

PROVISIONING THE CRUISING YACHT

When we are away from our home port, with the places we are accustomed to shopping and the products we need and like, we have to anticipate the access to and availability of the things our daily life requires. Provision planning allows us to address the limitations we may encounter and increases our confidence to deal with the unexpected.

Cruising stateside, we are never far from most of life's necessities. Therefore, significant provisioning becomes more a matter of convenience. As we extend our travels to more remote locals, such as the Bahamas, the comforts and enjoyment that adequate provision planning brings to the trip will justify the effort.

Provisioning will be different for each vessel, depending upon length of voyage, storage space, refrigeration, power systems, tastes of the crew, commitment of the chef and depth of the Captain's pockets.

FOR THE GALLEY

Start with lists:

Plan a rough menu (as a guide for quantity only) for each day of the voyage, consisting of three meals a day plus snacks. Remember, some meals will probably be eaten ashore to experience the local cuisine or shared with other cruisers aboard either boat or on the beach. Don't forget Happy Hour!

Review recipes for the planned meals and list the required ingredients, type and quantity.

Translate these into a shopping list (how many boxes of cereal are required to provide 30 bowls?). Make allowance for spoilage, and local procurement (fresh seafood is often readily available in the Bahamas, either from locals or by rod and reel). Try to alternate canned meats with fresh.

Just remember that some form of food is available everywhere, no one will starve.

Whatever you take will be more than you will use.

Everything you eat will taste better in Paradise.

When buying, try to avoid glass containers (if it can not be helped, take extra care by wrapping them in bubble-wrap or rags before storing them).

Multiple small packages are preferable to large to minimize spoilage after opening.

Canned products should be substituted for fresh whenever possible (vegetables, fruits and meats). Canned goods (or anything heavy) should be stored low. Before stowing, use a permanent marker to note the can contents on the top.

Products purchased in cardboard containers (such as oatmeal, hot cereal, rice, noodles, etc.) should be transferred to soft plastic containers with screw-on lids. Cold cereal should be transferred to large zip-lock bags. Minimize trash and compact it as much as possible. All powdered material should be stored in soft plastic containers with very secure lids.

Typical non-refrigerated items to consider:

Powdered milk or Parmalat (both require refrigeration after opening), canned item such as tuna, Vienna sausage, mushrooms, artichokes, fruits, evaporated milk for cooking, soups and most vegetables, dry chipped beef, granola bars, peanut butter, crackers, chips, dips, chicken salad, sandwich spreads, instant Jell-O and pudding, cobbler mixes, powdered orange juice, instant tea mix, coffee, powdered creamers (or individual liquid creamers), Crystal Light (makes a decent mixer), boxed drinks, dried tomatoes, instant potatoes, noodles, individual boxed drinks (convenient under way), spaghetti sauce, nuts, trail mix, tortillas (in place of bread), condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo, etc.) and spices of choice, cookies (ginger snaps?) and other desserts, etc.

Many brands of beer are available in the Bahamas at three dollars or more apiece, as is the local beer. Sometimes it can be found for less (two dollars each) in quantity at a major grocery. Coke is almost as expensive. Generic canned drinks are less. Rum is less expensive than stateside, but, most other alcoholic beverages are about the same.

Drinking water solutions depend on the vessel's capacity and the presence of a watermaker. In the Bahamas, R.O. water is available almost everywhere. Some marinas may provide water with a fuel fill-up, but, most charge.

Typical refrigerated items:

Lunch meat, cabbage (substitute for lettuce), pre-cooked bacon, sausage, wieners, chicken strips, pre-cooked ham slices, cheeses, Egg-beaters (or real eggs, kept cool in the bilge, or, for long term storage, coat with Vaseline), butter (an Aussie butter that does not require refrigeration is available in the Bahamas) etc.

Other:

Vitamins and prescriptions (order early).

Can Opener (Important!).

DISCUSSION:

Domestic water filtration (desirable) and storage treatment (available at West Marine).

NON-FOOD PROVISIONING

Try to eliminate as much cardboard, paper and plastic packaging before items are brought aboard.

Paper towels are convenient in the galley and the engine room or cloths can be rinsed or washed. A bucket is handy for this and many other task).

Toilet paper is necessary (if used in the head, it should dissolve easily, such as the "marine" toilet paper at West Marine, or, the least expensive in the discount store).

If we are cruising for more than a few days, it is likely we will need to do laundry. Liquid detergent is easy to store and un-effected by moisture.

Plastic trash bags are necessary for the temporary storage of trash. Have a plan for temporary trash storage (in the second head, in the dingy, etc.)

Zip-lock type bags in various sizes find uses in and out of the galley.

Propane ovens can be operated for several days from a grill type bottle, if an adapter is acquired. Several changes of spare batteries in the sizes required (for flashlights, handheld GPS or VHF, etc.).

Fuel treatments of choice may not be available when fuel is purchased.

Oil absorbent pads are necessary when dealing with fueling, filter changes and un-expected seal leaks.

Engine oil, transmission fluid, coolant, distilled water (for wet cell batteries) may be required for usage make-up or leaks.

MINIMUM SPARE PARTS:

Thermostat (& gasket, if required)

Raw water impeller (& gasket and key, as required) & tool for removal

Primary fuel filter set (more than one set is better and possibly a set of secondary filters)

Set of engine belts

Electric fuel pump

Bilge pump

Domestic water pump

Head re-build kit (especially if only one head)

Variety of hose clamp sizes (ALL S.S. only)

Tools necessary to make the repairs indicated above

Waterless hand cleaner (for the engine compartment)

DISCUSSION;

Outboard prop shear pin (if required)