



Dear Traveler,

Thank you and congratulations on reserving your expedition with Vantage! Inside you'll find all the information regarding our optional kayaking programs for expedition cruises.

Is kayaking right for you? Please review the following information and requirements so you can make the proper decision:

1. The **Kayaking Preparation Notes** section describes what you can expect while kayaking, how you can best prepare yourself beforehand, *and* how to pack for this extraordinary adventure.
2. The **Kayaking Terms and Conditions** section details in plain language all the rules governing your booking and participation in kayaking, including our refund policy. You'll also find detailed information regarding the waiting list.
3. The **Frequently Asked Questions** section will offer answers to any additional questions!
4. Once you fill in all the information, please review and sign the **Kayaking Participation Statement** and email it to customer-care@vantage-travel.com.

In addition to these forms **ALL** passengers, whether participating in kayaking or not, are required to complete a **Medical Declaration Form**. You will receive this form from our Customer Care team approximately 12 weeks prior to your departure and you will be required to hand carry that form to the ship for embarkation.

Upon receiving your signed Participation Statement, Vantage will review it, confirm your booking, and collect payment.

If you're unable to check all the boxes on the **Kayaking Participation Statement** — or, if for any reason you decide that kayaking is not a good fit for you after all, you may withdraw from the program for a full refund of any fees paid.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office at 1-800-322-6677 with any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you aboard!

Happy travels,

Deirdre Dirkman
Vice President Worldwide Operations

Kayaking Preparation Notes

GO BOLDLY ON YOUR EXPEDITION CRUISE WITH KAYAKING

Enhance your journey with even more up-close discoveries and unforgettable experiences, while paddling in our top-quality kayaks with our expert Expedition Team members.

What are we all about?

Kayaking is a limited-availability adventure offered on select voyages aboard Vantage expeditions. Travelers have the unique opportunity to experience the thrill and serenity of kayaking in a guided paddling group. This is a genuine small-group experience that offers a uniquely memorable adventure.

Where are we going?

Kayaking is offered on our expedition voyages, giving travelers the chance to paddle in some of the most awe-inspiring environments on Earth. Kayaking normally takes place in calm and protected waters where we can experience breathtaking scenery and unique wildlife in a safe and responsible way.

When does it happen?

Travelers can participate during selected times, usually daily, depending on itinerary, weather, wind, and environmental conditions. ***Please note: Kayakers will paddle during announced landing times; therefore, shore visits might be reduced.***

Why try kayaking?

Kayaking is a great way to encounter the destinations you'll visit from a unique point of view, as well as emphasize exploration, fellowship, physical exercise, and serenity.

Who can sign up?

All adults who are in good health, with appropriate physical fitness and previous kayaking experience.

How do I join?

You can sign up for kayaking for an extra cost. Space is limited, and we recommend signing up at the time you reserve your voyage. ***The option can be added after booking, but travelers are required to reserve their spot 30 days before departure.***

What to expect on a kayaking adventure?

You'll encounter some of the most interesting, demanding, and rewarding exploration opportunities in the world. Our seasoned Expedition Team and professional guides are at your service to deliver the adventure of a lifetime. Please read on to learn what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

Get up-close in small-group experience

Kayaking is limited to a small group of 16 participants per voyage. Your safety and enjoyment will be enhanced by teamwork and mutual respect.

Uncompromised safety in remote lands

You'll be part of a guided paddling group in our exceptionally stable double kayaks, where you'll explore alongside qualified kayak guides. The guide-to-kayaker ratio will always be at least one to eight (1:8). Also, there will always be a dedicated safety Zodiac (rescue boat) accompanying your paddling group, with safety gear for a speedy recovery in the unlikely event that a kayak capsizes. Your kayak guides will give a comprehensive orientation before your first paddle and safety briefings throughout the voyage.

Quality equipment

We'll provide all the kayaking equipment and paddling gear you'll need for a safe and enjoyable time, including high-quality paddling suits, personal flotation devices, and other gear. Our double kayaks are extremely tough and stable, with the maximum hip width at 45 cm (17 in.) and recommended paddler weight of 70 to 110 kg (154 to 242 lbs.). Our rugged paddles are fixed at 225 cm, the ideal length for our relatively wide kayaks. The paddles are angle-adjustable to fit each guest's paddling stroke perfectly.

