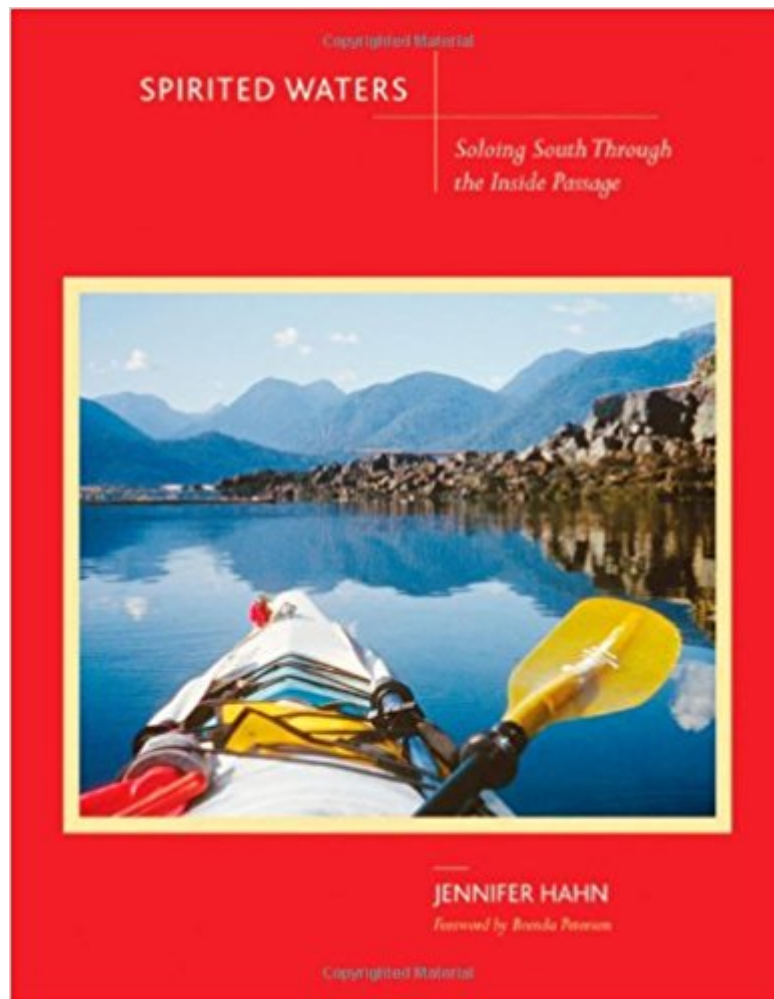


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# Spirited Waters: Soloing South Through The Inside Passage



## Synopsis

In this insightful account of her solo voyage in a 16-foot kayak, Hahn vividly relates the ecstatic moments and terrifying predicaments of paddling against the wind through Alaska's Inside Passage.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (23 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Adventurer, naturalist and narrator, Hahn takes the reader along through the spectacular scenery of a fabled coastline. Often pristine and wild, sometimes developed or abused, always interesting, sometimes scary. This is not another machismo assault of man-against-the-elements, this is Jennifer-and-the-sea. And she knows the sea well. This book is a good read. Inspirational and informative; enjoyable for knowledge gained (filling the plate at the "intertidal table") and emotions evoked ("At 2 A.M. I woke to hear food bags being shredded outside my tent..."). Spirited Waters is a spirited narrative of a modern grand adventure.

I read this book one winter day tucked safely and warmly under my bed covers. In the summer I signed up for a kayak trip with the author. Did the book inspire me--you bet! And I've been going on adventure trips ever since. I've bought the book for friends who love it as well. It's an exciting read but more importantly, for me, a life changer. Marilyn McLauchlan Bainbridge Island, Wa

This is the debut passage of a kayak guide whose fecund and original prose is reminiscent of Annie Dillard and John Muir. As if her exceptional natural history writing isn't enough, Jennifer Hahn is also

heritably wired--through the accidental deaths of her mother and brother--to the calculated risks of a modern day Odyssey. Her encounters with hairy bears, scary tiderips, lonely men, huge seas, and a spy-hopping gray whale are gripping and inspirational.

