

Tips and Tricks for Life Afloat



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Provisioning



Don't forget that people eat all over the world.

Shopping is part of the adventure.

You can buy fresh eggs and produce most places. Bring your own egg carriers and bags.

Chinese ingredients are widely available, since Chinese people have settled in so many places worldwide.

- Provisioning requires planning ahead, flexibility and stocking up when you see deals, unusual items or find shopping especially convenient.
- Carry enough staples aboard to meet your needs for about 9 months, unless you plan to visit more remote areas for extended periods. (Rice, pasta, flour, sugar, spices, paper products, etc..)
- Many cruisers arrive in New Zealand after crossing the Pacific with tons of food they bought in the U.S. more than 2 years before. Canned food doesn't last forever and can rust and explode in a saltwater environment.
- You can find fancy air conditioned grocery stores in larger cities in Mexico, Papaeete, Rarotonga and New Zealand.
- You'll have more time to cook. Find recipes for fruit, vegetables and seafood you haven't cooked with before and experiment.

Provisioning



- Carefully inspect packaged foods before buying. Look for *best by* dates, since sometimes expired items are shipped on to secondary markets.
- Don't buy baking mixes in remote tropical locations as they may contain bugs.
- You can buy canned cheese from WSU (Cougar Gold, etc.) and butter in cans on the Internet. They do not need to be refrigerated and will keep for a long time.
- Canned tomato-based products from New Zealand and Australia were different than ours – tomato sauce, ravioli, spaghetti & meatballs were not very good quality.

Hard to find items

Below are some items we had trouble finding outside the USA, but that is changing as fancy stores open where expats are known to visit, like Mexico and the South Pacific:

- Canned chicken and canned beef of any other type besides corned and meat with gravy, canned seafood (besides canned mackerel) and good quality canned ham.
- Canned chili with or without meat. Tortillas.
- Baking items like dark brown sugar, molasses, corn syrup, tapioca, shortening, baking spices, baking powder and baking soda, corn meal and corn flour, powdered eggs (handy for baking when you run out of fresh) are often hard to find.
- Specialty items like dried wild mushrooms (except Shiitake and oyster), fancy condiments like pine nuts or pesto and salsa sauces. Brand name items.
- Just add water pancake mix and just add water cake and other mixes are very handy when we're out of fresh items (like milk, cheese or eggs) but can be hard to find or stale.
- Cheeses besides cheddar are basically unavailable as well as many dairy items like cream, ricotta cheese and sour cream.
- Herbal tea is also hard to find in most places. Fine coffee beans were rare, although instant coffee was available most places.
- Candy other than hard candy was variable at best and is great for passage treats.

Food Storage



Every time you reprovision, packaging shapes and sizes can vary so you have to often alter your storage configuration.

- Decant Food into containers:
 - Save space.
 - Avoid bugs. We typically decanted all foods from cardboard into containers immediately to get rid of the cardboard which can host the eggs for pest to prevent a bug investation.
 - Protected cookies and crackers from going stale and turning into crumbs.
- Snapware containers are air and water tight.
 - They come in a variety of shapes and sizes.
 - They have gaskets for a tight seal.
 - They feature handy flip top lids.
 - You can buy them through the Internet.
<http://www.snapware.com>
 - I saved hot chocolate scoops for scooping out rice, flour, sugar, popcorn, etc..

Food Storage 2



- Keep & Resuse Ziplocs
 - Big Ziplocs are not available everywhere and are worth stocking up on.
 - I can stow more instant food mixes into a smaller space when I place mixes with their box instructions into ziplocs. I always double bag things.
 - You can wash and reuse them but they are not airtight and often puncture over time.
 - Simple Green can help get rid of even fish smells when reusing them and until you can dispose of garbage properly ashore.
- Store leftover in tupperware with rounded lids, because square lids warp over time and then don't seal properly.

Reuse packaging:

Don't be too quick to throw out good plastic containers when you finish with the contents, since packaging elsewhere is often lower quality.

You might want to buy some bottles for decanting oil, vinegar, detergent, etc. that you may buy in packaging that won't hold up.

