

Dugout Canoe



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



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Canoes are an essential tool for everyday life, used for travel, transportation, fishing, and gathering aquatic plants. The tall bald cypress and Atlantic white cedar trees that grow in the Chesapeake Bay are perfect for making dugout canoes. That's because the wood from these trees does not rot when it gets wet. Making a dugout canoe is hard work, but the use of fire makes things easier. First, a tree is felled by burning it at its base. Then, fires are lit along the log and the ashes are scraped away using tools such as oyster shells. This is done until the canoe is hollow. Dugout canoes are wide and stable so they can carry heavy loads and so that people can stand up inside them to do work.