

# SEA DEVIL CHARTERS

## CREWED YACHT CHARTER MYTHS

**Disclaimer:** We know this section will read like an infomercial. But truly, it is not. Remember, Sail-On-Line.com is an independent web site. Therefore, what you are about to read only reflects the fruit of our real and genuine experience and knowledge. Similarly, the web sites and boats indicated above are not endorsed by Sail-On-Line.com in any way, shape or form. They are not paying advertisers either. OK, let's start.

Frankly, we've heard it all:

- Crewed yachts charters? What's that?
- Crewed yachts charters are not affordable; they really are for millionaires
- Cruising with a crew on board HAS to be boring
- Crewed yachts cruises are for old people
- Crewed yachts cruises are decadent
- Crewed yachts cruises are for incompetent sailors: WE are real, hard-core sailors; we know what we are doing; WE don't need no stinking crew, dadgummit!
- Crewed yachts? They've gotta be on very large boats...100ft+, right?
- Etc... You get the idea.

I am going to take on all those myths and misconceptions so when you are done reading, you will understand why crewed yacht cruises can be a wonderful, affordable experience, whether you are a seasoned sailor or a complete newbie in sailing. In fact, they are one of the few areas left of the vacation industry that is still vastly unknown and/or misunderstood.

But first, a couple of definitions.

What is a crewed yacht? It is a boat generally 45ft and up, crewed and hosted by a couple: a Skipper and his wife/girlfriend as a Chef/cook/hostess. On boats 70ft. and larger, a 3rd crew is sometimes added as a deckhand. For seasoned sailors, there is a major difference here: The skipper is responsible for the boat, not you. Therefore, if discordance arises about any issue, he will have the last word, not you.

The service on a crewed yacht is full: all meals and alcohols are included, and several water toys are on board: wind board, kayak, snorkeling / scuba diving equipment, etc.

### **Myth #1: I am a competent sailor. Why in the world would I want to bother with a crew?**

I can modestly say I am a decent sailor myself. I even hold a commercial USCG sanctioned, Captain License. And in all fairness, if I am going sailing for a week with a couple of seasoned sailing buddies, the very last thing I need is a crew in my hair.

Yet, I find that depending on the circumstances, sailing with a crew can be a very enjoyable and convenient experience. Why?

For example, if am going with family and friends and/or young kids, then it's a completely different story, especially if the family/friends are not experienced and I cannot count on them to help handling the boat (I usually sail 50ft. boats.)

Let me give you some perspective here. If I have a crew on board:

- I don't need to get up 3 times (more if it is blowing hard) every night to check on the anchor and on the surroundings: The skipper does. I, on the other hand, keep sleeping.

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- My party doesn't need to worry about food provisioning, refueling the boat and the dinghy, filling up the water tanks, and basically wasting half a vacation day doing those chores. What we have to do is basically show up and cast off literally within minutes.
- Nobody in my party has to cook, do the dishes, clean the galley etc. TIP: Ask your wife how THAT sounds!
- I can decide to relax 100% any day of the cruise, just do nothing, and still be sailing while reading my book. And at the end of a long sailing day, while I shower, the skipper prepares some nice cocktails for my party.
- Alternatively, I can decide to do everything on board any time I want for the entire day and tell the crew to relax. Note: If you are not experienced, obviously, the Skipper won't let you do that.
- At the end of the cruise, the boat does not look like a wreck down below (ever cruised with kids??) since the hostess cleans the boat on a regular basis.

Now, let me reveal a lesser-known aspect of this: A cruise with a crew can be a great learning experience. You see, I belong to that category of sailors who have a very humble approach of the elements, and I believe there is always something new to learn about sailing, and/or about the sea and its environment. I have been fortunate enough to have an exceptional Captain (some of them have crossed oceans or even circumnavigated) on our family boat for almost 3 years, and although a licensed Captain myself, the amount of knowledge I acquired from him was tremendous.

Also, unless you are a very experienced sailor yourself, if you are bareboating, you will have a tendency to cruise in the geographic area where your boat is based. A professional skipper will allow you to travel farther and take your boat places you might not have been able to go to alone, and in probably safer and more comfortable conditions. And even if you are a seasoned yachting, it is sometimes comforting to cruise far, knowing there is another pair of experienced hands on board.

On the other hand, if you are a beginner sailor or if you are not a sailor at all, but are eager to discover the tremendous joys of this sport, what could be a better way to learn than with a professional Captain, while discovering magnificent sailing grounds? It will allow you to get your feet wet, in complete safety, to learn a great deal, and surely, you will understand that next time, you could go at it alone and discover bareboating, as your own skipper, which is extremely rewarding, believe me.

