

Choosing an ALL Inflatable

The choice of inflatable's under 4m from the 100's available is absolutely bewildering. Here we discuss the features that each type of craft have, especially floor options. We also outline the sort of uses that the craft can be put to. This may actually give you more questions than it answers and if does do [CONTACT US](#) and we will answer your specific questions.

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SMALL craft, 6hp or LESS



Sunspport 230 / 2.5 hp

Package Cost;	£1,000-2,000
Engine Range	2 - 6 hp
Guide to main Features;	
Pack into boot of car	YES
Carried by 1 person	YES
Speed	Up to 10 mph
Suitable for Family	YES
Suitable for the Sea	In Bays etc

Performance craft with 8 -20 hp



Zodiac Cadet FR 360 / F 9.9

Package Cost;	£1,800-3,000
Engine Range	8 - 20 hp
Guide to main Features;	
Pack into boot of car	Large Cars YES
Carried by 1 person	NO
Speed	Up to 20 mph
Suitable for Family	YES
Suitable for the Sea	YES

Performance craft - 25 hp +



Zodiac Futura / 25hp

Package Cost;	£4,000-10,000
Engine Range	15 - 50 hp
Guide to main Features;	
Pack into boot of car	Estates YES
Carried by 1 person	NO
Speed	Up to 40 mph
Suitable for Family	YES
Suitable for the Sea	YES

The **MAIN ADVANTAGE** of these sorts of craft is that they **PACK AWAY**, if you are not going to pack the craft away you need to think really carefully if an all inflatable is what you want, as they simply do not perform, as well as a Rib / Rigid Dinghy, **BUT** they do **PACK AWAY** !

All models of craft do have solid hull options (True Ribs) and these will all go on roof racks so Ribs do not **HAVE** to go on trailers and will give a performance advantage over the equivalent soft bottom craft.

Choosing a SMALL craft with 6 hp or less

What questions do I need to ask myself to help decide what I need?

Aside from overall cost, important questions are;

How **MANY** people do I need to carry?

How **FAST** do I want to go?

How **FAR** do I want to go?

What **TYPE** of floor do I want in the boat?

How many people can I carry ?

In this size bracket we are looking at craft of 2-2.8 m, obviously the builder of the boat will advise in the spec sheet what it can carry but as a rough guide:

2 - 2.4 m 2 - 3 Persons
2.5 - 2.6 m 3 - 4 Persons
2.7 - 2.8 m 4 + Persons

What you need to look at in a boat is NOT JUST length but also the BEAM (Width) a narrow boat will carry less than a wider one !

How Fast do they go ?

Motors fall in to 2 classes on these craft, UPTO 3.5 hp and 4-6 hp 2-3.5 hp weigh 13-17 Kgs and will push these craft at WALKING SPEED = 3-4 mph. A 4-6 hp motor will weigh 26-30 Kgs and MAY get the boat on the plane with 1 person in it, = 10 mph, but with more than 1 person (adult) the craft WILL NOT PLANE and will do 4-6 mph. Depending on weight 2 children may plane the boat with a 4-6 hp

How Far can I go ?

These are SMALL DINGHIES and as such suited to calm water, these are not boats you can hop from cove to cove on the north Cornish coast in. This size of craft will also not be hugely comfortable to sit in for hours so that an fuel capacity on the motor will determine range. 2-3.5 hp have integral tanks only and will run at most for an hour or so. 4 hp + CAN have remote 12.5 L tanks and then they will run all day if you want them to.

What floor types are there?

You have several choices:



Zodiac Cadet 260 S



SLATTS (LEFT: Sun Sport SF 240)

These are wood or plastic panels that slot in to the base of the craft, typically a few cm wide they leave gaps sjowin the soft base of the boat. These are the lowest cost and pack up the easiest

AIR DECK (RIGHT: Sun Sport AIB 230): These pump add and add a bit of time to getting the boat ready to go. If the craft also has a keel you get better directional stability in use. The air deck is more solid underfoot than slats. When packed the air deck adds some bulk to the craft.



SOLID DECK (LEFT): These are obviously the most solid under foot BUT they are a bother to put together and really you need 2 people to put the floor in easily. With a keel you get better directional stability, these will be the heaviest option and the bulkiest to store. You also need a FLAT AREA to get the floor in and it has to be smooth, if you are putting the floor in on a rough surface you will damage the boat

<p>Just how heavy are these boats and suitable motors?</p>	<p>The exact weight is dependant on the model of boat but as a guide Inflatables up to 2.8m are typically 22/35 kgs These packages really do go in the boot of the car</p>
<p>Can I let older children operate this type of craft?</p>	<p>YES, as long as they are responsible, wear lifejackets and you make sure the "kill switch" lanyard is worn at all times. HOWEVER depending on the age of the children they may find starting the motor not easy. Please seek guidance from us for suitable packages.</p>
<p>How do I choose a make ?</p>	<p>Basically there are 2 different types of craft in the UK. Those with the makers name on the side, basically Zodiac and all the derivatives (Zoom, Bombard etc) and then there are Chinese craft badged, Yam, Suzamar, Honwave, Excel, Quicksilver, XM etc etc The Zodiac craft are more costly but they are also OFTEN better designed and made and often LIGHTER. The Chinese craft CAN BE good but !</p> <p>Make sure that the craft is Value for what it is, some Chinese brands with a well known name on are V costly</p> <p>Check quality, they all look the same but they are NOT all as good as each other</p> <p>Look who has the warranty, iif it is some one like Mercury with Sun Sport then that is very good and the product will be supported, if it is a lad on the net with a container load Do not loose a valve next year or you will be throwing the boat away !</p>
<p>What is it going to cost me to get a boat on the water?</p>	<p>Go to our E Bay Shop [LINK] and look at the boat packages section or go to the PDF down load page [LINK] and look at the Sunsport Packages, this will give you an idea of cost. In addition to the boat and motor you need to also think about. Lifejackets, Anchor, Waterproof bag for Phone, Electric pump, launching wheels.</p>

