

Focus On Yachting

Your Guide to Buying, Renting and Sailing Yachts

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Yachts Aren't for Everyone!

Owning a yacht is by no means a small financial venture. Yachts can range in price from a few thousand dollars to basically unlimited. It's not rare to see them auctioning for more than a few million dollars. Even if you opt for a less expensive yacht you have to consider maintenance.

Every year you can expect to spend about 10% of the total price of your yacht in maintenance. A Yacht is a type of boat; as such it will be in the water for most of its life. Constant contact with the elements and with water takes its toll. This is amplified ten-fold if you have your yacht on sea water. Salt and other minerals wreak absolute havoc on the exterior of the yacht as well as the mechanical components inside.

Aside from initial cost and maintenance, you get to worry about licenses and permits to use your yacht depending on where you live. If you're yacht is bound for sea, you'll probably want to have a port to keep it at. Most of these places will have a monthly rate of around \$15/ft. and usually have a minimum (such as 30 ft. minimum). For an average-sized yacht of 45ft you're looking at \$675 a month, just for your yacht to have a place to stay!

Before you decide if owning a yacht is really for you, make sure you consider the financial and logistical challenges that lay ahead. Owning a yacht is an extremely fun and rewarding experience that you'll enjoy for years to come. All the same, if you're not financially or mentally prepared to own and maintain a yacht, it could be a decision you end up regretting some time down the road. If you're sure that you are fully prepared to enter the world of yacht ownership, or at least yacht enthusiasm, then let's get started! We'll start at the bare-bones basics and before you know it you'll be

a veritable expert on what a yacht is, how you can buy or rent one and where you should take it once you get it!

What is a Yacht?

A yacht is a recreational boat, often of a luxury variety. The term originated from the Dutch Jacht meaning "hunt." It was originally defined as a light, fast sailing vessel used by the Dutch navy to pursue pirates and other transgressors around and into the shallow waters of the Low Countries. After its selection by Charles II of England as the vessel of choice to return to Britain from Holland for his restoration, it came to be used to convey important persons.

In modern use the term designates two rather different classes of watercraft, sailing and power boats. Yachts are different from working ships mainly by their leisure purpose, and it was not until the rise of the steamboat and other types of powerboat that sailing vessels in general came to be perceived as luxury, or recreational vessels. Later the term came to encompass motor boats for primarily private pleasure purposes as well.

Yacht lengths generally range from 20 feet up to hundreds of feet. A luxury craft that is smaller than 40 feet is more commonly called a cabin cruiser or simply a "cruiser." A mega yacht generally refers to any yacht (sail or power) above 100 ft. and a super yacht generally refers to any yacht over 200 ft. This size is small in relation to typical cruise liners and oil tankers.

History

Yacht (pronounced like "Yott" where it rhymes with "pot") was originally defined as a light, fast sailing vessel used by the Dutch navy to pursue pirates and other transgressors around and into the shallow waters of the Low Countries. They were also used for non-military governmental roles such

as customs duties and delivering pilots to waiting ships. The latter use attracted the attention of wealthy Dutch merchants who began to build private yachts so they could be taken out to greet their returning ships.

Soon wealthy individuals began to use their 'Jachts' for pleasure trips. By the start of the 17th century 'Jachts' came in two broad categories- speel-jachts for sport and oorlog-jachts for naval duties. By the middle of the century large 'jacht' fleets were found around the Dutch coast and the Dutch states organized large 'reviews' of private and war yachts for special occasions, thus putting in place the groundwork for the modern sport of yachting. Jachts of this period varied greatly in size, from around 40 ft. in length to being equal to the lower classes of the ship of the line. All had a form of fore/aft gaff rig with a flat bottom and lee boards to allow operations in shallow waters. The gaff rig remained the principal rig found on small European yachts for centuries until giving way to the 'Bermudan sloop' rig in the 1960s.

Charles II of England spent part of his time in exile during the period of the Commonwealth of England in the Netherlands and became keen on sailing. He returned to England in 1660 aboard a Dutch yacht. During his reign Charles commissioned 24 Royal Yachts on top of the two presented to him by Dutch states on his restoration. As the fashion for yachting spread throughout the English aristocracy yacht races began to become common. Other rich individuals in Europe built yachts as the sport spread. Yachting therefore became a purely recreational form of sailing with no commercial or military function, which still serves a broad definition of both the sport and of the vessel.

How Are Yachts Made?

Until the 1950s, almost all yachts were made of wood or steel, but a much wider range of materials is used today. Although wood hulls are still in production, the most common construction material is fiberglass, followed by aluminum, steel, carbon fiber, and ferro-cement (rarer because of insurance difficulties). The use of wood has changed and is no longer limited to traditional board-based methods, but also includes modern products such as plywood, veneers and epoxy resins. Wood is mostly used by hobbyists or wooden boat purists when building an individual boat.

Classifications of Yachts

Sailing yachts

Sailing yachts can range in overall length (Length Over All—LOA, in yachting parlance) from about 20 ft. to well over 100 ft., where the distinction between a yacht and a ship becomes blurred. Most privately owned yachts fall in the range of about 25–45 ft.; the cost of building and keeping a yacht rises quickly as length increases. In the U.S., sailors tend to refer to smaller yachts as sailboats, while referring to the general sport of sailing as yachting. Within the limited context of sailboat racing, a yacht is any sailing vessel taking part in a race, regardless of size.

Modern yachts have efficient sail-plans, most notably the Bermuda rig, that allows them to sail towards the wind. This capability is the result of a sail-plan and hull design.