Explore in a variety of conditions

We will kayak in various regions, where there is always the possibility of rough weather and seas developing suddenly without warning, so paddling conditions will vary. Calm conditions are likely to exist in some locations we visit. But it's also possible to encounter strong winds and seas with moderate chop and swell. Water and air temperatures will vary, depending on the region. Kayaking will not take place if conditions seem to pose any risk.

A real workout

Paddling times and distances vary between voyages and excursions but expect to be on the water between one and three hours. Distances will depend on wildlife encounters and landscape sightings. Our purpose isn't to paddle a marathon, but the more we paddle, the more we see. Your guides will discuss anticipated times and distances prior to your excursion, but your adventure may end up being spontaneous, depending on conditions, weather, and wildlife.

Making choices during your expedition

Kayaking may be offered at the same time as other activities, including Zodiac cruising and shore landings. Occasionally, kayaking can be combined with these activities; other times, you'll have to pick one. Your kayak guides will hold pre-excursion meetings to help you choose your activity, with the aim that over the course of the voyage you'll achieve your preferred balance of shore landings, Zodiac cruises, and kayaking sessions.

Trustworthy paddling companions

All participants are required to have appropriate fitness, be in good health, and have previous kayaking experience. Participants are also expected to demonstrate team spirit and an attitude of cooperation. This is for the safety and enjoyment of everyone in the group. For more information, please see our **Kayaking Terms and Conditions**.

How to pack

Bring clothes that you'll wear under your provided paddling suit. For polar kayaking, appropriate inner layers for kayaking can also be used underneath your rain pants and parka while on deck, in the Zodiacs, or on shore, so, you do not necessarily need to pack the gear twice to go kayaking.

Dressing for the conditions

What you wear inside your paddling suit will depend on the conditions, which can vary substantially between destinations and excursions.

Cloud cover, wind, and precipitation can dramatically affect how it feels outside. However, keep in mind that you'll be engaged in a strenuous physical activity in a paddling suit that uses trapped air as insulation. So, the possibility of overheating and becoming wet (and then cold) from perspiration must also be considered. The layering principle should be observed, but please note that it will not be possible to add or remove layers while on the water and inside your paddling suit. For clothing requirements, please note that:

- Nylon, polyester, polypropylene, and merino wool are the preferred fabrics for paddling in polar regions. For warmer climates, make sure to wear breathable clothing.
- In polar regions, cotton is not appropriate due to poor heat retention when damp. Your base (regulation) layer should be moisture-wicking thermal long underwear (lightweight for bottoms, medium-weight for top). Your insulating layer should be comfortable non-cotton trousers/pants and a medium-weight, non-bulky, long sleeve fleece top, preferably without a hood

- The provided paddling suit will be your waterproof layer. Air trapped inside the suit will provide additional insulation

For your head

A head covering is recommended on all kayak excursions. A fleece or tight knit wool hat is essential for polar kayaking. Bring an extra in case one gets wet. In addition, a neck tube or balaclava will protect your face and neck against the cold polar winds. For Amazon kayaking, it is recommended that you wear a wide-brimmed hat or cap for UV protection. Donning and removing your headwear will be your primary method of thermoregulation while kayaking.

For your feet

Your feet will be dry in your paddling suits, so special socks aren't necessary.

For your hands

Our neoprene pogies should provide your hands with protection from the elements, without compromising your grip on the paddle shaft. In very cold and/or windy conditions, you may be more comfortable wearing fleece or wool glove liners inside your pogies. You should bring an extra pair of these in case your first pair gets wet. Durable dishwashing gloves with a tactile grip also make good liners that have the benefit of keeping your hands dry.

For your eyes and skin

UV (ultraviolet light) protection is essential while kayaking, even on cloudy days. Bring polarized sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat/cap, plenty of waterproof sunscreen, and lip balm.

Kayaking Terms and Conditions

Please read this document fully and carefully. Your participation in kayaking is conditional upon your agreement to the provisions herein.

I. Making your reservation

Kayaking is filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so we recommended you book your spot at the time you book your voyage. You are welcome to request a spot after booking your voyage, but it will be subject to availability. With the exception of those joining the waiting list and last-minute bookings, payment for kayaking is due no later than the time of final cruise payment. The fee for kayaking is refundable in some cases (see Section XVI below).