## **Myth #2: A yacht with a crew? Are you crazy? Those are for the super-rich!**

Whenever one thinks of a yacht with a crew, what comes inevitably to mind is the vision of some oil sheikh or Hollywood fat-bellied mogul puffing on a big cigar on the aft deck. Nothing could be further from reality. Of course, there are many big yachts fitting this description. And true, some big boats can fetch up to \$150,000 per week (Gasp!). But those are not our purpose here.

No, what we are talking about here are much less known boats from 45ft to 55/57ft., monohulls or catamarans, with a budget starting at an entry level of \$5,500 per week for 2 couples to \$6,000 / 9,000 per week for 3 couples to \$15,000 for 4 couples.

A little bit of details here.

- A \$5,500/week boat will buy you a 45ft for 2 couples with a professional crew of 2; 2 fully furnished staterooms with queen-size beds and private bathrooms; all

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meals and wine, snorkeling equipment water toys etc. As an example, see Scott and Janice Killam's boat at [www.islandmoorings.com/](http://www.islandmoorings.com/)

→ A \$6,000 / 9,500 (low and hi-season) per week for 3 couples will entitle you to a 50ft. monohull with a professional crew of 2, 3 fully furnished staterooms with queen-size beds and private bathrooms; 3 gourmet meals per day tailored to your food preferences, wine, water toys etc.

→ A \$9,000 / \$13,000 (low and hi-season) per week for 3 couples will put you on a 45ft Catamaran with the same features as above (2.) with the addition of larger accommodations, more gourmet cooking, a more powerful dinghy for water skiing, etc. As an example of 2. and 3., see [www.moorings.com/crewed.asp](http://www.moorings.com/crewed.asp)

→ A \$15,000 per week for 4 couples will take you on a very pampered cruise on a huge 57 Catamaran with enormous and plush accommodations, all communication tools like a satellite phone, CD and Cassette player, Color TV with VCR, Stereo in all cabins, and all the toys you can possibly think of. As an example, see the famous "Crazy Horse" at [www.ppmarine.com/](http://www.ppmarine.com/)

Now let's do some math.

In case #1, the entire vacation week would cost about \$2,800 per couple.

In case #2, \$2,000 to 3,200 per couple depending on the season.

In case #3, \$3,000 to 4,300 per couple depending on the season.

In case #4, \$3,800 per couple depending on the season.

Now, remember: all those rates are all-inclusive.

If you compare these rates with those of a good Caribbean resort, you will quickly find out that chartering a crewed boat cost roughly the same once you compute the cost of all meals, snacks and beverages, which are usually exorbitant in a hotel. On top of that, a crewed yacht will be like your private cruise ship, will allow you to explore secret coves and snorkeling areas and go wherever your mood dictates to.

### **Myth #3: Crewed yacht charters must be boring.**

Oh yeah? Let me give you a sampling of any given day schedule.

You get up at any time you like, and breakfast is ready in the cockpit, with your favorite treats. You leisurely discuss the day's activity with the Captain. Let's say you going to hop to an island 20NM. away, about which you've read a wonderfully isolated white beach is waiting. The Captain weighs anchor and sets sail. If you like, you can help raising the sails and take the helm or do the navigation-if you are experienced. If you're not, and if you wish so, the Captain will teach you. At the same time, the kids get busy and help cranking the sails each time you tack. The Capt's wife brings refreshments. At lunchtime, you stop over at this unbelievable snorkeling point, which you explore immediately. You see fish you've never dreamed of in your life. Kids go crazy over this. Upon your return, lunch is waiting for you.

At about 2PM., you set sail again and 2 hours later you reach your overnight anchorage, a beautiful textbook protected cove. You immediately go to the beach with the dinghy to explore the trail climbing uphill behind the beach. You swim a little. The kids snorkel and spot a few sea turtles. They go nuts.

6PM. You shower and when you go back in the cockpit, cocktails and hors-d'oeuvre are ready for your party. You down your drinks watching the Caribbean sunset and conversing with your friends.

Finally, your gourmet dinner is ready by 7:30PM.,

After dinner, you play an animated backgammon game. Or you watch from your hammock the incomparable star show in the Caribbean skies.

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Another hard day in the Caribbean ends.  
And you call THAT boring?

OK, are you beginning to get the picture? Think I am crazy? Think I am a disgusting, decadent yuppie? Try this and believe me, you will get used to it faster than it takes to say "Helm a-lee"!

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