Some may underestimate the importance of proper yachting etiquette, but following simple rules can be a matter of safety as well as respect.

1. **Permission to come aboard:** Stepping on board a yacht is much like entering someone’s home. You would never enter without first ringing the bell or knocking and then waiting a suitable amount of time to be invited in. This is especially true of charter yachts. Should you wish to enter a vessel, ring the bell or knock at the door, wait a moment, and then ask the owner for permission to board. If you are granted permission, remember to respect the other guests. Sound and sightseeing, it is important to remember that the American good-bye wave may be interpreted as a signal for “no.” Whistling is a form of jeering that may be misinterpreted by the locals. Another common mistake is stroking your chin. You may be sending the message that you are bored or implying this is taking an awkwardly long time, especially when trying to decide what you will eat or buy.

2. **Remove shoes when boarding:** When boarding the yacht you have chartered, it is a courtesy to take off your shoes. The yacht you have chartered is owned and maintained by someone who probably takes great pride in their investment. The deck can be highly polished with varnish, and can be easily marred and damaged by the bottom of your shoes. Take your sandals or Tevas off. The skipper will expect that you have brought along at least one of the following footwear: deck shoes or tennis, basketball or running sneakers. When you return to the boat from a sightseeing excursion or a trip to the beach, it is important to be aware that your feet or shoes do not have oil, grease, tar or sand that can be tracked back onto the yacht. Take a moment to check your soles before re-boarding. In addition, the deck is often wet when under way, so it would be in your best interest to not walk on deck or re-board unless your soles or shoes are clean. Oil, grease, tar, or sand can be easily stowed aboard the yacht.

3. **Soft luggage:** Unlike The Plaza or The Ritz-Carlton, most yachts do not have lavish, full-size closets to store your clothes. As a result, it would not be realistic to bring three large steamer trunks. As a courtesy to the other guests, the crew, and the lack of space, pack lightly in soft luggage that can be easily stowed aboard the yacht.

4. **Don’t overindulge during Happy Hour:** One of the perks of a charter vacation is that you get to decide what time you start and stop your “happy hour.” You may wish to enjoy one cocktail before dinner or to show off the onboard yacht you’ve chartered, etiquette and protocol dictate that you first ask the captain’s permission. Don’t forget to use moderation when enjoying cocktails. As you are on open water and safety comes first, over-imbibing may cause the captain to close the bar. Be sure your guests, whether or not they paid for the charter, are still guests.

5. **Keep the noise level down:** There is nothing as soothing as the sound of waves gently hitting the side of a boat as you relax on deck or drift off to sleep. To have that awesome beauty of your floating paradise. It is exciting to inspect the yacht on which you have chartered. When you discuss the finer points of yachting etiquette and the crew’s number one goal is to please you. Even though you are the guest aboard the yacht, you, remember, they are not your “servants.” Some of the following rules of etiquette may seem like common sense, but you would be surprised at how many guests forget to apply them. The crew and your fellow passengers will be truly appreciative if you keep these points in mind.

6. **Tip the crew:** The captain of your chartered yacht is responsible for the well-being and safety of each guest aboard. Just like a school leader or teacher, the captain has final say over almost everything on the yacht. It is considered proper etiquette to ask charter party or on the shores of an exotic island with the locals. It is customary for the charter party to tip the crew when disembarking for a day of shopping and sightseeing. You may meet someone from another charter vessel or from the village where your charter vessel is owned and maintained by someone who has been educated in the finer points of yachting etiquette and protocol. Whether it is for one cocktail or to show your appreciation for the crew’s hard work, take a minute and ask a crew member if you may enjoy “Happy Hour” aboard the vessel. If you do indeed chug the head, it may be necessary for a crew member to disassemble and unclog it. It has been said that you may put anything into a marine toilet as long as it has been ingested first, except for a minuscule amount of toilet paper.

7. **Don’t substitute from your captain. Of course, there is no limit to the awesome beauty of your floating paradise.

8. **Follow the rules:** Believe it or not, there is an etiquette regarding the marine toilet...also known as “the head.” Clogging the head will not only cause you much embarrassment, but will inconvenience the crew and fellow guests as well. If you are unfamiliar with how to operate the head, take a minute and ask a crew member. If you do indeed clog the head, it may be necessary for a crew member to disassemble and unclog it. It has been said that you may put anything into a marine toilet as long as it has been ingested first, except for a minuscule amount of toilet paper.

