



# Fjord Explorer *Additional Instructions*

*These instructions are intended as a supplement to the standard Alpacka Raft Manual. The information in the standard manual also pertains to your Fjord Explorer.*

Congratulations on your purchase of the Fjord Explorer! The “Explorer” is our largest and most versatile boat. You will find that the Explorer has the fastest top speed of all our boats and that, when rowed, it maintains speed more efficiently than any other boat we produce.

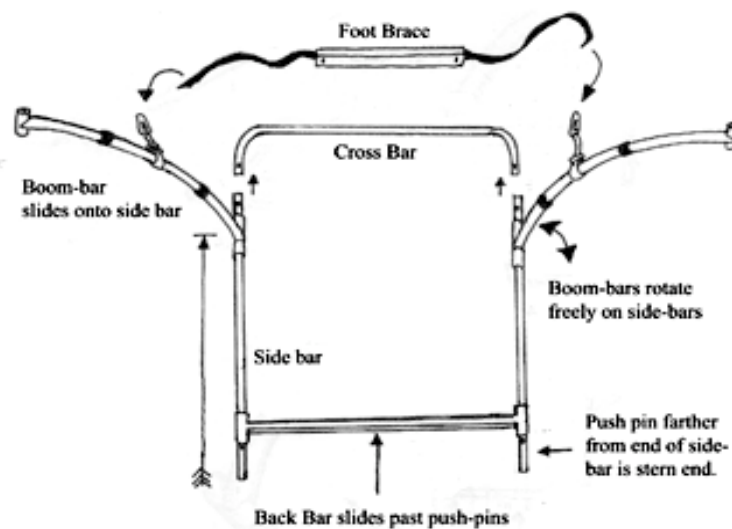
Your Explorer’s rowing system is designed to be lightweight and packable, first and foremost. *The Fjord Explorer’s oars and oarframe aren’t designed for whitewater and other very high stresses. For demanding uses, we strongly recommend using one of our whitewater kayak paddles.*

## 1. Assembly Instructions.

### Oarframe Assembly

Assembling your oarframe isn’t entirely intuitive at first. Like the Inflation Bag, the oarframe is designed for light weight, performance, and long-term utility – so a little head-scratching is normal when you first put it together. Your oarframe has 9 basic parts:

- **2 Side Bars.** Non-coated aluminum.
- **1 Cross-Bar.** Crescent-shaped black bar.
- **1 Back-Bar.** I-shaped black bar.
- **2 Boom-Bars.** Black curved bars with perpendicular sleeves on each end.
- **2 Oarlocks.** Hook-shaped aluminum pins.
- **1 Foot-Brace.** White synthetic bar with webbing straps.



**Step 1: Attach Side-Bars to the Cross-Bar.** Insert aluminum side-bars into the black cross-bar, as depicted. The end of the side-bar with the push-pin closer to the end is the correct end to be inserted.

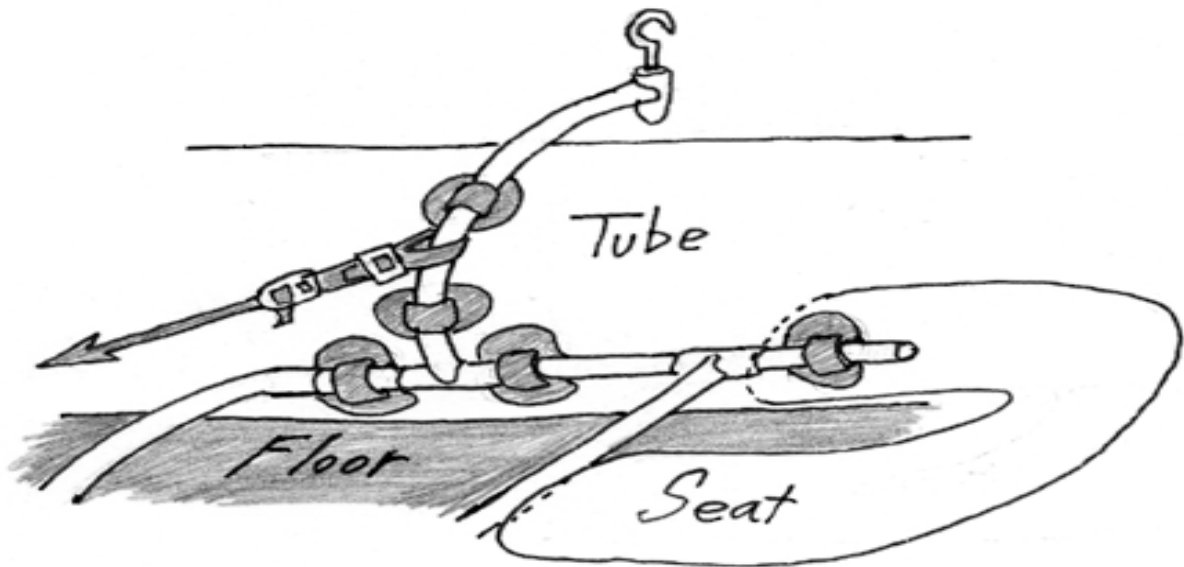
**Step 2: Add the Boom-Bars.** Slide the boom-bars onto the side-bars. Make sure the boom-bars point outwards from the frame, as drawn. The boom-bars will be loose on the side-bars, free to rotate. The boat tubes will support them.

