

Canoes provide a comfortable (sit, kneel, lay down, stand), flexible (room for gear and people) way to explore the water from splashing about to fishing, camping, seeing natural beauty and wild life, or heart stopping whitewater. Solo or with family and friends.

Canoe selection consideration - Matching the boat to water and use is key to enjoying canoeing

Water: (Go Paddling app)

- Flat- Lake Onalaska, Trempleau Lakes, Lake Neshonoc, Side Hollow, Lake Wazee, some Mississippi backwaters
- Slow moving – some Mississippi backwaters
- Current- LaCrosse river, Black river, Root river, Wisconsin river, Kickapoo river, Mississippi main channel and some sloughs
- White water- Upper Black river, Wolf river, Peshtigo

Use

- Day trips
- Overnight
- Tripping

Selected well for water and use one boat can cover several combinations without too much compromise.

Canoe design

- Length- Shorter is more maneuverable. Longer tracks (straight line) better, carries more people and gear
 - Solo: 14-16 ft, single seat
 - Tandem: 15-18 ft, two seat (some in this range can be used for solo of tripping)
 - Tripping: 18-20 ft, three (+) seats
- Width- Wider is more stable, narrow is more nimble and easier to reach over the gunnels
- Bottom- Flatter is more stable, rounder has a smoother transition from initial to final stability
- Sides- Rounder (tumblehome), gunnel width narrower than side, easier to reach water with paddle
- Rocker- Keel line curve. Less, better tracking. More, turns easier.
- Keel- Protrusion along hull centerline. Helps with tracking. Useful on lakes and wind, a problem in current

Materials

- Aluminum- Very durable, lower cost, heavy, noisy, hard, cold
- Polyethylene/Plastic- Very durable, lower cost, heavy
- Fiberglass- Durable, mid cost, mid weight
- Kevlar- Lighter version of fiberglass, higher cost, lighter weight
- Graphite- Lightest material option, highest cost

Parts of a canoe

- Bow- Front of the boat
- Stern- Rear of the boat
- Keel- Centerline of the boat bottom (physical in lake boats, not in river boats)
- Hull- Bottom contacting the water
- Sides- Vertical or rounded (tumblehome) parts above the hull

- Chines- Between hull and sides
- Rocker- curve of the keel from bow to stern
- Beam- Width at the widest spot
- Gunnels- Top of the sides
- Thwarts- Wood between the gunnels
- Yoke- Thwart near the boat center for carrying on shoulders
- Handles- Short thwarts near bow and stern
- Painter.... Any rope (floating) tied at the bow and stern.... 10-20 ft, use a bowline knot

Paddles

- Types- Flat blade/bent shaft, Palm/T grip, Beaver/otter/square tip
- Material- Plastic/Wood
- Length- Place the grip of the paddle between your legs while sitting. Mark where the shoulder of the blade hits you. The shoulder on a straight shaft should be at your forehead; the shoulder on a bent shaft should be at your nose (from Bending Branches paddles). Better to do in a canoe shop.....

Parts of a paddle- Grip (top)/shaft/throat/shoulder/blade/tip(bottom)

Trip preparation

- Plan
 - Make sure someone knows where you are going and expected return
- Car top
 - Much easier with two people
 - Place canoe on roof racks and orient in line with the car. If no racks foam blocks or slit pipe insulation on the gunnels can be used to protect the roof
 - Tie down both ends (inverted "V" is better than single rope, prevents shifting). If using racks tie across both. Cam loc straps or nylon/polyester rope can be used.

For rope learn the truckers hitch. If no rack limit car speed and distance, it is not as secure

- Boat and paddles
 - One paddle per paddler, plus one extra
- **PDF - One per boat occupant**
- Gear
 - Cell phone in a separate dry bag if possible and with coverage
 - Cloths
 - Match the weather
 - Prepare for predicted/unexpected changes. Rain and temperature drop can be unpleasant or dangerous
 - Food/Water
 - Trip of few hours or less just water, longer some food
 - Generally what ever you feel like carrying just be sure not to go long without
 - Sunglasses
 - Hat
 - Shoes, feet will get wet
 - Gloves in cool/cold weather, waterproof
 - Sun screen (I prefer a hat and spf long sleeve shirt, minimal sun screen)
 - Dry bags for gear
 - Rope or bungies to tie in gear
 - Kneeling pad if applicable
 - I never go anywhere without a knife....

Getting in the boat:

- Place boat parallel to shore if possible
- If fiberglass, Kevlar or graphite (anything with a gel coat) get in with boat floating. Plastic or aluminum ok to have resting on the bottom
- Step as close as possible to keel (center) line. If with others have them hold the gunnels to steady
 - If your center of gravity is very far from the boat center line, it will move
- Use the paddle as support to step in
- Sit or kneel (kneeling lowers center of gravity making the boat more stable)
- If more than one person in the boat get in and settled one at a time
- For tandem paddle on opposite sides. Agree on changes.
- Reverse for exit (one at a time, use the paddle for support)

Paddling

Technique:

- Always have upper hand on top of grip, not side
- Have lower hand near throat for most leverage
- Keep shaft as vertical as possible

Basic strokes (Practice strokes in flat, or very slow, water, they are hard to learn in much current):

- Forward (move forward)- Reach forward, place most/all of blade in water (keep it perpendicular to hull). Think of the blade as fixed in the water at that point and pull the boat there (using abs) rotating shoulders at the same time.
- Draw (move sideways)- Reach out perpendicular to boat blade parallel and pull boat to paddle
- J (correction)- Turn paddle grip out at the end of a forward stroke
- Backward (slow down, stop or move backwards)- Reverse of forward stroke
- Cross draw (move sideways opposite side)- Rotate lower hand to opposite side reach out, pull
- C (combination draw, forward, correction)- Start like draw but forward, pull and transition to forward, end with a J
- Brace

Links

- Put ins

<https://paddling.com/paddle/locations?viewport=center%5B%5D%3D43.8117383137508%26center%5B%5D%3D-91.22703552246095%26zoom%3D11>

- Water level links:

- Mississippi (probably others too)

<https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=arx&gage=LACW3>

- Mississippi (probably others too)

<https://snoflo.org/>