Day sailing yachts

Day sailing yachts are usually small, at less than 20 ft. in length. Sometimes called dinghies, they often have a retractable keel, centerboard, or dagger board. Most day-sailing yachts do not have a cabin, as they are designed for hourly or daily use and not for overnight journeys. At best they may have a 'cubby', where the front part of the hull has a raised solid roof to provide a place to store equipment or to offer basic shelter from wind or spray.

Weekender yachts

Weekender yachts are slightly larger, at less than 30 ft. in length. They often have twin keels or lifting keels such as in trailer sailors. This allows them to operate in shallow waters, and if needed "dry out"—become beached as the tide falls. The hull shape (or twin-keel layout) allows the boat to sit upright when there is no water. Such boats are designed to undertake short journeys, rarely lasting more than 2 or 3 days (hence their name).

In coastal areas, long trips may be undertaken in a series of short hops. Weekendenders usually have only a simple cabin, often consisting of a single "saloon" with beds pace for two to three people. Clever use of ergonomics allows space in the saloon for a galley (kitchen), seating, and navigation equipment. There is limited space for stores of water and food.

Most are single-masted "Bermuda sloops" (not to be confused with the type of traditional Bermudian ship known as a Bermuda sloop), with a single foresail of the jib or genoa type and a single mainsail (one variation of the aforementioned Bermuda rig). Some are gaff rigged. The smallest of this type, generally called pocket yachts or pocket cruisers, and trailer sailors can be transported on special trailers.

Cruising yachts

Cruising yachts are by the far the most common yacht in private use, making up most of the 25 to 45 ft. range. These vessels can be quite complex in design, as they need a balance between docile handling qualities, interior space, good light-wind performance and on-board comfort. The huge range of such craft, from dozens of builders worldwide, makes it hard to give a single illustrative description. However, most favor a teardrop-planform hull, with a wide, flat bottom and deep single-fin keel to give good stability. Most are single-masted Bermuda rigged sloops, with a single fore-sail of the jib or Genoa type and a single mainsail.

Spinnaker sails, in various sizes, are often supplied for down-wind use. These types are often chosen as family vessels, especially those in the 26 to 40-foot range. Such a vessel will usually have many cabins below deck. Typically there will be three double-berth cabins; a single large saloon with galley, seating and navigation equipment; and a "head" consisting of a toilet and shower-room.

Most large yachts, 50 ft. and up, are also cruisers, but their design varies greatly as they are often "one off" designs tailored to the specific needs of the buyer. The interior is often finished in wood paneling, with plenty of storage space. Cruisers are quite capable of taking on long-range passages of many thousands of miles. Such boats have a cruising speed upwards of 6 knots. This basic design is typical of the standard types produced by the major yacht-builders.

Luxury sailing yachts

Luxury Sailing Yachts are generally 82 ft. or longer. Recently these types of yachts have adapted and evolved from simple sailing boats to sophisticated, luxurious ships. This is largely due to reduced hull-building costs thanks to

the introduction of fiberglass hulls and increased automation and assembly line techniques for yacht building, especially in Europe.

Every modern convenience from TV and Electricity to Restrooms and, in some cases, even tennis courts can be found on very large luxury yachts (130ft and larger). These are usually very automated and use things like computer-controlled winches to adjust the sails. This requires highly specialized and dedicated power generation systems. Electricity use in yachts has come a long way in the past few years.

Even in the early 90's it was not common for a 25-foot yacht to have electric lighting. Now all but the smallest, most basic yachts have electric lighting, radio, and navigation aids such as Global Positioning Systems. Yachts around 33 ft. usually have amenities such as hot water, pressurized water systems, and refrigerators as well as radar, echo-sounding and autopilot systems. In this case, the auxiliary engine also performs the vital function of powering an alternator to provide electrical power and to recharge the yacht's batteries. For yachts engaged on long-range cruising, wind-, water- and solar-powered generators can perform the same function.

Racing yachts

Inshore yacht racing in Sydney Harbor, Australia

Racing yachts try to reduce the wetted surface area, which creates drag, by keeping the hull light whilst having a deep and heavy bulb keel, allowing them to support a tall mast with a great sail area. Modern designs tend to have a very wide beam and a flat bottom, to provide buoyancy preventing an excessive heel angle. Speeds of up to 35 knots can be attained in extreme conditions.

Dedicated offshore racing yachts sacrifice crew comfort for speed, having basic accommodation to reduce weight. Depending on the type of

race, such a yacht may have a crew of 15 or more. Very large inshore racing yachts may have a crew of 30. At the other extreme are "single handed" races, where one person alone must control the yacht.

Yacht races may be over a simple course of only a few miles, as in the harbor racing of the International One Design; long-distance, open-ocean races, like the Bermuda Race; or epic trans-global contests such as the Global Challenge, Volvo Ocean Race, and Clipper Round the World Race.

Propulsion

The motive force being the wind, sailing is more economical and environmentally friendly than any other means of propulsion. A hybrid type of vessel is a motor sailing yacht that can use either sail or propulsion (or both) as conditions dictate.

Many "pure" sailing yachts are also equipped with a low-power internal-combustion engine for use in conditions of calm and when entering or leaving difficult anchorages. Vessels less than 25 ft. in length generally carry a petrol outboard-motor of between 5 and 40 horsepower (3.5 and 30 kW). Larger vessels have in-board diesel engines of between 20 and 100 horsepower (15 and 75 kW) depending on size. In the common 25 to 45-foot class, engines of 20 to 40 horsepower are the most common.

Hull types

Monohull yachts are typically fitted with a fixed keel or a centerboard (adjustable keel) below the waterline to counterbalance the overturning force of wind on the vessel's sails. Multihull yachts use two hulls (catamarans) or three (trimarans) widely separated from each other to provide a stable base that resists overturning and allows for sailing in shallower waters than most keeled monohulls.

