

Canoe & Kayak Magazine's 2009 Beginner's Guide Issue Featuring the NRS 14' River Cataraft



RAFTING // GEAR

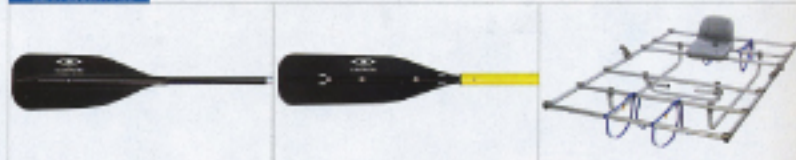
*RAFT RUNDOWN

CATARAFT

For those who don't have ready access to a team of paddlers, the cataraft offers an efficient downriver, gear-hauling option. Although two or four paddlers could paddle the dual tubes rigged to a central frame, catarrafts are most often rowed solo by a rafter using a pair of oars attached to the frame. **Pictured:** a mid-size cataraft like the NRS River Cat can handle plenty of overnight cargo and perform on serious whitewater with its sizable 25-inch-diameter, multi-chamber tubes.

NRS 14' RIVER CATARAFT (\$2,105 IN HYPALON, NRSWEB.COM)
L: 14'; W: 25" TUBES; 67 LBS

*GEAR ESSENTIALS



As a rafting beginner, don't invest in expensive paddles. They're the first thing to go should a passenger swim or a boat flip. That's why if you spend enough time on popular rivers, you're sure to find a durable, all-purpose, aluminum-shafted, plastic-bladed paddle. And that's all you need to get out on the water. **Pictured:** CAROLINE ECONOMY PADDLE, \$100, \$20.50, CAROLINEPADDLES.COM

When it's time to row your own boat, don't skimp on the oars. You need a solid set that can handle the inevitable abuse of transport and still allow you to keep on pushing every season. **Pictured:** Outblades have long relied on the basic, tempered-aluminum Carisle

oar (110 ounces) with removable 9-inch and 6.5-inch blades. CARISLE HAPPY OAR PADDLE, \$66.99, CARISLEPADDLES.COM

Now all you need is the frame to rig the oars to. Consider a frame you could use on both cataraft tubes and a raft, should you ever want to diversify your inflatable fleet and on-river skills. **Pictured:** NRS makes a universal frame that'll support cat frames with the requisite oar mounts and a high-back seat, plus breakdown rails for easy transport. NRS UNIVERSAL FRAME (480), NRSWEB.COM | L: 100"; W: 60"; 60 LBS



*RAFT RUNDOWN

Although carries can stake the claim to a classic form both historic and beautiful, it's the diverse inflatable armada that provides the modern and democratic means for giving most people their first rafting experience. Whether it's from a commercial outfit or a local inner-tube adventure, for raising camping gear to family reunions and then deflating the boat for the trip home, first-timers favor a few types of craft to stick from before they can blow and go.

INFLATABLE RAFT

The classic and versatile 14-foot raft is ideally suited for a group of four to six paddlers (plus the most experienced boatman or guide steering from the back chamber), leaving extra space between the thwart to rig day-hiking gear. **Pictured:** For nearly 25 years, Avon's top-selling Adventure has been known the world over as a classic, 14-foot whitewater performer, with a self-healing floor (pneumatically inflated), two thwarts, and a protective bottom layer of polyurethane fabric. AVON ADVENTURE (20.250) IS \$799.99 (NRSWEB.COM) | L: 14'; W: 7' (25.25" TUBES); 10 LBS

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two or four paddlers could paddle the dual tubes rigged to a central frame, catarrafts are most often rowed solo by a rafter using a pair of oars attached to the frame. **Pictured:** a mid-size cataraft like the NRS River Cat can handle plenty of overnight cargo and perform on serious whitewater with its sizable 25-inch-diameter, multi-chamber tubes. NRS 14' RIVER CATARAFT (20.250) IS \$2,105 (NRSWEB.COM) | L: 14'; W: 25" TUBES; 67 LBS

INFLATABLE KAYAK

Inflatable craft suitable for the rigors of prolonged whitewater are durable. Shamu pool toys don't cut it; are made of durable materials coated in either synthetic rubber (go with Hypalon) or PVC plastic. If you choose to go with an inflatable kayak, commonly known as an IK or sometimes a duck, make sure it's made of one of these materials. In leaving to paddle rivers and to control your own craft, it's better to start in a solo IK rather than worrying about being in the same pogo as a boat partner—there's a good reason tandem Iks are jokingly called "divorce boats." **Pictured:** consider Tribble's line of sturdy Iks with five-year warranties and hull designs to move you from first water to whitewater. TRIBBLE SERIES (20.000) IS \$1,999.99 (NRSWEB.COM) | L: 107"; W: 27" TUBES; 25 LBS