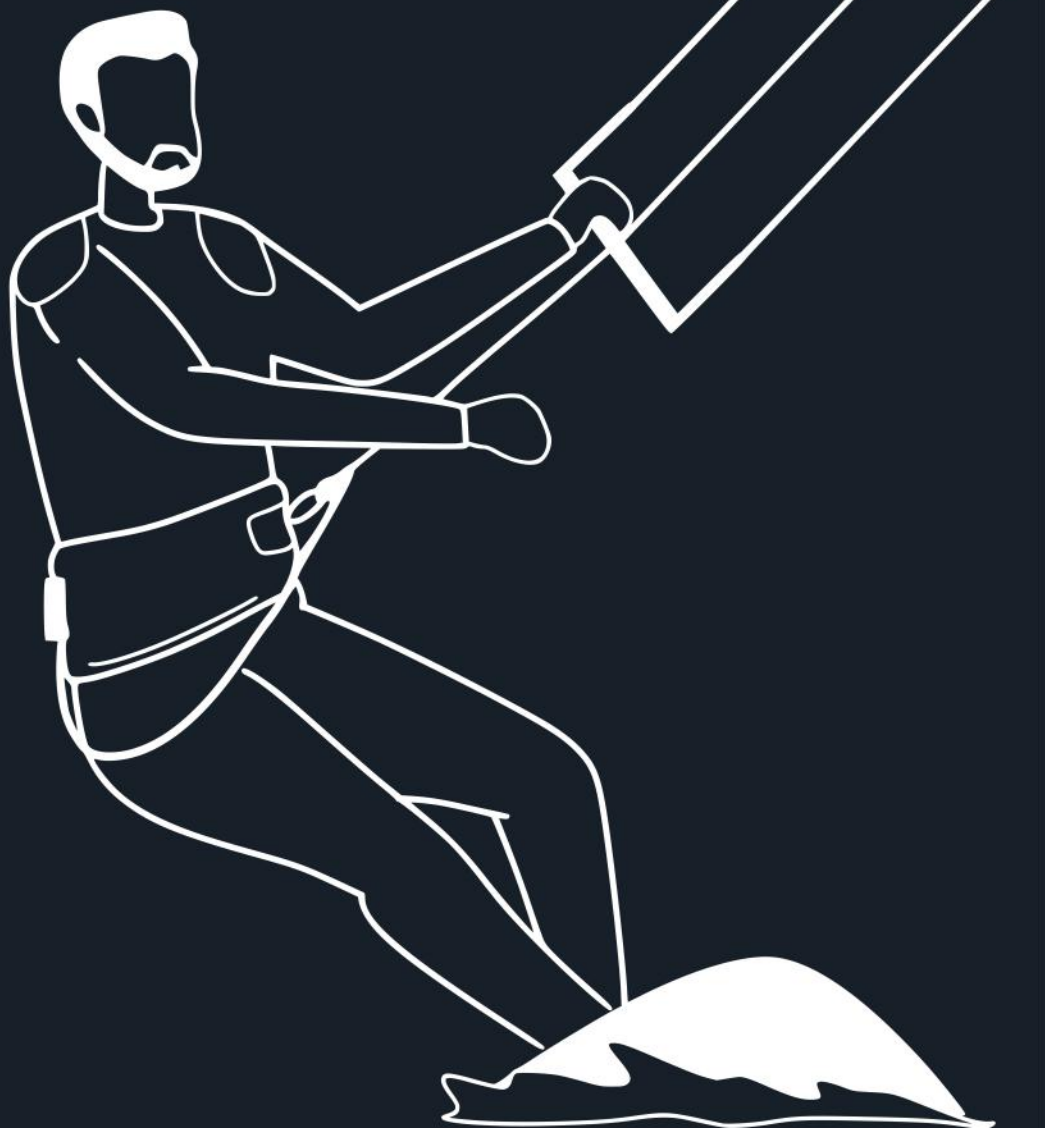


KITEBOARDING

THEKITESPOT.COM

GUIDE TO KITEBOARDING

FROM COMPLETE BEGINNER TO
INDEPENDENT RIDER



THEKITESPOT.COM

GUIDE TO

KITEBOARDING

**FROM COMPLETE BEGINNER TO
INDEPENDENT RIDER**

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Fellow Kiteboarder,

I am thrilled to present to you "Thekitespot.com Guide to Kiteboarding," the culmination of my passion, expertise as a Senior BKSA kiteboarding instructor, and **dedication to helping beginners navigate the exciting world of kiteboarding.**

My personal journey to master kiteboarding was challenging. After completing my initial beginner course, I quickly realized that this sport held a special place in my heart. However, **I faced the frustrations of slow progress and the overwhelming amount of information available online.** I spent countless hours researching various sources and watching endless YouTube videos, hoping to find the guidance I needed while having my lessons and to answer the multitude of questions I had before venturing out on my own.

During this time, I made a life-changing decision to pursue this sport further and signed up for a kiteboarding instructor course. Little did I know that this decision would shape my entire future. The course not only expanded my knowledge but also transformed my life. Inspired by my newfound expertise and fueled by my passion for teaching, I made the bold choice to leave behind my corporate career in London and dedicate my time to teaching beginners how to kiteboard.

Over the years, I have had the incredible opportunity to work with numerous students, witnessing their progress and sharing in their joys and triumphs. However, amidst the lessons and countless hours spent on the water, I noticed a recurring pattern: many kiteboarders, even after receiving instruction, struggled to navigate the vast sea of information available. **They often found themselves lost and overwhelmed, just as I once was.**

This realization led to the birth of thekitespot.com and this book. I understood that filtering and distilling the wealth of information into a concise and beginner-friendly format was crucial to enhancing the learning experience for many beginners. ***This book aims to provide aspiring kiteboarders with a comprehensive yet accessible resource that follows the same structure as many kiteboarding lessons. It offers step-by-step guidance, expert tips, visual representations, and practical advice to help you progress confidently.***

It is my hope that "thekitespot.com Guide to Kiteboarding" will serve as a valuable companion to every beginner kiteboarder, empowering you to embrace the beauty of this incredible sport and overcome any obstacles you may encounter along the way.

Remember, **kiteboarding is not just a sport; it is a lifestyle** that fosters growth, connection, and endless adventures. Embrace the wind, harness the power, and let yourself soar!

Wishing you blue skies and steady winds,

Samina Laurinaityte



Connect with me on social media or visit our website at www.thekitespot.com, and sign up for our newsletter to learn more about kiteboarding and stay updated on the latest trips and projects.



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TikTok @the_kitespot

This book is designed to provide you with the guidance and insights you need to progress confidently from a beginner to an independent rider.

We recommend reading all chapters of this book, regardless of your learning level. The chapters follow a systematic approach, allowing you to fill any gaps in your knowledge and reinforce what you've learned during your lessons.

HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO KITESPORTS

Discover the history and basics of kiteboarding. This chapter answers common questions, introduces kiteboarding lessons, and outlines the learning progression from beginner to intermediate rider.

CHAPTER 2: EQUIPMENT 101

Explore the terminology and components of kiteboarding equipment. Learn about different kite shapes, control bars, boards, harnesses, wetsuits, and other accessories.

CHAPTER 3: WIND & FORECAST

Understand the crucial role of wind in kiteboarding. Gain knowledge about wind direction, local wind effects, wind strength, water movements, tides, and reading wind forecasts.

CHAPTER 4: KITE CONTROL & SAFETY

Master kite control and safety techniques. Learn about kite aerodynamics, the wind window, kite control terminology, safe locations, kite setup and packing, pre-flight checks, self-rescue, and deep water packdown.

CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE

Delve into practical exercises for kite handling and power delivery. Topics include launching and landing kites, relaunching from the water, body dragging exercises, board starts, power strokes, riding techniques, and improving upwind riding.

CHAPTER 6: EQUIPMENT 201

Deepen your understanding of kiteboarding gear. Discover factors to consider when buying your own equipment, suitable kites and boards for progression, tuning kites for optimal performance, and maintaining your gear.

CHAPTER 7: INDEPENDENT RIDER

Transition to becoming an independent rider. Learn about non-verbal communication, right-of-way rules, kiteboarding etiquette, assisting others in need, self-launching and landing, and a checklist to assess your readiness for independent kiteboarding.

Throughout the book, you will come across QR codes and links that will direct you to thekitespot.com. These additional resources include in-depth articles on specific topics, as well as step-by-step guides accompanied by illustrations and pictures to enhance your understanding.

However, I would like to emphasise that this book should not be considered a substitute for the guidance of a qualified instructor. It is designed to complement your lessons and serve as a helpful tool to reinforce what you learn and comprehend the processes at your own pace.

At thekitespot.com, our mission is to empower beginner kiteboarders and provide them with the knowledge, resources, and community support they need to excel in this sport.

We are passionate about sharing our expertise and love for kiteboarding through comprehensive resources, like this book, our Knowledge Centre articles, Kite Size Calculators, detailed Location Guides, Facebook Group, and Newsletter.

We believe that by equipping beginners with the right tools, information, and connections, we can pave the way for their success and foster a lifelong love for kiteboarding.

So, if you have any further questions or want to deepen your knowledge after reading this book, you can visit thekitespot.com. There you will find all of these free resources:

WWW.THEKITESPOT.COM



KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

In our Knowledge Centre, you'll find a treasure trove of articles, tutorials, and tips created by our team of kiteboarding instructors. Our in-depth guides cover everything from equipment selection and setup to safety protocols and weather conditions and much more.

KITE SIZE CALCULATORS

Our Kite Size Calculators will assist you in selecting the right kite size based on your weight, wind conditions, and skill level, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience on the water.

LOCATION GUIDES

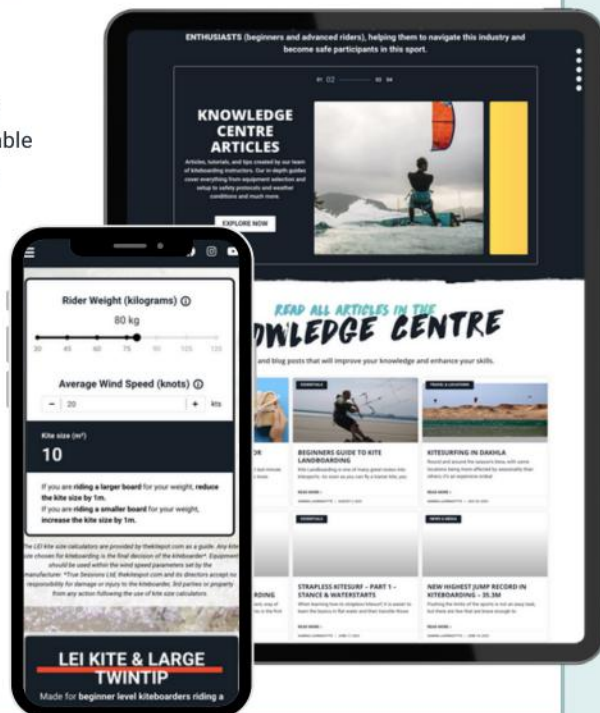
Location Guides offer detailed insights into some of the best kiteboarding spots around the world, providing you with valuable information on wind conditions, local regulations, and nearby amenities.

FACEBOOK GROUP

Joining our Facebook Group will connect you with a community exclusively created for beginner kiteboarders, where you can share experiences, seek advice, and be inspired by others' achievements.

NEWSLETTER

To stay updated with the latest news, tips, and exclusive content, be sure to subscribe to our Newsletter. We'll deliver kiteboarding insights straight to your inbox, keeping you informed and motivated throughout your kiteboarding journey.





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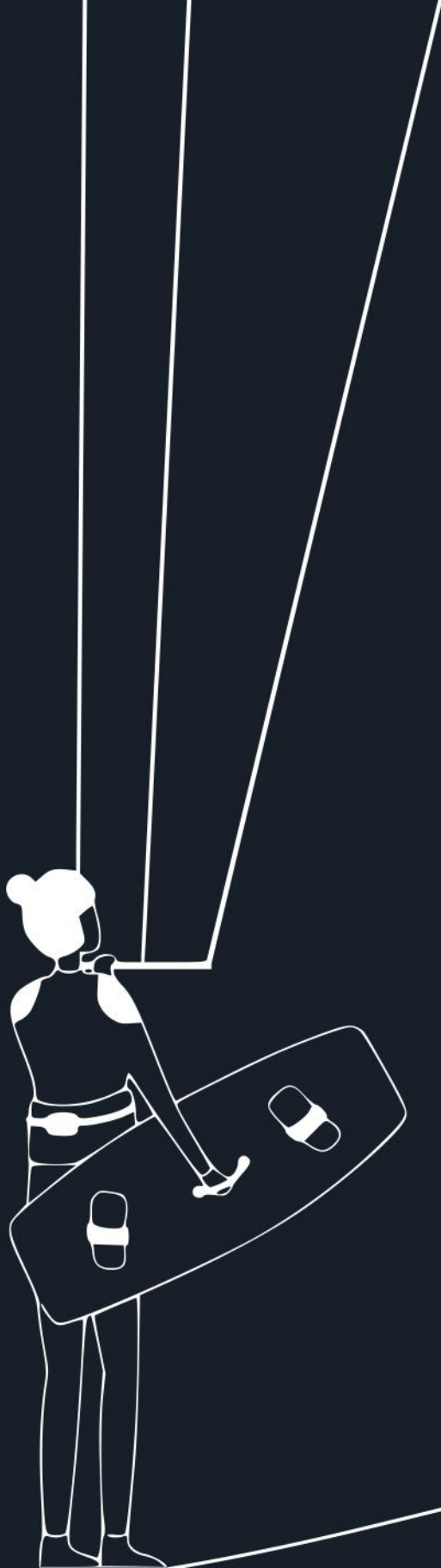
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01

INTRODUCTION TO KITESPORTS

This chapter is for those considering learning kiteboarding and joining this community. We will answer all the basic questions about this sport and help you decide whether this is for you.

