



# Yacht chartering guide



A guide for the first time charterer

The European Boating Association (EBA) is a civil, not for profit, recreational boat users' association, founded in 1982. The purpose of the EBA is to represent the mutually agreed common interests of national recreational boating unions and associations and to coordinate and develop recreational boating activities in Europe. Web: [www.eba.eu.com](http://www.eba.eu.com)

# EBA Yacht chartering guide 2011

## Contents

Introduction	3	Before you go	8
Types of charter	3	<b>Training</b>	8
Bareboat	3	<b>What to pack</b>	8
Flotilla	3	Arrival and departure	9
Skippered and crewed	3	<b>Handover</b>	9
Charter associations	3	<b>You should be advised on</b>	9
You and your crew	4	<b>You may want to ask</b>	9
Experience	4	<b>Handback</b>	9
Medical	4	<b>Ask questions</b>	9
Insurance	4	Regulations	10
Passports and visas	4	Port entry and exit	10
European health insurance card	5	Alcohol	10
Personal documentation	5	Pollution	10
Destination	5	COLREGs	10
Where	5	SOLAS V	11
When	5	Safe navigation	11
The boat	6	Radar reflector	11
Layout	6	Assistance to other craft	11
Boat equipment	6	Lifesaving signals	11
Vessel documentation	7	Misuse of distress signals	11
Booking	7	Annex 1	Equipment check list
Charter agreement and conditions	7	Annex 2	Handover check list
Insurance and safety deposits	7	Annex 3	Charter logbook
What's included or extra	7	Annex 4	Crew list

Published by  
The European Boating Association  
[www.eba.eu.com](http://www.eba.eu.com)

Words and photos by  
Simon Jinks SeaRegs LLP  
[www.searegs.co.uk](http://www.searegs.co.uk)

With thanks to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and Rustler Yachts for the use of their images and reproduction of certificates.

©2011SeaRegs

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored in retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

## Introduction

Hire and chartering offers boating on your terms, when and where you want it. Charter companies offer a wide choice of boats and locations from motor boats on inland waterways to offshore sailing in far flung places. If you have never chartered before the process can seem daunting. We hope this guide helps you make an informed choice.

## Types of charter

### Bareboat

Bareboat charter allows you to skipper the boat if you hold suitable qualifications and/or experience. You are responsible for the crew, the boat and provisioning. Within reason the itinerary is down to you. A bareboat can be chartered with a skipper for a day or so to familiarise yourself with the boat or area.

### Flotilla

Flotilla or assisted bareboat is a cruise in the company of a fleet of boats but with the assistance of a lead boat. The itinerary is often set; morning briefings advise of the day's destination and local hazards to avoid on route. Some sailing experience is necessary, although many companies offer pre-flotilla training if you are a newcomer or a little rusty. The lead boat is staffed with a professional skipper and often a hostess and engineer.

### Skippered and crewed

A professional skipper is supplied and takes responsibility for the boat and the passengers. Often a crewmember should have previous knowledge, to help with boat handling duties. Skippered charter is often the only option on larger, faster or trickier to handle boats especially planning motorboats. Crewed charter provides a professional skipper and crew so no previous experience is necessary and there are opportunities to learn, if desired.



## Charter associations

There are no overall regulatory body for charter companies around the world. Associations such as the Marine Leisure Association (MLA), Professional Charter Association (PCA), Mediterranean Yacht Brokers Association (MYBA) and many others, provide membership for charter companies and often provide a code of ethics to which they adhere. Membership is voluntary so there are companies who do not belong and others who belong to financial protection schemes which may offer more protection to the charter.

## You and your crew



Reproduced courtesy of the RYA

### Experience

Your experience often dictates the area and the type of boat you are able to charter. If you have no experience, opt for skippered charter then sit back and relax or learn the ropes along the way. With a little more experience or if you are new to skipping, a flotilla is ideal for low stress cruising as the planning is done for you. Bareboat offers unlimited choice, but the charter company will ask for experience or a boating qualification.