II. Kayaker statement

To confirm your reservation, you need to complete and submit the **Kayaking Participation Statement** indicating that you meet the requirements established for the safety and enjoyment of all participants (please see Section VI below). After requesting your spot, you have 30 days to submit the **Kayaking Participation Statement**. If you don't submit it in that time, you risk forfeiting your spot. With the exception of last-minute bookings, you are required to submit the **Kayaking Participation Statement** *before* joining the vessel.

III. Medical Information Form

If you have any medical conditions listed in Section 1 of the **Medical Information Form**, you must get a doctor's statement indicating that you're able to safely engage in kayaking, and that your medical condition(s) will not affect your participation. Please use our **Kayaking Preparation Notes** as a reference for what your participation in kayaking will entail. Your kayak guides will have access to your **Medical Information Form**. Prior to commencement of any kayaking activities, you're required to declare to your kayak guides any medical issues, conditions, problems, or illnesses you may be experiencing.

IV. Confirmation Letter

You'll receive a confirmation letter upon receipt and review of your **Kayaking Participation Statement**. Please be aware that possession of this letter does not necessarily guarantee your suitability for participating in kayaking.

V. Refusal of Participation

Travelers who do not meet the membership requirements in Section VI may pose an unacceptable safety risk to themselves and others and are therefore asked not to join kayaking. Your kayak guides and Expedition Leader will have the ultimate right and responsibility to judge your suitability for participation.

Please be aware that you may be refused the right to participate if it is deemed that your participation would expose you, your fellow paddlers, or your guides to an unacceptable level of risk to safety. The judgment of the responsible staff on board the ship will be final.

If you are refused participation in kayaking before commencement of kayaking activities, you'll be issued a full refund of your fee, but we will not otherwise be liable.

VI. Limitation of Participation

Your kayak guides have the right to limit your participation in kayaking for reasons of safety, as in Section VII. Based upon the degree to which you meet the requirements in Section VI and/or upon your proficiency as observed by your guides, you may be refused the right to participate in certain kayaking sessions as dictated by

location, weather, paddling conditions, or other factors that may increase the safety risk posed by your participation. If it is determined before commencement of kayaking activities that you may not be fit for some of the kayaking locations and conditions that may be encountered on the course of the voyage, you'll be advised accordingly and given a chance to withdraw from the activity for a full refund of your kayak fee. If you choose to continue with the activity, you'll not be entitled to a refund if you are not able to participate in any/all kayaking sessions.

VII. Your Responsibilities

At all times while kayaking, whether on the water or on land:

- You must not behave in an unsafe or disruptive manner
- You must not be intoxicated
- You must comply with any and all instructions given by your kayak guides
- You must be respectful of your fellow participants

If you do not uphold these responsibilities, or if your participation is deemed to increase the group's risk to safety or to be a detriment to the success or enjoyment of the group, your kayak guides have the right to limit or revoke your right to participate at their discretion.

The onboard staff's decision is final. No refund will be issued if the limitation or revocation of your right to participate is based upon your failure to uphold your responsibilities.

VIII. Additional Responsibilities

If you wish to participate in kayaking activities on excursions where it is offered, you must:

- Attend pre-excursion information and safety meetings held by your kayak guides
- Declare any condition (e.g. fatigue, hangover, seasickness, sore muscles, illness, etc.) that may affect your performance before each kayaking session
- Wear the paddling suit and life jacket provided for your safety while kayaking
- If you bring such gear of your own, it must be approved by your kayak guides
- You must alert your kayak guides immediately if you ever notice a problem with your kayak, equipment, or any paddling gear you are using

IX. Kayaking Opportunities

The onboard staff will determine which excursions are appropriate for kayaking based on observed and expected conditions, site suitability, and other factors. Kayaking is not intended to take place during every excursion. A reasonable expectation would be around three to five kayaking opportunities on your voyage, but there are no guarantees. No refund will be issued if we are unable to provide you with a full kayaking experience due to weather, ice conditions, medical emergency, or any other circumstances beyond our control.

X. Your Experience

We will do our best to give you an unforgettable kayaking experience. However, our ability to do so is heavily dependent on weather and other factors outside of our control, so we do not guarantee any outcome with regard to location, wildlife, weather, ice, or anything else.

XI. Non-Transferability

Once on board the vessel, your spot in kayaking or the waiting list cannot be transferred to any other person. Also, your spot cannot be shared with any other person(s).