Fresh Food Storage



- Preventing vegetables from bruising is the secret to long life. Buy and store them in small batches and protect from bruising by padding between layers with baskets and towels.
- Fruit and Veggies do not need to be refrigerated and last longer if they aren't as long as they are kept cool and dry. Lettuce is not very practical, though.
- Annie Hill's Voyaging on a Small Income has tips about fruit and vegetable storage.
- Be careful about putting citrus and bananas next to other items. Make sure onions are dry and well ventilated. Keep potatoes dry and shaded.

In general, keep items cool and ventilated as much as possible.

Farm fresh eggs don't need to be refrigerated & can last for months; Once refrigerated, the protective coating breaks down and they don't last as long. Make sure your carriers fit larger eggs.



Living without Refridgeration



People lived for millenium without refridgeration. Techniques used for food preservation still work today. Canning, drying, pickling, salting and other processing (i.e. making yogurt and cheese) were invented for long term storage. We still eat those foods today, but have been brainwashed into thinking we need to store them in the fridge.

- Leftovers can remain sterile stored in a pressure cooker for 24 hours.
- Buy fresh meat for that day's meal. Buy frozen meat a day or two before you want to cook it and it will thaw in 1-2 days. Frozen whole chicken is widely available where there is electricity and stores well for 24-48 hours in a cool place.
- Many foods do not need to be refridgerated, despite what litigious labels may advocate: Mayo and Mustard can be stored for years as long as they do not get contaminated by dirty utensils.
- Buy in food in small packages and use quickly once opened.
- Buy lunch meats, salami and ham, and cheeses in vacuum packaging, which will stay good for months until the packaging is opened. Use canned, smoked or lunch meats to flavor dishes.
- Refridgerators/freezers are typically small aboard boats. They demand lots of power to keep running in hot climates and they can create a nightmare if they stop working.

Cooking Underway

- A galley strap may make it easier to work and a stove/oven crash bar will keep you from falling against a hot stove/oven.
- Make a list of quick, easy-to-cook meals and place ingredients in the most easily accessible storage locations.
- Use plastic dishes with non-skid on the bottoms; Use pots with lids that fit tightly.
- Avoid bamboo utensils; they mold in moist climates.
- Arrange all ingredients within easy reach before you start cooking. You'll need to cook more systematically than usual. I'd advise chopping first as needed before beginning the cooking process.
- Place ingredients in a bowl leaned against a fiddle to keep them from rolling around; Use the sink or the stove to stow items as you work. You can also use a towel to dampen the motion of ingredients.
- Use a damp paper towel to wipe your fingers as you work so you don't need to use as much water;
- You can use a sponge to wipe food waste off dishes before stacking them in the sink. You can wring a damp sponge over them to soften any remaining food particles just before you wash them to reduce your overall water usage.

Cooking in the Tropics

Fix meals that don't require heating up the galley or using lots of propane, like BBQ, salads and sandwiches. Use a pressure cooker to reduce cooking times for lentils, beans and stews. Examples:

- Avocados available in Mexico, Vanuatu and the Solomons make a great salad filled with chicken, shrimp or crab drizzled with balsamic vinegar and oil. We often have cheese and crackers with sardines, smoked mussels, oysters, clams or smoked salmon.
- Popcorn is quick to prepare, cools quickly and can be topped with many interesting toppings to make it more filling, like curry powder, blue cheese or cheddar cheese. So are Papadums.
- Jello, applesauce, yogurt, meat/fish jerky, dried and fresh fruit are great snacks that are cool and refreshing in the heat. Many people make their own.
- Bread with hummus and Baba Ghanoush, tabouleh salad, salads with beans and meats (crab, shrimp and clams) make for filling meals without much cooking.
- Instant mashed potatoes are quick to make without heating up the galley and they taste quite authentic with butter and milk added. You can buy powdered milk packets and small UHT milk cartons. We often top potatoes with warmed meat in gravy from a can for a hearty, quick meal.
- Couscous is another quick cool meal that requires only heating water to prepare. We add garlic, sundried tomatoes, pine nuts and dried mushrooms to flesh it out.
- Instant refried bean flakes and black bean flakes are the base for another quick meal, with a toasted tortilla, cheese, tomatoes, and salsa.