The level of qualification or experience may dictate the type of boat chartered and cruising area that the company permits.

Many countries require skippers to hold a boating qualification and some require at least one member of the crew to be experienced. Always carry the original as the charter company and marine officials may need to see it. If you need to qualify before the charter, attend the course well in advance to ensure sufficient time for certificate issue.

If you do not hold any boating qualifications and the country does not require them, compile a sailing CV so that the charter company can gauge your experience. Occasionally, the operator may put someone onboard for a day to check your knowledge is current.

### Medical

It is wise to discuss any pre-existing medical conditions with your medical practitioner if you are concerned, especially when new to sailing. Take more than enough prescription medication for the duration of your charter. Check if any vaccinations are recommended for the country you will be visiting and start them early.

The skipper should be made aware of the crew's relevant medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma and any action required to help assist in their medication.

### Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance is recommended. Sailing is often classified as a sport, similar to skiing, often requiring more than a standard travel insurance policy. You may want to investigate whether your travel insurance covers trip cancellation, delay and loss.

### Passports and visas

Ensure you have a valid passport if chartering overseas and check visa entry requirements for the country visited and adjacent countries that maybe visited during the charter. Visas are increasingly significant to non E.U. passports holders (South African, American, Australian or New Zealand) who may require a visa when you do not.

## European Health Insurance Card

European Union citizens should carry the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This makes it easier to access free or reduced cost, state provided medical treatment and medication costs in the European Economic Area. Countries currently covered are; European Union's Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The EHIC is not a substitute for travel and medical insurance. Each family member should have an EHIC.

## Personal documentation

Always carry original documentation.

Requirements differ but these are standard:

Passports - Boating qualifications - VHF radio operators licence - Insurance - EHIC - Visa



## Destination

### Where

Whilst there are some beautiful charter destinations around the world consider the strength and experience of the crew and what type of trip would best suit them. An experienced group may tackle windier conditions and longer trips whereas a family may need to stop after a few hours to entertain the children. Consider what is important in your destination; a deserted beach, a vibrant city, a quiet anchorage or a good taverna? Always plan the itinerary around the least experienced crewmember.

If you are new to skippering, choose a sheltered area with lighter winds and close proximity of ports. A charter company operating in many areas can advise on the best area for you and provide potential routes, details of destinations and distances. If you're experience is non-tidal, a strong tidal area may be quite a challenge or if you have never berthed stern-to, you may require a professional skipper until you and your crew feel confident.

Moorings costs vary from free anchorages to expensive marinas. Most ports are reasonably priced, but some raise prices significantly in peak times. For instance moorings in Sardinia in the high season could soar to hundreds of Euros per night.

### When

All boating areas have their season; summer in the Med and the winter in the Caribbean. It may be cost effective to charter out of season but ask yourself why. Is it wet and windy or too hot and humid? Usually if the locals don't sail at that time of year there's a good reason.

Temperatures in the Caribbean and Asia rarely get excessive but the change in season brings about changes in humidity. So whilst there will be a breeze during the day, it often falls calm at night making the temperature feel uncomfortable, and remember, many boats do not have air conditioning. Also watch out for the hurricane or monsoon seasons.

High or extreme low temperature will usually affect the winds in a particular area especially around coasts or headlands. High summer heat may bring about very breezy periods and this is common in certain areas of the Mediterranean. These winds are often as regular as clockwork and passages are made to use or avoid the wind.

## Theboat

To narrow down the choice of boat consider the amount of crew and cruising area. If you are a sailor but the family does not like heeling over, try a catamaran. Large boats provide more air flow and better accommodation for hot climates whereas a small boat is easier to heat in the cold.



Also consider how many crew are required to moor and sail the boat; two people will struggle as size increases. Many companies offer a familiarity day where they will supply a crew until you are happy with the controls.

