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Sports & Recreation

Kayak Touring and Camping
Cecil Kuhne
Stackpole Books
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Canoe and Kayak magazine contributing editor and paddling enthusiast Kuhne has amassed an impressive array of instruction and information for neophytes of the increasingly popular sport of kayak touring. Fledgling kayak tourists should find this book to be a worthy reference in planning their first overnight voyage; more advanced boaters may find it to be a bit below them in terms of technical instruction, but a good checklist and information font nevertheless.

The book is well organized into three sections on equipment, technique and camping skills, each of which contains chapters on minutia that can make or break a safe and enjoyable trip on any body of water—from a small river to the ocean and nearly everything in between. The illustrations are merely adequate, while Kuhne's clear, concise and fluent descriptions of gear and techniques are ultimately the more illustrative component of the book. Numerous "it-happened-to-me" contributions from other adventuring boaters pop up throughout the book, adding a dimension of entertainment to a primarily utilitarian text. If readers of this book cannot find what they need to know about kayaks, kayak touring, or camping (as may be the case in the rather sparse chapter on wind, waves and currents), there are certainly enough references and contacts scattered throughout the book to point them in the right direction.

Reading a book on boating, however, is no substitute for actual boating. Beginning kayak tourists must understand that safely negotiating white water rivers or the ocean requires experience, and the company of more experienced paddlers on such ventures is usually necessary. Still, Kuhne's guide orients well, leaving it up to readers to write their own chapters on getting outfitted and going for it.

David Speas