

Topic Page: [Canoes and canoeing](#)

Definition: **Canoe** from *The Encyclopedia of Tourism and Recreation in Marine Environments*

A boat that is open on top and pointed at the bow and stern. It is propelled by the user with a one-bladed paddle. Canoes can be used recreationally by tourists on bays and oceans. Like other boats, canoes have a hull, keel, gunwales, thwarts and a stern.

Related internet sources

Canadian Canoe Museum: <http://www.canoemuseum.net>

International Canoe Federation: <http://www.canoeicf.com>

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Summary Article: **canoe**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(kənō'), long, narrow watercraft with sharp ends originally used by most peoples. It is usually propelled by means of paddles, although sails and, more recently, outboard motors are also used.

The canoe varies in material according to locality and in design according to the use made of it. In North America, where horses were not generally used and where the interlocking river systems were unusually favorable, the canoe in its various types was highly developed. Where large logs were available, it took the form of the hollowed-out log, or dugout, especially on the N Pacific coast, where immense trees grew at the water's edge, where an intricate archipelago invited navigation in ocean waters, and where the tribes came to depend to a large extent upon sea life for their food supply. A semiseafaring culture developed there, and the great canoes of the Haida and Tlingit tribes, with high, decorated prows, capable of carrying 30 to 50 people, began to resemble the boats of Viking culture.

On the northern fringe of the American forest where smaller tree trunks were found and rapid rivers and many portages favored a lighter craft, the bark canoe dominated, reaching its highest development in the birchbark canoe. At portages this light canoe could be lifted on one's shoulders and easily transported. It was the birchbark canoe that carried such explorers as Jacques Marquette, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and David Thompson on their journeys and carried fur traders out to trade with Native Americans; thus it played an important part in early American history.

A third type of primitive canoe is that made from skins, found where trees are lacking. The bullboat of the Plains people, little more than a round tub made of buffalo hides stretched over a circular frame, was its crudest form. A much finer form is the kayak of the Eskimo, originally made of sealskin stretched over a frame constructed of driftwood or whalebone.

In the South Seas, canoes were developed for use on long voyages from island to island, and ingenious outriggers were developed to give stabilization to the canoe under sail. The double-bladed paddle—used in North America only by the Eskimo—is almost always in use on wide bodies of water affected by wind and tidal currents. The substitution of canvas for birch bark in making canoes is credited to the Oldtown or Penobscot in Maine; the canvas-covered wooden canoe is sometimes called the Oldtown canoe. All-wood canoes made of basswood or cedar, very popular in Canada, are sometimes called

Peterborough canoes after a canoe-making center. Plywood canoes made in Canada and elsewhere have also been popular.

The majority of canoes made today, however, are manufactured of a tough but light aluminum alloy. This type of canoe contains an air pocket in either end to ensure flotation. Modern canoes are also made of fiberglass, plastic, and even a hard-rubber nonsinkable compound. The sail used on the modern canoe is usually the triangular lug sail known as the lateen. The decked sailing canoe used for racing carries two and sometimes three sails; its navigator uses a sliding seat (sometimes called the monkey seat) on which he balances, frequently out over the water on either side, to prevent his craft from heeling over too far. This canoe, clocked at 16 knots or more, and the Samoan canoe (with an outrigger), exceeding 20 knots, were the fastest watercraft under sail until the advent of the catamaran.

See also canoeing.

See Quirke, T. T. , *Canoes the World Over* (1952).

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