In this chapter, we will go deeper into:

- The history of the sport and how it evolved over the past years;
- What is kiteboarding and kitesports in general;
- Kiteboarding lessons and what to expect from them;
- How your learning progression will go from beginner to intermediate rider;
- Answer all the frequently asked questions beginners have before their first lessons.

Gijsbertus Adrianus Panhuise, in the Netherlands, received the first known patent (NL7603691A) specifically for "KiteSurfing". The patent covers a 'watersport where a pilot uses a floating board like a surfboard and is pulled by a wind catching device of a parachute type tied to his harness trapeze type belt'.

Practical kite buggying was pioneered by Peter Lynn in New Zealand. Lynn combined a three-wheeled buggy with a modern parafoil kite. Kite buggying proved to be very popular worldwide, with over 14,000 buggies sold up to 1999.

Raphaël Salles and Laurent Ness developed a specialised kitesurf board and later started the F-One company. Laird Hamilton and Manu Bertin popularised the sport and helped change the name of the sport from flysurfing to kitesurfing.

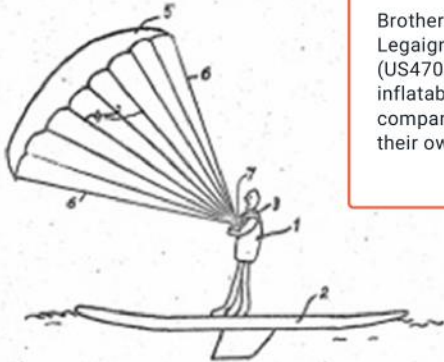
1977

1984

1990

1992

1996



1977 PANHISE'S CONCEPT OF KITESURFING

Brothers Bruno and Dominique Legaignoux filed a patent (US4708078) for the first inflatable C-kite. A design that companies have used to develop their own products.

Cory Roeseler and his dad Bill received a patent for a board, kite and bar combo called "KiteSki", which was commercially available in 1994. This patent was for a kite that connects to a bar with a reel that allows the water re-launch of the kite and is used with water skis.

HISTORY OF KITESPORTS

TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHEN THE FIRST CONCEPTS OF KITESPORTS STARTED IS NOT AN EASY TASK.

As early as the 1800s, George Pocock used kites of increased size to propel carts on land and ships on the water, using a four-line control system. Then, in 1903, aviation pioneer Samuel Cody developed "man-lifting kites" and successfully crossed the English Channel in a small collapsible canvas boat powered by a kite. And in 1977, Gijsbertus Adrianus Panhuise from the Netherlands received a patent for "KiteSurfing". That was described as 'a watersport where a pilot uses a floating board like a surfboard and is pulled by a parachute type wind-catching device tied to his harness-trapeze-type belt'. This sounds like a perfect description of what kitesurfing is nowadays; however, at the time, his idea did not receive any interest from the windsurfing, sailing, or surfing industries that were already developing since the late 1960s.



SAMUEL FRANKLIN CODY WAS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF THE MAN-LIFTING KITE PIONEERS. HE PATENTED A KITE IN 1901.

Kitesurfing became a mainstream sport with the key windsurfing manufacturers like Robby Naish and Neil Pryde becoming interested in kite manufacturing. Single direction boards derived from windsurfing and surfing designs were most used in this sport.

Twintip boards became more popular for flat water spots and freestyle riders, with directional boards still used for wave surf conditions.

Course-racing kiteboarding was included in the ISAF World Sailing World Cup program. Later kiteboarding was named an official event at the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires. And will be included in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris set in the sailing category in the form of mixed relay racing on foils.

1997

1999

2000

2001

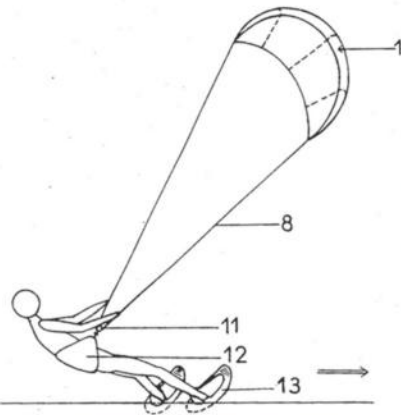
2004

2014

The Legaigoux brothers developed and sold the breakthrough "Wipika" kite design with a structure of preformed inflatable tubes and a simple bridle system to the wingtips, which greatly assisted water re-launch.

A new freestyle competition sponsored by Red Bull was launched in Maui. The competition, named Red Bull King of the Air, judged riders on height, versatility, and style. The competition is still held annually in Cape Town, South Africa.

The Legaigoux brothers launched a patent for an inflatable BOW kite design with bridles. Takoon and Cabrinha released their first BOW kites and a 100% de-powerable bar to the kiteboarding market in August 2005, and that is how the modern kiteboarding we know today was born.



1985 LEGAIGNOUX PATENT FOR FIRST LEI KITE



Only in the early 1980s did the first concepts of the leading-edge inflatable (LEI) kites that we use today start to emerge. After years of testing, the Legaigoux brothers from France got a patent for the first inflatable C-kite in 1985, and by 1992, American engineers Bill Roeseler and his son Cory got a patent for the "KiteSki" system, which was essentially a kite connected to a bar with a reel that allowed the water re-launch and added the possibility to ride upwind. Simultaneously, kite buggying was evolving in New Zealand, with Peter Lynn combining parafoil kite technology with the three-wheeled buggy.

From that point, the curiosity of the originators of the sport grew, and they started to collaborate, test new kite, bar, and board designs, and develop them further. Finally, in the early 2000s, the sport became more accessible to the general public, and kiteboarding schools started opening all around the globe. However, only in the past decade has the number of participants in kitesports grown by the thousands as the industry's governing bodies started to implement higher safety standards for the equipment and instructors.



1992 CORY ROESELER AND THE KITESKI SYSTEM



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KITEBOARDING AND KITESURFING?

Throughout your search for more information about this sport, you might have already noticed that the terms **kitesurfing** and **kiteboarding** are often used interchangeably in this industry. In fact, even the current definition of **kiteboarding** suggests that **kiteboarding** and **kitesurfing** are the same.