Motor yachts

Motor yachts generally fit into the following categories:

- Day cruiser yacht (no cabin, sparse amenities such as refrigerator and plumbing)
- Weekender yacht (one or two basic cabins, basic galley appliances and plumbing)
- Cruising yacht (sufficient amenities to allow for living aboard for extended periods)
- Sport fishing yacht (yacht with living amenities and sporting fishing equipment)
- Luxury yacht (similar to the last three types of yachts, with more luxurious finishings/amenities)

Propulsion

Motor yachts typically have one or two internal combustion engines that burn diesel fuel. Biodiesel for marine propulsion is in the experimental stage (e.g. Earthrace). Depending on engine size, fuel costs may make motor yachts more expensive to operate than sailing yachts. However, for smaller engine

sizes, operating costs are comparable to sailing vessels, due to the high cost of sails, which require regular replacement.

Hull types

The shape of a motor yacht's hull may be based on displacement, planing, or in between. Although monohulls have long been the standard in motor yachts, multihulls are gaining in popularity.

How to Buy a Yacht

This is a touchy subject because yachts can range in price from a few thousand dollars to many millions of dollars! Depending on what kind of yacht you're looking for and just how opulent you're willing to get, it may be ultimately more affordable to simply rent a yacht. Before you purchase a yacht, remember the very first section of this book. Do you have the funds to purchase the yacht? Can you afford about 10% of that every single year for maintenance? Do you have a place to put your yacht or a way to pay for porting? If you answered yes to all of those questions then you're ready to start looking for a yacht.

The Basic Idea

- Secure your finances. You should understand how you will finance the boat before you ever step foot in a yacht showroom. Without proper financing, a boat has a very great chance of becoming a hole in the water into which you'll end up pouring money. Also, understanding your financing will give a solid idea of your budget.
- Decide between new and used yachts. Both the new and used yacht markets are large and active, and both have advantages and disadvantages. New boats are sold at a very high premium when compared with relatively new used boats. Second-hand yachts, however, may be cheaper but include a certain amount of risk and uncertainty about the boat's history and structural integrity.
- Know your purposes for the yacht. A harbor gem designed to show your friends and have lunch on is a very different boat than a serious cruiser or ocean-going vessel. You need to know exactly what you'll be using the yacht for before you buy anything.

- Consider a brokerage. If you're looking to the upper-end of the market, a brokerage can give you a little bit of assurance that the boat came from a reputable owner and is in good shape. If you don't want to spend too much money, look at your local classifieds and marinas to see what's out there.
- Get a professional survey. Having an expert survey the boat is not an option. You must get the boat fully inspected for any damage or problems before you even seriously consider buying it. Hire a professional to complete this important part of the process

Advanced Tips

Used or New?

Consider your option of new or used carefully. There are very good values to be had in used boats. More first time buyers purchase new boats, while experienced boaters more often buy used. And with good reason. Experienced boaters know that there is better value dollar for dollar in many used boats than new ones. They've already had the experience of taking a big hit in depreciation, along with the high cost of financing involved in a new boat purchase. To help decide which is right for you, consider the following.

When we track the depreciation curve for many of the most popular builder's models by determining the net annual loss in resale value, we find that the higher the vessel quality, the sooner the depreciation curve will flatten out. That means that higher quality boats proportionately lose less value than lower quality vessels. For the above mentioned builders, the flattening out usually starts around five years, so that by the time a vessel is 6 years old, the annual loss of value is only a few percentage points.

If you truly want to know what the annual cost of ownership is, add in the total principle plus interest to the annual operation and maintenance costs. Then, simply subtract the anticipated residual value and divide by the number of years owned. For a new boat, this can be an enormous sum each and every year. Perform the same calculation for the purchase of an 8 year old vessel and the cost of ownership comes to only a fraction of that of a new vessel.

A general rule of thumb is that a new boat purchase works out better for the owner who keeps a boat longer than the average four years, or at least through the bottoming out of the depreciation curve. Obviously, the longer a boat is owned, the less the annual cost becomes. However, that doesn't help much as far as residual value is concerned unless we consider the original cost versus anticipated resale value.

Once we do this, we understand that what they told us was really true: boats, like automobiles, are not an investment but a major expense. If you plan to only own the vessel for a few years, or you anticipate that there is a chance you may have to sell, by far a used boat will be your better value.

Gasoline & Diesel Engines

Within the size range of 25-35 feet, it is a myth that diesel power is more economical than gas. After about four years, diesel engines become much more costly to own and maintain. When a gas engine goes bad, it can be rebuilt or replaced for a few thousand dollars while we measure the costs of diesel overhauls in the tens of thousands. Unless one plans to get a lot of use from his boat, gas engines are usually a better choice for boats up to 35 feet.

With used boats, don't make the mistake of equating low hour meter readings with good engine condition. For the most part, engine hours mean little because engines deteriorate over time. Engines that are little used, gas

or diesel, are often in worse condition for the lack of use. Also, don't succumb to the myth that marine diesels last for thousands of hours. They don't. The average time between major repairs is around 6-7 years (around 1500 hours). Marine engines deteriorate rapidly in a salt water environment.

Good boats with bad engines can turn out to be a good buy when comparing price differentials against a newer boat purchase, particularly for smaller boats, and boats with gas engines where engine replacements are easier. Many buyers find that they can get a good buy in a boat with clapped out engines and rebuilding or replacing them. If you don't mind the trouble, it may be worth making the price comparison. If the price works out, you end up with a boat with new engines, a real comfort to any boat owner.