### Layout

The interior layout varies depending on the size and make. In fact a manufacturer may offer three or four different cabin variations on the same model so choose carefully. Before booking the boat, consider who will be onboard and the sleeping arrangements. If there is more than one family, check the cabin and toilet layout for sleeping arrangements and privacy. Sleeping in the saloon rarely works because they will be constantly disturbed by early risers or late finishers.



Interior Rustler 33



Interior Rustler 58

### Boat equipment

Check what is included with the charter and what is extra. There is not an internationally agreed standard for vessel equipment. However, safety equipment, such as lifejackets, liferaft and flares should be included and most countries enforce a minimum standard for the carriage of safety equipment on boats operating for charter in their waters.

Items such as an anchor winch, furling headsail, auto pilot, bimini, GPS and dinghy with outboard may be essential to you and could have a major impact on your holiday. Consider the area you are sailing in, how you will get ashore, whether you'll be eating and cooking onboard or mainly living in the cockpit.

Depending on the location of the charter consider whether the boat has running hot water, cabin heating or air conditioning and a fridge or freezer.

Use the equipment lists in Annex 1 as a guide to the essential safety equipment required.

## Vessel documentation

Boats are required to carry 'ships papers' comprising:

- ◁ Boats registration details
- ◁ Boat insurance
- ◁ Ship radio licence
- ◁ Proof of VAT status
- ◁ Ships log book

The charter company should point out the relevant documentation when you take over the boat (Annex 2). Many countries require charter vessels to carry a valid operating licence or certificate. This ensures that the level of safety equipment and vessel condition is adequate. Often port officials or marine police check that the paperwork is correct.



**RYA MCA Certifying Authority**  
**Small Commercial Vessel Certificate**

Name of Vessel: SAMPLE Cert No: 115V0120000  
Name and Address: RYA RYA HOUSE  
RYA HOUSE  
ENGIN WAY  
HAMBLE  
SOUTHAMPTON  
SO91 4YA  
Owner / Agent: RYA HOUSE ENGIN WAY HAMBLE SOUTHAMPTON SO91 4YA  
Manufacturer: BENETEAU Date of Issue: 12 Apr 2012  
Model or Description: OCESSE 40 Date of Construction: 01 Jun 2012  
Base Port: PORT HAMBLE Length Overall: 12.17  
Nominate Departure Point: C/N  
This is to certify that the above vessel was issued by RYA on 12 Apr 2012 in accordance with the Code of Practice for Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure and Alternative Construction Vessels of up to 24 metres LOA and which do not carry more than 12 passengers, published by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.  
Unless otherwise stated, motorboats may carry up to 1 tonne of cargo in place of persons at a rate of 75 kg per tonne.  
The Certificate is valid only if the vessel, its machinery and equipment being efficiently maintained, is being operated in compliance with the Code of Practice, and to the following conditions:  
Permitted Category: 2  
Category Limits (Plus any Conditions above): Up to 60 miles from a safe haven  
Stability assessed for:  Power  Sail  
Absolute maximum number of persons: 8  
Max number of persons for more than 24 hours at sea: 6  
Max Weight of Cargo in addition to persons: 0 kg  
Date of issue: 12 Apr 2012  
This Certificate will remain valid until: 13 Apr 2012  
RYA authority: Bas Emonds  
This Certificate supersedes all previous MCA SCV Code Certificates issued by the RYA to this vessel.  
Reproduced courtesy of the RYA

## Booking

### Charter agreement and booking conditions

The charter agreement or booking conditions detail what is expected of you and the charter company. It should be simple to understand and cover payment and cancellation details, handover times, payment schedule and what is included in the price. It may also hint at your rights should it all go wrong. If additional terms are agreed confirm them in writing and carry the paperwork.

### Insurance and security deposits

The boat should be insured for total loss and accidental damage; check the extent of the insurance cover before chartering. All charter companies require a security deposit which is often the insurance excess of the yachts policy. It is probable that a fender will be lost overboard or a handle will come off a cupboard, so it is worth reading the conditions of the security deposit to ensure you know for what you will be charged. Payment of the deposit often indicates acceptance of the booking conditions on your part.

