

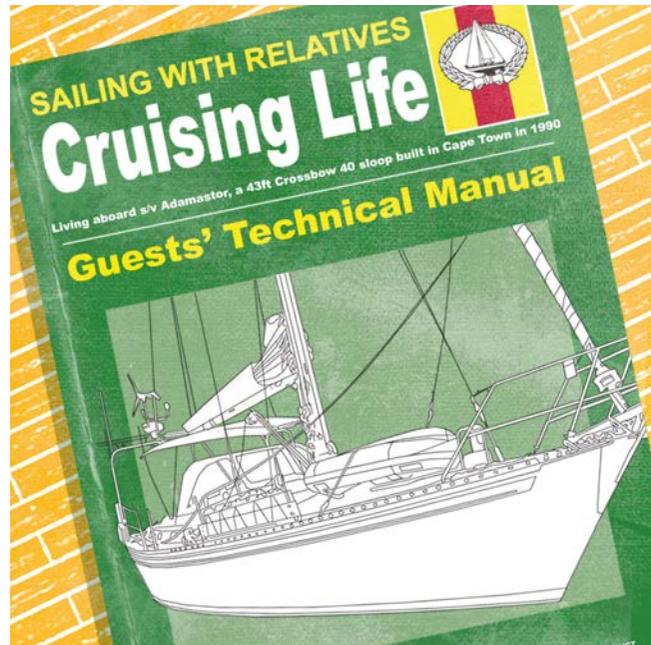
# Blue note

Having the in-laws to stay is always an interesting exercise. Inviting visitors to a boat, however, brings a completely different set of challenges

It's hard enough to pin down cruisers to committing to a plan of when you can visit them and where. The first year that we lived aboard, we were moving around so fast and so much that, when my folks booked a flight in advance to meet us somewhere, we simply guessed that by then we'd be somewhere on the coast of Costa Rica. As we were in the east Caribbean at the time we simply hadn't researched far enough ahead to realise that all of Costa Rica's yachting activity is on its Pacific side – Caribbean Costa Rica is all wild surf beaches, not suitable for anchoring. Poor things had to change their flights and meet us in Panama instead. But it taught us a valuable lesson in not planning ahead too much and that last minute flights are the only way to catch us when we're in 'go' mode. We know countless stories of friends on boats who have made the cardinal sin of promising to sail to a specific deadline and found themselves battling really unpleasant weather in order to get to the next port or country where they had people flying into.

In an ideal world any visitor will be able to join you for lots of lovely day sails. The reality of full-time cruising is that often the times that we've been stationary enough to arrange a holiday with someone have coincided with hurricane or cyclone season, as that's when we can most easily guarantee a location that we'll be based in. But, those times and places don't exactly lend themselves to day sailing. If you're out of the storm belt then it's likely that you'll have little to no wind; if you're situated within it then you're probably staying put at a particular dock.

Also the real world can sometimes encroach upon their trip. A friend from Germany joined us in Panama City only to find us pulling at our hair, trying to manage remotely the change of tenants at our flat in London. Admittedly, he was a welcome distraction from the admin worries we were wrestling with but I'm sure he got tired of us being so preoccupied when we should have been a bit more entertaining. And of course, every person coming out to the boat also gets sweet-



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talked into bringing out enough goodies and spares for us to start a well-stocked chandlers.

Once you get on board there are lots of tricky elements to a boat guest slotting into cruising life. When was the last time that you welcomed a friend to stay and had to say to them, "OK so try not to use too much water, please turn off the lights, you mustn't touch anything on this switch panel, I'll teach you how to use the toilet properly and please keep things tidy as you never know when we might have to move!" I think you'd be terrified. But, the truth of liveaboard sailing is that it's a way of living that we've had to learn to manage and it can be hard for an outsider to appreciate the importance of the myriad of little issues and concerns that might fill our days.

Having said all that, we actually love having people coming to

stay. Some of our best visitor experiences worked so well because of the location. The British Virgin Islands, in particular, were brilliant for a holiday to the boat, as there are so many islands and anchorages to suit every wind direction and condition. We could pick up the hook after breakfast, sail to one island for a bite of lunch and a quick swim and then sail on again in time to drop anchor for cocktails in another bay – perfect.

Even now, with our two little crewmembers, we welcome the opportunity for family to come and share the experience of our floating world.

The impending in-laws had tentatively asked what to do about hotel accommodation and we swiftly lured them on board with stories of the many New Zealand islands and by offering them our large aft cabin while the four of us would cosy up together somehow in the forepeak. So, James speedily builds a bunk bed for our daughter, in order to make things as comfy as possible. Sure there's a snoring toddler above my head and an infant who deftly assumes the starfish position between us but it's only short-term. After all, the big bonus of these flying visits is the big chunk of quality time we get with them. Which, even in our tiny home, is definitely something we can make room for.



JESS LLOYD-MOSTYN

Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en route. Follow their journey at [water-log.com](http://water-log.com).