“Vintage” Vessels

While used boats can represent good value, this is true only up to a point. The problem with some boats once they get beyond 10-12 years is deferred maintenance. It is an unfortunate fact of life that many boat owners cut a lot of corners when making repairs, additions or improvements.

This is particularly true when it comes to mechanical, electrical and plumbing. While the interior may be beautiful, major systems may have been ignored. On good quality boats, repairs are often done to a much lower standard than the original, so that by the time a decade has gone by, there may be a lot of substandard maintenance and jury-rigging.

Also bear in mind what type of boat you're buying. Some boats have hull parts that are completely closed off and cannot be accessed. These don't pose problems for new boat owners but after years of wear and tear there may be leaks in those areas. Since the hulls are sealed off you have no way of knowing or being able to patch the leaks in an emergency.

Ownership Costs & Maintenance

In addition to purchase price, interest and depreciation, the cost of ownership includes maintenance and repairs, something owners rarely consider. For new boats, maintenance is low for the first three years or so. After three years costs start increasing significantly. Regardless of type, major machinery will often require major repairs in years 5-7. There's a reason why warranties expire when they do, and that's because that's when the breakdowns begin to happen. If you buy a new 40' motor yacht and sell it after 3-4 years, annual maintenance is likely to average around 4%. The longer you own it, the more it will increase as things wear out and breakdown. The first big hit usually comes when an engine or generator goes bad somewhere between 5-7 years. Obviously, if you own the vessel this long, suddenly the annual average takes a big leap. If you're buying used, then you have to be prepared for this, whether it's an unexpected blister repair job, or some other problem that's not covered by insurance. Of course, with a used boat, that fifty or hundred thousand you saved off the new price more than makes up for "big bill."

The point is that in compiling averages, over time we know that costs can be reduced to annual percentages for which an owner should be prepared. For twin screw diesel motor yachts or fishermen, a ten year average will run around 7% annually. After ten years even more. This accounts for all types of maintenance from bottom painting to pump replacements and engine overhauls. Moreover, this assumes that there is little or no deferred maintenance, and for a boat owned since new. If you're getting into a used boat with considerable deferred maintenance, that annual average can increase dramatically, especially when serious problems gang up on you all at once.

Purchase Agreements

Make sure that your purchase agreement allows you to cancel the deal if the vessel does not meet your standards. Include a stipulation that the sea trial must be conducted in open water for a minimum of two hours.

If the seller warrants that he will repair any defects, make sure that you get that in writing, preferably with a maximum dollar amount attached. It is not wise to allow the seller to repair deficiencies himself. The reason should be obvious, but many buyers overlook the possibility that the repairs that the seller makes may not be satisfactory. Indeed, they often aren't. The best procedure is to negotiate a dollar reduction to the sales price and make the repairs yourself, even if there is an element of uncertainty as to cost. Of course you should get cost estimates on deficiencies, and better still a contract price.

If you can't get away from the seller making repairs, at least stipulate in the contract that the repair firm must be mutually agreeable to both buyer and seller. What you're looking to avoid is the shade-tree mechanic who doesn't do the job right.

Remember that the broker represents the seller, not you, the buyer. If you want to believe their representations, make them put it in writing. That way you have a contract, not just a sales pitch.

When concluding the Deal Don't be too quick to condemn an otherwise good boat that has a major problem, such as a bad engine. If you've done your homework and have researched more than just a few boats, you know what is available and at what price. The old saying that the devil you know is better than the one you don't applies.

If you can get serious defects repaired well within economic range, you'll probably end up with a better boat than the next one you look at. The

reason is simple: if the problem has manifested, it has become known. When you're looking at boats of comparable age, chances are those boats are also well on the way to having similar problems. Therefore, the more problems that can be discovered and repaired, the better off you'll be.

To Review

- Make quality a major consideration. Don't try to get the largest vessel that your budget will allow. Better to take a step down in size and a step up in quality.
- If size is a major consideration, seriously consider used versus new as a means of staying within your budget.
- Look beyond glamorous interiors, luxurious upholstery and racy designs: the beauty may only be skin deep.
- Calculate the full cost of ownership, including depreciation, interest, insurance, dockage, fuel and repairs. Figure maintenance as an annual percentage over the period of ownership.
- Seriously consider gas rather than diesel for boats under 35' for which you don't expect to get much use.
- Once you've decided on several possibilities, take a tour of a marina or boat yard and see how the products of those builders hold up over the years. Talk to their owners and see what they have to say.
- Consult a surveyor before you buy. Most surveyors will be glad to help you make a choice.
- Take the time to find the best surveyor in your area.
- Make your purchase decision only after you've read the survey report

- Consider the advantage of getting major machinery or parts overhauled or replaced based on a reduction in price.

How to Rent a Yacht

People who do not have the time or financial access to purchase their own yacht can still enjoy the ride and luxury of a yacht vacation or weekend. Owning a yacht is a big commitment of time, which most people don't have. Anyone who would like to take a weekend vacation or even a longer yachting vacation can do so by renting a yacht. This is an economical and time saving alternative to owning one. If your plans only involve an occasional getaway, renting a yacht may be a smarter alternative as well. If you'd like to cruise the open seas but don't want to invest in your own yacht, just rent one for a week or two. Yachts are a great way to experience the sea while still having all the comforts of home.