DEFINITION OF KITEBOARDING*

kite·board·ing | 'kīt·bôr-dīŋ

: is an extreme sport where the kiteboarder harnesses the wind's power with a large, controllable power kite to be propelled across the water, land, or snow. It combines aspects of sailing, surfing, windsurfing, skateboarding, snowboarding, wakeboarding, and paragliding.

– **also called kitesurfing.**

This is a well-discussed topic in this sport, and you might find many different opinions on why these two terms are the same or should not be used as such. At the end of the day, how you use these terms is a personal choice, but in order for you to understand the terminology used in this book and in other publications in this industry, consider the following reasoning:

1. Since the start of the sport, participants have used surf-style directional boards to propel themselves across the water. Around the mid-1990s, with the sport becoming more popular, the original name 'fysurfing' slowly changed to 'kitesurfing'. As the sport evolved, magazines and schools adopted the words **kitesurfing** or **kitesurf** for their branding.
2. Only in the early 2000s were twintip bi-directional boards introduced and widely accepted, and the term "kiteboarding" was born.

Due to this history, the term 'kitesurfing' is still used as the primary name for all kiting activities. However, in this new era of kitesports, where new disciplines are emerging and new participants are joining every day, it is vital to establish more accurate descriptions.

As you will see in more detail in the following section of this book, **kiteboarding** and **kitesurfing** are two separate disciplines in this sport.

And like all other disciplines, their names are a combination of the word "kite" with a specific type of board used in the activity.

KITE[BOARDING] IS WHEN WE USE A KITE WITH A TWINTIP OR A WAKESTYLE BOARD. WHEN USING A SURF STYLE DIRECTIONAL BOARD, WE USE THE TERM KITE[SURFING].

As this book is created for new participants of this sport who will most likely start learning to kite with a twintip board, therefore it is all about **kiteboarding**; and you as a participant will be referred to as a **kiteboarder** or simply a **kiter**.

*Source: Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kiteboarding>.



Remember that even though it is not technically correct, the terms kiteboarding and kitesurfing are often used interchangeably in this industry. So don't be surprised that when searching for kite schools or shops online, you might need to use the term 'kitesurf' to find more results.

KITESPORTS DISCIPLINES & RIDING STYLES

THE MAIN TERMINOLOGY AND RIDING STYLES OF THE KITESPORTS DISCIPLINES ORIGINATED FROM SURFING, PARAGLIDING, WINDSURFING, WAKEBOARDING, SNOWBOARDING, AND SAILING.

Therefore, you will hear terms like freeride, freestyle, upwind, toeside, etc. For you to better understand this sport, let's start with the most basic information that you need to know about the disciplines and riding styles in kitesports.

WATER-BASED DISCIPLINES

KITEBOARDING is when the kiter uses an asymmetrical board, otherwise known as a twintip board, with the power kite*.

The main riding styles of kiteboarding are:

Freeride - riding a board with regular strap type bindings and doing basic riding ('mowing the lawn') and small tricks while fully hooked into your harnesses. The most commonly known tricks are jumps, backrolls and frontrolls, as well as more of the airstyle (or old school) tricks like board grabs, one footers, and board offs.

Freestyle, also known as the 'new school' or 'wakestyle' style of riding, is where the rider performs 'unhooked' tricks and might choose to use a specific C-shape kite and wakestyle boots on the board. This riding style is visible primarily in a competition format, where you might see very advanced and challenging tricks performed like S-bend, F16, blind judge and many more.

Big Air kiteboarding discipline, as the name suggests, involves performing tricks while jumping high. This format grew exponentially over the past years when jump height devices became available to everyone enjoying this sport. This discipline is best known for the annual Red Bull King of the year competition based in Cape Town.

Slang terms:

Kiting is the activity of flying a kite or going kiteboarding/kitesurfing, e.g. "the knees finally healed, and I returned to tennis and kiting".

Kiter is a person participating in kiting activities, e.g. "let's meet other kites at the beach".

CURRENT HIGHEST JUMP RECORD IN KITEBOARDING



Scan the code to get access to an article about the current record (<https://thekitespot.com/jump-record-in-kiteboarding/>)



*A **power kite** (also known as a traction kite) is an inflatable or foil kite designed to provide significant power.

KITESURFING is all about the surf: the directional (surf-style) board and riding in the waves.

In this discipline, your kite control and wind and water knowledge have to be at a certain level before you venture out into the larger waves or attempt to learn some tricks. Hence, this discipline is a common choice for those who want some extra challenge once they have mastered kiteboarding skills.

Riding styles in this discipline are slightly different. The term **freeriding** is still used when just 'cruizing' around in shallow or choppy waters, but a new term, **wave surf**, refers to specific techniques to ride larger waves.

There is another riding style within this discipline that you will hear about in the coming years: **strapless freestyle**. This refers to doing freestyle tricks with the directional board, without any straps keeping you attached to the board. So if you don't want to lose the board, you will have to hold on to it, or use the angle of the wind to keep your board next to you while you are in mid-air doing tricks.

KITEFOILING, also known as foiling, hydrofoil kiteboarding, foil kitesurfing, or any other variation you choose, kiting with a foil board* (don't confuse it with foil kites; we will discuss different kite types in the next chapter).

Riding styles are still evolving for this discipline, but riders predominantly focus on racing or kitefoil freeride and freestyle.

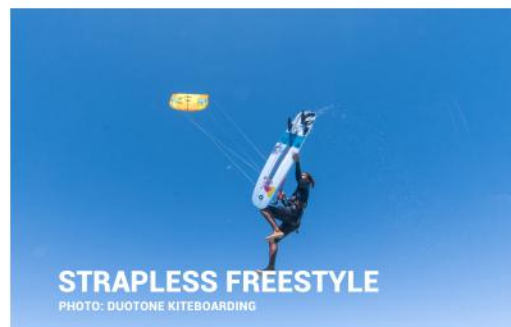
Kitefoil freeride, the same as for all the disciplines, means basic riding tacking upwind. However, **kitefoil freestyle** is where things get much more technical, as jumping and taking the board off mid-air is not just much harder but also extremely dangerous, as the board's wings are very sharp.

Racing is becoming more and more popular in past years. Not only because with the foil boards' and foil kites' help, you can reach incredible speeds, but also because from 2024, kiting in the form of **kitefoil racing** will be a permanent Olympic discipline.

WINGFOILING is a new discipline that has been rapidly growing in the watersports industry in the last few years. Even so, historically, first wing prototypes were invented before the first inflatable kites. However, whether this sport sits under kitesports or belongs to a separate category under general foil sports or on its own is still being determined.

Currently, more windsurfers than kites take up this discipline as the wing handling and the riding techniques are very similar to what they are used to. Using a wing instead of a kite is also getting more popular for landkiting and snowkiting disciplines, so the development of wing sports is just starting, and we are excited to see how it grows.