Comfort in the Tropics



The heat can be beastly to live in and surprise you with its intensity. Fans are essential.

An awning is essential for survival. Find ways to create shade while keep the ventilation

Find a way to keep hatches open for ventilation in rainy weather.

Bug screens reduce ventilation. We found we didn't need them. Anchoring farther off shore helps avoid flies.

Many items melt in that kind of heat, such as rubber bands and the ink off of plastic grocery sacks.

Make 2 sets of washable slipcovers:

- Protects permanent cushion covers from oils and salt
- Easy to clean
- Softer on your skin, especially fleece
- Variety in décor



Keeping Cool in the Tropics - Clothes



- Summer clothes we wore in Seattle were too warm for the tropics. Avoid 100% cotton. Loose collared shirts were cooler than t-shirts. Jean shorts are impractical.
- Quick dry clothing is essential, especially for dinghy expeditions.
- You spend a lot of time in swim suits and it's hard to own too many. Pareos (sulus) are cool and versatile as dresses, skirts, shoulder wraps and towels.
- Dresses and loose clothing was coolest for going ashore. In conservative places, it was best to keep shoulders and knees covered, so make sure you have something appropriate that's not too hot. Sometimes long loose sleeves are cooler than no sleeves.
- Hats with a back flap were often essential. Sometimes sunglasses and hats were too hot because they restrict ventilation. Visors were helpful for shade and ventilation.
- You need UV protection while navigating without an awning.
- Bum bags and dry bags are essential for easily carrying items and keeping them protected. Pelican cases are also useful.

Laundry (1 of 2)



- Laundry services were hit and miss.
 - They were sparse in most places.
 - Things went missing or returned with stains.
 - Things got ruined in overly hot dryers.
- Hand wash anything with lycra/spandex or elastic, like bathing suits, stretch pants, biking shorts, bras and underwear.
- Clothes dry fast in the sun and bleach in the sun and smell very good.
- You need LOTS of PLASTIC clothes pins. (They blow away and rust over time.)



Laundry (2 of 2)



- Quick-dry camping towels and clothing made laundry easier.
- For hand washing, several deep buckets with a mini toilet plunger works well, along with a fingernail brush to work on spots.
- Saltwater is plentiful and doesn't take that much fresh to rinse out. Saltwater uses more soap to lather. Liquid soap is best.
- Hand wringing can be tough on the wrists after a large laundry session; Wringers are handy but big to carry aboard the boat. Sometimes we wipe down the stays and then twist fabric around them to help with wringing.
- Bringing laundry ashore in a bucket or dry bag for a quick final rinse and wring can work well in some locations.
- You can catch laundry water: Our dinghy collected lots of water we could use that for the wash cycle and we have been impressed with how much water we could catch with a small foredeck awning. We made a point of doing laundry when we were able to catch lots of fresh water.

Water



- Since you need to acquire water to meet your needs, you need to practice water conservation and manage water carefully. Fresh drinking water has not been difficult to get in our travels, though we usually obtained it with jerry jugs or caught rainwater with awnings or tarps. We found water made from a watermaker had no taste and lacked important minerals. We treat our tank water with chlorine (1 teaspoon for every 10 gallons) or Aqua tablets. We had easy access ports and could clean our tanks frequently.
- We used 4 jerry jugs to haul water since filling tanks alongside isn't always possible. A collapsible hose is useful for getting water and filling tanks on occasion. We often took jugs in our dinghy to fill each shore trip whenever we found a convenient faucet.
- We used saltwater for washing and bathing with a quick fresh water rinse and can live for 3 weeks on 50 gallons. That's one gallon per person per day. Most boats carry more than this. A majority have water makers but water makers need special care and take fuel to run. For us it didn't make sense because we didn't have the space.
- Catching water on awnings can defray the hassle of obtaining or making fresh water and we were amazed at how much we could catch, usually enough for all our needs. You wouldn't want to catch water in polluted areas like Hong Kong, though.

