

THE COMPLETE ATLANTIC  
SAILING CREW GUIDE

# OCEAN NOMAD

*How to Catch a Ride  
& Contribute to a  
Healthier Ocean*



SUZANNE VAN DER VEEKEN

# OCEAN NOMAD

## The Complete Atlantic Sailing Crew Guide

~

*How to Catch a Ride, &  
Contribute to a Healthier Ocean*

© 2017 Suzanne van der Veeken  
Oceanpreneur Publishing  
Photographs: © 2017 Suzanne van der Veeken  
Map illustrations: © 2017 Rafał Zatwarnicki

Editors: Jessica McCarthy, Jose van der Veeken, Dirk Aardsma, Ludo Lévêque  
Interior book design: Paul Uhl  
Cover design: Miladinka Milic  
Front cover photo: Jean-François Tricot  
Author photo: Marcel Verheggen

First Edition September 2017  
ISBN 978-90-827454-1-2

All rights reserved. This book or any part of it may not be reproduced, forwarded, or copied in any manner without the express written permission of the author.

This book intends to assist and excite the reader for ocean adventure travel. Following the advice given in this book does not guarantee any form of result. The author cannot be held responsible for any kind of outcome.

Mention of specific organisations or websites does not imply endorsement by the author, nor does the mention of any organisation mean they endorse this book or the author.

Ocean Nomad is available at [www.oceannomad.co](http://www.oceannomad.co)  
For special book requests contact [ahoy@oceannomad.co](mailto:ahoy@oceannomad.co)

By Suzanne van der Veeken  
[oceanpreneur.co](http://oceanpreneur.co)

## TESTIMONIALS

“A must read for everyone who loves the ocean. Suzanne hands you the guidelines for sailing adventures, and she clears the path for all your ‘but what ifs’ and the ‘yes but’ . . . Yes, the book is about hitch-sailing and loving the ocean, but most of all she encourages you to take the step to pursue the dream instead of postponing it. So read the book, explore what works for you and create your adventure!”

– **LONNEKE RENTINCK** (NETHERLANDS)

“After meeting Suzanne in January 2014, I followed her adventures closely via social media. When she started her first hitch-sail adventure I was absolutely amazed: is it really possible to cross an ocean if you don’t have sailing experience!? Inspired by Suzanne’s adventures and her very well-provided details and information on the subject, I felt totally ready to throw off the bowlines myself. And I did! To me, Suzanne is THE example of ‘if you put your mind to it, you can do it’. This book will inspire and inform many more adventurous souls around the world. Thanks, Suus for being such an inspiration and friend!”

– **JANNEKE DIJKHUIS** (NETHERLANDS)

“Suzanne was the last of twelve hitchhikers (barnacles, as we decided to call this ‘breed’) I picked up between Grenada and Dominican Republic. What a pleasure! She’s turned hitching rides on boats from a sketchy endeavor to graceful art. Do as she says. She is the doyenne of sailboat hitchhikers!”

– **CLIFF LYON** (CAPTAIN)

## TESTIMONIALS

“I loved reading about the boat hitchhiking adventures and how Suzanne does sensitisation work about our oceans. So much that she inspired me to try the boat hitchhiking thing as well. From the first moment I read her writing, I knew that I wanted to do the same! I just loved reading with how much passion she realises her dream step by step. When we were full of doubts if it was the right thing to do, I returned to what she wrote and re-convincing myself that it was all for the best. And it worked out! We sailed from the Canary Islands to Cape Verde. There we spent one month looking for a boat to cross the Atlantic Ocean. We finally found one and went from Cape Verde to Barbados. Suzanne has been a major source of inspiration!”

– **PAULINA** (LUXEMBOURG)

“Having sailed with Suzanne from France to the Canary Islands, Cape Verde and St Lucia I have seen how enthusiastic and committed to her mission she is. Having read her book now, I can sense the enthusiasm coming out at me from the pages and feel that her book is an inspiration and fantastic guide on hitch sailing and ocean preservation. It should be on every yacht out there at sea.”

– **STEVE GREEN** (YACHT MASTER INSTRUCTOR AND OCEAN MASTER)

“Suzanne’s book is a two-part guide book. The first half guides you into the nomadic world of sailors. Once you have arrived, the second half implores your vital participation and duty to become an ocean advocate. This ambitious guide book is the spark that will ignite your sense of adventure and provoke your compassion to create a better world.”