### What's included or extra?

If you are comparing companies check carefully what is included in the cost. When travelling long distances bedding and waterproof clothing are problematic to transport. Boat equipment lists may differ wildly or be standardised nationally, however free transfers to and from the airport or a welcome pack of provisions can make all the difference. Check if provisions; gas, fuel and food can be pre-ordered or where they can be purchased on arrival.

Depending on your travel arrangements an extra nights' accommodation may be required before or after the charter. Is it possible to stay on the boat or can they arrange a hotel?

Are flights included in the charter price or do you have to make your own arrangements?  
Does the charter company arrange transfers from the airport to the boat?

Enquire how boat breakdown are dealt with and if the callout number is 24hr.

Before you go

## Training



Many charter companies also offer training for skippers and crew. If you have little experience of skippering, have not skippered for a while or are unfamiliar with the type of boat or area it may be worth booking training to boost confidence.

There are also many pre-flotilla courses to enable you to skipper a boat on a flotilla.

Flotilla training usually lasts between two and six days depending on previous experience and provides instruction on

helming, berthing, reefing, general yacht sailing and line of sight navigation. The location and timing of the training varies, some charter companies offer training courses in their base country before you go or it is tagged on to the start of your flotilla holiday.

It's useful to have at least one member of your crew who has some idea about what to do on a boat. It will make leaving and arriving in harbours less stressful if at least one other person knows what the skipper is trying to achieve.

## What to pack

Charter companies often provide details of the essentials required. Travel light using soft foldable bags, as storage on board is always limited. Hats blow off so take a few plus high protection sun cream and sunglasses. Water purification tablets are useful if you run out of bottled water. Consider footwear as bare feet often result in toe injuries.

Establish whether the boat has just 12 volt electrics or a household electrical system as well, so you know what phone chargers and electrical equipment to take.

It may not always be possible to connect to an external power source so choose your electrical devices wisely. The charter company can advise what sort of entertainment equipment will be onboard so you can take your own CD or MP3 players.



Local currency is useful as small remote ports or restaurants may not accept card payment.



## Arrival and departure

### Handover

A charter yacht handover usually takes about an hour. You should be as familiar with the vessel as possible before putting to sea. As a minimum you and at least one other member of the crew should be present at the handover.

Annex 2 lists what the handover should cover.

Ensure you are completely happy with the condition of the boat and that any faults, scratches or problems are noted and agreed by the charter company before you leave as it is your security deposit at stake.

A charter company representative should be fully contactable for the duration of the charter.

You should be advised on:

- < When and where you will be expected to leave the boat at the end of your charter
- < Final fuelling arrangements
- < Penalties for not adhering to the company's instructions or time limits
- < Procedures if there is a problem

You may want to ask:

Area information such as good harbours, hazards, places of interest or good supermarkets  
Sources of weather information in your language

The normal practice for port entry and paying fees

### Handback

At the end of your charter, the boat will be checked over by a company representative. As your security deposit depends on this inspection, it is worth being present. The boat should be clean and refuelled when it is returned; many companies offer a cleaning service for an extra charge. If the boat is returned late, there will usually be a charge as it will be often booked out again with a few hours after your return.

### Ask questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions before you book, and before you depart with the boat. Charter companies would prefer that you to feel 100% confident before you take their boat out. You may, for example, want to ask about sail plan for various wind speeds and directions on that particular boat. If you are not familiar with the cruising ground, the company will have local knowledge about some of your intended destinations and will be delighted to share this with you.



## Regulations

Even when you go on holiday it is hard to escape the clutches of regulation. Whilst we have covered qualifications and vessel equipment, there are regulations or courtesies that are specific to the country and some that are adopted throughout the world. Here are some that you should enquire about when talking to your charter agent.