***Hydrofoil** (or foil board) comes in many different shapes and forms, but one thing stays the same: the board has a mast with a wing, that is mounted to the bottom of the board, that essentially lifts the board off the water and allows you to glide across the water with that 'magic carpet' feeling.



LAND-BASED DISCIPLINES

LANDKITING, as the name suggests, it's flying a power kite on land instead of in the water, and this category is split into two main disciplines: kite landboarding and kite buggying. The main difference between the two is the mode of 'transportation' you use with the kite. A mountain board is used for **kite landboarding**, and a three-wheel buggy for **kite buggying**. As we need less power to get momentum in land-based disciplines, we often use trainer kites* or small foil kites that create less power.

You will be able to learn how to control a small trainer kite in a few hours of lessons with a qualified instructor. After that, combining your new kite-flying knowledge with the mountain board or a buggy requires only a couple of additional hours of training. Therefore this discipline is great for those who don't like going in the water or want to try kitesports before investing in more lessons.

SNOWKITING is an excellent alternative for the winter months or for those who love snowsports as much as watersports.

If you already know how to ski or snowboard, you can quickly transfer your kite flying skills to play around in an open field, on the frozen lake, or participate in a snowkiting race like Red Bull Ragnarok in Norway.

And if you have never flown a power kite before, you can find a specialised snowkiting school in the more prominent ski resorts worldwide to help you learn the skills needed.

Just keep in mind that the wind in cold seasons is very different than at the beach in a summer month. There are quite a few differences in how we handle the kite, not talking about the difficulty in launching and landing the kite with all the winter gear on and the dangers of snowkiting in unexplored mountain passes or close to forests and buildings.

If you decide to extend your kite-flying knowledge into the land-based disciplines, especially snowkiting, we highly recommend finding an instructor that could show you safe areas to try these disciplines and explain more about the preparations needed.



* A **Trainer kite** is a small foil kite connected with 2 or 3 lines to a control bar or handles. This type of kite does not require a harness and is usually attached to the rider with a safety leash on a wrist. They are specifically designed to learn the most basic flying skills producing very little power; trainer kites are easy to re-launch and can handle crashing on the ground.





KITEBOARDING LESSONS AND WHAT TO EXPECT

KITEBOARDING IS CONSIDERED AN EXTREME SPORT, AND IT IS NOT JUST BECAUSE OF WHAT PROFESSIONAL KITEBOARDERS CAN DO, SUCH AS JUMPING 20M HIGH AND DOING ALL SORTS OF TRICKS.

When kiteboarding, we use equipment that can injure us and others around us if not appropriately controlled. Also, we are playing with nature and wind (often a strong wind) that is unpredictable and can get us in dangerous situations.

Taking lessons means you will learn the fundamentals of the equipment and how to use it safely. Also, you will learn how to read the wind and water to make better decisions on when you can go kiteboarding. Finally, and most importantly, you will be able to practise this sport in a safe environment.

In my personal experience as an instructor, I noticed that once students realise that kiteboarding is not the easiest sport to learn and that there are many different elements that need to work together, they agree that taking professional lessons was the best decision they made.

CHOOSING A KITEBOARDING SCHOOL OR INSTRUCTOR

As far as there is access to water, whether that's a large enough lake or an ocean, you will be able to find a kiteboarding school or an independent instructor providing lessons for beginners in almost every part of the world. ***But how do you choose the right school or instructor for you?***

LOCATION

Depending on where you live, you first need to establish whether you will be learning at a local kiteboarding beach or a holiday destination, i.e. is it a day trip, or do you need to plan at least a week-long holiday for your kiteboarding lessons.

Suppose you are lucky enough to live not that far away from a kiteable location. In that case, we suggest starting your lessons there, as it will probably be where you will continue your progression once you are an independent rider. This will allow you to join a community of other kiteboarders and help you familiarise yourself with the location and all the rules and regulations surrounding kiteboarding there.

If you are not living near the beach or would like to learn kiteboarding in a set amount of time, heading for a holiday destination is a great way to learn all the basics of kiteboarding quickly. Just be aware that no matter where you travel, there is a chance that you might not go kiteboarding every single day or anytime you want. In further chapters of this book, you will learn how to read the forecast for your sessions and will be able to establish locations with good wind statistics. However, keep in mind that nature is unpredictable, and as kiteboarders, we need to be prepared to kite when the weather permits and not just when we want to.

ACCREDITATIONS AND REVIEWS

Every kiteboarding school and instructor should be accredited by a local governing body and have a valid kitesports insurance policy to provide lessons. The most popular local governing bodies you will encounter are IKO, VDWS, BKSA and PASA.

Which governing body the school or instructor chooses to associate with does often depend on the location they operate with. For you as a kiteboarder, it really does not matter which accreditation they use.

However, you should know that some schools (especially in less developed countries) do not hold valid accreditations and insurance policies. Therefore, we suggest checking the local governing bodies' website for a "list of accredited schools" and online reviews before booking your lessons.

PERSONAL PREFERENCE

Nowadays, you can find schools and instructors for everyone's needs and budget. If a school already has a good reputation, it's a good indication that they will take care of you while you are learning with them. But at the end of the day, it all depends on the individual instructor and their teaching style. Generally, most instructors teach the same syllabus set through the industry, but we all learn differently as students. Sometimes, just having the same information portrayed to you in a certain way can make a big difference in your progression.

We highly recommend getting lessons from different instructors, especially at the beginning, so that you can learn in the best way for you.

GOOD TO KNOW

*All local governing bodies are administered by **International Kiteboarding Association (IKA)** and the **Global Kitesports Association (GKA)**. Who are responsible for uniting the whole kiteboarding community and providing clarity on the kitesports governance structure, organising events, and providing systems and global standards for local kite schools and instructors.*

LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES

Worldwide - IKO (www.ikointl.com)

German - VDWS (www.vdws.de/en)

British - BKSA (www.britishkitesports.org)

American - PASA (www.pasaschools.org)



STANDARD KITEBOARDING LESSON SYLLABUS

It does not matter where you decide to take your kiteboarding lessons or what governing body the school or instructor has chosen to associate with (IKO, VDWS or BKSA or any other); they will all teach a standard syllabus.

So you go into your lessons knowing what to expect; here is a generalised list of what you will learn:

First Lesson (*Group Day 1 or 3-5h of private tuition*):

- Understand the fundamentals of kitesports and nature – wind, weather, tides;
- Learn how to perform a Site Assessment before your kite sessions;
- Small trainer kite flying, learning basic manoeuvres and understanding the wind window;
- Learn how to launch and land the kite for others;
- Learn kite set-up for Leading Edge Inflatable kites (also known as Tube, LEI or just Inflatable kites);
- Learn 3 Safety steps and know how to do a pre-flight check;
- LEI kite flying in the water and learn various water re-launch techniques;
- First Body Drags.