**Step 3: Add the Back-Bar.** Slide the back-bar onto the ends of side-bars. It may require some force to bring the side-bars into alignment to do this. Slide the back-bar past the push-pins. The frame is now ready to be put into the raft.

**Step 4: Connect the Foot Brace:** Thread the straps on the foot brace into the small buckles attached to each boom bar. The foot brace is an important part of your rowing system. In addition to helping you generate power, the foot brace prevents rotational stress from focusing the weld at the boom-bar – side-bar junction, which can damage the weld when rowing with great force.

**Step 5: Put the Frame in the Raft:** Push the frame down into the center of the inflated. Let the boom-bars wrap around the side tubes of the raft.

**Step 6: Lash Down the Frame:** There are currently 5 attachment points on each side of the raft, as shown below. This very-secure attachment gives you maximum rowing power and maneuverability.\*



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\* Forgive our drawing skills. We're boatwrights – not artists!

- Strap each boom-bar down with the 2 tiedown straps on the raft tubes. The foot-brace buckles should be between two boom-bar tiedowns.
- Strap down the stern ends of the side-bars with the tiedown straps beneath the raft seat. This tie-down should wrap around the side-bars just forward of the push-pins.
- Strap the remaining 4 tiedown straps onto the side-bars.

Your oarframe is now fully assembled and installed! Add the final components – the oarlocks – once you’ve set the oarlocks on the oars.

### **Attaching the Seat**



At the back of your installed seat is a short webbing strap. Feed this webbing through the small buckle (a “ladder lock”) on the back of the rowing seat, and cinch the webbing tightly down. This will give you a well-attached rowing seat, which will not shift under you as you row.

With two people in a Dory, the detachable seat can also be removed and used as a seat cushion by the second occupant.

**Optional: Attaching the Skeg.** Attach the Velcro on your skeg to the Velcro on the bottom of your boat. Be sure to work the Velcro well with your fingers, ensuring a secure grip. We use special Velcro that retains strength underwater. If properly seated, your skeg will not come off accidentally unless subjected to great forces (such as dragging the boat across the ground).

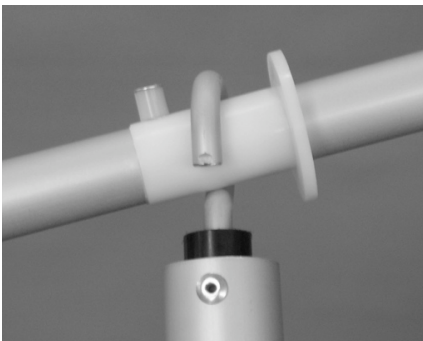
**Assembling the Oars.** Your oars are designed for light weight and versatility. They are intended for open water use in calm conditions, not for extreme stresses. They can be configured into oars, a feathered kayak paddle or canoe-like paddles.

- **Making Oars:** Your total oar kit consists of 2 blade sections, 2 middle sections (plain tubes) and 2 handle sections. To assemble the oars, simply attach 1 each of these three sections together: A blade, a middle tube, and a handle. The oar is complete!
- **Making Canoe Paddles:** Simply remove the middle section from your oar, attaching the blade directly to the handle section. With two people in your Dory, each of you can use one of these paddles, and operate the dory like a canoe.
- **Making a Kayak Paddle.** One of the foam grips on your oars doesn't cover the top of the oars. Using your fingertips (as shown below), slide this grip down the shaft of the oar, revealing the spring-loaded pin beneath. Detach the oarblade from your other oar, and attach this oarblade onto the exposed handle end, using the spring-loaded pin to secure it. Now you have a feathered kayak paddle!