XII. Emergency Evacuation Insurance

You must ensure that your emergency evacuation and medical insurance coverage does not *exclude* adventure activities like kayaking. You may be asked to provide proof of coverage. Regardless, you'll be held fully responsible for any and all medical and evacuation expenses incurred as a result of insufficient insurance coverage.

XIII. Waiting List

If the maximum number of participants allowed in your voyage has already booked (that is, if the kayaker list is full) at the time of your request, you can add your name to a waiting list. All the terms, conditions, and requirements in these terms and conditions apply to the waiting list. So, before joining the vessel, guests on the waiting list must be confirmed by submitting a signed **Kayaking Participation Statement**, but you are not required to pay the kayak fee until you move off the waiting list. Your position on the waiting list will be based upon the date you book your spot. As space in the program becomes available, you'll progress in order of your waiting list position. If you are still on the waiting when your voyage begins, you should still attend the kayaking orientation. If space becomes available before the commencement of kayaking activities, travelers on the waiting list will have the chance to take the spots in order of their position on the waiting list. Once kayaking activities commence, the kayaker list is finalized, and no additions or substitutions shall be made.

XIV. Refunds

Even if you have been confirmed, you have the option, at any time before commencement of kayaking activities, to withdraw from the program for a full refund of any fees paid. You'll also receive a refund if, before commencement of kayaking activities, you are refused participation. If your participation is denied after commencement of kayaking activities, you may not be entitled to a refund depending on the circumstances as per Section IX. If your participation is limited for any reason, you'll be issued neither a full nor a partial refund.

XV. Document Version

This document may be changed without notice. In case of any discrepancy, the most recent version of the terms and conditions at the time of your voyage will apply.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is kayaking?

Kayaking is an activity offered on select voyages with Vantage. Participants have the opportunity to experience the thrill and tranquility of kayaking in a guided paddling group. Kayaking is a genuine small-group experience and a memorable adventure in a unique and stunning setting.

How amazing is kayaking?

It's totally amazing! Words are insufficient to describe it. Whether in polar regions or in the Amazon, these excursions offer some of the most interesting, demanding, and rewarding kayaking opportunities on the planet. If you enjoy kayaking, then adding these activities to your voyage is an experience not to be missed.

Is kayaking right for me?

Kayaking is designed for recreational kayakers ready to challenge themselves in an extreme environment. With adequate preparation, just about anyone possessing a reasonable level of fitness and coordination, a positive and flexible attitude, and a passion for real adventure will find value in the program.

How many people can join?

Kayaking is limited to 16 participants per voyage.

Is kayaking safe?

With safety as our top priority, we have a comprehensive risk management strategy that exceeds industry standards. An important component of this strategy is our policy requiring that kayakers meet certain fitness, health, experience, age, and language requirements. Please note that the polar regions are some of the most remote and inhospitable environments on Earth, and that kayaking in these waters is an inherently risky activity.

What is the fitness requirement?

Kayaking is a physical activity that requires strength and stamina. Therefore, participants are expected to be reasonably fit. As a practical test, make sure you have the strength and agility to lunge yourself out of a pool without the use of a ladder, and that you can swim.

What is the health requirement?

Good health is necessary for your safety and enjoyment. If you have any of the medical conditions or problems listed in our **Medical Information Form**, please request a statement from your doctor indicating that you are able to safely engage in kayaking activities.

How much previous kayaking experience do I need?

All participants are expected to come with at least some relevant kayaking experience. By "relevant" we do not necessarily mean experience kayaking on the sea or the Amazon. Rather we simply mean experience in a kayak, even in fresh water.

What if I have no previous kayaking experience?

Then, you'll need to acquire some before you join us. If you are reasonably fit and in good health, you should be able to meet the experience requirement quickly. The quickest and most effective way to gain experience and skills is to take kayaking lessons.

What is the minimum age allowed?

Kayaking participants must be at least 16 years old at the time of voyage.

How often will we go kayaking?

The number of kayaking opportunities will depend on the itinerary, weather, and conditions. A reasonable expectation would be three to five times, but there are no guarantees.

Will I get the chance to experience ice from a kayak or get close to icebergs and glaciers while in polar regions?

On most of our polar voyages, ice is encountered, especially in Antarctica. However, be aware that ice is not encountered in the Falkland Islands and only rarely around South Georgia Island. If you are interested in seeing large icebergs, then the Antarctic Peninsula, as well as Greenland, will likely have what you are looking for.