Second lesson (*Group Day 2 or 3-5h of private tuition*):

- Learn how to launch & land a kite safely;
- Controlled body dragging (downwind & directional);
- Upwind body dragging with and without the board;
- Introduction to the board start technique.

Third lesson (*Group Day 3 or 3-5h of private tuition*):

- Learn to set up equipment independently;
- Practise emergency packdown & self-rescue techniques;
- The first board starts;
- Practising short rides (if weather and your skill allow).

Additional lessons (*Group day 4+5, or 9h+ of private tuition*):

- Determine wind direction, speed and quality of wind to assess a safe time and location for a kiteboarding session;
- Understand the 'rules of the road' and kiteboarding etiquette;
- Safe and precise launching and landing of the kite;
- Use and reset all safety features on the equipment;
- Exact upwind body dragging technique;
- Perform water start and maintain control of kite and board while riding;
- Upwind riding and transitions(turns);
- Confidently perform self-rescue and deep water packdown.



KITEBOARDER RIDING LEVELS

Every governing body in this industry has established its own riding levels for kiteboarders and specified the necessary skills required to achieve each level. To make it easier for you to determine your current level, we have compiled all of these levels into one comprehensive format.

A **learner kiteboarder** is an individual learning the topics mentioned in the previous section. Typically still going through the first 15h+ hours of lessons with a qualified instructor.

A **beginner kiteboarder** is considered an individual that has completed the basic kiteboarding training and can somewhat control the kite. Still, cannot be left entirely unattended and without the supervision of an instructor or an experienced kiteboarder.

In most cases, beginner kiteboarders are still taking some additional lessons (days 4&5 of a group course or an additional 10-15h of private tuition) and then spend time practising independently.

Most kites spend a lot of time at this level because it takes several supervised sessions and independent tries to get control of riding the board and another 5-6 sessions (sometimes more) to learn upwind riding.

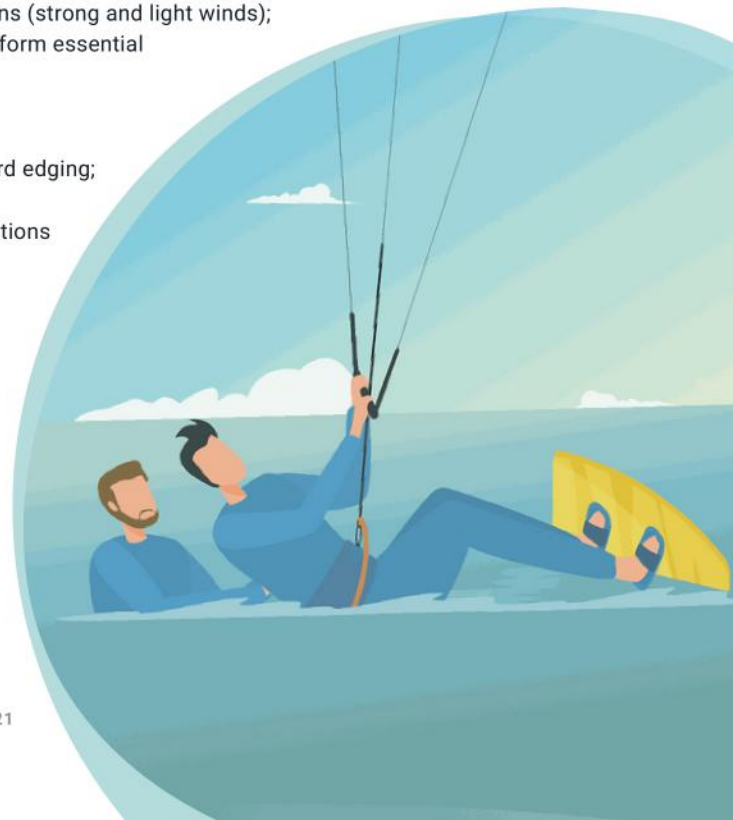
An **Independent rider** is considered a kiteboarder that completed their full lesson plan and can perform the following skills:

- Can do a site assessment correctly, weather and tide chart analysis;
- Have reasonable kite control in challenging conditions (strong and light winds);
- Knows advanced equipment knowledge and can perform essential maintenance;
- Can self-launch and land the kite;
- Know all safety and self-rescue techniques;
- Is confident in upwind riding, speed control and board edging;
- Can perform variations of turns;
- Shown controlled riding in deep water, choppy conditions and waves.

The **intermediate rider** can do all of the above and is trying to improve their skills with jumps, backrolls' or frontrolls' and other less technical tricks.

An **advanced rider** can perform controlled jumps, tricks, and grabs or participates in additional disciplines like kitesurfing and foiling.

Pro rider can do advanced tricks and very high jumps. Leads industry standards and performs in competitions.





HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR LESSONS AND PROGRESS FASTER

As with learning any other sport, embarking on a journey to becoming a kiteboarder will not be easy and will require much patience, as you will be learning many new skills at the same time.

Generally, learning new skills in any sport has three main stages: a *prep stage* (understanding the theory), a *practice stage* and an *automation stage*.

Time, repetition, and patience are required for the skill to arrive at the automation stage. So let's see what it means for you as a beginner wanting to learn kiteboarding.

First is the **prep stage** – this is where you learn all the theoretical knowledge surrounding this skill. In kiteboarding, that means not just how to control the kite, do a body drag, or stand up on the board. It also means learning about the wind, its effects and how to read it, understand the water movements and how it affects your riding, etc. At the end of the day, when kiteboarding, we are playing with nature, and if you do not know how to read it to make sure your session is safe, then your practice might lead to an injury or worse.

Once you are comfortable with the knowledge, you can *implement it with practice*. In kitesports, we highly recommend, if not request, that anyone that wants to learn kiteboarding take lessons with a qualified instructor for two main reasons:

- To make sure you are learning in a safe environment;
- You are not developing any bad habits that will hinder your progress in the long term.

If you succeed in the first and second stages, you will test your patience in the **automation stage**. For example, when learning to kiteboard, you will notice that you have to get good at controlling the kite while managing the board on your feet, and also, reading the nature and looking out for any hazards in the water (which, by the way, are other water users and kiteboarders). So, in other words, becoming a multitasking ninja.

This stage takes a long time to reach, and only once you get to this point will you feel in control of what you are doing while kiteboarding and will notice real progress in your learning.





IN ORDER TO LEARN AND PROGRESS FASTER, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1***Start where you are, not where you think you should be.***

Do not look how good other kites are (they might be already practising this sport for 10 years!). We all learn at our own pace, so don't be hard on yourself.

2***Develop a growth mindset and ditch your limits.***

Anyone can learn to kiteboard, regardless of age, gender or weight.

3***Learn the theory and get to know your learning process.***

Understanding the theory of how it all works will help your brain to use that knowledge in practice, so make sure to read this book until the end. Also, establish your learning process: do you learn fast and need private lessons? Or do you progress better in the team and would be better in a group coaching session?

