If you tuned in last week, you would have read Part 1 of this, a couple of posts on getting started in canoe and kayak camping. We looked at what sort of canoe or kayak is best for camping, the safety precautions you need to be mindful of, and what to wear for a day – or longer – out on the water.
In this blog, we'll look at how to pack your boat for camping, what sort of tents and shelters are best for this style of adventuring, and everything else you need for a fun and safe camping trip on the river, lake, and even the open sea.

Packing the boat



All the gear needed for a three-day kayak camping trip.

Personally, I only have 4, 8 and 13L dry bags, because I usually paddle a kayak. Kayaks have tapered spaces where gear is stored so by using these sizes I can squeeze my gear into small spaces easily. When I paddle a canoe I put the small bags in a kitbag of some form keeping my gear as a compact parcel. Much easier to keep track of if you flip the boat.

Cooking gear, food and water



The humble Jetboil is a fantastic stove to take on a kayak camping trip where space is limited. Provided you're happy to eat freeze-dried food.

As for food, the sort of stuff you take on a multi-day hiking trip is ideal for canoe and kayak camping. Freeze-dried meals, pre-packaged pastas and noodle dishes. So long as it's light and calorie-dense, it's worth considering. To make it that little more enjoyable, carry some fresh items for the first day or two – bacon and eggs for breakfast, anyone?