Here are the steps you can take to get going with your Yacht:

1. Decide where you're going on your trip. This will help determine which company the yacht will need to be rented from. Although there are many companies out there that offer yacht rentals, they may not be located at your planned destination. Some yacht rental companies even limit the destinations of their yachts. If there are a limited number of rentals available from your favorite company at the time of the vacation, consider changing the destination or travel time, since the right rental company can make all of the difference
1. Call the rental company in the area of departure to find out pricing information, any restrictions they place on the rental of yachts, and the insurance requirements. Ask for all of the specifications that will add costs and restrict the yachting adventure. Many companies will have websites with all of their information. Or, you can have a travel agent find the

companies and contact them for you; a travel agent or yacht broker can help plan the vacation and secure all the information.

2. Make a list of the amenities that the yacht should have to make the trip pleasurable. Plan a budget of how much can be spent for these amenities. List the amenities in order of priority. Not all yachts will have all the amenities so be prepared to know which ones are optional and which ones are required. This list will help narrow the yacht choices.
3. Travel to a local boat show to find luxury yachts owned by private individuals who are interested in renting them. These luxury yachts can rent for an extravagant amount of money but if the travel group is large, it may be worth the extra expense. Going to a boat show will also provide an opportunity to explore the different types of yachts before making a decision about which rental to select.
4. Remember the basics. Find out beforehand if the rental fees include fuel costs, food and beverage expenses, customs fees, taxes or any other costs. Get information on what, if any, staff will accompany you on the yacht and which services they'll provide.
5. Secure a written agreement about the total costs of the yacht rental. Find out how much the rental fee actually is and if this includes fuel costs. Be sure to consider the costs of food and beverages, any custom fees that may be incurred when traveling, taxes that may need to be paid etc. Will the rental fee include a captain or a staff, and if so how many staff members will be on board and what will each one be in charge of? Learning all the expenses and related details will make the yacht rental vacation pleasurable and relaxing.

How To Get A Free Yacht!

Okay, so the title of this chapter seems a little sensationalist. Obviously this is not going to work 100% of the time but the point of this book is to appeal to people of all budgets so if buying and renting conventional yachts is way out of your price range, this may be the solution for you!

Wooden Boat" magazine has a "free boats" section in every issue.

Any harbormaster can show you some free boats.

They're especially plentiful in the northeast in the fall.

Divorce season, whenever that is, produces lots of project boats that "must be removed from my yard before such-and-such a date".

Yacht and Boat Safety Tips!

Private Yacht Safety

Have you recently made plans to charter a private yacht? If so, when is your trip coming? Is it quickly approaching? While the chartering of a private yacht can be fun and exciting, it is also important that you place a focus on safety. When on a privately chartered yacht, you are literally at the mercy of the waters and your yacht crew. Although it may seem like the situation is out of your hands, there are a number of different ways that you can go about protecting yourself. Just a few of those ways are touched on below.

Perhaps, the best thing that you can do is tour your yacht. Although you might want to start enjoying your vacation right away, you will also want to know the ins and outs of your yacht. Whether you choose to explore every inch of the yacht yourself or if you ask the crew to give you a quick tour, you are advised to do so. In the event of an emergency, this may come in handy.

In addition to getting a generalized tour of your privately chartered yacht, you will also want to know about safety, namely where the safety devices or supplies are. All privately chartered yachts should come equipped with items like lifejackets or floatable rafts. While these items may help you in an emergency, you must first know where they are. It may also be a good idea to learn to how send out a distress signal in the event that anything happens to your yacht crew. It is also important to know where all first aid items, like first aid kits, are.

As with any trip that you take, you are advised to know where you are going and when. This information should not only be used for yourself, but it should also be given to your family and friends. For instance, does your

privately chartered yacht adventure involve docking in foreign ports? If so, you will definitely want to let your friends or family members know where you will be going. If you will not be given a copy of your itinerary, you are urged to create your own. Give a few copies of that itinerary to those that you know. Should you not return when you are supposed to, they may be able to contact the proper authorities.

Since you will, essentially, be vacationing on the open waters, it is advised that you know how to swim. Although many privately chartered yacht journeys go off without a hitch, you never really know. That is why it is advised that you know how to swim. If you do not consider yourself to be an experienced swimmer, you may want to think about taking a refresher training course. If you are traveling with children, it is also advised that they know how to swim. Many local community centers, like YMCA's, offer low-cost or affordably priced swimming lessons, for individuals of all ages. For your own safety and even a sense of security, you are advised to take one of these training courses or lessons.

While the above mentioned safety tips may be able to help you stay safe, it is also important to remember that there are some circumstances that may be out of your hands. For that reason, you are urged to look into travel insurance, especially if you are planning on chartering a private yacht for an extended period of time.

General Boating Safety Advice

1. Be Weather-Wise

Always check local weather conditions for boating safety the day before and of departure. TV and radio forecasts can be a good source of information. If you notice darkening clouds, rough changing winds, or sudden drops in

temperature, play it safe by getting off the water. View the current forecast by postcode.

2. Follow A Pre-Departure Checklist

Proper boating safety means being prepared for any possibility on the water. From safety regulation compliance to tips on refueling, following a pre-departure checklist is the best way to make sure no boating safety rules or precautions have been forgotten. Things to include in your checklist:

- Have I checked the weather?
- Is my boat license and registration current?
- Have I made myself familiar with the area I am going?
- Check the tide to ensure the ramp is suitable for launching.
- Checked the boat for defects and note any required repairs.
- Do I have enough fuel for the round trip, plus reserves?
- Do I have sufficient water and food for the return trip, plus reserves?
- Is all the appropriate safety equipment onboard and in working order?
- Have I shown my passengers where the safety equipment is and how to use it?
- Have I advised a reliable person of my boating plan? This is best written down and handed to the person prior to your departure. Include where you are going and when you plan to be back as well as the number of passengers on board and type of radio and emergency beacon you are carrying. These details are very helpful in an emergency.