– **MONIQUE MILLS** (CANADA – CAPTAIN AND OCEAN CITIZEN)

“I hadn’t even gone further than Mediterranean and seen the ocean even once in my life. I found out about Suzanne who stood out there with her stories across the Atlantic. The positive vibe she was sparkling in our correspondence encouraged me, and has always made me sure that I could do whatever I dream of. Thank you, Suzanne for helping me opening up a new path, a new mindset of life, not only with the way you hit the oceans but also with you being so sensitive about the future of our world and the oceans and making efforts for it.”

– **BARBAROS** (TURKEY)

# DEDICATION

**TO**

My little nephew Hugo and niece Mathilde  
My wish is for you to experience the beauty of ocean

My Parents

Thank you for providing a playful outdoorsy childhood. And for the  
eternal mental support, no matter how crazy the adventure.

The Ocean

Thank you for giving adventure, play and life. This book  
is one way to give back.

And to all the Adventure Seekers!

On the ocean, you'll find it.

# FOREWORD

By Edwin Butter & Marjo Boertien  
*Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, June 2017*  
Sailing Research Vessel 'Grace of Aberdeen'  
Founders of *OceanConservation.org.uk*

*"Are you crossing the Atlantic?"*

*"Are you also looking for a boat?"*

You will likely hear these questions dozens of times a day when in the 'Muelle Deportivo of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria' (the harbour) between November and February each year. The Canary Islands, and Las Palmas, in particular, are a very logical and convenient place to prepare for an Atlantic Ocean crossing, so it is no surprise that many sailing yachts and (aspiring) sailors gather here every year.

Captains and crew come from all walks of life and with all kinds of ambitions and expectations. For some, crossing an ocean on a sailing boat is a once in a lifetime adventure long dreamed of, for others, it is the start of many ocean crossings. For some, it is already a way of life, and for others, it is 'just' a means to get the boat and themselves to the Caribbean as soon as possible.

Whatever the reason for crossing, it is not something to be taken lightly. Besides technical issues, sailing experience, food, and safety (just to name a few of the issues) it is super important to get along with each other on board. After all, there is no choice but to do this together, 24

hours a day over the course of three weeks. It's wise to be picky, both as captain and as crew!

We, as boat owners and liveaboards, are picky indeed when it comes to taking on crew. The most important thing for us is 'the personal click', sailing experience is not essential for us (so don't let a lack of sailing experience hold you back!). Having a good spirit on board is vital when embarking on an adventure like an ocean crossing.

Some crew thinks the selection easy. A befriended captain took on two inexperienced sailors as crew, who arrived on board with huge bags of food supplies and drinks. They figured that they would not have to pay for the passage ("You are going anyway") if they brought their own food and cook their own meals in their cabin on a small camping gas cooker! Needless to say, they did not pass the test. It doesn't work like this. And it does make sense to prepare yourself.

There are many stories, both about crew and about captains. Good stories as well as bad stories. More often than not, the crossing is a great experience for both. And sometimes it is not. For both parties, it would be very nice to find out if things work out before departure.

This is how we got to know Suzanne. We remember very well meeting her and her fellow crew members. All of them, people with lots of dreams and a drive to make their dreams come true. Some things the aspiring sailors told about the state of the boat and the (large) number of crew did not make sense to us though. Especially the fact that the captain/owner seemed to change crew as quickly as he would change his underwear because he didn't like the fellow, we found very peculiar. As things got even weirder, the whole crew decided to leave. And rightly so!

There they were, on the terrace of the *Sailor's Bay*, a group of more than ten people, seeing their dream dissolve into thin air. They were sharing their experience and picking up their pieces. It was a touching sight how they helped each other through this time.

Suzanne surely was one of the first to pick up her pieces and move on. Back to the adventure, she had started, but in a different way: the way that would suit her best. She kept on believing that she was going to sail the ocean; not crossing was not an option!

And of course, she managed. Not only did she cross enjoying it fully, but she also developed a great interest and knowledge in 'ocean issues'.



## FORWARD

This is how Suzanne stands out for us: her never ending enthusiasm and eagerness to learn and discover more possibilities in life, and actually go on and just do it. She is not just making her dreams come true, but she is also caring for the planet she discovers. Even more so, with this book, she is giving you all it takes to do the same!