4***Practice. Practice. Practice.***

Take as many lessons as you need from a qualified instructor, and when you feel confident, go out on your own or with a friend.

5***Patience. Patience. Patience.***

Remember, it takes a lot of time and effort to become a good and safe kiteboarder. So stick to your goals, and you will eventually see the results.

6***Seek expert advice and be open to it.***

Take as many additional lessons as you need; it will allow you to learn faster and remove any bad habits that might hinder your progress.



FAQ'S ABOUT KITEBOARDING

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO LEARN KITEBOARDING?

Like learning any NEW skill in life, learning to kiteboard takes time. And this is the most often-asked question we receive from people wanting to learn kiteboarding. And the answer to this question is not very straightforward. Everyone who is already learning to kiteboard and has had some lessons in the past would tell you that there is a pattern in learning, almost like acquiring skills in a specific sequence.

On average, ***the learning process goes like this:***

STEP 1: Basic theory and trainer kite flying

This is where you learn to read the wind forecast and water movements and the required safety theory surrounding this sport. Also, you practise how to 'fly' and control a trainer kite on land or in shallow water. You will learn this in your first lesson, most commonly advertised as the first 3 hours of private tuition or Day 1 of the group course.

STEP 2: Kite control & body dragging

Learning to control the kite safely is not as easy as it looks. Many beginners assume that once they can keep the kite in the air, they are ready to stand up on the board and ride off. In reality, it takes many hours of practice controlling the kite at the same time as being vigilant of your surroundings. At this stage, you will be introduced to the multitasking you need to perform while kiteboarding.

The fastest way to do it is by learning to Body Drag. Just as the name suggests, it is dragging your body through water with the help of the kite. Once you master this skill, the next stage will be more straightforward as your kite control will improve. You will learn this technique on the Day 2 of a group course or another set of 3 hours of private lessons.

STEP 3: Advanced theory & board starts

This is the most anticipated stage of learning for most beginners - learning to stand up on the board. However, controlling the kite while manoeuvring

the board, and at the same time, keeping an eye on other water users around you is no easy task, and, for most kites, it takes many hours to master.

At this stage, you will get your first tries at the board start, learn more advanced theories surrounding the kite behaviour while travelling at speeds, and practise skills to help you put the board on your feet and control it while riding.

These skills are learned on a Day 3 & 4 of a group course or another 10+ hours of private lessons. But for the majority of beginner kiteboarders, it might take many more classes and practice hours to feel any good at these skills.

STEP 4: *Becoming an independent kiteboarder*

After your initial five-day group course or the equivalent number of private lessons, you might notice your instructor giving you more freedom handling the kite and allowing you to launch and land it on your own. This indicates that you are moving toward the Independent kiteboarder level.

It might not necessarily mean that you can easily stand up and ride upwind on the board - these skills might take you many more hours of practice to master. However, it means that you feel confident in controlling the kite and are a safe participant in this sport among other water users.

Most instructors will then start to prepare you to go out kiteboarding independently without supervision. They will teach you various kite re-launching techniques, perfect your water safety packdown drill in various conditions and guide you to become a considerate kiteboarder.

Learning times for these skills depend on how well you learn the previous stages and might even expand to several years of learning if you have very long gaps between your lessons.

Some people who might have some sailing, wakeboarding or paragliding experience go through the first two stages much faster because some needed skill sets are already there. And others take their time and learn a bit slower. It all depends on your previous sports experiences and how much time you put into the learning; therefore, there is no one-fit-for-all approach.

Overall, if you are willing to do that initial 20-25h of tuition in the same year or a season, you will reach a level where you can go out into the water with minimal or no supervision.

DO I NEED TO BE FIT TO LEARN TO KITE?

All kiteboarding instructors will agree with this statement:

"It doesn't matter if you are a 7-year-old or 70 years old, male or female. You can learn this sport with a bit of patience and willingness to adapt to your capabilities."

Kiteboarding looks like a sport that requires a lot of physical strength, especially if you compare yourself with the pro riders that are busting incredible tricks and jumping high. Still, it doesn't require you to be fit and sporty to participate.

There are many examples of people well over 70 years old who kitesurf, so if they can do it, you can do it too!

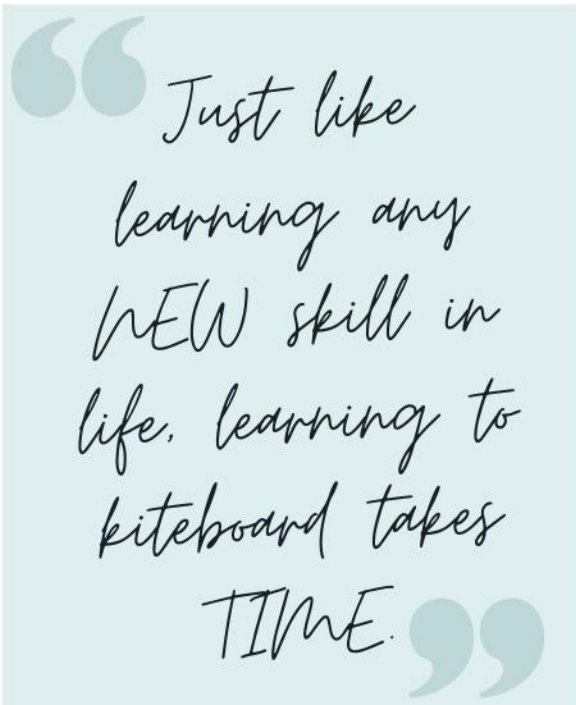
If anything, you will become more active just by spending your time at the beach and moving around in the water. The trick to making kiteboarding easier for you to learn is to find an instructor who will choose the correct equipment and environment for you to learn in and adapt their teaching style to your capabilities so you learn at your own pace.

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO LEARN KITEBOARDING?

It is not difficult at all; it just takes time to learn it. It is not only the physical movements of kite control or standing on the board that we need to learn. We must also understand nature, read the wind and water movements, understand the forecast, and know our equipment specifications and location characteristics. And all this takes time.

For some, this understanding comes naturally, especially if they have experience in other water or wind activities, and for others, it takes longer to gain this knowledge. And that is ok because the number one skill you need to learn in kiteboarding is PATIENCE.

As you are reading this book in preparation for your lessons, you are already moving one step ahead of most students as you are equipping yourself with the knowledge that you will then combine with practice.



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DO I HAVE TO TAKE LESSONS TO LEARN HOW TO KITEBOARD?

ABSOLUTELY. Knowing the theory is one thing, but practising in a safe environment is necessary. Just like you have to take x amount of driving lessons before you can venture out on your own, it's the same

in kiteboarding. Water is our 'road', and there are rules of how to behave; also, there are other water users that you will injure if you don't know what you are doing. Furthermore, mother nature is not forgiving, and when kiteboarding, we play with wind and water, and both of these elements are unpredictable. By taking lessons, you will learn the safety systems and steps you can take to protect yourself and other water users when the natural elements get out of control.