Some of the following safety equipment is required by law - you should check the laws with your local authority. Safety equipment can include:

- Oars
- Knife
- Rope
- Radio
- Torch
- Mirror
- Flares
- Boat hook
- First aid kit
- Drinking water
- Fire extinguisher
- Bailer or bucket
- Chart and compass
- Anchor chain and rope
- Buoyancy aids, life jackets
- Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB)

3. Use Common Sense

One of the most important parts of boating safety is to use your common sense. This means operating at a safe speed at all times, especially in busy areas. Be alert at all times. Steer clear of large vessels and watercraft that can be restricted in their ability to stop or turn. Also be respectful of buoys and other navigational aids, all of which have been placed there for one reason only- to ensure your own boating safety.

4. Designate An Assistant Skipper

Make sure more than one person on board is familiar with all aspects of your boat's handling and safe operation. If the primary navigator is injured or incapacitated in any way, it's important to make sure someone else can follow the proper boating safety rules to get everyone else back to shore.

5. Develop A Float Plan

Whether you choose to inform a family member or staff at your local marina always be sure let someone else know your float plan in terms of where you're going and how long you're going to be gone.

A float plan can include the following information: name, address, and phone number of trip leader; name and number of all passengers; boat type and registration information; trip itinerary; types of communication and signal equipment onboard.

6. Make Proper Use Of Lifejackets

Did you know that the majority of drowning victims as the result of boating accidents were found not to be wearing a Lifejacket? Hundreds of people all over the world lose their lives each year in recreational boating accidents and most of them are from drowning. Make sure that your family and friends aren't part of this statistic by assigning and fitting each member of your onboard team with a Lifejacket-prior to departure. See link below for more information on lifejackets.

7. The Facts About Boating And Alcohol

One third of all boating fatalities involve alcohol. The blood alcohol limit on the water is the same as on the roads – 0.05%. Extra care is needed as the wind; waves and the sun combine to multiply the effects of alcohol. Your chances of disorientation and drowning are dramatically increased.

8. LEARN TO SWIM

If you're going to be in and around the water, proper boating safety means knowing how to swim.

9. Take A Boating Course

Beginning boaters and experienced experts alike need be familiar with boating safety rules of operation. Boater education requirements vary by state- some require validated completion of at least one boating safety course. Regardless of your individual state's requirements, it's always important to be educated, aware and prepared for every circumstance that might arise. It could save your life or the life of someone you love.

You can learn boating safety rules by taking a local community course. Search our Directory for Boating Courses in your area.

10. Children's Safety

Buy a good Lifejacket or life vest with a collar that turns a child face up in the water. It must have strong waist and crotch straps, a handle on the collar, and preferably be a bright yellow or orange color for good visibility.

Attach a plastic safety whistle to the Lifejacket and teach the child how to use the whistle - and practice using it. Additionally, ensure that children thoroughly understand safety procedures and can respond appropriately in an emergency. Practice safety drills and situation role-plays so that emergency procedures become second nature to you and your children. Visit the Yacht & Boat Directory for Children's Lifejackets.

NSW Maritime advises it is a must to have a lifejacket available for all people on board and it must be in good condition, ready at hand and of the correct size. Lifejackets are available in a wide range of sizes to suit adults down to

young children. For infants where a correctly-sized lifejacket is not available, NSW Maritime recommends parents to keep the child close at all times while afloat and to have their own lifejacket ready for instant use or to put it on at times of heightened risk. Heightened risk includes occasions when conditions get rough or a storm or squall approaches.

While it is only compulsory to wear a lifejacket in NSW while crossing coastal bars, riding a jet ski or in a paddle craft or windsurfer more than 400m from shore, Maritime recommends children and poor swimmers wear on at all times when in the open areas of a boat which is underway.

Children must also be kept within the bounds of the vessel and should never sit with their legs or arms dangling over the sides of a powerboat that is underway.

The activity known as 'teak surfing' where people, usually children, hang onto the duckboard or transom of a powerboat that is underway is dangerous and must not be encouraged. Not only is a child close to the propeller in such a situation, they are also likely to be exposed to carbon monoxide poisoning via exhaust fumes.

11. Carry A Marine Radio

A mobile phone is not enough. It can only reach one person, and can become water damaged very easily; run out of battery or the reception can drop out. If something goes wrong with your mobile your lifeline to safety is gone. A 'Mayday' call-out on a Marine Radio can be heard by many people - instantly, getting help to you more quickly. It is also purpose built and is a lot reliable than a mobile phone.

12. Night Safety

When night falls it is a completely different world on the water, and so vessels that operate from sunset to sunrise, whether at anchor or under way, must carry and exhibit the correct lights. BE BRIGHT AT NIGHT!

Popular Yachting Events

America's Cup

The America's Cup is a trophy awarded to the winner of the America's Cup sailing regatta match, and the oldest active trophy in international sport.

Originally named the Royal Yacht Squadron Cup, it became known as the "America's Cup" after the first yacht to win the trophy, the schooner America. The trophy remained in the hands of the New York Yacht Club (NYYC) from 1857 (when the syndicate that won the Cup donated the trophy to the club) until 1983 when the Cup was won by the Royal Perth Yacht Club, with their yacht, Australia II, ending the longest winning streak in the history of sport.

The America's Cup regatta is a challenge-driven series of match races between two yachts which is governed by the Deed of Gift which is the legal document that made the cup available for international competition. Any yacht club that meets the requirements specified in the Deed of Gift has the right to challenge the yacht club that holds the Cup. If the challenging yacht club wins the match, the stewardship of the cup is transferred to that yacht club.