**Setting the Oars:** To set the oars in the oarlocks for rowing:

1. Remove the oarblade.
2. Slide the oar shaft through the hook-shaped oarlock.
3. Re-attach the oarblade. The oar is now secured in the oarlock.



To place the oars in rowing position, slide the oarlock over the white oarlock sleeve, then rotate the oars until the blades are in a good rowing position. This will lock the oars into the oarlocks, as shown at right.

To ship your oars, simply rotate them until the stud on the oar sleeve no longer holds the oars in the oarlocks, and slide the oars across your boat.

## 2: Special Uses of the Fjord Explorer

### Using the Fjord Explorer as a 2-Person Boat

In calm water, the Explorer can be used by two people. Through our experiments, some of the comfortable and effective method we have found for this is:

1. **Have the second occupant sit on the bow tube, or remove the elevated seat for use as a seat pad by the second occupant.** The elevated seat works well as a “second seat.”
2. **Reconfigure the oars into canoe-style paddles, if both occupants will paddle.** If you intend to paddle, rather than row, we find using kayak paddles with two paddlers results in tangled paddles, if both occupants are paddling.
3. **Sit facing each other.** Finally, we find that the most comfortable way to sit is facing each other – one paddler in the stern, sitting on the installed seat, and the other in the bow, sitting on the seat pad.

These are by no means the only ways for two people to use the Fjord Explorer; they’re just a few viable options we’ve discovered.

### Heavy Cargo Techniques

The Explorer is our “pocket freighter,” recommended for carrying large and bulky loads. Featuring both bow and stern “duck tails” and parallel tubes, its internal capacity and flotation are by far the greatest of any Alpacka Raft. Points to consider are:

1. **Boat Configuration.** You can carry heavy loads with your Explorer in rowing configuration. However, if you are hiking the boat into the wilderness, you may prefer to strip off all modular equipment and use the Explorer kayak-style.
2. **Protecting the Floor.** When carrying large, heavy loads, such as multiple heavy packs, moose quarters, etc., we recommend using a foam or inflatable floor pad in the bottom of your boat. This pad will help protect the floor from “pinching” forces if you hit rocks, which can damage or puncture the floor. *A punctured floor will not sink the raft, but it will mean a wet load and a more sluggish, heavy boat.* If you do puncture the floor, consult the standard manual and our website’s “Repairs & Enhancements” section (found in the “Tips & Technique” area) at [www.alapackaraft.com](http://www.alapackaraft.com).
3. **Securing the Load.** You may wish to install extra grab loop(s) in the boat for securing heavy loads. We can also install these in our shop. Just be careful that your securing rig doesn’t create a foot-entanglement hazard.
4. **Paddle Choice.** If you are using your Explorer to carry heavy loads on rivers for surf landings, we recommend choosing a durable paddle, such as the Aquabound Splat or Manta Ray Fiberglass. The momentum of a heavily loaded boat can necessitate using your paddle to fend off rocks, etc. with some force.
5. **Handling & Weight Capacity.** The Explorer is capable of carrying hundreds of pounds of cargo. However, as you progressively load the Explorer, it will

handle more sluggishly and be more vulnerable to damage from impacts with stationary objects.

### **LINING CONSIDERATIONS**

The Explorer may be moved along waterways or across pools with one or more ropes/lines attached to either the bow or the stern (or both, in the case of using it as a ferry to cross deep pools). You may also pendulum the Explorer across a river by means of a line. Although all our boats can be lined, the Explorer is particularly well suited to it.

However, consider the weight of the load within the craft when lining. If the boat is heavily loaded and is held directly against the current, water may pile up on the upstream tube and exert great force on the boat. There is a possibility the person pulling the boat to be overwhelmed by the forces, or in extreme cases (such as where the line is tied-off to an anchor and a loaded boat is hung directly in a swift current) there is potential to rip off grab loops or severely damage the hull of the boat.

When lining heavy loads or other people, consider the way the boat is loaded and the location of eddies or other safe spots to swing the boat out of the current into calm water.

Finally, the way the line is rigged to the boat will affect the way the current itself pushes the craft. The way the boat performs can be adjusted by attaching the line to the different (and multiple) grab loops on the boat. We recommend some experimentation in a safe environment.