At a minimum, we recommend taking at least the basic kiteboarding lesson package that most kiteboarding schools advertise as 6 hours of lessons. In addition, however, we suggest taking at least 12 hours of private tuition or a full 5-day group course at the start of your training and with minimal gaps between your lessons. Please note that there is a very high chance that you will then decide to take more lessons to make sure that you are progressing faster and safely.

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IS KITEBOARDING DANGEROUS?

YES and NO.
 Kiteboarding is still considered an extreme sport because of what the pro riders can do, like jumping 30m high and performing quite dangerous manoeuvres.
 But the sport has developed a great deal over the past decade, so much so that equipment now is very safe if used appropriately.
 Accidents do still happen, typically through either human error or equipment failure. Most often, it's human error and lapses in judgement that causes accidents. This is why the answer to this question is that kiteboarding is not dangerous when done safely. Therefore taking lessons at the beginning of your journey is crucial and must not be overlooked.

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HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The initial investment to start this sport is quite substantial, but it doesn't cost much more after that. So let's break down the costs:

Learning

- Introductory five-day course (or 15h private tuition) – depending on location, costs between €500-900.
- Additional 10-20h of private lessons to reach an independent kiteboarder level might cost another €500-700, depending on your progression.

Equipment

- Wetsuits, harnesses and any other extra layers are usually bought new and will cost around €200-500, depending on what brand you choose.
- Board – if new, depending on the brand, costs anywhere from €350-600, but as the boards are hard to break, you can easily find some used ones in various online marketplaces for €200-400.
- The kite and bar will differ depending on the brand, size and year of the model. The prices average €700-1500 per kite and around €300-400 for a bar if new. You can find used equipment for at least 30-40% cheaper in online marketplaces, but you have to make sure that equipment is not older than 2012 and, ideally, as new as you can get. This is because the safety aspect of the equipment has changed dramatically over the past years. There is a substantial difference in the kite performance from 2012 and 2016-17 models, not even considering the brand new releases.

Reoccurring costs

- As much as we would like to say that once you had your lessons and got your gear, there are no more costs involved, you still should consider the reoccurring cost.
- Renewing the gear every 2-3 years. Wetsuits break and stretch, harness loosens up (maybe you lose weight because of all this exercise you are doing). But every once in a while, typically every few years, it will be time to upgrade your gear. Additionally, you will also want to change your kites and boards; if you looked after your equipment well, you should get at least 60% of your initial investment back when you sell it.
- Health Insurance. You should also consider updating your health, home or travel insurance to include watersports and especially kiteboarding in open waters (read the fine print as some providers exclude watersports in open water in

their policies). Also, check that it covers injuries or equipment damage for third parties. If not, you might consider getting a specialised Third party insurance policy for kiteboarding from IKO (<https://www.ikointl.com/kitesurf-insurance>) or BKSA (<https://www.britishkitesports.org/join-british-kitesports/british-kitesports-association-insurance-policy/>) or any others.

- Joining kiteboarding clubs or gaining access to kite beach. You might also experience that some locations have private access to the beach or clubs you need to join to kite there, and they might ask for a small yearly fee.

Travel

Unless you live at the kite spot, you should also add extra costs for travelling to windy locations. It might be just a few miles away or on another continent. If you choose this sport, you will have an urge to explore other beaches, and the travel costs add up, especially travelling abroad with large kiteboarding equipment bags or buying a van or a car just to go kiteboarding.



FOR THE FULL BOOK

go to

www.thekitespot.com/guide-to-kiteboarding/



To get a 10% discount for the Full book use code "ILOVETOKITE10" at checkout.

IN THE REST OF THE BOOK YOU WILL LEARN:

CHAPTER 2: EQUIPMENT 101

Learn about different kite shapes, control bar terminology, twintip board features, harness types, wetsuits, and other essential accessories. This chapter provides you with the knowledge to understand the terminology and make informed gear choices.

CHAPTER 3: WIND & FORECAST

Develop the skills to read wind direction, identify wind features and local effects, determine wind strength, understand water movements and tides, and interpret wind forecasts. This chapter empowers you to make informed decisions based on wind conditions.

CHAPTER 4: KITE CONTROL & SAFETY

Dive into the aerodynamics of kites, explore the Wind Window, learn kite control terminology, discover the importance of the sweet spot, find safe kiteboarding locations, and understand essential safety procedures such as self-rescue and packdown.

CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE

Learn how to launch and land kites, perform body dragging exercises, execute board starts, improve upwind riding, and enhance overall control on the water. This chapter provides practical exercises and techniques to refine your skills.

CHAPTER 6: EQUIPMENT 201

Discover what to consider when buying your first gear, explore suitable kites and boards for your progression, learn how to optimize kite performance, and gain insights into maintaining and caring for your equipment.

CHAPTER 7: INDEPENDENT RIDER

Explore international hand signals, understand 'right of way' rules, practice kiteboarding etiquette, learn how to assist other riders, master self-launching and landing techniques, and gain confidence to ride independently. This chapter also includes a helpful checklist to assess your readiness for independent kiteboarding.

THEKITESPOT.COM

GUIDE TO KITEBOARDING

FROM COMPLETE BEGINNER TO INDEPENDENT RIDER

This theoretical and practical guide is your ultimate companion to mastering the sport of kiteboarding.

Written by Samina Laurinaityte, a senior BKSA kiteboarding instructor and founder of thekitespot.com, this step-by-step guide takes you on a systematic progression from beginner to independent rider.

- Gain a deep understanding of the sport's history, equipment essentials, and terminology.
- Learn to interpret wind direction, identify local wind effects, and optimise your equipment selection based on wind strength.
- Explore the dynamics of kite aerodynamics, proper steering techniques, and critical safety procedures to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience on the water.
- Immerse yourself in a series of practice exercises designed to refine your techniques, from launching and landing kites to mastering body dragging and board starts.
- Acquire valuable gear selection, maintenance, and tuning knowledge, maximising your performance as you progress.
- Learn international hand signals, rules of the road, and essential kiteboarding etiquette, empowering you to ride confidently and responsibly.
- Take a comprehensive checklist, ensuring you are fully prepared for your solo kiteboarding adventures.

Detailed instructions and illustrations will guide you through each step, allowing you to understand and refine the skills that you already learned in your lessons at your own pace.

Whether you're a complete beginner or have some experience under your belt, this book adapts to your level and addresses common challenges faced by kiteboarders of all stages. With "Thekitespot.com Guide to Kiteboarding" as your trusted companion, you'll gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to become an independent kiteboarder and embrace the freedom that kiteboarding brings.