Despite their apparent serenity and repose, icebergs and glaciers present the most formidable hazard encountered by polar kayakers. Therefore, there will be strict limits on how close you are allowed to approach them. Staying safe around the ice is a matter of careful judgment, which will be the responsibility of your kayak guides.

You'll be required to stay with your paddling group and obey all instructions given by your kayak guides. That said, you do not have to be very close to these features to appreciate their immensity and otherworldly beauty. You'll get close enough!

Will I have close encounters with wildlife in a kayak?

Kayakers do not necessarily get closer to wildlife than other expedition travelers. Kayakers simply tend to have more intimate and personal experiences. Kayakers are required to follow IAATO/AECO guidelines concerning distances to wildlife. **For Arctic kayaking:** Under no circumstances will we approach a polar bear in the water.

Will I be able to paddle off on my own?

You are required to stay with your group. When deemed safe by your guides, you may be given leave to venture farther away from the group. On other occasions, "quiet time" will be established so that everyone can appreciate the peace and quiet of their surroundings.

What kind of paddling conditions might we face?

Calm conditions are likely to exist in some of the protected polar bays and fjords we visit and along the Amazon river. However, it is also possible to encounter strong winds and seas with moderate chop and swell, and water and air temperatures will vary. Kayaking will not be initiated if conditions seem to pose any risk. In polar regions, there is always the possibility of rough weather developing suddenly and without warning while you are out on the water.

What kind of kayaks will we use?

Participants use Prijon Excursion EVO double kayaks with rudder steering. These tough, stable kayaks are ideal for occasional rough conditions and paddling through brash ice.

Will I be able to take photos from my kayak?

Kayaking will give you a unique perspective from which to capture incredible photos of scenery and wildlife. You'll be provided with a small waterproof dry bag, so you can take your compact digital camera with you while kayaking. Large DSLR cameras are cumbersome to carry, difficult to keep dry inside a kayak, and therefore not recommended.

If you have a small waterproof camera, consider bringing a pole attachment that allows you to operate it underwater while keeping your hands dry. You'll have many chances to take photos from your kayak, but keep in mind that the best use of your camera will be to capture magnificent moments as they come. There will be plenty of time to organize professional photo opportunities during your voyage while on ship, on shore, or during your Zodiac cruise.

What is the best time to go kayaking in Antarctica?

Each part of the Antarctica season has something special to offer. The early summer months (November and December) see the most ice. The late summer months (January and February) are the best to see whales. Inclement weather in March can make for less frequent kayaking, but the whale watching is at its prime. Seals and penguins can be encountered all season.

What is the best time to go kayaking in the Arctic?

Kayaking in the Arctic is equally amazing all season long (May through September).

Do I need to get special evacuation insurance to join kayaking?

All passengers must purchase travel medical insurance, with emergency evacuation and repatriation. We recommend coverage of at least **USD \$200,000**. *Travelers participating in kayaking must ensure that their policy does not exclude kayaking.* Travel medical insurance, including emergency evacuation and repatriation covering kayaking, is included on Arctic voyages (if you wish to purchase your own, we recommend a coverage of at least **USD \$150,000**, and you must ensure that it does not exclude kayaking).

Kayaking Participation Statement

To confirm your spot in our kayaking tour, please complete this form. You can fill it out and sign it electronically, then return it to us via email at customercare@vantagetravel.com. Or, just fill it out manually and photograph or scan the form, then email it to us. If your party includes more than one kayaker, we kindly ask each kayaker to complete their own form. This will help us ensure that all kayakers meet the requirements established for the safety and enjoyment of all tour participants.

Upon receiving and reviewing of your statement, and based on availability, we will send you your confirmation letter.

Participant's full name:

Voyage name and date:

Please check the boxes to indicate that the following statements are true:

- I have received and read the **Kayaking Preparation Notes** and the **Kayaking Terms and Conditions**.
- I have a level of physical fitness appropriate for kayaking, including the ability to swim.
- I am in sufficiently good health for kayaking.
- I have previous experience in a kayak and at least basic paddling skills OR I will obtain kayak experience and basic paddling skills prior to the start of my voyage.
- I will be 18 years of age or older at the time of my participation in kayaking.
- I have ensured that my emergency evacuation insurance policy does not exclude kayaking.

I am ready for this adventure!

Signature: _____

Date: _____