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The art of letting go

To the editor: Our passages up the Pacific coast of Mexico have been hard going as they were mostly into wind and against current. We burned a lot of diesel, which frankly is rather galling when you're a sailing vessel. So, in order to balance out these somewhat frustrating journeys, we took to doing some inland travel and exploring some of the cities and natural beauty of Central America.

Leaving the boat is a bit like going on holiday for the majority of people, except for a few key differences. Normally, when on holiday, you don't tend to think about what's happening with the weather back home. In fact, it is usually the case that you went away specifically to escape the crummy weather back home and have no wish to be reminded of it. Also, there is never a thought in your mind that whilst you're on vacation your house will accidentally slide down the street and stop, leaning over onto its side, in a nearby park. Or sink for that matter.

But deserting your boat can mean just this. There is a side of you that is rejoicing in the present and embracing the proper break and adventure that you are having. But, the other side, the good, vigilant boat-mama in you, will always be checking the weather online before your personal e-mails.

This last year we've left our floating house on a mooring ball up a river in El Salvador and at anchor in a lagoon in Barra de Navidad, Mexico, as well as the marina time we've had to visit Oaxaca, Guadalajara and even fly to Canada. Although, it should



Jess Barber

Voyagers Jess Barber and her partner James Lloyd-Mostyn aboard their Crossbow 42, Adamastor. They initially had a hard time leaving their boat while in port.

be noted, that even leaving your boat in a marina isn't worry-free when it's peak storm season; a ton of rain can fall in a short period of time, a lightning strike could fry all your electronics and that's before you even begin to talk about the damage potential of true hurricane strength winds.

Suffice to say it's a mixture of a gamble and calculated risk each time we lock the door and step away from the dock. The likelihood of storms means we double up the lines to strengthen the boat's attachment to the marina slip. If the boat was left at anchor we throw out a lot of extra chain and, every time we say goodbye, we close all the seacocks.

Perhaps leaving the boat more often has made it easier to get faster at applying all these safety measures as we've been pleasantly surprised each time that on our return there are no suspect damp patches, no insect infestations or mutant mold growths, no leaks, no charred-looking mast-head and, most important, there has always so far been a boat to return to!

Jess Barber is voyaging aboard *Adamastor*, a 1990 Crossbow 42 sloop, with her partner and their little girl, Rocket. They left the U.K. more than two years ago and are now 11,000 miles into their circumnavigation.