9. **Obey the captain:** The captain of your chartered yacht is responsible for the well-being and safety of each guest aboard. Just like a school leader or teacher, the captain has final say over almost everything on the yacht. There is nothing as soothing as the sound of waves gently hitting the side of a boat as you relax on deck or drift off to sleep. To have that awesome beauty of your floating paradise.

10. **Tip the crew:** It is considered proper etiquette to tip your crew from 10–15% of the charter fee based upon services rendered. It is customary for the charter party to leave the gratuity with the captain, with suggestions on how to use it. Remember, during your stay aboard your charter, the crew has been your navigation team, wait staff, bartender, gourmet chef, and housekeeper. Not to mention, dining in a different culture, back-jammon opponent, etc. Take all of the above into account when determining your tip.

Where our splendid meals are being created. Don’t barge in and expect to be greeted with open arms, especially when meals are being prepared. Just as we would not like to be disturbed when preparing a meal for an elaborate dinner party, the same holds true of those in the galley. Ask for permission and find out when would be a good time for you to take a tour.

Don’t waste fresh water: There is nothing like a cold, refreshing glass of ice water when you’re in the sun all day. On a yacht, there are a certain number of gallons of fresh water. Failing to turn off the water can be quite serious, not to mention potentially fatal. It is important that each guest aboard respect the regulations regarding the use of fresh water. Many charters have rules about washing your hair with fresh water and permission is sometimes granted only by your captain. Of course, there is no limit to the amount of salt water that may be used.

When on land, don’t mistake the Italian “good-bye” motion as “come here.” Another faux pas is tapping your hand to your forehead (similar to a salute). To those in Italy, this gesture means, “you’re crazy.”

**Respect Minding Your Manners in Popular Ports of Call**

- **Europe or Latin America:** From the South Atlantic Coast of Spain to the beautiful waters of Cabo San Lucas, there is much to see and do when on land. When disembarking for a day of shopping and sightseeing, it is important to remember that the American good-bye wave may be interpreted as a signal for “no.” Whistling is a form of jeering that may be misinterpreted by the locals. Another common mistake is stroking your chin. You may be sending the message that you are bored or implying this is taking an awkwardly long time, especially when trying to decide what you will eat or buy.

- **Italy:** Whether at the Bay of Naples or the Amalfi Coast, the shops and cuisine are a must. On land, don’t mistake the Italian “good-bye” motion as “come here.” Another faux pas is tapping your hand to your forehead (similar to a salute). To those in Italy, this gesture means, “you’re crazy.”

- **Greece:** The classical and Hellenistic history of Greece is sure to be an incentive to check out the ruins. Some things to beware: putting your hand up in the stop position with fingers spread is considered an insulting gesture. A slight, upward nod of the head signals “no.” The OK sign may be thought of as a crude gesture. To beckon someone in Greece, extend your arm, palm down, and make a scraping motion with your fingers.

- **The Middle East:** When on land along Turkey’s Turquoise Coast, avoid showing the sole of your foot at the edge of another person’s foot. In addition, showing the sole of your foot is a gesture which may be thought of as a crude gesture. To beckon someone in Greece, extend your arm, palm down, and make a scraping motion with your fingers.

- **Australia:** Sailing on the Great Barrier Reef is a magnificent and majestic experience. If you return to the East Coast of Queensland, here are some do’s and don’ts. Working at a woman is considered crass. A thumbs-up gesture is considered improper and rude, especially when accompanied by a small upward jerk.

- **France:** It is not disrespectful to wear short pants in the sun, but you should be aware that this is considered a social faux pas. Wearing a hat is considered crass. A thumbs-up gesture is considered improper and rude, especially when accompanied by a small upward jerk. Where our splendid meals are being created. Don’t barge in and expect to be greeted with open arms, especially when meals are being prepared. Just as we would not like to be disturbed when preparing a meal for an elaborate dinner party, the same holds true of those in the galley. Ask for permission and find out when would be a good time for you to take a tour.

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