

Additional Important Information About Going on Sailing in Portland San Juan Islands Cruises

How to Confirm your Place on the Trip:

1. Email me (BrianStipak@gmail.com) your **phone number** and **email address**.
2. Pay me a \$180 deposit (I have already paid a deposit to the charter company). Deposits are generally refundable until close to the cruise date. I take Venmo or checks:
 - Venmo name is BrianStipak. Email address is BrianStipak@gmail.com. Phone number is 503-502-6034.
 - Mailing address for checks: Brian Stipak, 448 N Bridgeton Rd, Portland, OR 97217.

Understand how Living on these Sailboats Differs from Living in your Houses

Although the sailboat interiors may look similar in some ways to the interior of houses, we need to understand and keep in mind that these boats are not the same as houses which have unlimited electricity, unlimited water, and robust sewage systems.

Sewage Systems

Houses use 3"-4" sewage pipes. Sailboats use 1½" sewage pipes which have ¼ or less of the cross-sectional area of the smallest house sewage pipe. This makes sailboat sewage systems clog very easily, and if that happens the result is very bad.

- Therefore, we NEVER put toilet paper or anything else in the toilets.
- Toilet paper goes into zip lock bags (available by the toilets), which then go into the trash containers in the heads (boat word for bathroom).
- This rule is inviolate: TOILET PAPER NEVER, NEVER, GOES INTO THE TOILETS!

Water Systems

Unlike your house where the water supply is limitless, on the boats there is only the amount of water carried in the water tanks. We therefore exercise more care when using water.

- When brushing your teeth, do not leave the faucet running.
- When washing dishes, do not leave the faucet running.

When we stop in ports, some of the crew should fill up the water tank(s). It is VERY important to identify the correct inlet deck port for the water. Putting water into the fuel/diesel port could ruin our cruise.

Electrical Systems

When at the dock and wired into shore power, you can use the 120v outlets and appliances just like at home. If your boat has a microwave oven you can use it when plugged into shore power. You can also use hairdryers and any other 120v appliance.

However, when we are on a mooring ball or at anchor, and not wired into shore power, then electrical power is limited and we can not use electrical power like at home.

Microwave Ovens and Hairdryers:

We can NOT use microwave ovens and hairdryers except when the boat is wired into shore power. On some boats with inverters (convert 12v to 120v) the microwave ovens might work for a short time when not on shore power, but even a short time will SEVERELY run down the boat batteries. Here is why:

- Amps = Watts/Volts
- Microwave ovens and hairdryers use about 1500 watts
- So at 120v a microwave oven draws about 12.5 amps, but at 12v about 125 amps.

Conclusion: On the sailboats you can use microwave ovens and hairdryers only when the boat is at a dock and connected to shore power. In port we will be connected to shore power and you can use these devices. At anchor, on a mooring ball, or at a dock at a marine park we will not be connected to shore power and you can NOT use these devices.

Several cruises ago on a mooring I was perplexed why the battery voltage on my boat had gone so low. The boat electronics automatically started shutting off appliances, and we had to turn off the cooler, the ice box, the heating system, and the inverter. Later I heard that someone had run the microwave oven.

General Comments about San Juan Islands Itineraries

We have a choice among many excellent possible itineraries, and there are many great places to visit.

Regardless of our exact itinerary, we will stop at some very scenic islands (state island marine parks), and those wanting hiking or camping will have excellent options. We usually use [Pelican Beach](#) on Cypress Island as our last stop because it has excellent hiking and it's closeness to Bellingham makes it easy to get back to Bellingham on the morning of our last day. Look at [the map of Cypress](#) to see the hiking options. If you are a hiker, then download the full-size photo file for the map of Cypress to your smartphone. What we often do on the next to the last day is drop hikers off at Cypress Head and then they have options for great hikes and then meeting the boats later in the day at Pelican Beach.

All of the state island marine parks have some good hiking. [Jones Island](#) has some excellent and beautiful hiking in a very park-like setting. [Sucia Island](#) has a great hike from the Fox Cove area where we usually stay to Ewing Cove and back. Hiking on [Patos Island](#), much less visited than nearby Sucia, has a very remote and wild feeling. [Clark Island](#), where we often spend the first night, and [James Island](#), where we often spend the next to last night, are smaller islands but have some scenic shorter hikes.

Sometimes we have a port stop where we can use a spa. Think of sitting in an outdoor hot tub overlooking the marina, like in [Poets Cove](#). Other options for a spa stop are [Rosario Resort](#) and [Lopez Islander Resort](#). Bring a swimming suit if we have one on our itinerary.

Remember that we have a plethora of excellent cruising destinations, many more than we can go to on a 7 day trip or even a 10 day trip. Regardless of the exact itinerary, you will see some beautiful scenery, can do some great hiking and camping if you desire, maybe enjoy a spa if you desire, and have a memorable experience.

Try the Different Boats

On our past trips some people have tried sailing on different boats for a day. We encourage you to try the different boats because you can learn something different on the different boats.

Sleeping on the Boats

A topic some people find sensitive is sleeping arrangements when sleeping on the boats. Below is everything you ever need to know and more.

