

# *Cruising Conversation #2*

## *Provisioning for Cruising*

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Eating well, and keeping your crew well fed, can mean the difference between a basic trip from point A to point B, and a cruise that you'll remember fondly for years to come. Use this checklist as a good starting point to provision before taking a trip on the boat. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but reflects what works for me. Other sailors may have other ideas and preferences; these are mine. Following this checklist is by no means a guarantee that you'll always have everything you want or need when under way, but it's a good baseline.

Considerations before provisioning:

- How far are you going? How many days will you be away?
- Will you eat any meals ashore or will you eat on board most of the time – or vice versa?
- Does anyone have any special dietary needs or restrictions?
- How many people will you have aboard?
- Do you like to cook?
- Do you want basic grub or gourmet meals?
- Do you have refrigeration? A freezer? How much do they hold?
- Do you have a stove aboard, and how many burners does it have?
- Do you have a grill aboard?

Naturally, I cannot tell you precisely what to bring food-wise, because everyone has different taste. I can, however, provide some suggestions for things that have worked well on our cruises – both long and short.

### **Food Ideas:**

- An extra jug of fresh water is always a good idea, to hold you over to the next fresh water supply in case your water tank gets contaminated
- Some people only drink bottled water aboard – this is a matter of personal choice; I prefer to refill a bottle with water from the tanks and keep it chilled in the fridge
- Granola bars or other high calorie “in hand” food, stored in a zip lock bag, are great for when you get hunger pangs but aren't in a position to prepare a real meal
- Bring something quick and easy for the first meal on the day you head out; if you leave later than planned or decide to try to put some extra miles behind you, and you don't want to stop to cook or to go ashore, you will be happy to have that well wrapped sub tucked into the chill chest
- Bring some bagged snacks, things you normally like (chips, pretzels, Doritos, whatever); it's nice to have at least something minimal and quick to offer unexpected guests who might come aboard for a sundowner

- Speaking of visitors, it's good to have some cheese, dip, beef stick, or the like aboard so you can put out a little spread for friends
- Buy your adult beverages at home; things are always expensive in port towns
- Consider buying as much as possible at home; see previous item about port towns
- It is possible to find some really nice boxed wines these days; these are really excellent to store, and you don't have to worry about a bottle flying around in rough seas
- Consider buying hard alcohol in plastic bottles (see previous item about flying bottles) or putting it in plastic before you go
- Some produce keeps longer than others, especially if you have a wonky chiller; carrots, cabbage, summer and winter squash, celery, turnips, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, are pretty durable
- On the other hand, some produce is delicate and may not stand up to a less-than-40-degree storage spot for very long; things like lettuces, asparagus, arugula, green onions/scallions, watercress, and the like may turn limp and mushy faster than at home – plan to use these early in the trip
- Berries and other fruits are delicious, great nutritionally, and can be eaten as-is or to jazz up just about any dish; delicate berries may not last long, especially unrefrigerated, so use them early
- Scout out green grocers and farmers' markets when you go ashore – nothing tastes better than a home grown tomato or other local produce, and it's always nice to have something fresh and crisp to add to your plate after a few days at sea
- Same goes for a local bakery – a great loaf of bread, some rolls, or a couple breakfast pastries can make you feel like you're really living high on the hog
- Eggs are delicious and a great source of protein, but can be tricky to store on a boat; consider Egg Beaters type products that come in cartons – we have one thawed and one frozen when we get aboard; by the time we finish the first carton, the second is thawed and ready to use
- Nut butter (peanut, almond, cashew, etc.) is your friend
- Some condiments don't require refrigeration and can be left aboard unrefrigerated all summer if you like: mustards, vinegars, pancake syrups (not real maple – that keeps best in the fridge), soy sauce, steak sauce, olive oil, vegetable oil, sesame oil
- Condiments like mayo, ketchup, barbeque sauce, salad dressings, and sweet relish should be kept refrigerated after they are opened; if you don't have a fridge aboard and can't live without mayo on your tuna fish sandwich, consider buying the small restaurant single serve packets which keep indefinitely without refrigeration
- Don't forget the spices and seasonings!
- You can keep salt aboard, just put some grains of uncooked rice in the shaker (make that shaker one with a screw top cap)
- There's nothing you can't cook on a boat that you already cook at home – it's just a matter of willingness (generally) and creativity (sometimes)

#### **Storage Thoughts:**

- It's a good idea to store long-term consumables (pancake mix, store-bought cookies, and other things that you won't eat all of at one sitting) in a zip top bag; they will stay fresh longer

