

## On-board Etiquette:

- 1. Ask permission to come aboard** – Stepping on board a yacht is much like entering someone's home. You would never enter without first ringing the bell or knocking and waiting for someone to invite you in. The same courtesy applies when boarding your chartered yacht. It is considered proper etiquette to ask the captain for permission to board. Of course, the request does not have to be formal or stuffy. Simply asking "Permission to come aboard?" will be much appreciated, not to mention that you will start your vacation off on the right foot with your captain. After all, manners make all the difference! This is usually only asked once and then you are welcomed guest.
- 2. Remove shoes when boarding** – When boarding the yacht you have chartered, it is a courtesy to take off your shoes. The yacht you have chartered is owned and maintained by someone who probably takes great pride in their investment. The deck can be easily marred and damaged by the bottom of your shoes. If you want to wear shoes on the yacht you should bring a clean pair of deck shoes or tennis, basketball or running sneakers with light colored soles. When you return to the boat from a sightseeing excursion or a trip to the beach, it is important to be aware that your feet or shoes do not have oil, grease, tar or sand that can be tracked back onto the yacht. Take a moment to check your soles before re-boarding, better yet remove your shoes.
- 3. Bring soft luggage** – Unlike the Plaza or the Ritz-Carlton, most yachts do not have lavish, full size closets to store your clothes. As a result, it would not be realistic to bring three large steamer trunks. As a courtesy to the other guests, the crew and the lack of space, pack lightly in soft luggage that can be easily stowed aboard the yacht. Roll-ons with their frames and wheels are not considered soft luggage. Try duffel bags or the traditional sea bag.
- 4. Don't overindulge during Happy Hour** – One of the perks of a charter vacation is that you may enjoy "Happy Hour" aboard the vessel or on the shores of an exotic island with the locals. You may meet someone from another chartered vessel or from the village where you have anchored whom you wish to invite on board. Whether it is for one cocktail or to show off the yacht you've chartered, etiquette and protocol dictate that you first ask the captain's permission. Don't forget to use moderation when enjoying cocktails. As you are in open water and safety comes first, over-indulging may cause the captain to close the bar. Unruly guests, whether or not they paid for the charter, are still guests.
- 5. Keep the noise level down** – there is nothing as soothing as the sound of waves gently hitting the side of the boat as you relax on deck or drift off to sleep. To have that rudely interrupted by the sound of loud noises and blasting music can cause anyone to lose their cool. When it comes to noise remember to respect the other guests. Sound travels, oh so well, across the water and even normal conversations can be heard much farther than you expect.
- 6. Don't enter the galley unless specifically invited** – It is exciting to inspect the yacht on which you are sailing. From bow to stern, cabin to galley, it is a given that you want to take in the awesome beauty of your floating paradise. Perhaps we get curious and decide to see where our splendid meals are being created. Don't barge in and expect to be greeted with open arms, especially when meals are being prepared.
- 7. Don't waste fresh water** – There is nothing like a cold, refreshing glass of ice water when you have been in the sun all day. On a yacht, there are a certain number of gallons of fresh water aboard. Running out of fresh water can be quite serious. It is important that every guest aboard respects the regulations regarding the use of fresh water. Do not let the water run when brushing your teeth or washing your hands.
- 8. Follow the head instructions** – Believe it or not, there is an etiquette regarding the marine toilette....also known as "the head". Clogging the head will not only cause you much embarrassment, but will inconvenience the crew and fellow guests as well. If you are unfamiliar with how to operate the head, take a minute and ask a crew member. It has been said that you may put nothing into a marine toilet, unless it has been ingested first, except for a miniscule amount of toilet paper.
- 9. Obey the captain** – The captain of your chartered yacht is responsible for the well-being and safety of each person aboard. Just like a scout leader or teacher, the captain has final say over almost everything on the boat. There is nothing you can do about it, but respect the rules.
- 10. Tip the crew** – It is considered proper etiquette to **tip your crew 15-20%** of the charter fee based upon service rendered. Remember, during your stay aboard the yacht, the crew has been your navigation team, wait staff, bartender, gourmet chef and housekeeper. Not to mention dinghy driver, tour guide, diving instructor, backgammon opponent etc. Take all the above into account when determining your tip.

No matter where your destination takes you, your voyage will no doubt be unforgettable. Those who are educated in the finer points of yachting etiquette and protocol can take comfort in knowing that they have been a first-class guest.