Choosing a Performance craft with 8 - 20 hp

<p>Will craft like this fit in my car?</p>	<p>We are looking here really at craft of 3-3.8 m m and using a 8-15 hp motor. This is a bulky piece of kit but will go in the back on estate car, larger 4 WD and larger hatch backs. You need to make sure it is going to fit though !</p>
<p>What big difference do I get here over a dinghy with a 6 hp ?</p>	<p>Obviously a MUCH bigger bill but what you get is a craft that will carry 3-4 people + and WILL get on the plane and do 10-20 mph with the people in the craft. With a 9.9 jhp motor you will also have the option to pull CHILDREN on inflatable toys but you CAN NOT Ski. With the extra speed and the range it gives you, the larger craft has a much better sea keeping ability it becomes an OPTION and subject to weather, and the correct safety gear, to hop from cove to cove on the Cornish Coast etc</p>

How much does all this weigh, can I carry it?

Boats with inflatable floors will weigh circa 30-50 kgs with solid floor versions weighing 40 - 80 kgs +. 8 - 9.9 hp motors weigh 38 Kgs and 15 -20 hp motors weigh 50 kgs So you can pick each part of this package up though you will not want to carry it a long way. You will need to think about LAUNCHING WHEELS for the boat so that you can move it around with the motor on and a TROLLEY to store and move the motor on.

How quickly do these boats go?

The whole point of this "class of craft" is to plane so as long as you get on the plane you will do 15-20 mph.

What size motor do I need to ski with?

You can not ski with this size of craft and motors upto 20 hp, whilst at 15-20 you MIGHT get a small child up on skis REALLY you need 25-30 hp minimum and a craft of 3.8 m + To control a skier you will also want to think about steering.

Can I have seats in the boat.

These boats will come with 1 seat normally, a simple cross boat bench. Whilst you can add an extra bench to some craft in reality it just gets in the way. You can not really add any other type of seating to craft of this type and size.

What floor options do I have ?

You have 3 choices, all craft at this size have a keel:



SOLID (LEFT: Zodiac Zoom 310 S): Wood or ally floor boards, these are a REAL bother to put in needing 2 adults and adding 20 mins + to assembly time, they do offer the most rigid craft though.

FLAT AIR DECK (RIGHT: Zodiac Fastroller 325): An air deck replaces the ally floor boards, the air deck stays in all the time so no assembly it just has to be pumped up. Whilst not as firm as a solid deck it does the job just fine.



V HULL AIR DECK (LEFT Sun Sport A Rib 320): The flat air deck and the solid deck will have some outside shape due to the keel, the V Hull air deck has a much deeper profile and you see the V inside the craft, this is the best option if you are using the craft at sea a lot and with the largest motors.



Sun Sport A Rib 320

Choosing a Performance craft - 25 hp +

These are big bulky craft and you need to be VERY SURE this will do what you want, users of this sort of craft are: Motor Homes / Caravans who are at one site for a period and can not tow a trailer but what a "proper" boat. Other users are holiday homes where there is no where to store a boat on a trailer or tenders to vessels where a craft big enough to ski can not be lifted on davits but a packed boat can be stowed on board. Obviously these can be carried on a trailer but a true RIB will offer much better performance for not much more cost ?

Are Inflatable floors still the best choice for this type of craft?

Though you can get 4.7 m inflatable floored craft (Zodiac Futura Fastroller MK III) this size of inflatable will probably have a solid floor and thus can weigh 100 kgs plus. The solid floor gives you more scope to mount seats and consoles / steering BUT the assembly issues covered above are even more relevant here

How big a motor can I fit? How long does it take to assemble a craft like this.

There are pack away boats that take 40/50/60 hp but these motors at 100 - 120 kgs are really too heavy to readily carry, some kind of motor trolley will be required if you need to move the motor around. The larger remote control, electric start engines do not have thumbscrews and BOLT ON ONLY, so either lots of people or a crane are needed to fit the. In terms of time you will take at least 45 minutes to pump up and assemble even a simple open boat with tiller steer motor. Add seats a solid deck and steering and this can take a couple of hours.

How quickly do these boats go?

Whilst I say above that a TRUE RIB will go better in reality these all inflatables are VERY LIGHT so with 40-50 hp motors and comparatively shallow hulls they can be VERY quick with 40 - 50 MPH perfectly viable, this will be at least 10-15 MPH quicker than the equivalent TRUE RIB. However you can only use this in the absolute calm and you will need steering

Are all the craft as tough as each other?



Sun Sport SS 420, Great Value but not a performance boat

NO ! The Zodiac craft both leisure and commercial are on a completely different level of quality to all other craft on the market. And I mean in all aspects, build quality, longevity, performance, toughness but they can be 4 x the price of an apparently similar Chinese made boat. If you want performance and are fitting a 30 hp + motor the simple flat deck / keel Chinese made boats will just not do the job any where near as well as the Zodiac Futura / Grandraid etc. If you want just a big inflatable and are happy with 15-20 hp then craft like the Sun Sport SS 420 are great. (ABOVE: Zodiac MK III Futura, Great Performance)



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