

HOW TO CHOOSE A KAYAK

When choosing your perfect kayak, there are many factors to take into consideration. We recommend talking to our Sales Associates to help with this decision. Information provided here will help you understand kayak differences and steer you in the right direction.



STEP 1: PADDLING STYLE

Where do you want to kayak and what will you be doing? Kayaks fall into 3 categories. Each category has the right combination of size options, outfitting, gear, storage, and performance features for the intended uses outlined in the chart below.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER	TYPE OF KAYAK		
	RECREATIONAL	TOURING	SEA KAYAKING
IDEAL TYPES OF WATER	Ponds, small lakes, bays, slow moving rivers	Lakes, bays, moving rivers, currents, limited ocean use	Lakes, bays, moving rivers, rougher currents, ocean
TRIP DURATION	Day trips (less than 10 miles)	Day or weekend trips (less than 20 miles)	Day or weekend trips, expeditions
SKILL LEVELS	Beginner to intermediate	Intermediate to Advanced	Intermediate to Advanced
GEAR CAPACITY	Low	Moderate	Moderate to High

STEP 2: PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

Once you've gotten a general idea of your paddling style, you are able to narrow it down more precisely by understanding the performance characteristics that are typical for each category. Below is a chart of how each performs relative to the other categories in each characteristic.

DEFINITIONS

STABILITY: General capability of boat's resistance to tipping over under normal conditions.

SPEED / GLIDE: Boat's efficiency moving through the water and potential for higher velocity.

TRACKING: Boat's ability to stay in a straight line.

MANEUVERABILITY: Boat's ability to turn easily and precisely.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTIC	TYPE OF KAYAK		
	RECREATIONAL	TOURING	SEA KAYAKING
STABILITY	Best	Better	Good
SPEED / GLIDE	Good	Better	Best
TRACKING	Better	Best	Good
MANEUVERABILITY	Good	Better	Best

STEP 3: FEATURES AND OUTFITTING

Now that you've decided on a kayak model or two that fits your needs, looking at the features and outfitting can help in making your decision.

COCKPIT: Cockpit outfitting is key to finding the best fit for comfort, safety, and control. Look for inclusion of a thigh brace or backrest, and adjustability if you will be doing longer trips or kayaking rough conditions. Pay attention to cockpit size to ensure it fits your body type.

HATCHES AND BULKHEADS: Located at either end of the boat, the hatch is the opening to store gear and the bulkhead is the vertical wall that seals the compartment. Also a great safety feature providing buoyancy to the boat.

DECK RIGGING: Deck lines, bungees, and toggles add safety and convenience for certain types of paddling. A spare paddle, compass, navigational charts, and other items can be readily available on deck.

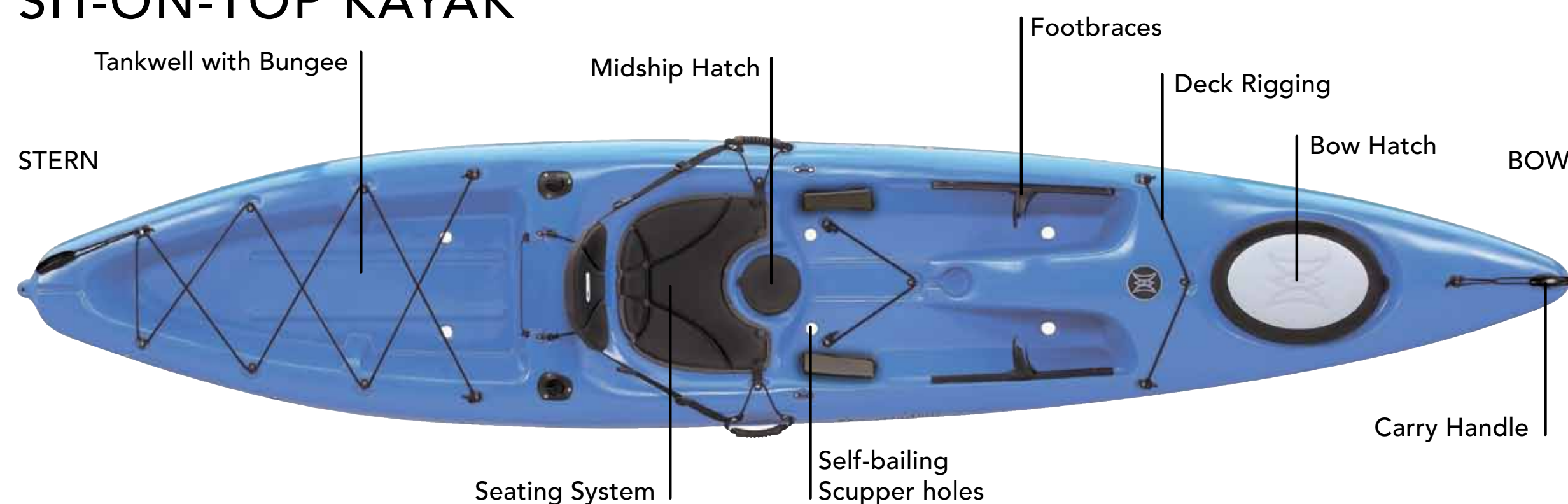
RUDDER: A mechanical device at the stern of the boat that is foot controlled and can aid in both steering and tracking.

DROP-SKEG: Mechanical device at the stern of the boat that can be deployed or retracted by hand. Aids in tracking, but not steering.

Finally, we offer a variety of sizes in all kayak categories to comfortably accommodate paddlers of all proportions.

KAYAK ANATOMY

SIT-ON-TOP KAYAK



SIT-IN KAYAK



STEP 4: ACCESSORIES The right paddle and safety gear—Personal Flotation Device (PFD), whistle, bilge pump, and paddle float—are essential. There are many accessories available to enhance both your enjoyment and your comfort. Consult our Sales Associates or visit www.harmonygear.com.