

## **Charter Boat 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.

### **Refrigeration**

Make sure it is in working order. A good charter company will run the systems (engine or onshore power) before your arrival for you to find a cold freezer and fridge when you step on board. 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. Well, I wrote: "Supposed". Sometimes, for whatever reason, 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 with some fuel

Paddles / Oars: are they in there and the right size?

### **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. You certainly do not want to find out the anchor does not go back up when you have to leave an anchorage in a hurry.

### **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 switching 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  
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**

Flashlights working? Enough batteries for the flashlights.

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) in order?



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

Check for special events in your area.

If this is your first time, or if you're not too experienced, make sure your first sailing leg is not too long for your first day, in order to be at the anchorage around 1500 at the latest.

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.