When we talk to people about why we dedicate our lives to raising awareness about the oceans and the actions people can take to preserve them, we often get the question “Is it really that bad?” Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is that bad. The oceans reflect the state of our planet as a whole: the depletion of the waters due to overfishing, the effect of land based agriculture, plastic pollution, climate change messing up ecosystems and so on, show us that we are at a tipping point in human history. The coming decades will be crucial, and the good news is that there is a lot that can be done to change our direction. If there is one way to see and feel this for yourself, it is by doing an ocean crossing.

In this Suzanne also stands out as a leading example: she shows that you can enjoy life to the max *and* take care of the planet at the same time. So it is absolutely great that she took the time and effort to create a reference book that has it all: extensive information about how to hitchhike the Atlantic and how to prepare for it as (aspiring) crew, with a consciousness about what you can do for the oceans. A holistic approach so to speak, to make a dream come true.

So, go ahead, dig in, read, explore! Preferably with at least one toe in the sea, a lake or a river, just to get a touch of the feeling how everything is connected through water.

Guaranteed you will be inspired by Suzanne’s writing!

# PREFACE

In 2014, I decided to take the dream to sail around the world to the next level and see if I could somehow do an ocean passage. I figured if I can successfully cross an ocean, I can continue chasing the dream to sail around the world. I was curious what it would be like to be on a boat for a longer period of time. Are the waves really as high as in the movies? What would it feel like to see land after weeks on the water? Is the Caribbean really like I imagine it to be? There was only one way to find out: to go for it! There were no excuses: my studies were finished, I had no housing commitments, no boyfriend, no best friends' wedding and the cold winter was approaching. The timing for a big first ocean adventure was perfect!

There were just a few challenges to tackle. I had no boat, I had no idea about sailing, and the adventure funds were pretty low. And as ambitious as I am, I didn't just want to sail; I wanted the whole package. I wanted to learn about all the aspects of seamanship, technical aspects of the boats, navigation, energy management, weather, the stars and I wanted to learn more about the ocean itself. I wanted to learn from the sailors.

As a nature lover and advocate, I felt the need to contribute, to attach a mission, an exploration, and meaningfulness to the adventure. I wanted to see what was going on with our oceans, marine life, and find ways to make a positive change for the good. I wanted to learn all this by being out there and exploring the sailing lifestyle. I wanted a lot. I was not the only one looking for this. I was curious, determined and naïve. Did I actually know what I was getting myself into by catching a ride across the Atlantic?

## PREFACE

No. I did not. Fast forward two years later . . . , I do. I have figured it all out! I hitched a ride across the Atlantic three times now. I threw myself into the whole sailing scene to learn whatever there is to learn when crossing the Atlantic Ocean as crew. I've experienced high seas, low seas, good times, bad times. I have learned loads about sailing, seamanship, and people.

Almost every day someone asks me: "How do you find a boat?" This can't be summarised in one sentence. Finding a boat is one thing, finding the *right* boat is what makes all the difference.

Figuring out how to tackle this Atlantic Ocean adventure can be a maze for a newbie. There wasn't a go-to resource on how to catch a ride across the Atlantic. Loads of research, experimentation, lessons learned, and three ocean crossings later, I have realised that now I am the resource. I decided to put it all down and help you make this happen: happily, safely and meaningfully. With this book, I aim to help you navigate the wild wild west of figuring out the Atlantic Ocean crossing as a newbie. This is the book I wish was out there when I naively started the 'Let's catch a ride across the Atlantic' adventure.

I discovered so much as a result from crossing oceans. What has struck me most when going across is what I learned about the ocean itself, how important it is for us, and the serious state of decline it is in. As ocean nomads, we can 'just' cross an ocean and have a memorable adventure, but we can do more! We can make the experience truly rewarding, for ourselves, the ocean and for the places we visit. The ocean brings us so much. As fanatic users, we are responsible for bringing life back into the ocean.

I hope this book inspires, encourages and motivates you to make your ocean-crossing dreams happen. In addition to practical tips, information and stories, I've included some actionable takeaways on how sailors can make a positive difference for the ocean. This book provides the bearings. It's up to you to gather the courage, take action and make the most out of it. NOW is the time, because 'later' may never arrive. I wish you a safe, happy and adventurous journey.