Garbage

- Sometimes it is difficult to find appropriate places to dispose of garbage so we end up carrying it longer than we might normally expect.
- Separate food scraps from the rest of the garbage and dispose overboard when appropriate. We'd suggest washing food residue out of cans, bags and plastic containers so that the garbage doesn't stink if you are unable to dispose of it for extended periods.
- Flatten boxes and crush cans for compact storage. Separate bottles, cans and paper from plastic garbage. Get rid of cardboard packaging as soon as possible and decant items into plastic waterproof containers.
- See if you can recycle your “garbage” into something useful in remote islands.
- Sometimes bottles are useful to locals to use as bailers or for food storage containers. They asked us for them.
- We reused ziploc bags because they were often difficult to replace and still useful. I'd wash them and hang them over a narrow jar to dry.
- Simple green can remove even the odor of fish and other items from plastic containers.

Offshore Watch Schedules

- Offshore you are required by maritime law to maintain a look out at all times. And you want to make sure you are still on course and don't hit anything. A ship on the distant horizon can reach you in 7 minutes.
- We always had someone in the cockpit and wore flotation vests strapped to a tether that connected to a padeye in the cockpit.
- This means sleeping in shifts. There are several options that you can design for your sleeping preferences and who is on board:
 - 4 hours on, 4 hours off: Watch changes at 8, 12, and 4.
 - 3 hours on, 3 hours off: Watch changes at 6, 9, 12, and 3.
 - 6 hours on, 6 hours off: Watch changes at 6, and 12.
 - Alternating nights when one gets a more complete night's sleep
 - Some on-watch crew would just let the off watch crew sleep as long as possible and then change.
- We used a Casio wrist watches, with an alarm set on an auto-repeat that sounded at 10 minutes before the change in watch. We strapped it onto the companionway handhold, which was audible from both the bunk and the cockpit.

Avoiding Motion Sickness

- Most people adjust to the motion after a few days.
- Having your sails up will help dampen the motion and make it more steady and predictable.
- Sometimes working with the sails can improve the motion on the boat. Experiment.
- Take preventative medicine: Bonine, Meclezine worked well for me. I also found that Sturgeron (Cinnarizine) worked very effectively without any side effects. It is not available in the US, but you can find it in Canada, Mexico, and other places (Fiji, Vanuatu, etc.) The patch worked well for some but had side effects.
- If you are feeling queasy, avoid spending time below. Minimize reading or navigating below as much as possible the first few hours/days you are out.
- Stay out in the cockpit and steer. Focus on the horizon.
- Eating Ginger snaps, crackers or other simple bland foods might be helpful to keep up your strength and calm your stomach. Keep hydrated. Drink hot water with fresh grated ginger or ginger tea.

Medical

- We carried a first aid kit in an easy to access location. We were anal about cleaning coral cuts. Cuts that we'd ignore in Seattle would quickly get infected if not cleaned immediately in the tropics.
- Before we departed, we also took a wilderness first aid class and carried multiple first aid books aboard. Doctor's Book of Home Remedies and Medicine for Mountaineers
- We also carried a fully stocked medical kit filled with medications we purchased before we left. We visited Lafferty's Pharmacy in Ballard, who supplies the north Pacific fishing fleet and they helped us prepare what we needed. We carried burn ointment, eye wash and items for minor surgery, setting bones plus bandages and slings of various shapes and sizes.
- We left with health insurance then cancelled it when the cost tripled after one year, before we ever used it. DAN (Diver's Alert Network) offers evacuation insurance.
- We were very lucky with our health and never needed medical care. We did give away some of our medications and medical supplies to others in need in remote places. Health care is readily available and inexpensive outside the U.S and usually of decent quality in major centers. There are doctors out cruising that can be consulted informally via SSB as needed and some services exist that offer formal advice via radio or email. Friends found inexpensive quality care along the way.
- We were able to replenish some antibiotics in Vanuatu and Fiji, and Band-aids or “plasters” in New Zealand, Australia, and larger ports.

