

# RED PAPER CANOES



Our family doesn't own a red canoe (ours is a decidedly faded shade of green) and at the moment, we are a family with an infant and a novice swimmer. The grand adventure of a river canoe camping trip like the one in *Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe* is probably still a bit in the future for us. In the meantime, I figured that we might find another way to channel our inspiration after reading that canoe-trip classic. These origami paper boats are easy to fold and if you ask me, look enough like a canoe to make a very nice follow-up activity after reading the book. This is a classic origami project, modified just a bit for our purposes here. Read on to find a printable template, as well as a tutorial, for folding a red canoe of your very own. If you'd like to sail your canoe in a nearby lake, stream or bathtub, you'll find instructions for waterproofing your boat at the end.

## FOLDING PAPER CANOES

Print the red square template that follows this tutorial and cut it out, making sure to follow the lines of the square as closely and neatly as you can. It will help with folding. Fold the square in half neatly, with the right (red) sides together. Use a folding tool to make a nice, sharp crease at the fold.



Now unfold the square and then fold the outside edges of the square so that they meet the fold in the middle, as in the picture at left. Again, make a nice, sharp crease where the paper is folded.

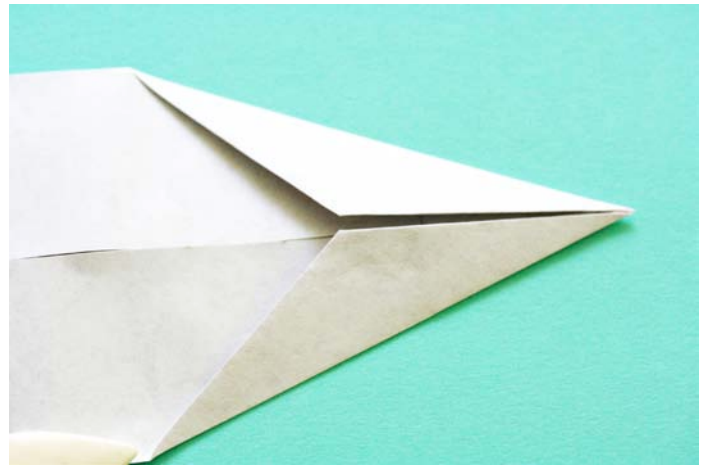
Leaving the paper folded into the rectangle pictured above, fold one of the four corners down and in so that it forms a triangle with a point that lines up with the middle of the rectangle.





Repeat this process with the remaining three corners so that you have a shape that looks like the photo at left.

Fold the two tips at one end of the paper in half so that they line up with the middle line and make a sharp point at the end of the paper.



Repeat this process at the other end of the paper. You will find that you get a bit of strange overlap effect in the middle of the paper, where it comes to a kind of a point. Just ignore this- it's really fine. You should now have a vaguely diamond shaped piece of paper like at left.

Now fold the center points of your diamond down and in so that they line up neatly with the middle line of the paper. More sharp creases!



Here's where it gets interesting. Gently open up the paper at the middle. You will have this nice little boat shape, but you will also notice that it is red on the inside. Not on the outside where it should be. So...

Turn it inside out! You can do this by carefully pushing the center and the sides of the boat outward with your fingers until you are able to turn the entire thing inside out. Now you have a red canoe!



If you'd like to waterproof your boat, you can do so pretty easily. Light a candle and wait for the center to pool with a good amount of melted wax. Using a paintbrush, apply a coat of wax to the outside of the boat. Our candle was white, so we did get a white, waxy residue in the areas where we painted it on thickly. If you want to avoid this, I suspect that a bit of red food coloring added to the liquid wax would probably be just the thing.



Now all that is left to do is to take your miniature watercraft on its maiden voyage! If you are going to be outside with your canoe, you might consider tying a string to one end so that it doesn't go too far down river without you!

CANOE TEMPLATE:  
print and cut out square