—Suzanne

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                           | xvi   |
| Catching a ride across the Atlantic           | xvi   |
| How to navigate this book?                    | xviii |
| What's in the book?                           | xix   |
| <b>ON SHORE</b>                               | 1     |
| <b>1 THE ADVENTURE</b>                        | 3     |
| 1.1 Why sail across the Atlantic Ocean?       | 3     |
| 1.2 Sneak peek: What's it like?               | 14    |
| 1.3 Reality check & ocean crewing basics      | 17    |
| 1.4 When is it maybe not for you?             | 20    |
| 1.5 How to start: get the right mindset.      | 21    |
| 1.6 Coastal hitch-sailing                     | 32    |
| 1.7 Snapshot of my hitch-sail experiences     | 33    |
| <b>2 ATLANTIC OCEAN PASSAGE: THE BEARINGS</b> | 36    |
| 2.1 Sailing the Atlantic Ocean                | 36    |
| 2.2 The Atlantic Sailing Routes               | 37    |
| 2.3 When to hitch a ride?                     | 41    |
| 2.4 How long does it take?                    | 43    |
| 2.5 How much does it cost?                    | 45    |
| 2.6 North Atlantic Weather                    | 50    |
| 2.7 Types of boats crossing                   | 56    |
| 2.8 Rallies                                   | 60    |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|          |  |     |
|----------|--|-----|
| <b>3</b> | <b>THE SEARCH FOR A RIDE</b> . . . . .                     | 64  |
| 3.1      | Where to find a boat? . . . . .                            | 64  |
| 3.2      | When to start searching? . . . . .                         | 93  |
| 3.3      | Captain's choice . . . . .                                 | 94  |
| 3.4      | Your crew profile . . . . .                                | 97  |
| 3.5      | Your search criteria . . . . .                             | 100 |
| 3.6      | Solo female travel . . . . .                               | 102 |
| 3.7      | Couple travel . . . . .                                    | 103 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>ATLANTIC-PASSAGE HARBOURS</b> . . . . .                 | 104 |
| 4.1      | Palma (Mallorca, Spain) . . . . .                          | 104 |
| 4.2      | Gibraltar . . . . .  | 106 |
| 4.3      | Las Palmas (Gran Canaria, Spain) . . . . .                 | 108 |
| 4.4      | Mindelo (São Vicente, Cape Verde) . . . . .                | 111 |
| 4.5      | Rodney Bay (Saint Lucia) . . . . .                         | 114 |
| 4.6      | Antigua . . . . .  | 116 |
| 4.7      | St. Maarten . . . . .                                      | 118 |
| 4.8      | Virgin Islands . . . . .                                   | 120 |
| 4.9      | Horta (Faial, the Azores) . . . . .                        | 122 |
| <b>5</b> | <b>SAFETY &amp; HAPPINESS CHECK</b> . . . . .              | 124 |
| 5.1      | What could be wrong? . . . . .                             | 124 |
| 5.2      | How NOT to catch a ride . . . . .                          | 125 |
| 5.3      | Three-Step boat & captain assessment . . . . .             | 131 |
| 5.4      | Expectations and agreements . . . . .                      | 142 |
| <b>6</b> | <b>TAKE-AWAYS FOR THE CAPTAIN</b> . . . . .                | 150 |
| 6.1      | Before you take on Crew . . . . .                          | 150 |
| 6.2      | Crew management—On shore . . . . .                         | 151 |
| 6.3      | Crew management—On the ocean . . . . .                     | 153 |
| 6.4      | Make a difference for a healthy ocean—as captain . . . . . | 154 |
| <b>7</b> | <b>PREPARATION: ON LAND</b> . . . . .                      | 155 |
| 7.1      | The packing list . . . . .                                 | 155 |
| 7.2      | Skills to work on . . . . .                                | 173 |
| 7.3      | Prepare for seasickness . . . . .                          | 178 |
| 7.4      | Stay healthy . . . . .                                     | 180 |
| 7.5      | Onboard entertainment . . . . .                            | 181 |
| 7.6      | Pre-departure research & arrangements . . . . .            | 182 |
| 7.7      | Onward travel planning . . . . .                           | 183 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|           |   |            |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 7.8       | Visas .....   | 186        |
| 7.9       | What to tell Mum? .....                               | 187        |
| 7.10      | Connectivity .....                                    | 189        |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>PREPARATION: ON BOARD</b> .....                    | <b>190</b> |
| 8.1       | Get to know the boat .....                            | 190        |
| 8.2       | Provisioning .....                                    | 191        |
| 8.3       | Safety & risk management .....                        | 204        |
| 8.4       | The day you leave .....                               | 206        |
|           | <b>ON THE OCEAN</b> .....                             | <b>208</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>STORIES FROM THE OCEAN</b> .....                   | <b>209</b> |
| 9.1       | Southern route Stories (east to west) .....           | 209        |
| 9.2       | Northern route Stories (west to east) .....           | 229        |
| <b>10</b> | <b>LIFE AT SEA, HAPPENINGS &amp; SITUATIONS</b> ..... | <b>239</b> |
| 10.1      | Watch .....   | 239        |
| 10.2      | Seasickness .....                                     | 245        |
| 10.3      | People Habits & Hurdles .....                         | 246        |
| 10.4      | Fun in the galaxy .....                               | 251        |
| 10.5      | Sleep .....   | 256        |
