

CHARTER CHECKLIST

When you get onto your boat, the charter operator should give you a comprehensive handover to make sure you know where everything is. With bigger companies, this is normally a well-oiled process repeated dozens of times every week, but if you are chartering a private boat, you may want to be more thorough in the checks you do prior to departure. It's worth asking what to do if the boat has any issues while you're on board, and exactly what's covered by the deposit.

- Check the boat's inventory with specific reference to the location and contents of the first-aid kit, engine spares, tool kit, lifejacket spares, batteries, torches, and other survival equipment such as handheld VHF radio and EPIRB.
- Check you have enough lifejackets (with crotch straps) and harnesses (plus spare jackets) and spare CO2 canisters and cartridges, and have your crew fit them to themselves.
- Check battery charge levels, water tanks and diesel tanks, and make sure you have sufficient domestic supplies. Locate the gas bottles and confirm that the gas is off and isolated at the bottle.
- Look at the Boat Data Book, which will detail the boat's specification, including water capacities, call sign, draught, etc.
- Inspect all skin fittings and exercise all seacocks. If the seacocks are stiff or broken, raise the issue with the charter company.
- Undertake a safety brief for your crew and open the log. Make sure you detail how many crew are on board (including you) and start checking/recording weather forecasts.
- Check the rigging on deck and look up the mast. Loose or broken wire strands, corrosion, broken deck gear, and missing or distorted split pins should be rectified.
- Make sure the anchor chain is attached at the bitter end and that the windlass and break work properly.
- Locate the emergency tiller and make sure you and your crew know how to fit it.
- Locate any additional bilge pumps, buckets, throwing lines and danbuoys/horseshoes.
- Check lifelines (if fitted) and all stanchions and guard rails are secure.
- Check all hatches are watertight and in good order, grease if necessary.
- Complete an inventory of charts and navigational equipment including almanacs and additional equipment, such as GPS.
- Complete standard engine checks and make sure that everyone knows how to start the engine and how to send a Mayday using the boat's VHF. They also need to know what to do if there is a man overboard.
- Make sure you have a plan for your week and let someone on shore know about it.



WHERE & WHEN TO CHARTER

1 CARIBBEAN

Where: Windward Islands – St Lucia, Grenada, Martinique; Leeward Islands – Barbados, Dominica, Antigua, St Kitts & Nevis, BVI, US VI; Jamaica, Cuba, Bahamas
When: November – March
Cost: ££
Experience level: Beginner

2 CENTRAL AMERICA

Where: Brazil, Colombia, Belize, Mexico
When: April – November
Cost: £££
Experience level: Intermediate

3 ATLANTIC ISLANDS

Where: Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands (all year)
When: April – August
Cost: ££
Experience level: Intermediate

4 WESTERN MED

Where: France, Spain, Sardinia, Corsica, Balearics
When: April – October **Cost:** ££
Experience level: Beginner

5 EASTERN MED

Where: Turkey, Greece, Croatia, Montenegro, Italy, Cyprus, Crete
When: April – October **Cost:** £
Experience level: Beginner

6 UK

Where: Kent, Solent, Plymouth, Falmouth, Pembrokeshire, North Wales and Anglesey; Ireland – Cork & Waterford, Galway, Wicklow, Sligo, N Ireland;

Scotland – Clyde, Argyll, Highlands, Skye, Shetland and Orkney

When: May – October
Cost: ££
Experience level: Advanced

7 NORTHERN EUROPE

Where: France (Brittany), Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland
When: April – September
Cost: £££
Experience level: Intermediate

8 ASIA

Where: Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong
When: November – April
Cost: £££
Experience level: Intermediate

9 INDIAN OCEAN

Where: Goa (India), Madagascar, Seychelles, Maldives
When: March – October
Cost: £££
Experience level: Intermediate

10 AUSTRALIA & NZ

Where: Australia – Fremantle, Melbourne, Whitsunday Islands, Sydney, Brisbane; N – Bay of Islands, Auckland & Hauraki Gulf, Wellington, Marlborough, Christchurch, Abel, Tasman
When: August – October
Cost: £££
Experience level: Intermediate

11 PACIFIC

Where: Tahiti, Fiji, Hawaii, Canada
When: June – August **Cost:** £££
Experience level: Intermediate