

10 Things to Remember Before You Buy a Fishing Kayak

1. The sport of kayak fishing is really emerging and because of that fact, companies are paying attention to our needs and are now producing kayaks that are fast, stable, and make great fishing platforms.
2. There is no single perfect fishing kayak for everyone because there are too many variables to consider. Before you even walk into a kayak shop, here are some things for you to ponder. Let's begin by considering the obvious such as the kinds of water you will fish, height and weight of the user and even the kayak transport vehicle. Although this may change after you get your kayak, you need to consider your present preferred method of fishing, whether that is with live bait, artificials, or flies. A kayak that works well for one person's type of fishing could be a horrible choice for somebody else.
3. Your research should start with talking with others who are kayak fishing and getting their input as to what models would be appropriate for your area and style of fishing. Another great source of information are the many online kayak-fishing communities where veterans are more than willing to give quality help to the person just getting into the sport.
4. Many companies are coming out with their angler versions, and it would be logical to assume that these models would be best for fishing and for some people they are, but it's not always the case. An angler model usually means some added flush mount rod holders and an anchor cleats, this might work out well if you don't want to outfit the kayak yourself and are happy with the placement of the rod holders and cleat, but getting the non-angler version can save you some money and allow you the flexibility to outfit the way you want it, so consider the kayak in both the angler and non-angler version if offered that way.
5. Common advise is to "try many kayaks before you buy". Well, this is good advise but if you are new to kayaking this approach sometimes leads a new person to chose a kayak that is very stable, of course stability is always a good thing, but it sometimes compromises performance. Many people will buy this very stable kayak because it felt good on that first day they paddled it and will soon realize that they already have outgrown its usefulness. Like riding a bicycle, you'll soon learn to control the "balance factor" as you get used to your kayak and therefore that initial emphasis for stability will be gone.
6. Storage can be a very important issue if you plan to take a lot gear along and some kayaks offer better internal storage by way of hatches while others offer better external storage with tank-wells. Being able to stow away extra clothes, kayak carts, fishing outfits and other useful items is an important consideration.
7. Consider carefully what color you will choose for your new kayak, there are two approaches to this subject; a bright kayak will make you much more visible on the water which is important to your safety as boaters and rescue personnel will be able to see you. This is especially important in areas of heavy boat traffic. However, some people choose to be stealthier on the water and feel that a brighter kayak will spook fish. This approach seems to be more popular with the fresh water community. Either way, color is something to think about.
8. A rudder can add as much as 20 – 30% to the final cost of a kayak but in some fishing situations, it can be invaluable. Drift fishing is one of these. The rudder can add 90 degrees of flexibility to your drift without ever picking up the paddle. Another situation where a rudder can really help is whenever you are anchored off your bow or stern, you can add 10 yards to your fan casting range by changing your rudder position.
9. Once you have settled on which kayak you will purchase, you will have to think about some off the other accessories you will need right away. You might be tempted to just get a cheap PFD to get you started but spending a few extra dollars on a good one will be a very good investment in comfort and safety. A PFD that you never wear because it is uncomfortable is not worth any bargain price. A good paddle is another investment that will make your day more enjoyable, but one that is the right length and blade shape is more important in the beginning, take your time and remember that you will spend many hours paddling and you should be comfortable with your choice. Another must have item is a paddle leash - you've heard the adage; "up the creek without a paddle", that's one piece of equipment you don't want to become separated from while on the water.
10. Lastly, always inspect your new kayak before it leaves the shop. Sometimes in transport from the company, a kayak can get some scratches and little dings, usually these won't affect the kayak's performance and are just cosmetic but they still should brought to the attention of the dealer at the time of purchase.