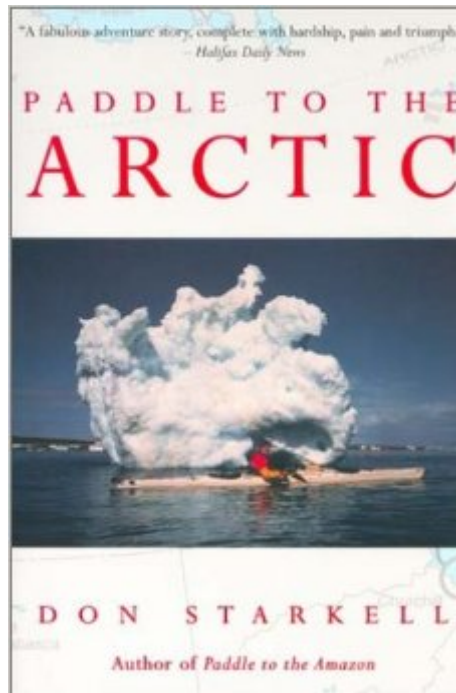


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# Paddle To The Arctic: The Incredible Story Of A Kayak Quest Across The Roof Of The World



## Synopsis

After his astounding 12,000-mile canoe trip from Winnipeg down to the (recounted in his bestseller *Paddle to the Sea* on page 48), Don Starkell decided to paddle a kayak from Hudson Bay 3,000 miles through the Northwest Passage. This is Don's diary of this journey from Churchill, Manitoba, to Tuktoyaktuk, close to Alaska, a voyage by kayak (paddled on water or dragged on a sled over the ice) that took him three Arctic summers and almost cost him his life. Through this compelling book we find ourselves sharing his blazing, driving determination to reach his goal, as he closes in on his destination, with his supplies running out and his ocean highway freezing over, making death a near certainty. Armchair travel at its best.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: McClelland & Stewart (March 25, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0771082657

ISBN-13: 978-0771082658

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,268,062 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #82 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Kayaking > Sea Kayaking](#) #224 in [Books > Travel > Polar Regions > Arctic](#) #418 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Canoeing](#)

## Customer Reviews

Another reviewer thought this tale was presented without whining; I must wholeheartedly disagree. The author continually bemoans his chosen fate, actually saying things like 'when oh when will this end?' He went up there three times with insufficient experience & no guidance; continually misreads the terrain and the weather; then is surprised when it's a really hard trip. He has little to say about any beauty he might have encountered along the way because he's only paying attention to the schedule. He constantly complained about being behind a completely unrealistic schedule and how his companion slowed him down. He doesn't even apologize for the patronizing, dictatorial way he treated her. She was making better choices than he and was often better able to figure out their location, yet he treated her like a nuisance. He even admits to driving her to exhaustion (requiring hospitalization), then gets mad at her for not continuing the trip with him. In hindsight while telling

the story, he still has no realization that he could have handled things better. For a potential explorer, this book may provide a good idea of what to expect in the Arctic. The different adventures he encountered are often entertaining, but his attitude in telling them was intolerable. I kept hoping his companion would smack him in the head with her paddle. For comparison, Maria Coffey's "A Boat in our Baggage" and Chris Duff's "On Celtic Tides" are glorious, well-written stories of grand kayak adventures. Both authors submerge themselves in their surroundings in an attempt to fully appreciate the experience, and they are richly rewarded for it. They had nothing but positive expressions of even the toughest events. They were not merely trying to beat the clock like Don Starkell - their goal was to find the magic of new places. They found the magic and artfully put it on paper for us to enjoy.

With in the first chapter i was ready to put the book down. I admite reading this book is like seeing a bad accident, horrifying, yet i had to read on to see what tom foolery was next. At points it occured to me that this may have been a comedy. But no, this is the account of a determined, driven man with no common sense. Starkell seems to see himself as a hero. With pride he tell of his follies one after another as though over coming each near fatal mistake was a virtue in its self. I dont know what is more amazing, that he lived to tell the story or that he is willing to admite the story. I am a professional kayak instructor and expedition guide. I have used sections of this book in classes as case studies to see if the novice students can pick out the mistakes. They usually spot them right away. If you want to know what you should never do on a kayak expedition this is the book for you. As to Mr. Starkell, god been watching over you, and it sounds like that is a full time job for him/(her).

When I first read this book, some of the adventures seemed so implausibly stupid that I suspected that the story was a hoax. Rest assured, the events described - however improbable - really did take place. The book is a must read for anyone contemplating solo adventures in the Arctic, if for no other reason then to dissuade them. However, Starkell is hardly a suitable role model; those who are familiar with his adventure have described him as "a danger to himself and everybody around him". Nor can much be said for his character; he almost killed his partner by forcing her on when she was seriously ill, yet in his account of the episode, he talks of nothing but how frustrating it was to be behind schedule. For a truly heroic account of this and other adventures, I highly recommend the account of the late Victoria Jason, who accompanied him on his first two trips. Her book, *Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak: One Woman's Journey through the North West Passage*, is an inspiring account of courage and generosity made all the more remarkable by the fact that all the

while she was battling what turned out to be a terminal illness. Despite all obstacles, she nonetheless succeeded where Starkell failed -- and kept all her fingers and toes to boot.

Another amazing trip from Don Starkell, this story is truly amazing, I found myself talking out loud as I read through some the episodes detailed in the book. I Would have loved it if Vicki had been given a chance to write a chapter or two, giving her perspective on things, I think she sounds like one tough lady. I am not sure if I would like Don Starkell if I met him, but personality issues aside you have to take your hat off to the man he is one driven adventurer. Both his books rank in my top ten of kayak adventure books.

This book is like a train wreck. You want to do the decent thing and turn away but the gore is too compelling. This is a poorly written journal of an egotistical fool that mooched, sponged and thieved his way across the arctic. There was no-one that this creep wouldn't use, and when he's quite justifiably refused "good samaritan" help, he rants and raves about how unfair it all is. His writing is nothing more than egocentric drivel about how brilliant and brave he is. Nothing about the beauty, the people or the history. The journey was remarkable, but Starkells stupidity, incompetence, lack of planning and astonishing lack of ethics are a study on how not to make this type of journey. His methods of resupply consisted of sponging off people who likely couldn't afford it and stealing the rest. Please don't buy this book. It might encourage this idiot to go kayaking again.

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