

FAQ's

Not sailed before? Check out these notes before you get too engrossed in the romantic image of "Sailing the Greek Islands" (or any other islands!)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

For those of you who are not familiar with sailing, these Q & A's should help give you a picture of what life on a sailboat is really like. Already experienced sailors won't need all this—but there's still plenty of other useful details for you too!

We can't count the number of times people have told us that this was their "best vacation ever", a "dream come true", it "totally surpassed expectations", and other such comments.

***BUT**—sailing isn't for everyone—and maybe the reason why we get so many comments like this is that we are very down-to-earth in setting expectations.*

A sailing yacht is not a cruise ship; and if this type of vacation isn't going to suit you, it's better realised now—not in the middle of the Aegean with not a hairdryer nor ice cube in sight for miles!

We hope these notes will help. . .

Q. *A comment that we know our sailors get all the time— "Wait a bit. . . you're going to spend a week on a boat with a bunch of people who you don't know real well ?? "*

A: A good point! But—the actual fact is that 95% of the time, everyone on board gets on just great, and ends up good friends. How ??

1) A very effective self-selection process! By definition, anyone who would choose an adventure vacation like this generally is an independent, flexible type, with a sociable nature which enjoys the company of others at close quarters.

2)—and just to be QUITE sure, we go on . . . and on . . . at great length. . . to make sure that everyone who books with us totally understands what life on a sailboat is all about!

We DO tell anyone who we don't think is really suited that they should reconsider. We're not doing anyone any favors by not being totally honest about this.

Q: So who does come on Sailing School trips?

A: A wide age-range, from 18-73; though many tend to fall into the 30-to-late 40s bracket. Some very experienced sailors,Some who'd literally never set foot on a sailboat before.....Some folks come with a friend/partner;Some travel solo.....Some people have travelled/worked all over the world.....Some had to get their very first passport issued to join us!

Q: Is there an age limit?

A: A number of people have emailed us asking what the age limit is. There IS no age limit.

However—one important point that we DO need to make (and of course, this doesn't apply just to age)—is that a sailboat does need a certain amount of physical mobility. You need to be comfortable climbing over one boat to another to get to dock at times; in and out of inflatable dinghies; across a narrow gangplank from boat to shore, and so forth.

I am single. Can I come on a course on my own?

Answer:

Yes. About 25% of our students come on their own. Unfortunately, we have to make a surcharge for single occupancy of a cabin. It is often possible to share storage in a cabin with one person sleeping either in the saloon or the cockpit. If you are prepared to share there is no surcharge.

Q: I'm definitely an adventurous sort, love the concept so far—but I'm concerned about getting seasick ?

A: If you've gotten seasick being out on a boat for an afternoon—don't worry that this means you'll never make it as a sailor! It takes most of us (yes, including us skippers!) a day or so for the inner ear to adapt to the different motion. The vast majority of people are fine after that.

If you are the type who gets motion sickness on everything: cars, planes, boats. . . bathtub. . . this is the time to wonder if a sailing vacation is for you.

Q: What's it like to live on board?

A: We're pretty casual about most things, but there's a few basic rules that keep life on board happy for everyone.

For instance, keeping the saloon free of personal junk,..... not partying on till the wee small hours when others are trying to sleep,..... not using all the precious water to wash your Laundry when we're days away from the next water supply. All these sort of issues are covered in the (even more extensive!) notes we send out on booking.

Q: What are the sleeping arrangements / cabin assignments?

A: Each yacht sleeps up to six guests in four double cabins. The two aft cabins are double beds, the two fard cabins can be either single bunk beds or convert to double beds also. First to book, first to choose is our policy on who gets which cabin!

In mid season, lots of people opt to sleep on deck too—a great feeling, completely clear n' starry nights..... no threat at all of being rained on halfway through the night!

Q: Is there hot water?

A: We might be out to downplay the facilities and tell you it's like "camping on the water"—but in fact, it's really quite civilized ! In fact, many of our guests who are experienced sailors tell us they were surprised at how luxurious the boats are, compared to what they are used to sailing! So, yes there is indeed plenty of hot water, in each of the 4 showers/toilets. We also have two fridges on each boat, a stove w/oven, a great CD collection, novel library, snorkeling gear and all sorts of other toys.

Q: What about food n' drink?

A: We keep the boats well-stocked with supplies for breakfasts, lunches, drinks, snacks, fresh fruit, etc ; and the bar is always open too!

If there's something in particular you want that's not on board—just add it to the shopping list. This is all included in the cost of the trip; and it's all very much on a help-yourself basis.

