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## 7 Things You Need to Know When Buying an Inflatable Kayak

Recreational kayaking attracts [11 million paddlers](#) while 2.6 million Americans enjoy whitewater kayaking. You're in good company if you're considering the activity.

Inflatable kayaks let you paddle and explore like a hard shell model, but they're much easier to store and transport.

Inflating a kayak is quick and easy, much easier than wrestling to get a hard-shell kayak on top of your car and back down again.

Finding the [best inflatable kayak](#) is easier when you consider your needs and understand the features of this kayak option.

Check out these seven things to keep in mind when choosing an inflatable kayak.

# 1. Intended Use

How you plan to use your inflatable kayak affects which type you buy.

Consider the type of water you'll most often paddle in, such as seawater, lake water, or rivers. The salt in seawater can be tough on the kayak, so you'll need one that can handle it.

Whether you'll paddle on calm or rough waters is also a factor. Choosing a kayak designed for rough water helps it hold up to damage and allows better control.

## 2. Types of Inflatable Kayaks

Knowing how you plan to use the kayak can help you narrow down the different types.

Recreational inflatable kayaks give you more stability due to the wide profile. They're good for beginning paddlers who will mainly stick to calm, slow-moving water.

[Inflatable fishing kayaks](#) add features that make it easier to fish from the watercraft. That might include things such as built-in fishing rod holders, tougher material to resist hook pokes, and slip-resistant floors to keep your footing while you fish.

If you're planning to paddle in whitewater situations, an [inflatable whitewater kayak](#) might be the best solution. They're usually shorter and self-bailing to better handle whitewater conditions.

## 3. Material Options

You'll find three main material options when searching for inflatable kayaks.

Most high-end kayaks are made of a [synthetic rubber called Hypalon](#). Its high durability means it can hold up to lots of elements, including UV radiation, chemicals, and extreme weather.

Nitrylon is a newer material that offers an eco-friendly option. It holds up well against punctures, abrasions, and cold weather.

PVC is a more cost-effective option. It's not as durable as Hypalon.

Look at the gauge to judge the durability. A higher gauge means the material is thicker, which

should make it more durable.

Some kayaks feature double- or triple-layer material. Those extra layers provide more resistance to punctures, but they also increase the weight of the kayak.

## 4. Weight and Portability

Inflatable kayaks appeal to consumers because you can deflate them and transport them easily. But not all kayaks are as easy as others to transport.

Heavy-duty materials make the kayak more durable, but the heavier weight fabric also makes it bulkier and heavier to carry.

The overall size of the kayak is also a factor in how portable it is. Larger kayaks give you more room on the water, but they take up more space to store.

Consider your needs and look for a balance of features and portability.

If you plan to take the kayak with you on hiking trips, look for the lightest option that still fits your other needs. Lightweight models are usually the most compact options, which means you can fit them into a smaller bag.

They also don't add as much weight to your pack, which makes them easier to carry.

## 5. Size and Capacity

Inflatable kayaks come in both solo and tandem models. [Solo kayaks](#) have a single seat that you use on your own.

[Tandem kayaks](#) come with two or three seats. Some models offer different seat configurations so you can convert it to a solo kayak when needed.

Consider the overall size of the kayak, including the width and legroom. This is especially important for people who are tall or large.

If you have long legs, you won't want to sit in a tiny kayak with very little legroom.

When looking at the width of the kayak, take into consideration the thicker sidewalls. When they're inflated, they're thicker than a hard-shell kayak. That can leave less room inside the kayak.

Look at the weight capacity rating on the kayak as well. Consider that the weight limit isn't just your weight. It includes the total weight in the kayak, including any gear you have.

If you get a tandem kayak, consider the weight of the other people who will paddle with you regularly. Choose a kayak with ample weight capacity for everyone and everything you plan to take.

## 6. Assembly and Structure

While inflatable kayaks are generally easier to maneuver than traditional kayaks, they come with different levels of setup difficulty.

Some models simply have a few chambers that you need to inflate and you're ready to get out on the water.

Others have a lot more chambers that you'll have to inflate individually. The extra chambers can give you more security on the water, though. If one chamber gets punctured, having more chambers that aren't affected could help you stay afloat better.

They might have different straps, zippers, and clips that you need to connect or adjust before you can start paddling.

## 7. Included Accessories

Look at the total inflatable kayak package to see what comes with it.

Is it only the kayak? If so, you'll need to buy all of the other accessories separately.

At a minimum, you'll need a pump and paddle just to get on the water. Repair kits are also useful to have on hand.

If you're buying the kayak by itself, add in the cost of the other accessories you'll need to get the full price.

Buying the pieces individually isn't always a bad thing. If you get a kayak that comes with lots of accessories, they might not always be the highest quality options.

When you buy each piece separately, you can choose exactly what you want to ensure it all meets your quality standards.

# Find the Best Inflatable Kayak for Your Needs

When you're looking for the best inflatable kayak, consider how you'll use it and what features are important to you. Understanding the common features of inflatable kayaks helps you compare the options and choose a model.

Now that you know how to choose the best model for you, check out our [selection of inflatable kayaks](#).

## Selecting the Right Kayak for Your Adventure

<b>Fishing Kayaks</b>		A great way to enhance your fishing and kayaking experiences. Enjoy a unique fishing experience that also allows you to fish areas that are hard to get to by other means.
<b>Self Bailing Kayaks</b>		Perfect for whitewater kayaking adventures. Strategically placed drains allows water to flow out of the kayak.
<b>Sit On Top Kayaks</b>		Very user friendly, stable and great for paddling in warmer climates. Keeps your legs free so you aren't confined in case you capsize. Easy to reboard after a swim.
<b>Sit In Kayaks</b>		Lower center of gravity gives you a faster, more maneuverable, and more efficient kayaking experience. Also great for paddling in rough seas and longer kayaking expeditions; you are protected from the sun, water, and cold.
<b>Tandem Kayaks</b>		Kayaking with a friend or loved one is a fantastic experience. It also allows you to relax and explore more efficiently on your kayaking adventures.
<b>1 Person Kayaks</b>		Allows you to have complete control of your experience and with a lighter weight you will generally move across the water faster than a tandem kayak.

### Benefits of Inflatable Kayaks

- Easy to store, easy to transport, easy to set up.
- No need for a car or truck rack nor a trailer.
- Lightweight, so it is easy to carry and easy to launch.
- More affordable than traditional kayaks.

### Kayaking Fun Facts:

- Over 16 million kayakers in the USA
- One of the fastest growing recreational activities in the USA
- 50/50 demographic split amongst Male and Female kayakers
- Easy to get involved in