| 10.6      | The heads .....                                       | 259        |
| 10.7      | Night time .....                                      | 259        |
| 10.8      | Laziness & exercise .....                             | 260        |
| 10.9      | Swimming in the ocean .....                           | 262        |
| 10.10     | Boredom .....   | 263        |
| 10.11     | Expect the unexpected .....                           | 266        |
| 10.12     | Safety at sea .....                                   | 268        |
| 10.13     | Limited resources .....                               | 269        |
| 10.14     | Waste management at sea .....                         | 273        |
|           | <b>ON THE OTHER SIDE</b> .....                        | <b>276</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>LANDING AND LEAVING</b> .....                      | <b>277</b> |
| 11.1      | Arrival: coconut o' clock .....                       | 277        |
| 11.2      | Waste disposal .....                                  | 279        |
| <b>12</b> | <b>BACK ON LAND</b> .....                             | <b>289</b> |
| 12.1      | The Caribbean .....                                   | 289        |
| 12.2      | Europe .....  | 296        |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>OCEAN LOVE &amp; CONSERVATION</b> . . . . .                | 303 |
| <b>13 WHY IS THE OCEAN SO IMPORTANT?</b> . . . . .            | 304 |
| <b>14 WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE OCEANS?</b> . . . . .           | 307 |
| 14.1 Recent Ocean Explorations . . . . .                      | 307 |
| 14.2 Climate change . . . . .                                 | 309 |
| 14.3 Plastic Pollution . . . . .                              | 312 |
| 14.4 Biodiversity change . . . . .                            | 320 |
| 14.5 Overfishing . . . . .                                    | 321 |
| 14.6 Management and protection of the ocean . . . . .         | 324 |
| 14.7 What happens if we don't change anything? . . . . .      | 327 |
| <b>15 WHAT IS BEING DONE TO SAVE IT?</b> . . . . .            | 328 |
| 15.1 Ocean Conservation & Research. . . . .                   | 328 |
| 15.2 Sailors for the Sea . . . . .                            | 329 |
| 15.3 OceansWatch . . . . .                                    | 330 |
| 15.4 The 5 Gyres Institute . . . . .                          | 330 |
| 15.5 Plastic Pollution Coalition . . . . .                    | 331 |
| 15.6 PangeaSeed Foundation . . . . .                          | 331 |
| 15.7 One World One Ocean . . . . .                            | 331 |
| 15.8 Mission Blue . . . . .                                   | 331 |
| 15.9 Sea Shepherd Conservation Society . . . . .              | 332 |
| 15.10 Ocean Unite . . . . .                                   | 332 |
| 15.11 Ocean Conservancy . . . . .                             | 332 |
| 15.12 Parley TV . . . . .                                     | 332 |
| 15.13 Plastic Soup Foundation. . . . .                        | 333 |
| 15.14 Plastic Oceans Foundation . . . . .                     | 333 |
| 15.15 The insPirates! . . . . .                               | 333 |
| 15.16 Sailing conservationists . . . . .                      | 333 |
| <b>16 WHAT CAN YOU DO AS CREW?</b> . . . . .                  | 335 |
| 16.1 Be aware . . . . .                                       | 336 |
| 16.2 Distribute goods. . . . .                                | 336 |
| 16.3 Pack & store smart . . . . .                             | 337 |
| 16.4 Minimise waste impact . . . . .                          | 338 |
| 16.5 Do your research . . . . .                               | 339 |
| 16.6 Contribute to research . . . . .                         | 339 |
| 16.7 Fish responsibly . . . . .                               | 342 |
| 16.8 Rethink—Refuse—Reduce—Re-choose—Reuse- Recycle . . . . . | 343 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                 |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 16.9                            | Create content and campaign           | 355 |
| 16.10                           | Support ocean advocates & initiatives | 357 |
| 16.11                           | Organise a harbour cleanup            | 358 |
| 16.12                           | Connect & team up                     | 359 |
| 16.13                           | Be an inspiration and example         | 359 |
| 16.14                           | Dive below the surface                | 360 |
| 16.15                           | Green your diet                       | 361 |
| 16.16                           | Offset your footprint                 | 363 |
| 16.17                           | Educate the kiddos                    | 364 |
| 16.18                           | Learn                                 | 365 |
| 16.19                           | Explore more                          | 365 |
| 16.20                           | Celebrate!                            | 366 |
| <b>THANK YOU</b>                |                                       | 367 |
| <b>OCEAN NOMAD COMMUNITY</b>    |                                       | 368 |
| <b>APPENDIX &amp; RESOURCES</b> |                                       | 369 |
|                                 | Measurement conversions               | 369 |
|                                 | Abbreviations                         | 370 |
|                                 | Glossary                              | 371 |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>         |                                       | 377 |
| <b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</b>         |                                       | 378 |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>             |                                       | 380 |