Boat Insurance

- Insurance is expensive and we've heard stories of people paying nearly the purchase price of their boat in a matter of a few years.
- Policies have various requirements which could include:
 - one or more surveys of the vessel a year (not easy to get in many places),
 - more than two people aboard for longer passages
 - restrictions for traveling in certain regions
 - limiting the amount of time offshore in a calendar year.
 - cancelation or lapses in coverage with little warning or after the fact.
- The cruising book written by John Neal and Amanda Swan lists a number of boat and health insurers.
- We decided to self insure. We left with a boat that we could afford to lose, fix out of our own pockets or walk away from.

Finances

- How much does it cost to cruise offshore? Depends on your priorities, how you spend money, what kind of boat you have and how you want to keep it, where you want to go and for how long. Boat maintenance can be deferred for a while but must be addressed eventually. Are you on a trip or living a lifestyle?
- We lived on about \$1000 per month. Others lived on less, some on much more. There are an infinite number of ways to spend money with tours and rental cars, visits home and side trips, etc. but there are also great things to see that don't cost anything if you take the time to discover them: hiking, snorkeling, exploring, socializing, cooking, reading.
- Some months we spent a lot and then others very little, depending on where we were, how well stocked we were with supplies and our state of boat maintenance.
- We relied on a combination of cash, check, traveler's checks, credit cards and ATM money machines. We found the best exchange rate was usually through ATMs. Our credit union did not charge fees.
- We set up auto bill paying for our credit card and cross checked charges with a family member who was managing our mail for us. There's a mailbox place on Market Street in Ballard that provides mail services.
- Is it possible to work while traveling? Yes, unofficially. If you are handy at fixing boats, there is money to be made. But trying to make money off people's equipment problems can get awkward within a generous community that pulls together to overcome hardship.

Storms

- Generally we saw more light wind than heavy wind. We could often avoid heavy weather by carefully monitoring weather reports and forecasts.
- When winds came up, generally we shortened sail. We had 3 reef points in the main and usually used a small headsail. On longer passages we rigged a storm trysail and a storm staysail on our removeable inner forestay just in case we'd need them.
- The technique of **heaving to** - putting the main and jib on opposite sides dampens the motion. This technique worked well when we had lots of sea room to drift some distance from land to wait out the roughest weather.
- Lynn and Larry Pardey have a book called Storm Tactics Handbook.
- We carried a Jordan Series Drogue, a Sea Anchor, extra line we could use for warps, fire hose to wrap around lines to protect against chafing. In 7 years we never needed to use them.
- Extra anchors are essential equipment and can help you survive stormy weather at anchor. Many anchors will work, though we carried a Spade and our next favorite choice would be a Rocna.

Piracy

- Pirates are thugs at sea. They're opportunists.
- To keep things in perspective, pirate attacks are rare. Because they are so unusual, we hear about every one. (Unlike muggings, murders and accidents in our cities every day.)
- It's hard to know what to do to avoid pirates other than avoid the area completely. But the area where pirates are is getting larger as the ransoms get paid and they can afford to buy faster vessels with greater range.
- There was a very unfortunate incident this past week in which four sailors died. It's hard for us to know exactly what happened and perhaps somewhat insensitive to second guess. 200 boats passed through that area safely this last year so it is possible. This boat was unlucky.

Conclusion

- Don't panic. This is a lot of information to share in a short period of time.
- You will learn by using your boat what works for you, so go cruising. The Puget Sound Cruising Club has free monthly cruises locally with lots of people who are facing or have faced these same challenges.
- Search out online information and publications. Great books: Beth Leonard, Lynn and Larry Pardey, and John Neal and Amanda Swan-Neal all have great publications that share their knowledge.
- You can visit my website to see revisit this presentation. www.wendyhinman.com
- You can contact me for a private consultation. We can spend time going through your boat and discussing tips and tricks for on board comfort in the context of your personal needs, preferences and boat situation.

Thank You!

I hope this has been helpful.

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