

So you're going sailing - A quick guide to everything you need to know

This quick brochure is full of information you need to know before getting to the sailing club.

Sailing is a sport for life and is available to every level of skill, age, gender and physical ability. From eight year olds in the smallest of dinghy's through to Olympic aspirants and ocean going yachts, there is no better way to spend a weekend than out on a river, lake, harbour or ocean enjoying the wind in your face with team mates friends and family.

What to expect?

Everyone's expectations and experiences will vary however if you come to the day with a good attitude you will enjoy every moment of the day. The actual timing of your day will vary from club to club, or event to event. The tips below will cover your day and if you have any questions make sure you ask.

- Turn up at the allocated time. If driving be aware that parking is often limited in the vicinity of sailing clubs.
- There may be a registration process dependant on the event you are taking part in. Ensure you register early so people aren't searching for you.
- You will be allocated to a boat/crew and once instructed to board the boat, make sure you have been to the bathroom etc as it is much easier on land.
- Skippers will welcome you to their boat, give you a quick brief on safety and show you how to use lifejackets etc. If you aren't confident around the water or even if you are and want to wear a lifejacket please ensure that you ask.
- You will head out for your sail, whether it be for a race or just a social sail. Ask questions and don't be afraid to get involved. If you aren't comfortable with getting involved that's fine just let the skipper know.
- Be honest about your experience if you have sailed before. A skipper will arrange for everyone to have a go, but for the less experienced they will ensure someone is showing you how to do things correctly.
- Always listen to the skipper and crew.
- Your yacht will lean over at an angle. Although initially unsettling for some, this is normal and yachts are designed to do this. Your crew will talk you through it so relax and listen to the crew.
- Once finished make sure you head back to the club to talk about your day and enjoy some social time with your crew and friends.

What to wear?

Contrary to many beliefs sailing is a very easy sport to enter into as crew on a yacht and you don't need much gear at all.

There is a chance that you may get a little wet from sitting on a wet deck. Keep this in mind when choosing the shorts that you wear (jeans stay wet long after you finish). Collared shirts are usually the preferred option to help protect you from the sun. Make sure you are protected from the sun - bring a hat sunglasses and sun cream.

The last item of clothing you will need are shoes. There isn't any need to go out and purchase expensive shoes, soft soled non marking shoes (joggers) are fine or even better Dunlop Volleys or similar. Lace up shoes are preferable.

If you have one, bring a light spray jacket and/or something to keep you warm. Sailing is all about the wind and it can get cool on the nicest of days. A change of clothes is always a good idea should you return a little wet.

What to bring?

What to bring depends on the day you are participating in. If you are participating in an organised day (Try Crewing Day, Corporate Sailing Day or regatta) lunch and beverages are usually provided. After you register you will receive information on the day and this is something you should check to see whether you need to bring your own. Bringing your own drink bottle is always a good option as you will need to stay hydrated.

If you're not sailing as part of an organised event - Check with the person who invited you along as to the particular arrangements with that boat.

Some useful tips if you are bringing your own food: Fruit is a good option as there is little waste.

Sailors are environmentally conscious people and we like our waterways clean. Sandwiches are great. Nothing too complex when it comes to fillings so they don't go soggy and don't include items like grated cheese etc. Bring your food in a paper bag and bring a drink bottle. NO GLASS.

Sunscreen or zinc are necessities for sailing and it is best to bring your own. If you forget to bring some, ensure you ask the skipper or crew as they won't want you getting sunburnt either.

Bring a camera; you are going to have a sensational experience why not take those memories home. You never know what wildlife you may see as well. If you do bring your camera make sure it has a lanyard or safety strap in case you accidentally drop it.

Where to now?

Did you enjoy your day and want to go again? The best way to get into sailing regularly, or even semi regularly, is participating in twilight sailing in the summer months.

Sailing clubs all over Australia have twilight races usually starting around 6pm in summer and it is a great way to spend an evening unwinding from the stresses at work. This is very relaxed racing and skippers are keen to secure crew and often use events like these to train crew for more serious racing, if that is what you are interested in. Yachts are always looking for crew and most clubs have a crew register on the day to make it easy for people to be placed on a yacht. The club you are at will have details on this for you or contact the sailing office of a club in your area. Club details can be found on the Yachting NSW website www.nsw.yachting.org.au

If you wish to take part in formal training before venturing further into the sport, Yachting Australia Training Schemes are nationally recognised and span from beginners in small boats, yachts and powerboats, to sailing and racing offshore. These are taught at Yachting Australia approved Training Centres (YATCs), including clubs and commercial schools, all around Australia. These training centres run courses and are flexible to individuals needs. A list of Training Centres is available on the Yachting NSW website. www.nsw.yachting.org.au