

Private Instruction and tours Page:

A little about us and why we are offering private instruction

In essence, OLTOA is a Maine-based train the trainer organization that specializes in paddle sports. We offer customized staff trainings, and American Canoe Association Instructor Certification Workshops in Canoe, Kayak Touring and Stand-Up Paddle Boarding. Most often we travel to our customer's home base of operation to deliver our programs. We are willing to travel almost anywhere.

The majority of our customers are professional guides, outfitters, summer camp counselors, park rangers, outdoor educators, and scout leaders. In other word, serious outdoor enthusiasts who often have their own equipment and work from a base of operations. We travel to those locations and train staff on site, or they send their staff to Maine, and we create the experience here.

Over the past decade or so, especially after the pandemic hit, we have been hired by individuals, couples, and families to provide private trips/tours and instruction. Because this has been so well received, we have decided to start marketing these opportunities.

Our instructors have all started as outdoor enthusiasts before they became outdoor professionals. Because they are so passionate about what they do, they make excellent choices for offering private instruction and experiences.

Our customers often get comfortable with one of our team members and they request that same team member year and after year. Some of our customers have done trips or courses with us for over 15 years, others for generations.

How this works:

Let us say that you have taken up paddling as sport. Perhaps you have taken a group lesson from a local outfitter, enjoyed the group experience, and now you would like to focus on enhancing your skills even further. Or maybe you and your family are looking for a personalized, outdoor experience.

All you have to do is contact us and tell us your goals. We likely have an instructor on staff that can help you. If you don't have a specific goal but wish to enhance your skills as a paddler or an outdoor educator, we can help you focus.

Why choose private instruction?

Many people enjoy having one -on - one personal instruction and the opportunity for individual coaching.

You get to learn at your own pace. Whether you enjoy a fast paced learning environment or a more relaxed, learning experience, we have an instructor for you.

Outcome- based learning: We start with the end in mind. We set realistic expectations, and we work with you to achieve your goals.

You are the only one in the class. You have no one else that you are waiting for and no one else who you have to keep up with. It's all about you and your experience.

In today's world, due to the pandemic, many of us would like to have one on one instruction to minimize the number of people that we come into contact with.

At OLTOA, we believe in vaccinations and at the time of writing this, all of our instructors are fully vaccinated and boosted.

We also offer Private Trips & Tours

We ask you about your experience, about the type of trip you would like, what kinds of foods you can and cannot eat (If food is part of your experience) and if this is going to be designed as a vacation, a skills course or a combination of both.

People are requesting private tours for family and close friends now more than ever due to C19 and its variants

In all cases, we run our programs where we function as a team. During our trip everyone carries food, gear, & boats, helps out with meal prep, and does dishes. We feed you well, lead you to amazing places and share our knowledge and passion for our sport.

Things to know:

Private instruction works best when it is a one- on -one experience.

If you do wish to have private instruction for more than one person, it is helpful if you both come to the program with about the same skill level and the same goals. Much of the experience will need to move at the skill of the least experienced person.

To get the maximum benefit from the experience, it sometimes makes sense to book two different private lessons: One for the least experienced person and one for the most experienced person.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where do we do the private lesson?

A: If you have a place of preference then we will work with you to use that place, just as long as your instructor deems that the place would help facilitate a safe and positive learning environment.

If you do not have a place of preference, your instructor will choose a place that they feel best will facilitate this environment.

Q: Who provides the equipment and transportation?

A: Most of our customers provide their own equipment and transportation to the meeting place. If you are flying to Maine and need to rent a vessel and/or a dry suit, please let us know in advance. We will try to be helpful, flexible, and work with you to get your needs met.

Q: Is private instruction expensive?

A: Compared to group lessons, private instruction can be costly. How much a given lesson or experience costs depends on how far we have to travel, what equipment is needed, etc. Please understand that the instructor has to create a lesson plan for you, find the ideal location, and prepare for unforeseen circumstances. So for a 3 hour lesson your instructor may have more than 8 hours of time invested.

Please contact us for a free consult and quote

Q: Why would someone be willing to pay more for private instruction?

A: Please see "Why Choose Private Instruction" at the top of the page.

Q: When is it too early to book a lesson or trip?

A: It is never too early to book a trip. We are taking reservations as much as 2-3 years out.

Q: What kinds of things do people wish to learn in private instruction?

A: People have come to us for private lessons and trips to learn everything from basic to advanced skills. Here are a few examples:

How do I plan a canoe trip on the Allagash River in Maine?

How to plan a wilderness canoe trip anywhere

learn river reading and canoe handling in class 1 and class 2 whitewater.

How to read a topo map and use a compass

How to read a nautical chart and factor in variation when using their deck mounted compass

How to learn to roll a kayak

How to prevent capsize using support strokes such as braces and sculling

How to enhance the turning ability of their vessels (Be able to make sharper turns using edging techniques)

How to do effective pivot turns on a SUP

How to rescue a capsized canoe or kayak and get a paddling partner back into a canoe If they have fallen out.

Thank you for looking into Private Instruction with OLTOA. Please plan ahead and try to book your experience well in advance. At the same time, if you want a lesson next week, it never hurts to contact us and see if we can help you.

We love sharing our sport and we look forward to hearing from you!