store and carry
- ✗ Safety: if kayak capsizes, you will need to bail water from the hull; lessons are suggested to learn how to exit the kayak if it flips