# INTRODUCTION

## CATCHING A RIDE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

No boat, no budget and no sailing experience, but a dream to cross the Atlantic Ocean on a sailboat. How can you make this ocean travel adventure happen?

Every year thousands of sailboats cross the Atlantic Ocean. It's a thing. Many of them like to have crew to make the trip more relaxed, more fun, and sometimes more affordable. Then, there are people out there, like you and I, aspiring to sail the Atlantic Ocean passage but don't have a boat.

So, on the dock, do you just put your thumb out, hold a sign saying 'Caribbean' or 'Europe' and wait for a sailing boat to pass by? If it were that easy, then I would not have had to write this book. It is not a straightforward endeavour. There are a few aspects you have to be mindful of to make an Atlantic ocean crossing a happy and safe ride.

When I first started exploring this adventure, after a few weeks of searching on the internet, I thought I had found the coolest boat, captain, and crew in the world. It sounded too good to be true. It was. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I should have done more research. I learned how not to pursue this adventure. My determination though has also taught me how to do it. I have sailed across the Atlantic Ocean three times on strangers' sailboats: twice from Europe to the Caribbean, and once from the Caribbean to Europe. All these experiences were unique—

## INTRODUCTION

different routes, different weather, different boats, different people, different everything! I wouldn't change a thing—I would do every one of the crossings again in a heartbeat.

I have written this guide based on the lessons learned from my Atlantic Ocean boat hitchhiking adventures, and insights from ten years of solo slow travelling around the world. But the book is more than just a compilation of my tips, lessons learned during the crossings and stories from the four boat's which I've crewed on. To give a sense of what it's like on both sides of the wheel, I surveyed 90 Atlantic Ocean crossers: 58 persons who have sailed across as crew, and 32 captains who crossed the Atlantic with crew. I asked them questions about their Atlantic sailing journey.

The comprehensiveness of this book has made the guide not only useful for crew members, but captains can also get ideas on where to find crew, how to prepare them and how to handle crew related tasks. Also, enjoy the read about what an Atlantic Ocean passage is like from a hitch-hiker's perspective.

In this book, you will find an ocean of information that will help turn your Atlantic Ocean sailing dream into reality. It has been designed to guide you from the idea of “someday I would like to sail across the Atlantic, but, but, but. . . ,” to freeing up the time to do it and sail across to the other side. Discover whether ocean sailing is for you, where to find a boat, how to assess the safety, what to pack, and how to make a positive impact along the way. It's a useful guide for sailing newbies as well as those with some sailing experience who want to know where to start looking for a boat to cross the Atlantic, what to do to prepare, or who just want to read more about what it's like. Whether you find a boat in advance online, or locally in the harbour, whether you contribute money for the trip or not, here's the information you need as a first-time ocean crosser to prepare yourself and jump happily and safely on board. Become excited, be a well-prepared crew member, have a happy journey of searching and sailing the Atlantic Ocean, and be hooked to this life-style forever! Become inspired for ocean adventure, make your dream come true, and who knows—you might even become an ocean ambassador. “Someday' I would like to make a big sailing trip!” starts TODAY!

## HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS BOOK?

The book has four sections: On shore, On the Ocean, On the Other Side, and Ocean Love & Conservation. Each section includes a number of chapters containing an abundance of stories, ideas, actionable tips and related internet resources.

