

Yacht Charters Offer Intimate Voyage Alternative

Sailing the deep, blue waters of an ocean on holiday is a dream come true for many. But, some prefer to do so on a much smaller scale than most cruise ships allow. More rugged and especially private, yacht charter trips are a great alternative for vacationers.

The key to finding a great yacht charter trip, however, is doing some homework. The following are some steps to consider before booking a trip or planning a vacation:

- * Destination. This is paramount. If you don't know where you want to go, it will be hard to find a charter. Locations where you can find yacht charter trips include Alaska, the Caribbean, Florida, California, Europe. Pretty much anywhere there's water, you'll find a charter company available.
- * Purpose of the trip. Do you simply want to sail away your vacation in a relaxing setting or do some serious sight-seeing and fishing, too? The purpose of the trip will help make it easier for you to find the right charter.
- * Overnight stay or not? Are you looking for a two-week charter or a single day out on a fishing boat. This is vital information to have in advance.
- * Number of people. A charter boat captain will have a set number of people he or she can allow on board. The number will determine availability of the ship and is vital for booking a trip.

Once you know where you want to go, who you want to bring and what you hope to do, the search for a good charter will become much easier. Look for charter companies in the areas you'd like to visit and do shop prices and features. It's important to know what's included in a package and what's expected of passengers. Some sailing charters, for example, actually rely on passengers to help with the process of sailing. If working doesn't sound fun to you, it's a good idea to know the expectations in advance.

Before booking a charter trip, check the following things:

- * Prices. Shop them.
- * Inclusions. Will you have to pay extra for food? Port of call trips? Fishing gear and lures? Make sure you understand everything that's included in the price and what is not.
- * What to pack or bring. A charter is not a huge cruise line. The trip may require you to actively get involved in the sailing process. If so, you may want to pack accordingly. Captain's attire for a working trip just won't do.
- * Amenities on the boat. If it's a basic boat, stripped down of all life's little luxuries, you will want to know this. It may not be the trip for you if a family will be coming along.
- * Safety record, years of experience. You want to go on a charter with a captain who knows his or her stuff and the area in which you'll be sailing. This is especially so in areas with treacherous waters, but applies anywhere as things can and do happen.

A yacht charter cruise is a great idea for a vacation that's a little different than an ordinary cruise. Keep in mind, however, the little extras on a regular cruise are not likely to be present and you may, in fact, find yourself doing a little sailing, too. These are perfect vacations for those who want to get away from it all without doing it with 1,000 other people.

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