Personal touches



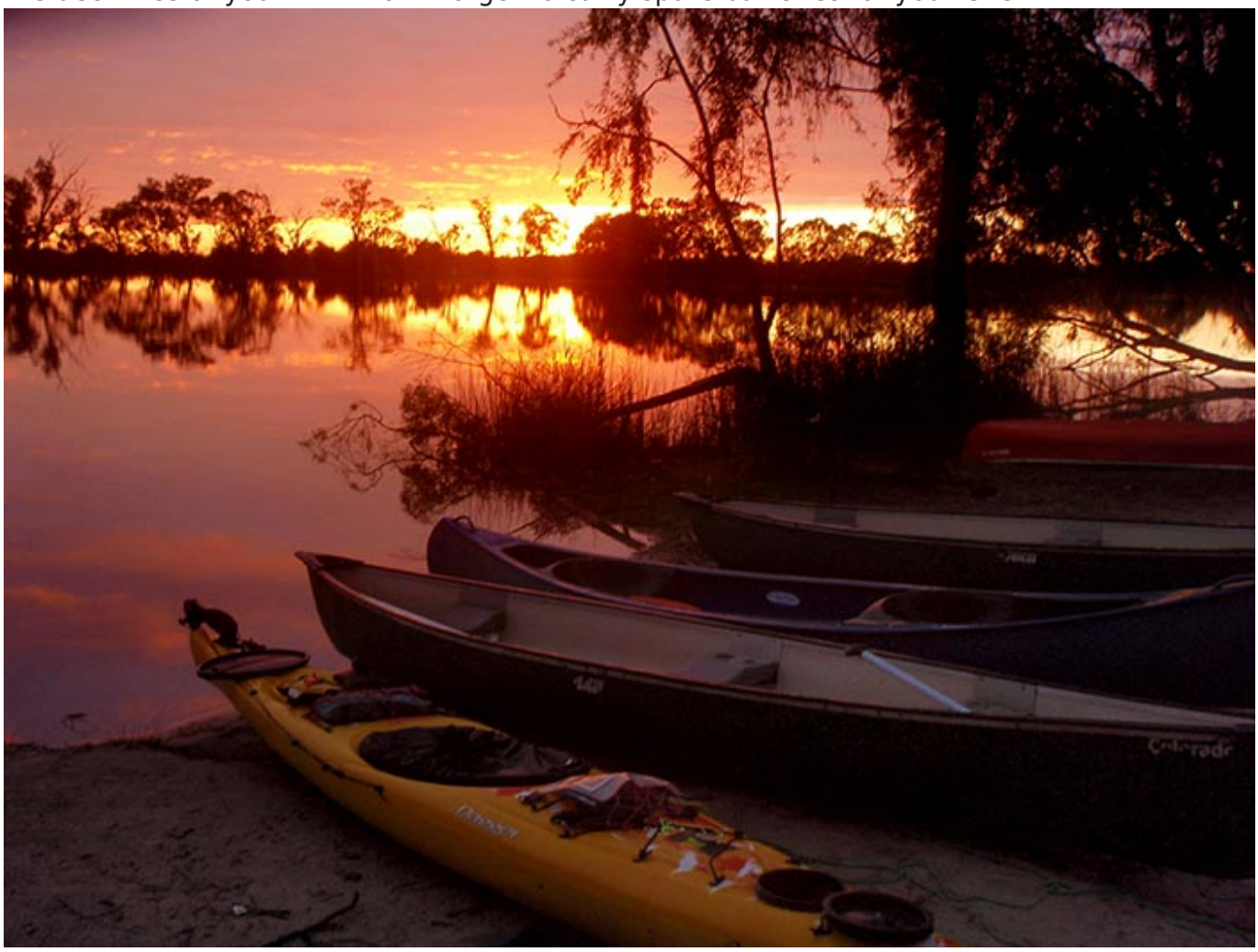
Repairs and spares

There is a core group of items that are needed for safe and effective travel. In terms of your canoe or kayak an often overlooked item is a spare paddle! Blades can be broken or paddles swallowed by obstacles on the river such as fallen trees if you are not careful.
In a canoe this can be easily stored on the bottom while in a kayak a split paddle can be secured under shock cords on the deck. A sponge should be carried to soak up water that has gathered in the bottom of your boat and also to clean out any mud that accumulates.
Running repairs to your craft can be done with a small repair kit containing at least duct tape and zip ties. If you don't have a multitool a Phillips head screwdriver is handy for retightening nuts and bolts.
The boat kit can be completed with rope to use as a painter to tie the boat to an anchor point or to enable it to be lined around or through an obstacle without the paddler on board and a separate one to tie your gear into a canoe.

Finding your way

Navigation is covered by maps sealed in a mapcase – even those deemed to be on waterproof paper, a good orienteering compass and backed up or supplemented by a GPS. The mapcase and compass can be clipped to decklines while the GPS can be clipped either to

the decklines or your PFD. Don't forget to carry spare batteries for your GPS.



How's this for a sunrise on Ral Ral Creek, north of Renmark?

Communication equipment

If you are paddling in areas such Chowilla you will need to give consideration to either hiring or buying a satellite phone for better coverage and/or carrying a PLB such as KTI Safety Alert. Personally, I consider a PLB an essential item to have when travelling by any means through the bush.

Nice, extras!

There a few little extras that add to the enjoyment and comfort of the trip. Firstly seating. As my body has got creakier I have found that a 3 or 4 legged stool is perfect for relaxing onshore. They fold into a very small bundle that can be slipped into the storage area of your kayak, under decklines or in the bottom of the canoe. It is simple, cheap and much appreciated. I have supplemented this by using an Oztrail Folding Aluminium Stool as a "table". It folds away nicely and usually I slip it under the deck of my kayak.
A camera is a way of saving great memories. If you have a small dedicated waterproof camera you can clip it to your PFD and get to it quickly when you want. This is a lot better than trying to use a phone that is in a case. A small pair of binoculars is also handy,

particularly if they are also waterproof.
There are many birds, monitor lizards and mammals you will encounter as you paddle along and to be able to see them through the binoculars adds something special to your experience. Finally for those with a bent for fishing a small kit will add enjoyment and possibly food to the journey for you.



Where to go from here?

You've made your choice between a canoe, kayak, or SOT. Then you've taken some paddling lessons. You have packed and waterproofed your equipment. Now, where do you go? Importantly, grab the chance and get out on the water. It is a unique and special experience that you can do whatever your age and experience. Happy paddling!