

Fieldcraft Skill Series

Constructing a Coracle



When the ancient Britons needed to or wanted to cross a stream, they used a raft known as a *Coracle*.

They made the wreath-shaped frame for the raft on the stream bank from the available brushwood, sticks, and twigs; and then covered it with an animal hide.

You can make your own coracle from twigs, brush and flexible branches, forming them together into a ring, and tying it together with heavy cord. You can use a waterproof tarp or canvas to cover the outside of the ring - or "wreath" - instead of an animal hide to make your coracle water-worthy.



Start a coracle by placing twenty - 2 foot long stakes in two concentric circles, the inner circle approximately 5 feet in diameter.



Fill space between circles with twigs and flexible branches, building up the wreath and weaving the branches together, and then tie the brush into a crude wreath with binders twine or cord.



Run rope crisscross into a spider-like web around the wreath and across the bottom of the opening of the wreath, and place sticks on it for sitting. Finish the coracle by tying a waterproof tarp around the wreath.



The finished coracle will float very close to the surface of the water, so it may be necessary to construct a second coracle to float your equipment and supplies across the water you are crossing.