From the third defense of the Cup in 1876 through the twentieth defense in 1967, there was always one challenger and one defender, although the NYYC ran a defender selection series to pick the yacht they would use in the match. Starting in 1970, interest in challenging was so high that the NYYC started allowing multiple challengers to run a selection regatta among themselves with the winner being substituted as Challenger and going on to the actual America's Cup match. From 1983 until 2007, Louis Vuitton

sponsored the Louis Vuitton Cup as a prize for the winner of the challenger selection series.

The Cup attracts top sailors and yacht designers because of its long history and prestige. It is not only a test of sailing skill, boat and sail design, but also of fund-raising and management skills. From the first defense in 1870 the matches were between very large (65 ft. or greater on the waterline) racing yachts owned by wealthy sportsmen. This culminated in races in magnificent J-class yachts in 1930, 1934 and 1937.

After World War II almost twenty years went by without a challenge, so the New York Yacht Club made changes to the Deed to allow the smaller and less expensive 12-metre class yachts to compete, and this class was used until 1987 when it was replaced by the International America's Cup Class.

Places to Take Your Yacht

The Mediterranean:

This is probably the best place in the world to see yachts and be seen on them. From the French Riviera to the Greek Isles, this body of water is packed with every manner of pleasure craft during the European summer. The principality of pleasure, Monaco, is the unofficial capital of the international yachting community and stomping grounds of royalty and the jet set. Nice and Cannes swell with population as the temperature rises and the Hollywood set makes the annual pilgrimage for the film festival and associated revelry. But these are, by far, not the only Mediterranean places of interest for yachters. Here are some appropriate destinations that you may find less crowded and more appealing than the Côte d'Azur.

Ibiza

Ibiza will probably appeal most to the younger crowds who prefer to stick around technology and be a part of the club scene. Ibiza is the world's clubbing capital with massive clubs that house riotous nightlife and even foam parties. As a center for electronic music, this island attracts a young set that dance till dawn night after night. If dancing isn't your cup of tea, the island's history and natural scenery can keep one occupied for days.

Dubrovnik

Croatia may not seem like a place that would be great for taking your yacht, but the Dalmatian coast is becoming the new place to go experience the joys of Mediterranean life. Compared to 1950's Italy, the laid back atmosphere and ancient walled city make for a fantastic port of call along the Adriatic.

The Caribbean:

The Caribbean is a beautiful place with droves of palms and spectacular sunset. The only issue is the massive floating cities people that come and go from island to island; disrupting the peace that makes these islands great. Surprisingly, there is a Caribbean that exists apart from Little Switzerland and all of the "Duty Free" mania that comes with the major islands.

Martinique

What makes Martinique a great island is the fact that even though it is a pretty populated place, very few cruise ships dock here and the daily life stays pretty relaxed. The island is a French Overseas Department, meaning that the island is technically French home turf and even votes in the French Assembly. This enables the island to boast the best highways and paved roads in the Caribbean. Martinique is a great place to see rainforests and the great volcano, Mt. Mount Pelée, which destroyed the old capital, St. Pierre. If you want to experience the lush nature of Hawaii and don't wish to make the long plane trip, Martinique is a great alternative.

The Spanish Virgin Islands

Culebra and Vieques are two islands that make up this little group off the coast Puerto Rico. Now, Vieques may have been in the news for Navy bomb testings a while back, but the military is gone now and tourism is slowly coming alive. Beaches on both islands border on the surreal and remain mostly deserted. Check out the Bioluminescent Bays which are filled with microscopic life that glow with movement, simply incredible

These options give you a glimpse of a different Mediterranean and Caribbean, but what if you want to totally abandon the beaten path and blaze

a path to your own hideaway. Here are some that places that offer great scenery and guarantee a unique unforgettable yachting expedition.

Labrador

The northernmost Canadian Maritimes don't attract a lot of the tourist set, but it isn't for lack of something to see. A yacht gives a traveler the utmost accessibility to the remote communities of the Labrador. Quaint fishing villages and scores of wildlife make the rocky coastline a delightful place to summer. Yes, I say summer only because even in the heat of July, expect to see icebergs drifting along and keeping the voyage exciting. A great photo log of a cruise to the Labrador can be found [here](#).

The Amazon

Sure, a jungle excursion is fun, but why not experience the exotic with the comfort of air conditioning and a personal chef? Sail up the mighty river as far as your yacht will allow and see monkeys and pink dolphins. Bring the kids along for the ride too. They'll behave if they know that the waters are infested with Piranhas.

The Galapagos

Darwin may have been the first outsider to appreciate these strange islands, but modern travelers won't be working on any famous theories whilst visiting the Galapagos. The big draw here is the wildlife and volcanic activity. Be sure to see the tortoise and various marine lizards. The islands are becoming a tourist draw, but the biggest cruise ships that travel these waters have fewer than 500 guests.

Ultimately, you and your captain should decide the best itinerary for you and your yacht. Some locations aren't made for the modern megayacht, but can easily handle smaller vessels. The options are limitless, deserted

beaches abound for those with the means to get to them. A yacht, whether owned or chartered, can be the key to visiting places that haven't been changed by the ravages of mass tourism. Wherever you decide to sail, remember to experience the culture and lifestyle of your surroundings. This will make your memories sweeter and the time you spend there all the more valuable. Bon Voyage!!

Hawaii

You can watch surfers perform their amazing feats on the huge waves from your berth at the dock. Along with the stunningly beautiful landscape, you can enjoy some of the most famous beaches in the world. A Hawaii yacht charter vacation is the vacation you've always fantasized about.

