

Canoeing Checklist

By Kimberly French

Preparation

Know-how

Get lessons on how to canoe before hand; they're really invaluable.

Clubs

There are plenty of these to join, and they are great sources for tons of information.

Experience.

There is only one way to get this, and that is practice, practice, practice!

Teachers

There are plenty of instructors out there, but make sure that they are certified, and First Aid certified, too.

Equipment

Investing in a canoe can mean some money at first — but the long-term payoff is worth it.

Gear

Paddles

You will need at least two pairs; one to use, and the other as a back-up pair.

Canoe

This is obvious, so make sure you pick one that you like, and will use.

Life jacket

When on the water, you must always have at least two life jackets or personal flotation devices on board a boat. No discussion on this one.

Accessories

Extra paddles

While two sets of paddles are usually enough, some canoeists want a third set.

Throw ropes

These are useful to pull yourself into the dock, or pull someone out of the water, if needed.

Knife

Use the knife for a number of different things, including cutting the rope or trimming repair patches.

First aid kit

Do not go anywhere without this, and keep it fully stocked.

Whistle

Ensure that it works, and if something happens, use it to get others' attention while out on the water.

Repair kit

On the odd chance that your canoe is damaged, have a kit with the necessary items to fix it.

GPS

For those who are navigationally challenged, have a GPS handy to ensure arrival at the correct spot, using the right route.

Compass

For those areas where GPS doesn't function, use this to guide you in the right direction.

Map

Combine this with the compass or GPS to get you to your final destination.

Case

This would be something that maps and anything digital could be put into, in order to prevent damage.

Things to Take

Towels

Don't forget these! You'll use them for many different things, including drying your wet head.

- Dry bags**
Use these for carrying wet clothes, shoes and more.
- Boxes**
Clean and dry, these will be needed to store things in while in the canoe, and while going back and forth to the canoeing site.
- Sunscreen.**
Water reflects the sun, and sun can burn, so bring some sunscreen with you!
- Hats**
Pick a hat you like, and that will provide some decent protection from the sun so that you're not squinting all the time, and you have a bit of shade.
- Sunglasses.**
These are a great thing to help cut down on eye strain, so wear them, and relax!
- Drinks**
Have some sort of bottled drinks with you, just in case you need them; water would be great.
- Food**
If you're only going for a day, pack a small simple meal or two. Otherwise, pack a bit more.
- Camera**
You will certainly want to take some pictures of the scenery; just make sure you have a good dry container to keep the camera in.
- Safety Tips**
 - Weather**
Pay attention to it, and if it starts to go bad, get out of the water.
 - Stay properly hydrated**
Drink liquids that won't dry you out — water is best.
 - Itinerary**
Have a set itinerary so that someone is expecting you at a specific time.
 - Staying together**
If you're canoeing in a group, trying to guide each other in a pack helps. You can use radios to stay in contact, too.
 - Place to meet**
If you should happen to break up as a group, agree to meet in a specific spot, then do so.
 - Search and rescue**
Who is going to do what if that itinerary isn't met, who's getting called, and when should be planned in advance.