Picking the right board

There are several schools of thought when it comes to surfing. Sure there are paddle surfers, kayak surfers, surf fishermen, kite surfers, and a million more variations sure to come. But when it comes to the real nitty-gritty, surfers are either long-boarders or short-boarders.

Long-boarding

This is the original form of surf dating back to the Hawaiians, Peruvians and Polynesians. The bigger the board, the easier it is to catch a wave and to stand up. Once up, you cruise. Some do handstands. Some walk forwards, backwards and dance. You might even "get your toes on the nose!" Long-boarding is the easiest to learn and usually the gateway to surfing. Once you get the hang of paddling, picking waves, popping up and surfing on in, you can move down in board size as you improve.

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- For smaller to mid-sized waves
- Easy to stand
- Easy to balance
- Hard to start but easy to maintain momentum
- That means you should start paddling sooner to catch a wave
- Difficult to maneuver surfboard upon wave
- Can move up and down a wave but don't expect any 360 aerials

- Easier to maneuver your body upon board while riding
- Front to back
- Toes on the nose!
- Headstands
- Spins

- Turtle/Alligator Roll
- Best way to get past breaking waves

Short-boarding

This is the action packed, carve 'em up, cut 'em back, 360-spin, show off or shove off form of the sport. You may think of Kelly Slater or Keanu Reeves and the late great Patrick Swayze trying to be Kelly Slater in the movie Point Break. Short boards are easier to carry and easier to paddle out in heavier surf, but more difficult to catch waves or to stand on (let alone sit on!) and to stay on once you catch those waves. There is a steep learning curve to riding a short board, so be patient, or get started on a long board first.

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- Made for larger waves
- Harder to stand
- Harder to balance

- Easy to start but harder to maintain momentum
- Can begin paddling later than on long boards
- Made for maneuverability upon waves
- Cutbacks
- Aerials
- Not made for dancing upon