- Canned food is convenient and lasts a very long time, but it can be heavy to carry in and may make rusty rings in your cabinetry
- Breads of all types freeze beautifully and will keep longer in a damp hot boat than keeping them out on the counter; just take out the portions as needed, storing them in the freezer. If you don't have a freezer aboard, I recommend storing in the fridge – keeps mold at bay.
- Consider lining shelves with grippy material sold for that purpose, to keep stuff from sliding around
- Put small items (tea bags, packets of Splenda, hot cocoa packets, etc.) into zip lock bags to keep them dry; remove them from original paper/board packaging (this will also take up less space)
- Some produce can/should be stored unrefrigerated (potatoes of all kinds, cabbage, round onions/shallots, fresh garlic, watermelon/other melons before they're cut, bananas, tomatoes, winter squashes, etc.); keep these on a shelf, hanging in a mesh bag, in a plastic tote – whatever you have room for...don't waste chilled space on these items
- Zip top bags can be used to store all kinds of leftovers, even liquids
- Save a few quart and pint containers from your Chinese takeout and keep them stowed on the boat for leftovers, whatever; if you lose or break them, you won't care
- Make soups, chili, sauces, and the like at home before the trip and freeze them flat in gallon-size zip top bags; those flat bags store really well, and can be used to keep other things cold. If you don't have a freezer aboard, simply use them up as they thaw.
- If you are not looking forward to cooking down below on a hot day, consider pre-boiling pasta at home; rinse, chill, and store in zip top bags – huge time saver aboard; just toss in a big pot with sauce to reheat
- If you don't have a freezer aboard, freeze your meats at home in individual portions in plastic bags. You can put them in your fridge or cooler aboard; tucked around, they will help keep other items cold, and will slowly defrost over a couple days. Use them as they thaw.
- Ginger-based foods are nice to have aboard – they are tasty, and some people consider ginger a homeopathic remedy for seasickness; try candied ginger, ginger ale, ginger snap cookies, whatever you like
- We keep all unopened nonperishables aboard for the whole season

#### **Non-Food Galley Stuff to Bring:**

- Zip top bags; gallon and quart are particularly useful
- A roll of heavy duty aluminum foil
- Paper towels, toilet paper – more than you think you'll need
- Dish soap and a scrubby pad of some sort
- Trash bags; plastic grocery bags – can be stuffed just about anywhere and have a zillion uses

### Preparation Tips:

- Foil packets on the grill are a great way to have something delicious without heating the cabin
  - For each person, peel off a roughly 18" length of aluminum foil
  - In the center of each foil rectangle, layer thin slices of potato (any kind), onion, veggies (carrot, zukes, asparagus – whatever you like), top with a protein of your choice (chicken cutlet, fish, shrimp, big scallops, boneless pork chop – nothing over about 1/2 inch thick), drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and seasonings of your choice
  - Wrap foil securely over the food, then plop on a pre-heated grill; once you hear constant hard sizzling (can be 20 minutes or so – depends on your grill) you know it's cooking; another 15-20 minutes (depending on the protein), it's done.
  - Remove packets with tongs and place into a bowl before opening – watch for the hot steam; you'll find the packet now contains a bit of liquid now (which is usually yummy and is great for dunking bread).
- One-pot meals are a favorite of ours, mainly because it saves on clean-up afterward (no one wants to miss a sunset because they are washing dishes)
- We love salads with dinner, but don't like all the room bottled dressings take up (or the mystery ingredients in many of them), so we make our own
  - In a large bowl, mix a blob of mustard about the size of a silver dollar (roughly 1 Tbsp) with about ¼ cup of an acid (any vinegar, or a fruit juice like lemon or lime, or soy sauce), ½ cup of oil (we like a nice fruity olive oil), salt, pepper, and herbs/seasonings of your choice
  - Whisk or blend well with a fork until emulsified
  - Start adding your veggies directly on top of the dressing – I like to put the wetter first (like tomatoes) then build up with lettuce last
  - Toss at the last minute
  - Only down-side (if you can call it that) is that you have to eat it all – it doesn't keep well once dressed
- The same approach used to make dressing works to make a terrific marinade for any type of meat or veggies. Make the marinade in a gallon zip top bag, and put the food right in with it; chill in the fridge until meal time. You can also do this at home and freeze the bag – meat, marinade and all – then just thaw aboard and cook. Yum.
- If you don't have room or refrigeration for butter/margarine, consider using a decent olive oil with your bread or on your eggs. You can add assorted herbs, spices, pepper, and salt to the oil in a small bowl or container to dip your bread. Your small Chinese takeout container with lid is a great place to make and store your oil concoction.
- Leftover meats, sliced thinly, can make a great foundation for many breakfast, lunch, or dinner meals...long as you've kept them cold.
- Consider marinating and grilling veggies that are past their peak – they will probably still be pretty darn tasty

Bottom line: *ENJOY YOURSELF!* You're on vacation. ☺