



MUSKOKA • ALGONQUIN PARK • HALIBURTON

How do I... load more than one canoe on a small car?

One of the most popular questions we get is "how do you tie a canoe on top of a car?" Although it is easier to show you than tell you I am going to attempt to put the process into words here.

Lets start with a single canoe

Step 1 Vehicle Selection - Select an appropriate vehicle. Any car or truck with a larger flat roof is best.

Step 2 Between the canoe and car - Use either factory roof racks with a cross bar, accessory roof racks (Yakima) or foam blocks as a spacer between the roof and the canoe. In the case of foam blocks it's best to lay the canoe beside the car with the canoe's portage yoke aligned with the middle of the roof (or over the post between the doors if your vehicle has 4 doors). Place the canoe blocks on the canoe spaced evenly out from the canoe's yoke so they will sit on the vehicle's roof (preferably where a roll bar is located, you can locate them by softly pressing on the roof, you will find a more solid place where roll bars are located inside the roof. Usually just behind the windshield, across the middle and at the back of the back doors.

Step 3 Tie downs needed - Gather your tie down equipment. You will need one cross rope or cam strap (about 10-16ft in length) plus 4x 6-12 ft bow / stern ropes or two Y tie down straps. If your choice vehicle does not have some nice tie down hooks under the front and back bumper then you may also need an additional 4x 2ft ropes.

Step 4 Where to tie to - Take a good look at your vehicle. You will need to locate two points at the front and two points at the back where you will be able to tie to. Some vehicles have shipping hooks or loops that you can tie to some don't. If you can't find any place to tie to under the front and back bumpers that are solid you will need to find a spot under the hood and trunk. If this is the case you should tie a loop in the end of a 2ft section of rope and loop it around something solid under the hood and trunk, tie another loop in the other end and allow this to hang out as you close the hood and trunk. This will form your tie to points (one on each corner of your vehicle) if you lack the tie down hooks from the factory.

Your last point of contact will be across the center of the canoe. If you have chosen a 4

door car then this is easy, open all the doors and tie across from one post to the other. If your vehicle only has two side doors then you may have to either tie to the latch (inside the door on the car body you may find a U-shaped bar that the door latches to, if you tie to the back/inside of this U-bar the door will still latch close) or you may have to just tie one big loop that goes all the way through the interior of the car.

Step 5 Mounting the Canoe - now that you are prepared, it's time to find someone to help you place the canoe on top of your vehicle. Usually you can just flag down almost any passer by, most people are curious enough to see how your going to get a canoe on your car to actually stop and help you if you just ask. Take care if it's windy as it doesn't take much wind to blow the canoe off your vehicle. Center the canoe over the roof. usually placing the yoke between the front and back doors is a great guide to go by.

Step 6 Knowing your knots - the one knot that your going to have to master is the truckers hitch, it's basically a way of tying a pulley. On the rope where you want the pulley to be you are going to tie a slip know, just put a twist in the rope and pull the end toward the end of the rope back through the loop in the twist forming a loop. This is a slip knot. You then take the end of the rope and loop it around your tie down hook on the vehicle and go back up through this slip knot, pull back toward the tie down hook making sure the rope is tight and tie it off on itself, again with a slip knot to make it easy to remove later. This is a truckers hitch and is the best way to secure a load. When you are done you should be able to play some kind of a musical note on your ropes, signifying that they are very tight.

Step 7 Belly tie down - Start with the belly strap and tie a loop in the end and loop it around the door post on the drivers side then toss it over to the passengers side. This is where your going to tie your first truckers hitch, Starting with a slip knot high up on the hull of the canoe. Next loop the rope around the door post and back up to your slip knot, pull tight back down toward the door and then tie off your ropes to finish off your truckers hitch.

Step 8 Bow & Stern tie downs - Next your are going to tie an inverted V at the bow and stern, again tie loops in the end of two ropes and loop them around the bow handle. Each rope will be then tied to the two corners of the front of your vehicle, if you have front factory tie down hooks then tie to these again using your trucker hitch knot, if there are no factory tie down hooks then your are going to tie to the 2ft ropes that you have secured under the hood and left the other end sticking out. Tie a loop in the free end and this is where you tie your bow truckers hitch to. Repeat the same process for the stern tie downs. One thing you may want to consider with your stern tie down is that the bow and stern ropes should not both slant in the same direction, The either need to both slant into the vehicle or out of the vehicle. If you fine your front rope slants back to attach to the canoe and your back rope slants away from the vehicle you may want to tie to the stern seat in your canoe instead of the handle.

Now for two canoes

The process is the same except you need to use a Yakima or other accessory rack that has wide bars. Yakima makes a 72" wide bar for their racks. with most canoes being 32-36" in width this is the perfect size for both canoes. When you tie your belly straps you are going to tie two of them with the anchor loops around the middle of your front accessory Yakima bar, so each canoe has it's own belly strap. Next you are going to tie bow lines that cross from the canoes to the bumper tie down hooks, and again at the stern. One one additional belly strap is needed.

How about more canoes?

Well this is where it gets a little more complicated. You again will require a wide accessory rack, although 72" will still do. Your first canoe still goes on the same way, but when you tie down your second canoe your going to lean it at about a 45deg angle against the first canoe and tie it again to the tie town hook on the side where the first canoe was placed. Your second belly strap will go around both canoes. Your third canoe again gets leaned against the second canoe and it's bow and stern lines will again go to the side where the first canoe was placed. Like the second canoe it's belly strap will go around all three canoes.¹

Three canoe tie down option 2

another way to tie three canoes would be to place the third one on top and in the middle of the first two canoes. With some practice in knot tying you may prefer this method. The top canoe can just rest on top of the other canoes. You do not need to use foam blocks as these will create pressure points and could actually damage the canoes.

What's not recommended

- ratchet straps, these over tighten and you can damage your canoe or vehicle
- banana tie downs. two canoes where the bottom one is upside down and the top one is right side up on top of it. This can be dangerous especially if it happens to rain and your top canoe starts to fill up with water. Never tie a canoe right side up on top of your vehicle and never ever put any gear in a right side up canoe on top of your car.
- although our record is 27 canoes on one truck we suggest you stick to a maximum of 3 canoes on any one vehicle.

Rain

If it happens to rain or if you leave the canoes on your vehicle over night, you should be aware that moisture makes all ropes and straps stretch. Before hitting the road you should check to make sure that all ropes are still capable of playing a musical note, signifying that they are still tight.