For those who have ever dreamed of taking a trip through Alaska's Inside Passage, Jennifer Hahn's *Spirited Waters* might be the closest thing to making that dream come true. With every page reader's can feel the freedom, the thrill, even the tension and moments of fear that Hahn experiences--whether cause by acts of nature (predictable and unpredictable) or acts of people along the way (well-intentioned or otherwise). Motivated in part by the untimely deaths of her mother (when Hahn was a young girl) and then her brother when he was just 32 and in part by the persistent "whispers" of her own dreams, Hahn knew "it was time." "Dreams," Hahn says, "I've learned have the patience of Job. Like mushroom mycelium, they can live underground for years, laying a vast framework while awaiting an opportune rainstorm to waggle their fruits. Unbeknownst to me," she continues, "such a storm was approaching as I strode into my early thirties...Whatever dreams lay sleeping inside me; my intuition said I'd better roust them ASAP. For all I knew, like my adventurous mom and my brother, I might not live past my mid-thirties, either." Armed with the survival skills she had learned over the years and had been teaching for almost 15 years, as well as the tools of survival she could fit into her kayak, Yemaya, she set off--alone!" Kayaking, "she says, "offers the traveler one of the most holistic and sensual rides," largely because one can move "at a walking pace" in a kayak. At maybe three miles per hour (if there's no wind or current) the traveler can observe--see, hear, feel--the smallest details in the water, the flora, the fauna, even the wind and the water current. Hahn's adventure--72 days on the water--spanned two summers and two springs with breaks in between during the most unrelenting Alaskan climate. While she spares no details, readers flow through the pages and the chapters as smoothly and adventurously as Hahn flowed through the Inside Passage. As impressive as the thoroughly engaging and often poetic prose are Hahn's delightful, detailed maps and illustration of birds, plants, flowers, and animal tracks. This is a thoroughly enjoyable book, laden with wonderful insights, tales of trials and trails, and exciting accounts of seemingly endless adventures.

*Spirited Waters* is not just another run of the mill, macho adventure story. Don't get me wrong, you'll find plenty of excitement, danger, and a wonderful guide to roughing it in the remote Pacific Northwest, but this book offers so much more. This is a moving journey of self discovery in one of the last great wildernesses of the Pacific Coast. Hahn is a true wild woman whose love of the

natural world makes her stories lush with detail, a succulent feast for your mind's eye. I've finally found my ideal wilderness adventure reading, a beautiful narrative inspired by a passion for all things wild, and written from the heart.

This book was on a reading list in advance of an upcoming trip my wife and I are making to Alaska. And as an avid kayaker, I'm a sucker for sea kayaking travel logs, especially for a place so foreign to a Southerner. Unlike some of the reviewers, I have no problem that journey was taken in segments, or that the writer diverged into a variety of topics outside of the actual trip. Jennifer is an excellent writer. I found her descriptions of the scenery to be vivid, effectively using metaphors to bring to life what she encountered along the way. She successfully whetted my appetite for my trip - Alaska sounds like an absolutely exquisite place. On other hand, her descriptions of how to find and prepare edible plants and seafare were interesting in small doses, but the topic took a lot more space than I expected in a kayaking book. Last, I thought she played the New Age "spirit" thing a bit heavy - on every other page she's praying to an otter, and eagle, a whale - whatever... Maybe its just me, but it made her come off a bit flaky? In short, I would loved a bit more about "Waters" and a little less "spirits"... Nevertheless, its worth the read just to take in the scenery of her trip.

Unlike the other negative reviews, I didn't mind this wasn't done in one stint. I respect the fact that the woman has a real job, and needs to make money. But there was so much else to dislike. First, what kind of kayaking instructor doesn't look into the wind directions? Second, what is with analogies for how red something... Jen, I'm a guy, I don't know how red menstrual blood... duh!! Third... I hated her taking rides when the going got tough. Fourth... the last few chapters had more fluff, and less kayaking data... meaning she wanted to extend it a few more pages. This is a boring read.

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