We recommend that you **bring a sleeping bag to use** on the trip. That way people can move to different berths by just moving their sleeping bag and there is no issue about changing linens.

Our boats have "staterooms", each with a double berth. Note that double means 2. Although these are called "staterooms" and the charter company's photos make the "staterooms" look spacious, remember that we are going on sailboats, not on cruise ships. Sailboats, even 40+ foot sailboats, are not spacious. So keep your expectations low.

Besides each of the "staterooms" that are double berths, some boats have a convertible dinette that makes into a double bed. Converted these dinettes are often very large and can easily sleep 2 people. Also, you can choose NOT to convert (my preference) and just sleep on the settee, which I find very comfortable.

Boats with traditional interiors (e.g. S/V Vita Beàta, S/V Sea Otter, S/V Arete, S/V Allora, S/V Chinook) have 2 settees (port and starboard), both of which serve as single berths (or 1 single and 1 double if the dinette is converted).

Some boats (e.g. S/V Vita Beàta, S/V Sea Otter, S/V Arete, S/V Allora, S/V Chinook) have excellent sleeping in the cockpit on the 2 cockpit benches. A foam pad, sleeping bag, and pillow convert a cockpit bench into an excellent berth, with protection from the dodger and the bimini. I have slept on boats this way, and I find it one of my favorite places to sleep. In very inclement weather the dodger and bimini may not provide complete rain protection and I sometimes use a bivi sack (or a tarp would work) for extra protection or attach the side panels for the bimini. On boats with dual helms or with very large helm wheels, the length of the cockpit benches are usually abbreviated, making them too short for sleeping.

I personally have sometimes slept on the cabin sole (floor) on a foam pad on our San Juan trips. On my own boat in rough offshore conditions I sometimes have slept in my foulies on the cabin sole, often athwartships, ready to go quickly topsides to deal with sailing issues - but no need for that on our San Juan trips where we sleep in protected anchorages or in ports.

Check out this photo below which shows 6 of us lying on S/V Kipper Kite's dinette conversion:



At the island marine parks some people choose to camp ashore, and the group (e.g. I) pays for your camping fees. The islands have beautiful camping! I often sleep ashore myself. When people sleep ashore that may free up a berth on the boat, and then any other people on the boat can use that berth for that night. Just move your sleeping bag to that berth. So if you usually share a berth and then someone camps ashore and frees up a berth, then you can use that berth that night just for yourself. In short, we all jointly share the amenities on the boat. None of us own particular spaces on the boat.

One of our crew has even set up a hammock between the forestay and the mast and slept in that when we were in port.

So we have lots of space and sleeping options.

However, **we do need to use our double berths for 2 people**. All of the “staterooms” are double berths. That means you might need to sleep in the same double berth as another person. Sometimes even men and women (who are not couples) mix.

We therefore LOVE couples, because couples are usually happy to share a "stateroom" with their partner. And BTW, if you are part of a couple please wait until AFTER our San Juan trip to have a big fight with your partner. We want you on good terms with your partner when you are on our trip so that you and your partner will share a double berth.

Women are usually happy to share a double berth, but not always. On our 2021 San Juan trip it turned out that the women were overall the most fussy about wanting to sleep alone. Men are usually the biggest problem, but not always. On our 2021 San Juan trip it turned out that the men were overall the most accommodating with the sleeping arrangements.

So I hope that explains clearly the sleeping issues on the boats.

PLUGGING IN ELECTRICAL SLEEPING DEVICES:

Using electrical sleeping devices like breathing aids that are quiet and operate by battery power has been done on our cruises and seems to work ok.

Using plug-in devices and/or devices that are noisy will generally not work on the boats:

- Needed electrical outlets and sufficient battery power (when not plugged into shore power at the dock) may not be available.
- You will probably be sleeping with another person in a double bunk and using a device that disturbs the other person or other people in the boat will not work.

FOOD ON THE BOATS

THE FOOD COMMITTEE:

If you like to plan meals and cook, then consider serving on the food committee. The food committee will buy the food and cook the dinners on the sailboats. The food committee plans the dinners we have when on the islands, provisions the boats with food for breakfasts and lunches. To pay for the food the committee assesses a per person fee for the food the committee buys for the boats. The fee will be about \$70, to be determined exactly by the committee.

When we are in ports most people choose to eat in the ports. However, there often is food on the boat, including leftovers, that might be available if some people prefer not to go out to eat.

When we are at anchor or at marine parks we usually share most dinners jointly with all of the boats, especially if we are on a dock at a marine park, but not always.

The food committee basically owns the galleys (kitchens) on the boats. The committee members have control over the limited food storage and cold storage spaces.

MISSION OF THE FOOD COMMITTEE:

The mission of the food committee is to try to meet reasonably the overall food needs of the whole group. The food committee should not let its purpose be subverted to cater to the specific desires of one individual.

ACCOMMODATING SPECIAL FOOD NEEDS:

There is limited, but only limited, ability to accommodate special food needs/desires. All dinners will have a vegetarian option. Some of the vegetarian options may qualify as vegan, and some may not. You can talk to the members of the food committee to see how much they can accommodate you.