### Port entry and exit

All countries have port entry and exit procedures which will affect you on a day to day basis. Quite often crew lists are required to be filed and copies kept onboard. When coming into a new port you may need to take all of your ships papers, passports, qualifications, insurance and crew lists to the port captain to gain entry, even if you have just travelled a couple of miles. In some cases your passage plan and crew list is required before departure, so be warned, this can take time. A sample crew list is listed in Annex 4

### Alcohol

There is a growing trend of maritime alcohol limits being adopted and enforced by countries for recreational skippers in charge of vessels at sea. They range from the non-existent to, in some cases, zero tolerance. They are often only enforced when there is a complaint of anti social behaviour or when there is an incident.

### Pollution

All countries have regulations concerning the dealing with waste. There are many types of waste; items and food stuff that could be thrown overboard, waste from toilets and sinks and waste from the bilge or engine exhaust.



Ask if there are any specific regulations that apply in the country as many countries are getting quite strict and enforce penalties for non compliance. Quite often good practice is just to put all your general waste in a bag and dispose of it ashore. Areas such as the Mediterranean and the Baltic often require the use of holding tanks onboard the boat, into which the waste is initially pumped. It is then either pumped out at a predetermined distance offshore or at a pump out station in port.

### Publications and log books

A country may require you to carry a copy of the countries maritime regulations onboard and a translation. It is also good practice to keep a log of your navigational position and daily events. Some countries may occasionally inspect it. Sample log pages are listed in Annex 3

### COLREGs

The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCS or COLREGs) apply to all vessels upon the high seas and connected waters navigable by seagoing vessels.

It is essential that you know these rules so that you know when you are the stand on vessel, when you are the give way vessel and the correct action to take to avoid a collision.

## SOLAS V

SOLAS V relates to Chapter 5 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea. Most of the Convention applies to commercial vessels but this section is aimed at pleasure craft such as the one you will be chartering. The key requirements of SOLAS V are:

### Safe navigation

This requires the skipper to consider and plan the passage. It should take into account several seamanlike factors such as; weather, tides (if any), the limitations of the boat and the crew, checking charts for navigational dangers as well as having a contingency plan on longer voyages. Whilst it does not necessarily need to be written down it would be difficult to prove that you complied, if it were not written down.

### Radar reflectors

Carriage and preferable permanent mounting of a radar reflector is required if it is practicable on board the yacht.

### Assistance to other craft

You are required to help anyone in distress as best you can as well as report if you encounter anything that could cause a serious hazard to navigation.

### Lifesaving signals

A set of internationally recognised signals has been adopted for communicating between ships, aircraft and persons in distress and an illustrated copy of these should be kept onboard. They are often included in the Almanac or pilotage notes.

### Misuse of distress signals

Clearly, setting off distress signals for fun is totally irresponsible, as is a misleading call put out over the radio.

**LIFE SAVING SIGNALS**  
To be used by Ships, Aircraft or Persons in Distress

**Shore to Ship Signals**  
Ships in distress

**Ships and Rescue Unit Replies**  
The following codes, accompanied with the given signals as prescribed, shall be used:

Message	International Code of Signals	ICG	Visual Signals
Urgent assistance	Y	⊠	Y
Urgent medical assistance	M	⊠	X
Air or navigation	N	⊠	N
Top or off-course	C	⊠	Y
Proceeding in this direction	↑	⊠	↑

**Surface to Air Signals**

**Air to Surface Replies**

**Air to Surface Direction Signals**  
Sequence of 3 manoeuvres meaning proceed to this direction:

1. Change course to starboard
2. Change course to port
3. Change course to starboard

**Surface to Air Replies**  
Message Understood - I will comply

**Surface to Air Replies**  
Message Understood - I am unable to comply

Reproduced courtesy of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

These regulations are not enforced on a day to day basis, but might be when there is an incident. As they are part of International maritime law, there is always the possibility of insurers looking closely at your actions with respect to SOLAS V in the event of an incident.



