

Sea Kayak Camping Gear Checklist

At first glance, this list will seem overwhelming and exhaustive, but it's not meant to be a list of "everything one should take" on a kayak camping trip (with the exception, of course, of "The Essentials"). Its purpose is to give the paddler a checklist for what experience has indicated could be important, to aid in developing one's own list, or "food for thought." Length of trip, paddling environment, personal comfort/needs, and other factors will determine the need or utility of items appearing on this list.

The Essentials

- Kayak
- Hatch Covers and/or Lids
- Paddle
- Spray Skirt
- PFD (Personal Floatation Device, must be Coast Guard approved: Type III)
- Paddle Float
- Bilge Pump
- Sponge
- Whistle (note: US Coast Guard requires; attach to PFD)
- Dry Bags (multiple smaller bags are easier to pack into the boat than larger ones)

Safety Gear

- Spare Paddle (2-piece are much easier to stow)
- Tow Rope (if you know how to use --- required in Canada)
- Rescue Knife (attached to PFD)
- Marine VHF radio (or weather radio)
- Cell Phone (in waterproof case --- may not work everywhere, be aware!)
- Compass (deck-mounted or in PFD)
- GPS
- EPIRB or PLB
- Spare Clothing (pack in dry bag(s) --- poly or wool, NO COTTON)
- Sunglasses

Safety Gear, continued

- Spare Prescription Glasses
- Water Bottle or Hydration System (e.g. Camelback, Platypus, etc.)
- Paddle Leash
- Helmet
- Float Plan (leave copy in vehicle and with responsible person “at home”)
- Deck Light(s) (if paddling after dark is a possibility)
- Head Lamp
- Spare Flashlight
- Spare Flashlight Bulb(s) & Batteries
- Laser Flare
- Signal Mirror
- Chemical Lights (“light sticks”)
- Dye Marker
- Smoke Marker
- Rocket Flares
- Strobe Light
- Navigation Charts/Maps (in waterproof case)
- Tide Tables
- Emergency “Space” Blanket
- Waterproof Matches
- Butane Lighter
- Fire Starter Material
- High Energy Snacks (have accessible while paddling)

Note: several of the items above could be incorporated into a “grab bag” or emergency pack, stowed in a readily accessible area of the boat, in case of an emergency on water, near or on shore.

First Aid

- Basic Individual First Aid Kit*
- Trip Leader First Aid Kit (more extensive than Basic)
- Waterproof card with emergency phone numbers and important personal medical information
- Change for pay phone

*First aid kits can be assembled by the individual paddler or purchased “pre-packaged” at outdoor supply stores or through catalogs. “Pre-packaged” kits can be expensive and don’t always have the best assortment of supplies, but having “too much” is probably better than not having enough – space limitations taken into account. Whichever choice is made, the first aid kit must be kept dry.

Paddling Clothes

- Dry Suit
- Wet Suit (Farmer John/Jane, Shorty, Jacket & Pants Combo, Shorts)
- Paddle Jacket
- Paddle Pants
- Long Underwear (light or mid-weight tops and bottoms; Poly-Pro, wool, or polyester --- NEVER COTTON)
- Paddle Shoes or Booties or Mukluks
- Gloves
- Pogies
- Rain Hat
- Sun Hat
- Neoprene Hood (nice for cold rain, or rolling practice)
- Glasses Strap (Chums, Croakies, etc. – some come available with floatation)

Camp Clothes

A key consideration in choosing clothing for around camp is retaining body heat and shedding moisture. Obviously, the requirements for a trip in Baja are going to differ from those in the Pacific Northwest. This list is aimed more at cool/wet environments.

- Waterproof Jacket (Parka or Cagoule); waterproof and breathable fabrics are best
- Sweater or Jacket (polyester fleece or wool)
- Fleece Pants
- Pants (nylon pants with zip-off legs to make shorts are handy)
- Shirt (nylon or polyester), Long Sleeved
- Shirt, Short Sleeved
- Hiking Boots (light weight) or All-Terrain Sandals
- Socks (synthetic fabric or wool)
- Rain Pants
- Warm Gloves (insulated work gloves are warm, durable, and handy for camp chores such as gathering/splitting firewood, etc.)
- Bathing Suit
- Bandanas (bring at least a couple – the ONE item that can be cotton!)

Personal Gear

- Quick drying towel (poly micro-fiber, not cotton)
- Biodegradable soap (check for utility in salt water! – “Camp Suds” works well)
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Lip Balm (SPF 30 or higher)
- Solar Shower
- Small Mirror
- Toilet Paper

Personal Gear, continued

- Trowel
- Human Waste Disposal Kit (required in some areas now)
- Prescription Medications (also “epi pen” if allergic to insect stings)
- Pain Relievers (aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen)
- Hand Wipes and/or Diaper Wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Wallet
- Car Keys
- Emergency Phone Numbers

Camping Gear

- Tent with Rainfly (needs to withstand moderate-to-heavy wind and rain)
- Nylon Tarp (nice to suspend over tent if prolonged or heavy rain anticipated)
- Synthetic Sleeping Bag (compression stuff sack recommended, then pack into a dry bag)
- Sleeping Pad or Air Mattress
- Pillow Case (synthetic) or Inflatable Pillow
- Camp Stove
- Fuel
- Cook Kit
- Dish Soap (“Camp Suds” can work for body and dish cleansing)
- Scrubie
- Dish Towel
- Eating Utensils (including cup, plate, bowl, etc.)

Camping Gear, continued

- Water Containers (collapsible bags are easier to stow aboard than large plastic containers; use several smaller “hard” containers)
- Water Filter
- Water Purification Tablets
- Camp Saw or Small Axe/Hatchet
- Large “Hunting” or Utility Knife
- Collapsible Buckets (for doing dishes)
- Small (< 1 pint) Bottle of Chlorine Bleach (for sanitizing dishes in rinse water)

Miscellaneous

- Large Mesh Bags or “IKEA” shopping bags (for hauling all those small dry bags up to your campsite)
- Deck Bag (for essentials while paddling – NOTE: may interfere with rescues and boat handling in strong winds; weight on deck may reduce stability)
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Film or Memory Card(s)
- Multi-tool Knife
- Small Flashlight
- Fishing Gear and License
- Day Pack or Fanny Pack (for land excursions)
- Spare Plastic Bags (all sizes, up to garbage bag size, choose heavy duty plastic)
- “Crazy Creek Chair” (or kit that converts a sleeping pad into a chair; other options include small folding stool, mini-thermorest style pad, etc.)
- Extra Batteries & Bulbs
- Insect Repellent

Miscellaneous, continued

- Guide Books
- “Rite-in-the-Rain” Notebook (for Journal)
- Pen(s)
- Reading Material
- Snorkeling Equipment
- Sturdy Bag for Hanging Food
- 50’ of Nylon Cord (innumerable uses...)
- Large Tarp (for Dining Fly – be sure to have plenty of rope/cord, stakes, etc. as needed to pitch in a variety of settings)

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