You can take the guide with you to use as a handbook while you're on the journey. Each section and chapter stand on its own. You can use the Table of Contents or to navigate directly to the topic of your interest. I have tried to describe the most logical order of the preparations and the actions to take when living the 'hitch a ride across the Atlantic' adventure. Chronologically the book helps you to go from dream state into action state. If you're not sure whether ocean travel is for you or not, read the first chapter: The Adventure! Hopefully, this will ignite a spark for you to set out on your own adventure. The 'On Shore' section talks about the boat search and preparation. It covers what you need to bear in mind while still on shore. If you are curious to find out what the adventure is like, navigate to the 'On The Ocean' section. After that, you probably can't wait to get started and should start reading again from the beginning of this book. The 'On the Other Side' section provides the bearings for leaving the boat and moving on. If you want to learn about the ocean and contribute to a healthier ocean, set course to the Ocean Love & Conservation section. You can start making a difference: today.

The parts in which I talk about my personal experiences are highlighted in blue (my favourite colour). You'll be reading quotes of the surveyed people when it says Hitch-sailor: "... " or Captain "... ". Out of respect to a captain, and the new owner, I refer to the boat I did not cross the Atlantic with, with an alias name 'The Bounty'. Sometimes I link internally to other places in the book where you can read more about a certain topic. Sailors speak a different language. Words that used to be foreign to me and I think may be new to you, I have put in **bold**. You can check the meaning in the Glossary at the end of the book. Navigate to the Appendix for *measurement conversions*.

# WHAT'S IN THE BOOK?

*In short . . .*

## SECTION 1: ON SHORE

### 1. **The Adventure**

What's the adventure all about? Should you do it or not.

### 2. **Atlantic Ocean Passage: The Bearings**

Learn about the sailing routes and seasons across the North Atlantic. From where and when do boats cross? How much time and money does it cost? What weather can I expect?

### 3. **The Search For a Ride**

How, where and when can you find a boat? This chapter includes a thorough analysis of relevant crew websites.

### 4. **Atlantic-Passage Harbours**

Practical destination and boat search information on the main ports of departure and arrival.

### 5. **Safety & Happiness Check**

Go through the safety and happiness checklist to find out if it's a reliable, safe, and happy captain, crew, and boat match. Learn what captains expect from you as a crew member. What agreements should you make.

### 6. **Take-Aways For The Captain**

The focus of the book is on crew. But for a safe and happy passage, collaboration, communication, and expectation management between the captain and crew is key. This chapter provides some useful info for captains considering taking on crew.

### 7. **Preparation: On Land**

Good preparation can make or break the experience. How to prepare as crew? What should you think of before stepping on board? From telling your mum, the packing challenge, and preparation for seasickness, it is all here.

## 8. Preparation: On Board

You're on board! Before throwing off the bowlines, there are preparations to be made. Learn about provisioning, crew safety measures, and how to be ready the day you leave.

## SECTION 2: ON THE OCEAN

### 9. Stories from the Ocean

What is it like to be on the ocean? Read ocean travelogues from the different boats I've been on.

### 10. Life at Sea, Happenings & Situations

"We have a situation" is a phrase you'll hear on every boat, multiple times, if not daily. What happens at sea? And how do you tackle various situations as a crew member? Learn about being on 'Watch', and how to deal with aspects like cooking, washing, sleep, boredom, limited resources, waste, and fellow crew.

## SECTION 3: ON THE OTHER SIDE

### 11. Landing And Leaving

Can you just leave the boat? How to dispose of waste? Is it easy to find another boat or job once you arrive?

### 12. Back On Land

What's it like in the Caribbean? What's it like in Europe? How to go around on a budget? Where to find a coconut?

## SECTION 4: OCEAN LOVE & CONSERVATION

### 13. Why is the Ocean So Important?

By experiencing the ocean first hand on a boat, you will be amazed by its beauty, gain a deep respect for its power, and also see its decline. Why is the ocean so important in the first place?

### 14. What is Happening To The Oceans?

We hear about climate change, plastic pollution, overfishing and many other challenges! But what is actually happening to the oceans?

### 15. What is Being Done to Save it?

Read about a selection of ocean organisations that inspire, provide good data, and that can help you learn more about the ocean. They are all eager for you to get involved!

### 16. What Can You Do as Crew?

What can we do as a crew member to make a difference for the ocean? How can you minimise your impact? How can you contribute? What can we do at the frontline, as sailors, with our special connection to the sea?