

Technical Tips and Little Things that add Comfort on a Cruising Sailboat

by Bezy McKay *S/V Ceilidh*

1. Always carry Tidy Wipes....for hands...for spills...for sanitizing...for a waterless bath.
2. An Oil Lamp adds ambiance, non electrical light, nautical tradition, and Warmth.
3. A Rug at the bottom of the ladder collects most of the "foot dirt" that comes aboard. Shake it out daily.
4. Get Screens for every opening, hatch, port and companionway.
5. Color Coordinate the interior cushions, pillows, towels.
6. Use Snap shackles on the Lazarette at sea. You don't want them to fall open in a knockdown.
7. Add canvas covers with common sense fasteners for the side opening lockers, (covered by cushions Velcro in place.) Cans need a positive restraint.
8. Ventilation is essential. Make sure the main saloon and forward berth have opening hatches. A wind scoop is excellent!
9. Opening Ports provide cross ventilation....never too much ventilation. You can always close them if there's too much air.
10. Sew covers for throw pillows, then stuff them with guest bed pillows.
11. Cruisers need good Rain Gear. Light weight, waterproof (seriously waterproof) jacket and pants will be used more often than heavier, more expensive foulies.
12. If the refrigerator is too big....build up the floor.
13. Several flashlights are needed....nav station, each berth, dinghy, combing boxes, red lens for the cockpit at night.
14. Build a Library of Repair Books, Engine, Electrical System, Repairs at Sea, First Aid, Navigational Knowledge.
15. Get a set of good quality, basic tools....screw drivers of all sizes to get into funny places. A tool that can keep you going is worth millions. A large basin (plumbing) wrench for the shaft packing gland.
16. Think "less" clothing. Take less and wash every two weeks.
17. Keep boat ready to go....tooth brushes, soap, towels, sheets, pillows, dishes, cook ware etc. If you're ready to go, you'll go more often.
18. Captain and Mate should both be able to make sail, drop the anchor, helm the boat, navigate. Sudden illness and you've got to do it.

19. Use ALL spaces for storage. Look for empty corners. Expand existing spaces. Space is the non-expandable commodity.
 20. Carry games, cards, dominoes, good reading books, CDs, DVDs for fun.
 21. Keep a supply of "comfort food." Tea, Coffee, a stash of special goodies.
 22. Use Sailing Gloves to help your hands.
 23. Carry more fire extinguishers than required. Check them regularly. Practice with one in the back yard.....very important.
 24. Buy a bound book with blank pages and record the maintenance history as you go along, oil change, engine repair, new canvas, etc.
 25. Get a Loose Leaf Notebook with plastic sleeves for instruction manuals, parts sheets, registration.... for every thing you install on the boat.
 26. Carry one or two Marine Catalogs for easy reference, price check, and ordering in out of the way places.
 27. Build a file of business cards for Marinas, mechanics, suppliers and manufactures you meet at boat shows.
 28. Put a little vinegar or vegetable oil in the head frequently to lubricate the pump.
 29. Spray Corrosion X on everything electrical and metal at least once a year....including the Captain if he's not working properly.
 30. 12 Volt fans are a godsend on a still, hot night.
 31. Use filters and service them regularly....shower sump, engine fuel, drinking water, water from tanks into the pressure system.
 32. Plan, Plan, Plan for any new installation of new equipment..location of switches, will it fit, how will wires run, future need for this location.
 33. Install a hammock for the fruits and vegetables.
 34. Never go to sea without the all weather, easy, ever ready and necessary Peanut Butter and Saltine Crackers.
 35. Use generic cleaning products for multipurpose use. In 20 years, we've not found any "specialty products" worth their salt.
-