You can visit many coves and inlets during your Hawaii yacht charter, where you can be completely alone or with a significant other. On Moloka, the 3,800-foot cliffs are the highest in the world, and the Pelekunu Valley opens into an uninhabited area. You can moor your yacht off one of the many golden beaches and row to shore in the dinghy. A Hawaii yacht charter will also give you the opportunity to indulge in spectacular diving experiences, and you can enjoy the thrill of sliding down 10-foot and higher waves, something you won't find on other tropical yacht charters.

Hawaiian sailing vacations are fast, much faster those than in the Caribbean. This makes Hawaii yacht charters popular with those who have been sailing for years. Before taking a bareboat charter, you do have to have some knowledge of sailing the waters around Hawaii. To help you have a safe Hawaiian vacation with a bareboat yacht charter, you need to know such things as not taking a night trip on the water when the winds lay and avoiding going to windward when the trade winds are up.

There are no state taxes in Hawaii. This is one of the advantages of booking a Hawaii yacht charter for the sailing vacation of your dreams. The quoted cost is what you pay. You don't have to figure in any extra money for taxes for a Hawaiian sailing vacation. The director of the charter company will find the perfect yacht to suit your needs and offer you options so that you can customize your Hawaiian vacation.

Hawaii yacht charters include special charters for sunset dinners, events, activities, and formal occasions, such as weddings. You can choose a yacht that only holds 6 passengers or up to 49. The larger yacht is powered as well as crewed to enable you to enjoy a private resort as you sail the Hawaiian islands. You can book your Hawaii yacht charter online without even leaving the comfort of your home.

Cheap Florida Trips

You can easily charter a boat in the U.S. State of Florida for a really fun and exciting family vacation experience. Few things match the enjoyment of the Atlantic breeze or beautiful gulf ocean in a yacht on the eastern coastline looking for just the right place to dock for a bit of fun or shopping.

That sounds like a great way to spend a summer vacation right? You're not the only person who thinks so; several companies in the Miami area offer luxury yacht charters. Finding a place to dock your yacht might be difficult; being able to charter one is very convenient, especially if you live far from Florida. You might want to explore companies that offer luxury yacht sales, or sales of other types of water vessels. Miami yacht charter companies can provide you with information.

Companies with Yacht Chartering Services

Water Fantaseas, offers a variety of cruise options, serves the Ft. Lauderdale, Aventura, and Miami areas. Its services include corporate charters and accommodations for special events. They offer luxury sport yachts, luxury motor yachts, party yachts, power boats, fishing boats, luxury mega yachts, luxury sailing vessels, and catamarans, among other water vessels. They have term charters as well as half- and full-day charters. An outstanding company, it offers the best in high-quality sea excursions for those who want the most out of their vacation. You can visit their website at www.waterfantaseas.com to find out even more about what they have to offer.

You can also go online at www.biscaynelady.com to check out Biscayne Lady Yacht Charters. You will be, literally, in the lap of luxury when you book one of their vacation charters. Whether you're interested in a corporate or social event, a wedding party, a twosome, or a solitary affair, they have all it takes to outfit you in style. Among the amenities their luxurious yachts offer are three grand decks, accommodations for up to 400 passengers, catamaran-designed twin hulls, state-of-the-art interior and exterior design and much more.

Florida Yacht Charters and Sales serves Miami Beach, Key West, and the Bahamas. The folks at this company offer charters and instruction in addition to sales and service. For those interested in a comprehensive yachting experience, they even offer membership for boaters to join a yacht-sharing program called SailTime Miami. Their full line of vessels includes yachts, sailboats, catamarans, trawlers, bare boats, and motor yachts. With this wide variety of crafts to choose from, and amenities that will please even the most discerning of sailors, customers are sure to find what they want. You can visit their website at www.floridayacht.com for more information.

Carrousel Yacht Extraordinaire, based in Miami, accommodates the needs of its customers in grand style. Whether you want to host a holiday party, anniversary, wedding, reunion, graduation, birthday party, business dinner, or just get away on your own, this company is a great way to go. You can also cruise the Florida coastline from Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Ft. Lauderdale, Hollywood, Aventura, Miami, and Miami Beach in the luxurious chartered yacht of the day. You can take a virtual tour of this charter company's top-of-the-line yachts by visiting their website at www.carrouseyacht.com.

You can find the perfect chartering service for your needs in virtually any waterside location worldwide by simply pulling up your favorite search engine and doing an online search. Until you've experienced the luxury of cruising around the ocean on a chartered yacht, you're missing the vacation of a lifetime. There's a vessel out there ready and waiting for you, whether you want to get away on your own or with family, friends, business associates, or former classmates. Many companies are available to do their best to meet your needs and the needs of your ocean-going party.

Enjoy Your Yacht

We've given you all the basic information for attaining your yacht. You've been thoroughly briefed on buying techniques, reviewed renting procedures and even been given a few tips on getting a yacht for free. All you have to do now is enjoy your vacation time with your yacht. Whether it's a little family yacht or a million-dollar party yacht, it's a magical vessel that will provide you with an experience you just can't get on land.

The most important last piece of advice I can give you is to print out the safety tips in this book and keep them in mind always. There's nothing that ruins the pleasure of owning a yacht like becoming the victim of a terrible boating accident. Choose a safe yacht that you can easily navigate in and make sure you're always able to communicate with the coast guard or local authorities.

Remember, we gave a few vacation spot possibilities but there are thousands and thousands of other places you could take your yacht. Even just cruising at your local peer can be a nice way to relax after a hard day's work. Always keep your yacht well maintained, pay attention to all safety tips and you will get a lifetime worth of enjoyment from your party or family cruising yacht!