## Annex 1-Equipment list

Many countries have minimum standards for the operation of a charter yacht. The standards often differ depending on the yachts area of operation; a yacht going further offshore will have more equipment than one staying inshore. Sometimes the provided lifejackets are solid foam so you may consider taking your own for comfort.

This equipment list may prompt you as to the minimum that should be on board.

Suggested minimum equipment for charter yachts			
NAVIGATION		Life ring	
Steering compass		Radar reflector	
Deviation table		Electric bilge pump	
Hand bearing compass		Hand bilge pump, bailer	
Navigation equipment		Signal lamp	
Charts		First aid box	
Pilotage information		Bolt croppers	
Log book/ships papers		Gas cylinders & spare	
Navigation lights		Flares	
VHF radio		Fire blanket	
Barometer		VARIOUS	
Log		Anchor ball	
Echo sounder		2 anchors (chain/warp)	
Binoculars		1 windlass	
Required flags		4 mooring lines	
Instruction manuals		1 long mooring line	
Diagrams		Boat hook	
GPS		Dinghy	
SAFETY		4-6 fenders	
Lifejacket and harness - lights		Tools	
Children's lifejackets		Deck lights	
Liferaft		Spare parts and engine spares	
2-3 Fire extinguishers		Bosuns' chair	
Foghorn		Emergency steering	

## Annex 2-Handover checklist

Expect and ask for a boat handover from the charter agent or owner.

Someone with intimate knowledge of the vessel should be present at the handover of the vessel to the chartering skipper and crew in order to complete a familiarisation process.

It should cover:

- ⟨ The location and safe operation of all the safety equipment including:
  - liferaft location and deployment
  - fire extinguisher location and operation
  - lifejackets and safety harnesses
  - location of first aid kit(s)
  - bolt croppers
  - emergency tiller
- ⟨ Location and operation of all sea cocks, emergency bungs and bilge pumps
- ⟨ The operation of the cooking and heating systems
- ⟨ Correct operation of the toilet
- ⟨ Operation of the VHF system.
- ⟨ The location and operation of the navigational instruments
- ⟨ The location of charts and pilot books
- ⟨ The location and operation of halyards, winches, reefing lines and other controls
- ⟨ The method of setting, sheeting and reefing the sails
- ⟨ The anchoring system
- ⟨ Engine checks to be carried out prior to starting whilst running and after stopping
- ⟨ Details of routine maintenance required for any equipment
- ⟨ Any other systems peculiar to that vessel

### Documentation

The vessel's file should be shown to the chartering skipper. It should contain at least the following:

- ⟨ Registration papers
- ⟨ Copies of the insurance policy
- ⟨ Other necessary certificates
- ⟨ Details of permitted operating area
- ⟨ Instruction manuals
- ⟨ Electrical wiring and piping/plumbing diagrams
- ⟨ Inventory of the vessel's equipment

Annex 3-EBA Charter logbook

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Crew \_\_\_\_\_ Tides for \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ HW \_\_\_\_\_ height \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ LW \_\_\_\_\_ height \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ HW \_\_\_\_\_ height \_\_\_\_\_  
 Towards \_\_\_\_\_ LW \_\_\_\_\_ height \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_

Weather/notes	Damage
---------------	--------

Time	Log	Course	Weather	Sea state	Sail/engine	Engine Oil	Engine Temp	Waypoints/GPS Landmarks	Comments/observations

Total

Annex 4 EBA Crew list

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of yacht \_\_\_\_\_ Type of yacht \_\_\_\_\_ Net tonnage \_\_\_\_\_

Flag \_\_\_\_\_ Port of registry \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_

Last port of call \_\_\_\_\_ Next port of call \_\_\_\_\_

Owners name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

No	Family name	First name	Date & place of birth	Nationality	Passport No. Place of issue	Address	Skipper/ Crew
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							