

## Canoe Fact Sheet

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- The canoe is regarded as one of the most ingenious inventions. It was developed out of necessity as Aboriginal people used Canada's many waterways for transportation.
- The canoe was not used nearly as much on the plains as it was throughout the rest of Canada.
- The birchbark canoe is probably the most well known of canoe types
- The birchbark canoe was not made solely out of birch, white cedar and spruce trees were also used in construction.
- The birchbark canoe came in many shapes and sizes that reflected the different Aboriginal groups constructing them
- It is said that Champlain was the first European to recognize the ingenuity of the canoe around 1603. The Algonquin crafted canoes were the first that he encountered.
- The Algonquin canoes were very light and speedy. They often ranged in size from one man canoes to transport canoes that were about 5 meters long.
- From the design of the Algonquin canoes, the French fur traders developed their own style of canoes known as Canot du Maitre meaning Montreal Canoe. This was a large canoe used on larger waterways. They also developed the smaller Canot du Nord, meaning North Canoe, which was used on smaller waterways.
- The Canot du Maitre could carry a crew of 8-12 men and their provisions, not to mention more than 4 tones of cargo. If you paddled this canoe at 45 strokes per minute you would travel 9 km an hour.
- The Canot du Nord was a smaller more manageable canoe as it carried 4-6 men and 1 ½ tones of cargo.
- The onset of the fur trade era, brought the importance of the canoe into a new light. Canoes became the primary means for transporting furs and traders.
- The demand for transportation canoes was a benefit for Aboriginal people as they were employed to develop the canoes. However, the demand continued to increase and the first canoe building factory was established in 1750 at Trois-Rivières. The new canoes became even bigger.