



5 Most Common Kayak Buying Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Finding the right kayak for your vacations requires knowing what you want and knowing what to avoid. We have previously posted about [what to look for in a kayak](#). Now, here are some common kayak buying mistakes and how to avoid them.

It wasn't until the 1970's that kayaking became a popular mainstream sport. But since it started gaining popularity, it hasn't slowed down. Each year the number of kayak enthusiasts continues to grow.

And who can blame them? Kayaking is a fun, great way to get out and explore while also exercising. If you're interested in getting into paddling as well, one of the first things you'll need to do is buy a kayak.

But people can get over-excited and overwhelmed by so much new information that it can often lead to making certain kayak buying mistakes. So, how do you know what those are and how to avoid them?

Don't worry! In this post, we'll go over 5 of the most common kayak buying mistakes, so you don't have to make them.

1. Choosing the Wrong Type of Kayak

When you decide to buy a kayak, you likely have a specific use in mind. This use significantly affects what [type of kayak](#) you should buy. There are different kayak sizes, body shapes, safety features, and designs available for each purpose.

If you're not sure what you're looking for yet, this post is a good place to start.

Recreational Kayaks

Recreational kayaks are the most popular type of kayak on the market. They are good for use in calm water but not in open or rough water. This is because they lack the extra stability and safety features of kayaks designed for those environments.

This type of kayak tends to be on the shorter side, usually less than 12 feet long. They are designed with different seating options and are built to be generally stable and wide. This makes them ideal choices for beginners, children, and other casual kayakers.

Whitewater Kayaks

Whitewater kayaks are designed to handle much rougher, faster-moving water than recreational kayaks. They are much smaller than the other options, usually coming in between 6 and 8 feet long.

While their upturned ends help them to maneuver better in streams and rough water, it makes them an inefficient choice for flat, calm water.

Touring Kayaks

Touring kayaks are made for long-distance trips. They are narrower and longer, often up to 18 feet. They also usually come with storage built-in and features like rudders to help the kayaks move straight through the water.

2. Compromising on Quality

When comparing kayak prices, there is a wide range available. And while it can quickly wind up being an expensive investment, it's important that you don't compromise on the quality of the kayak in an attempt to save money.

It's not worth it to buy a cheap kayak only to have to replace it much sooner than you would've otherwise. This will likely wind up costing you more money in the long run.

But don't worry! There are places where you can find higher-end used kayaks that are still in good condition for an affordable price.

3. Not Checking for Damage

Especially when you're buying a used kayak, it's critical that you check it thoroughly for damage before actually buying it.

Depending on the [material the kayak's made of](#), different levels of wear and tear will be acceptable. For example, most recreational kayaks are made of tough plastic that can handle some damage without losing function. But other materials may be more fragile and need to be in better condition.

When looking at the hull be sure to look for any discoloration from the sun. Long-term exposure to the sun can cause warping or weakening of the material, making the kayak less efficient to paddle.

But you need to inspect more than the condition of the hull. Make sure to inspect other features like the backrest, foot supports, seat, and rudders to make sure everything is working as it should be.

4. Buying Without Testing

The various types of kayaks all have a different feel to them when paddling, depending on their specific design. When possible, you should always test out a kayak before buying it. The last thing you want is to buy your kayak and finally get it out on the water only to find out it's uncomfortable.

Pay close attention to if your legs and back are comfortable in the cockpit and if you think you could sit like that potentially for hours. Also, consider if you feel comfortable with the size and that you'll be able to adequately maneuver through the water in the kayak.

5. Ignoring Safety

When buying your kayak you'll also need to buy certain accessories to go with it. While some are for function or fun, some are for safety and need to be a top priority.

The number one thing you'll need is a [Coast Guard-approved PFD](#) or personal flotation device. This is necessary not only for your safety but it's also a legal requirement in many places. Your PFD needs to fit properly and be in good condition in order to protect you.

There is also other safety gear you may need including a wetsuit if you're planning on paddling in very cold water. A bilge pump can help you to empty water from the cockpit and avoid sinking if you begin to take on water.

Another part of safety that you shouldn't skimp on is learning how to properly use your kayak. You especially need to know what to do if you capsize. Safety should always be your top priority.

Don't Make These Kayak Buying Mistakes

Kayaking is a great activity for those looking to explore nature, fish, or just get some exercise. When you decide to enter the paddling world, make sure you're prepared to find the right kayak and not make one of these common kayak buying mistakes.

Check out our wide range of [kayak options](#) and get ready to dive into the world of paddling.