

Another Charter Checklist

When you arrive at the base for your charter, unless you have the luxury of a crew — in which case you will just step on board and cast off — you have some work to do to make sure your cruise will go smoothly. Here is a checklist of the most common items to verify.

Food & Provisioning: Make sure you have enough staples like paper napkins, paper towels, liquid soap, bathroom items, salt, pepper, sugar, cooking oil, ice. Stow food in the order that you will use it: most perishable and first to be used near the top, but near the cooling plate - But don't store lettuce or other veggies next to the cold plate.

Refrigeration: Make sure it is in working order. If it is cold plate system, the plates should be covered with a thin layer of soft ice.

Water Tanks: Charter Companies are supposed to give you a boat with full tanks. Many times this does not happen. So make sure you top off all your tanks yourself. Check that all faucets are working including the deck shower.

Dinghy: Before leaving the dock, start the outboard and check that it spits water. If it is an inflatable, make sure it is properly inflated and that you have an air pump on the boat. Check the gasoline level. The following should be on board the dinghy: Fuel tank – full, Bailing bucket, Paddles / Oars, Wrist/disconnect attachment set, Long painter - the painter is the long rope that is attached to the dinghy for towing it, tying it to the boat or to a dock. Cable with lock, Safety line between dinghy hull and outboard in addition to the outboard clamps.

Anchors: Go to the bow, grab the anchor remote control or whatever device you need to make the windlass work, and try it both ways a couple of times.

Boat Tour by Charter Company Briefer

Pay attention to this, ask all questions you need, and have another person present. Pay particular attention to important items below:

Location and operation of all sea cocks, Understanding of bilge pumps procedures, including manual pump, Location of flares and fire extinguishers, Windlass: electric and manual procedures in case of power failure, Location of anchor windlass reset button (if electrical system gets into an overload) , Location of spare anchor, Water tanks procedure, Location and operation of fire extinguishers, Testing of the stove and propane system with the briefer (propane tanks full?), Propane shutoff valve, Operation of refrigeration systems and fridge drain, Understanding of the marine head(s) and holding tank procedures (to ensure they work, and to prevent them from clogging or flooding), Understanding of the reefing procedure on this particular boat, Hoisting of the main a few feet to check it goes up and down freely, Unfurling of the head sail a couple of turns to check it furls in smoothly, Location of the emergency tiller, Location of the First Aid kit (should be fully stocked), Location of the tool box, with

spare oil, Testing of the VHF and other electronics with the briefer present, 12 V outlet(s) tested, Location of engine oil stick and cooling water tank, Starting of the main engine and transmission testing, forward and backward, with the briefer present , Fuel and water tanks deckplate keys.

Weather: Get the latest forecast as well as the trend for the coming days., Ask the base staff if there is anything in particular you should know for the duration of your cruise — strong winds expected, expected change in the usual patterns, etc., Get all the radio frequencies you need to check the weather daily.

Miscellany

Flashlight, is it working? Enough batteries for the flashlights, WD 40 or some kind of lubricant, Boat hook, Dock lines, Main companionway locking key, All necessary charts, cruising guides on board, All life jackets on board, including for the kids? Boat documentation, cruising permits (if necessary)?

Ask crew to have everything properly stowed and nothing lose in cabins.

Check for special events in your area.

The faster you get this necessary stuff done, the faster you can get out and to your first anchorage. This takes some coordination, as you can see, but it is imperative that all this be accomplished to have a safe and pleasant cruise.