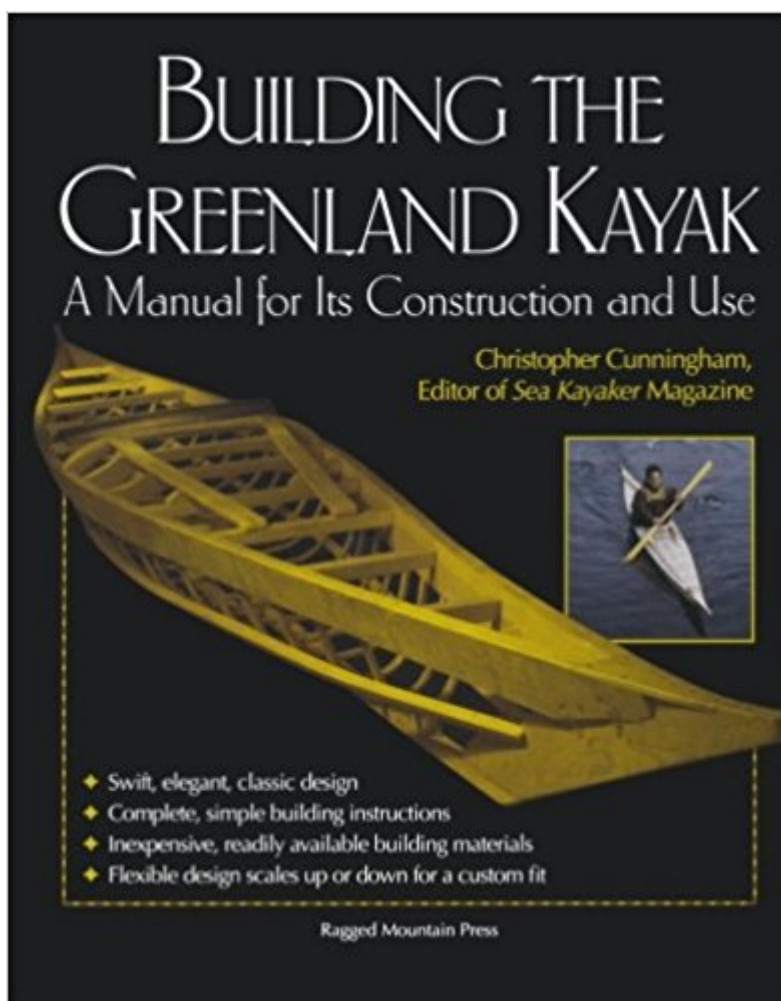


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# Building The Greenland Kayak : A Manual For Its Contruction And Use



## Synopsis

This step-by-step guide to building a lashed-frame, fabriccovered sea kayak is both a means to a sleek, fast, universally admired boat and an excellent introduction to woodworking and boatbuilding for hobbyists. The Inuit design scales up or down to fit the paddler and can be built using \$150 worth of hardware-store materials, a few basic tools, and a minimal investment of time. Also included: plans for a low-volume version designed for Eskimo rolling; an especially stable version for children; and discussions of kayaking equipment, paddling, and rolling techniques.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Take to the water in style for less than \$300 and a few weekends and evenings of work. Simplicity, elegance, performance, and speed: these are the hallmarks of the Greenland kayak. Its low profile minimizes windage, and its narrow beam makes it well behaved in rough water and fast. Despite its ancient origins, the Greenland kayak is lively, versatile, and responsive even by modern standards. Building the Greenland Kayak leads you step-by-step through the process of crafting your own lashed-frame, fabric-covered, custom-fitted Greenland kayak, using inexpensive, easy-to-find materials and common woodworking tools. Master boatbuilder Christopher Cunningham provides plenty of tips and pointers to help you build a kayak that is strong, flexible, and perfectly scaled to your dimensions. Great for the accomplished boatbuilder and the novice alike, this easy-to-use manual includes: Easy-to-follow building instructions accompanied by hundreds of photos. Complete lists of all the tools and materials you'll need. Detailed primers in lumber milling, fastening, rib

bending, and measuring Additional instructions for making a Greenland paddle, paddling clothing, float bags, skegs, and more Pointers on paddling skills, kayak rolling, and children's kayaks

Christopher Cunningham has been the editor of Sea Kayaker magazine since 1989 and has been building kayaks since 1979. He has taught Greenland kayak construction at the WoodenBoat School and has built scale models of traditional kayaks for the Alaska State Museum. His Greenland kayak construction and paddling skills have been documented in several videos, and he has lectured on and demonstrated those skills in North America and Europe.