Q: So who does the cooking and keeps the boat in order??

A: There's not usually a great deal of cooking on board—most of our dinners are ashore (see below), and an array of salads / cold plates are usually the preferred option during the day. Breakfasts are very much help-yourself-when-ever-you-get-up; Greek yoghurt, honey n' fruit is one very popular choice! Lunches—everyone is expected to help out sometimes—chopping tomatoes for a salad, arranging a cheese platter, clearing up afterwards, etc.

Occasionally, a group will get inspired to cook on board in the evening... a quiet anchorage, cocktails and dinner under the stars is quite wonderful ! Whilst this is not officially included in the "package price", we do like to keep things as flexible as possible, and not spoil any spontaneous fun! On almost all other crewed yachts, the charge is \$35+ per person to eat dinner on board—not our style!!

Q: Dinners ashore—do we eat out every night?

What should I budget for this?

A: Most nights you eat out—in Greece, the taverna is an essential part of the whole experience; it is the social hub of the community, the rendezvous central for all gossip and socialising. Unlike the more usual western experience of the "move 'em in, move 'em out" mentality, once you occupy a table, it's yours for the evening, and into the wee small hours too, if you so desire!

In fact, the problem is not having the check slapped on the table before you've even put down your fork; it's getting the waiter to come over and take your money! It's a totally laid-back atmosphere; bills are often tallied up on (paper) tablecloths, the drinks bill is figured out according to how many bottles are on the table!

As far as budget goes, the average cost for dinner is around \$20-30 USD, a person. That's usually a real feast of appetizers we often share around, and main course too. This includes some beer/wine—although if you go for some of their more expensive imported wines, you'll have a bigger bill. If you're a light eater, or don't drink, your bill will most likely come out well under \$20 USD.

Q: What other costs should I expect?

A: Very few! That's our whole philosophy of "once you're on board, it's all covered!" The only other spending money you'll need is if you decide to go rent scooters on some of the bigger islands; they cost around \$15-20 per day. Jeeps are around \$80/day—fit 4 people in, and \$20 per person is quite the bargain.

Of course, if you decide to go hit the town and get into expensive cocktails, this will clock up a few extra \$\$s. Though all things are relative: you probably couldn't spend as much on a night on the town in Greece as you could at home, no matter how hard you tried—so may as well make the most of it!

Q: Why Greece and the Islands ? _

There will still always be something magical about the Greek isles. Their ambiance is unique; there's nowhere in the world quite like it. So this has to be the major plus point for Greece—it's "Greek"! The Greeks are a strange combination of "so laid-back they're almost horizontal" and yet conversely, they are full of life and energy, volatile,

passionate, ready to laugh and dance the night away at the drop of a hat. Living life for the moment is a way of life in these little islands (what we call the "real" Greece, as opposed to "touristville Greece"—the bigger places & Athens are quite different!).

If you're a super-keen sailor, and getting some great sailing time in is one of your primary objections—Greece is the better pick. The winds tend to be stronger, the sailing is more challenging. Traditionally, the windiest times are late July/Aug—this is when the meltemi is meant to be at it's peak. These weather patterns have not been terribly reliable these last 5/6 years; but in general, if the sailing side is real important to you, go for Greece.

The islands. . .there's just something about sailing from island to island that is unique; it feels like encountering new shores every time. Each of the islands is so different; each has it's own character (and local "characters"!); it's own idiosyncrasies and ambiance. From the upmarket atmosphere of Poros; the bars n' discos n' restaurants; its greenery, the jeeps, to the opposite extreme of tiny fishing villages with nothing more than a taverna, a church (both essential to any Greek community of more than 6 people!), a scattered collection of little houses and several dozen goats.

History. . .though out Greece there are ancient ruins on most all islands from the Fortresses in Navplion, the monasteries around Erimoni, the castles of Monevasia to the Castle of St John in Patmos and Leros that has a wonderful 11th century fortress, with the most incredible view of both sunset and sunrise!

Q: OK, I'm sold—I wanna go!! How do I get there?

A: First of all, of course, you need to get to Athens!

If you already have frequent flyer miles, or a regular travel agent—great! If you'd like advice/suggestions from us, we are more than happy to help out. Whilst we at Chandler Charters aren't in the airline ticket business, we do have a few good contacts that can help with tickets.

Q: Anything else I need to know?

A: That covers most of the initial questions that people ask—if you have others, please do give us a call or send email! We're always happy to chat . . .