

Are Inflatable Paddleboards Better Than Traditional Paddleboards?



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Stand-up paddleboarding has recently soared in popularity with SUP participation [rising by 120%](#) in the last 3 years alone! The number of people around the world experiencing the exhilaration of paddleboards continues to grow. Part of the increase in popularity has been due to the emergence of new, better, and more affordable designs.

You may have heard by now there are fundamentally two kinds of boards to try – inflatable SUPs and hardboards. The [increasing market for SUPs](#) shows that more people are choosing inflatable SUPs as their board of choice. But why?

Keep reading to find out why inflatable SUPs are your best option for enjoying time on the water.

What Are Inflatable SUPs?

An inflatable stand-up paddleboard or iSUP consists of layers of thick PVC polyester fabric sewn and glued together. The hollow core can be inflated with a hand or foot pump via the inflation valve at the tail end of the board. Inflatable SUPs are usually pumped up to 15-20 psi (which can

be seen on the pump pressure gauge) which makes them surprisingly rigid!

Inflatable SUPs generally come with an a [paddle](#), a carry bag, a pump, and a repair kit. The specially designed fins on the bottom of the board help with the stability, tracking, and performance of inflatable SUPs and can be fixed, flexible, or removable. There are many designs, types, models, and brands of inflatable SUPs [and accessories](#) to choose from depending on:

- Your stature
- Your budget
- Your ability level
- What kind of water you'll be paddling on
- How you will use it – surfing, cruising, touring, fishing, SUP yoga, etc.

So now you know what an inflatable stand-up paddleboard is, but why are they the best choice? People of all ages and paddling abilities are enjoying the benefits of owning an inflatable SUP.

Benefits of Inflatable SUPs

Inflatable SUPs are best for all-around use for most paddlers. Professional SUP surfers and racers would say that hardboards are essential for the expert performance they need. But if you're not a SUP athlete, an inflatable one will be great for you for many reasons including [a fun workout!](#)

Easier to Transport

Transporting an 8-12ft fiberglass hardboard is not easy unless you have a car with a roof rack, a pick-up truck or SUV, or a trailer. With inflatable SUPs, it's as simple as deflate it, roll it, and bag it!

Most inflatable SUPs fold or roll up into a backpack roughly the size of a small suitcase making them super easy to travel with. You can check them in as regular luggage at the airport without paying expensive 'oversized baggage' or 'sporting equipment' fees; you may even be able to carry them on.

Light Weight Design

Inflatable stand-up paddleboards weigh around 15 pounds which is less than half the weight of some traditional hardboards. This means less effort is required to carry them to and from the shore which means they'll get used more! A lighter SUP makes it easier for solo paddling

because you don't have to rely on a buddy to help you carry the board.

Easy Storage

Due to the ability of inflatable SUPs to be stored in a backpack, they can easily be placed on a shelf in your closet or garage with no hassle. This makes inflatable boards the perfect watersports equipment if you live in a condo or if you don't have much storage space. Or, if you have the space and want to keep it inflated, you can easily lift the lightweight board onto [a SUP rack](#).

Durable and Built to Last

Inflatable SUPs are incredibly durable and are able to withstand accidental bumps with rocks and other hard surfaces better than fiberglass and epoxy hardboards. The super strong and flexible material will bounce back in a collision with minor damage compared to the dent or hole that a hardboard would endure. Even in the worst case of a puncture, a quality repair kit will allow you to inflate your SUP and hop back onto the water in no time.

Increased Stability

If you think you may be a little wobbly on a SUP, an inflatable SUP offers excellent stability. The high volume and great weight capacity of inflatable SUPs make them a lot easier to use making the experience more enjoyable. In the inevitable situation of falling off, no matter how good you are, they're also easier to get back on!

Better for Beginners

Hardboards are certainly better suited to the pros and serious paddlers. An inflatable SUP's user-friendly design and durability are why they're perfect for those new to paddleboarding. Whether you're trying it for the first time or enjoying a regular weekend paddle, inflatable stand-up paddleboards are a great way to revel in some fun and relaxation on the water for all ages.

Great for SUP Rental Business

Because inflatable paddleboards are durable, easy to store, easy to transport, and easy to use, they are perfect for SUP rentals at the beach or on the lake. Not only are they the best bang for your buck but customers will enjoy them and become your best form of advertising. Everybody will enjoy their experience and spread the word for you! When it comes time to pack up gear for

the day or for the season it will be an easy task.

Inflatable vs. Hard Boards

Are inflatable SUPs better than hardboards? It depends on what you'll be using your paddleboard for. If you're planning on training for races, competing in surfing competitions, or paddling very long distances then a hardboard is for you. However, if you're looking for a fun way to enjoy the water with family and friends, or want to escape with a quiet solo paddle on the lake – an inflatable sup is your best option, hands down.

There are so many designs, sizes, and shapes to choose from, so it's worth doing your research to find the one that best suits you. New SUP brands are appearing almost every year with new ideas and innovative features. If you're not sure where to start, check out the [best inflatable SUPs](#) in our range.

Get the Best Inflatable SUPs

Whether you choose a paddleboard as a weekend toy for the kids, or you want a full inflatable SUP package just for you – there are many great models and accessories to choose from.

[Get in touch](#) for some helpful guidance on choosing the best inflatable SUP model. Enjoy more quality time on the water this summer and all year round with inflatable SUPs from Splashy McFun!