Christopher Cunningham writes a detailed explanation of every phase of the build including paddle making and paddling! Lots of tips for processes and jigs. When the dialogue becomes too complicated suddenly a picture appears. Seriously I think I would do as well with just pictures but we all don't learn the same. This book stays in the shop with you while building as a useful reference. Apparently Mr. Cunningham has built many of this style kayaks and his understanding of the process shows in the writing. He is noticeably concise thus "No Fluff"

I was searching for a build guide or set of plans to build myself a kayak that I would be proud to be seen in and paddle. After a lot of searching and posting questions on Kayak Build forums I pretty soon discovered that "Building the Greenland Kayak" by Chris Cunningham is one of the most informative and successful guides you can get. So I bought the book and followed along, like any instruction manual there are parts that you don't get the first time, maybe even the third time, but all I can emphasize is that you re-read that section, you'll get it in the end. For me, I got confused in the section to do with rib sizing, I just did not get the instructions the first time I read it. This book takes you step by step on how to re-create an authentic and very pleasing kayak, both to paddle and to look at. My build took me a year and I didn't skin my kayak the way Chris did, I followed a more new age method using ballistic nylon and a 2 part polyurethane resin which worked fabulously. The result is a kayak that starts conversations, gets warm welcomes in any boating circles and usually draws attention at any kayak put in or venue. So if you are shy, buy a plywood kit or a plastic kayak, don't build one of these. The wood working skills needed to complete this build aren't cabinet maker quality, but you need to be able to plane to a line, cut straight lines and make good joints. If you can cut mortise and tenon joints well by hand you'll have all that you need. Hand power tools are not essentials, but well recommended and all I can stress is that you take your time. The most time consuming piece being the rib cutting, soaking and steaming. Wood varies incredibly

when it comes to steaming and soaking, what works for one person may and most likely will not work for another. So be patient, I spent nearly 4 months on getting the ribs right and I'm pleased I took the time and didn't rush or settle for anything less than a near perfectly steamed rib. Make sure you read the book from cover to cover before you start and keep notes for when you build the next one. The result is a kayak that will paddle very well in the sea and in cross winds, it'll be comfortable, and you'll be the envy of all your kayaking friends. It's well worth the time and effort, you won't be sorry when you get to take the first paddle. The kayak will be light, easy to carry and will handle very well. You'll be very happy you built it and you'll probably end up building more than one. Update - It's now 4 years since I built my Greenland kayak following the instructions in Chris's book. I still am so pleased when I paddle it, as nothing else paddles so effortlessly and I still get lots of comments from people who see me with it or in it where ever I am.

I purchased the Kindle version. I love my Kindle, and the iPad kindle app, but I would in hindsight have preferred to buy the paper version. As a book, this is perfect. If you wish to build a boat, and you find the Greenland kayak seductive, this book will place all the tools you need in your hands. The outcome will be excellent. The descriptions are clear, and the process is elaborated in all necessary detail. As a kindle book, however, I found that the illustrations were just that little bit less legible. Looking for a precise picture of how the knots are tied, for example, left me in the dark. Trial and error will work, but I found that you really need a hard copy to work with. Using a kindle in the workshop just will not do. You could - and will - build in steps, so you can read, place the book away and get to work, and return for a cup of tea and re-read. That would work. As a simple read, if you are interested and want to find out more, the kindle version will be perfect for you.

After almost a year of work I am now the proud owner of a West Greenland kayak, a West Greenland paddle, custom-made fore and aft flotation bags (made with heat-sealable nylon), and a tuilik, or paddling jacket; now, the remarkable thing is I made all these things myself! Rarely do I write an book review where I give a book a 5 star rating without any reservations; this, however, is one of those books. Now, let's get down to business. The most pressing questions you ought to be asking if you're considering building this baby are 1) Can I really build a kayak using this book? 2) Do I need any other kayak-building literature? and 3) How long will this take me? Yes, you really can build a West Greenland kayak using this book and no--although additional sources may be helpful, they aren't required. The answer to the third question is a bit trickier. I spent 400-500 hours (maybe more), but keep in mind that I had no previous woodworking experience. If you're somewhat

handy with wood/crafts, I can see the potential for a shorter time period. I have a complaint, however with the back cover of this book which talks about "a few weekends and a few evenings of work." Well, this estimate is not only overly optimistic, it's just plain false. Okay, let's get back to the book...Cunningham writes in a fluid style rather than a clearly itemized manner. Those who are used to following numbered instructions which accompany diagrams may find this confusing, but I found it to work great. The perfect balance of detail and conciseness is given, and the photos which accompany the text have been carefully selected to highlight critical steps in the process (the photos are in black and white, which sacrifices clarity a little). Although the book can be confusing in certain areas, building a Greenland kayak can be pretty confusing too--not, in my opinion, because it is "anthropometric", but because a kayak is a 3 dimensional object! Also, I never fully understood the text until I started building, and Cunningham talks about this in his introduction. Another remarkable thing about this book is its scope--it doesn't stop after teaching you how to build the kayak, but continues to teach you how to make the accessories (paddling jacket, spray skirt, hunting float, etc.), and all this is topped off with instruction for how to use the kayak! It talks about entering the kayak, the two main paddling strokes, 5 or 6 different types of Eskimo rolls, and more. Amazing book. My only complaints are minor. The section on how to make the tuiik was very confusing; I think it was intended for people who have some prior sewing experience. Second, the book can be a little detail-oriented, which makes it easy to lose track of the big picture. I would have found it helpful if a summarizing overview was given at the beginning of each chapter before the details commenced. Bottom line: beautiful boat, beautiful book. Well done Mr. Cunningham.

Very interesting but not an easy week-end project it would take many week-ends to complete.

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