You are free to bring special food that you want in your personal bags, but if you want some storage space for personal food items in the refrigerator or in the galley cupboards, then you will need to talk to the food committee.

SUGGESTED DINNER MEALS (All with vegetarian option) and BREAKFAST AND LUNCH Supplies:

Some dinner meals: tacos, hamburgers, spaghetti, soup plus leftovers (last night).

Breakfast supplies: eggs, bacon, pancakes, cereal, yogurt, bagels.

Lunch supplies: bread, cheese, tuna, peanut butter, sandwich meats.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

All of us need to adapt a little and to think of the entire group, not just about ourselves. So if your eating preferences are highly specific you should expect that your eating preferences will not be met as well on this trip as when you are at home and you should consider whether you can live with that.

Personally, I have found the boat food on our past trips excellent and my main challenge has been not to put on weight. Here is why:



Items Not to Bring on the Boats

Guns: If our cruise itinerary takes us into Canada, then bringing guns is absolutely forbidden and violation could cause great problems. If our cruise stays in U.S. waters, we still ask you not to bring guns because guns serve no purpose on a San Juan Islands sailing cruise and bringing them could discomfort some participants.

Marijuana: This is a more complex topic, and one that more sailing participants care about. Although marijuana may be legal in states/provinces where we stop, there is a problem because marijuana remains illegal by U.S. federal law. The U.S. Coast Guard operates under federal law. Consequently, if the USCG should board one of our charter boats, they will apply federal drug laws, and the USCG has confiscated boats with marijuana. Therefore, the charter company requires that people who charter their boats sign that the charterers will obey federal law and will not have federally controlled substances including marijuana on the boats. If you are a marijuana user and do not like

this situation, one way to make the situation more agreeable is to buy marijuana in the ports at which we stop and use it there.

Other Items Not to Bring:

- Hard luggage: Only bring soft bags.
- Big car-camping type gear: For those choosing to do some camping, we have room in the cockpit lockers for some back-packing size gear, but not for large car-camping type gear.
- Too much: Don't bring too much! There is limited room, and you don't need that much for these sailing trips.

Items to Bring on the Boats

- Sleeping bag (even if not camping).
- If you want to camp then bring light camping gear (back-packing type, not heavy car-camping type) – sleeping pad, tent.
- 12v chargers, cables, maybe battery pack, for cell phones.
- Ear buds if you want to listen to music (No music via on-board sound systems on the boats is allowed, because we have found that does not work out.)
- Possibly water shoes or sandals for use when using dinghy to go ashore.
- Bunting/fleece jacket, light rain/wind parka.
- See the [charter company's suggested list of what to bring](#).

How to Make this Cruise Work Out Great

Your Basic Attitude about the Trip:

You need to view this trip as a different kind of experience to which you need to adapt for the short period of the cruise. In my case, I forsake my 2000+ SF house for a tiny sailboat that I share for a week with a bunch of other people. Think of it as roughing it and going boat camping with other people. Try your best to make it work and you may find that you love the experience (most do). And if you don't like it, then don't ever do it again and maybe next time choose to go on a luxury cruise ship.

Your Responsibilities:

If there is a problem or if something bothers you, do your best to try to work it out with the other people. This is not like a commercial tour in which you pay a company and if something displeases you then you can complain to employees paid to take care of you and make you happy. Rather, each one of us on this trip has paid an equal amount and has equal responsibility to try to work out problems and make the trip a success.

The captains of the boats do have special responsibilities for the operation of the boats. The charter company has endorsed these people as qualified to operate the boats and has entrusted the boats to their care. The captains have signed the charter company's required forms about operation of the boats.

But the other captains and I are members of our group and have paid to go on this cruise just like everyone else. We are not paid employees whose responsibility is to cater to the other group members.

Therefore, all of us have the responsibility to work together to get along and to work out any problems that might arise. So if some kind of problem arises try your best to work it out with the others. Of course, you might want to mention it to the boat captain or to me also, but everyone's responsibility is to try to work things out, not just to complain to someone else and expect someone else to work everything out for you.

As the person who did all the work (which is a LOT of work) to organize this trip, frankly I feel like I have already done WAY more than my share to try to make this trip a success and I would appreciate other people doing as much as they can for the sake of the trip.

Here is an example from a past trip. On one of the boats (not mine) a person sleeping on the top of the cabin (not a usual place to sleep) made some noise moving around and that noise bothered 2 other people sleeping below. That problem could have been fixed that night if the person sleeping on the cabin top had moved to a different location. That

night no one talked to the person making that disturbance. The next morning those 2 people were unhappy about the sleep disturbance, but by that time no one could do anything about the noise the night before. The result was some bad feelings about a problem that we could have handled and fixed.

So all of us need to try to fix any problems that occur, and to fix them in time. Talk to the other people involved. Work it out.

By working together we can make this trip as good as possible.

*Work together to
solve problems.*

Think of others.

Self-abnegate.

*Make this trip as
good as possible.*