

Offshore Cruising Academy

Five Key Steps

To Dropping the
Dock lines & Sailing
Over the Horizon

By John & Lyn Martin
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C&OC
INTL.

Offshore Cruising Academy - Five Key Steps.



With over 130k Ocean Miles and 28 years Cruising, 15 of those years mentoring and training others, John & Lyn Martin have a wealth experience, resources & knowledge to share with you. They'll also help you avoid the pitfalls, money sucking rabbit holes & give you qualified information to help make your Cruising Decisions!

Building the Dream

Whether we crave a sense of adventure, dropping out of the stressful nine to five grind or just for a change of pace and scenery, many of us have dreamed of buying a boat and sailing over the horizon. It may be that your dream is to explore the islands of the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Asia or the South Pacific. Maybe you want to take some time to circumnavigate the globe, and experience all the diverse cultures on the way. Whatever your Cruising Dream, **You Can Make it Happen!**

Our dream building started early on in our relationship with talk of cruising the Greek Islands or the Caribbean, enjoying cocktails or a glass of wine along with samples of the local cuisine while we watched the sun go down over a calm sea. The Dream was shelved while we started a family and were caught up in work. On holiday at an Island resort in Fiji our Cruising dream was reborn. While enjoying a Sunset Cruise we passed three offshore cruising yachts sitting at anchor off a white sandy beach in crystal clear water. We both looked at each other and decided right there and then that the next time we came to Fiji, that would be us.



Building the Dream

Both of us were brought up on boats and boating, at the time we had a Young 88 a high performance weekender sailing boat which we both Raced. The transition from our previous sailing experience to the Cruising Lifestyle was a huge learning curve and we made plenty of mistakes along the way but within 3 years of making the decision, we threw off the dock lines and headed to the Tropics. 27 years later we are still enjoying this wonderful lifestyle, 15 of those wonderful years have been helping others "Live the Dream"

So how do you **Build your Cruising Dream?**



Sundowners with Friends



Simple! Plan, Prepare & Do

- Join a community of Offshore Cruising sailors such as Coastal & Offshore Cruising Intl. Ask questions, talk with other like minded people who are out there, **Living the Dream.**
- Put pictures of places you would like to visit on your fridge or screensaver to help remind you that you have a dream to turn into reality.
- Make a plan for when the dream will become a reality and **Give it a Timeframe.** This will give you a goal to aim towards.
- Take courses that will help you realise your dream for example, The **Offshore Cruising Academy** online course.
- Read Cruising Guides and start planning places you want to visit.

Deciding on your Vessel

Many of the people we've met cruising haven't had previous sailing or boating experience and found the first few steps more than daunting. Finding the right information and someone to bounce ideas off is sooo important. For example, if you've not already got a boat the first very important step is choosing the **Ideal Cruising Boat** that will suit your needs, and carry you across oceans safely and comfortably. If you have a boat already, is it the right choice?

There are a multitude of choices available from monohulls to multihulls, power and sail, light displacement or heavy displacement. There is no one size fits all and budget plays a big part in the final decision. The cruising boat we chose ticked most of the boxes, with the added bonus of near new electronics, along with a comfortable interior layout for our family of 4.

- If you already have a boat, it may fit your Cruising Lifestyle and only need to be slightly modified, systems upgraded or added, and you are one step closer to sailing over the horizon.
- Charter or go sailing with friends or yacht club members on different vessels and narrow down what type of boat is going to best suit how you want to cruise. Have a clear idea of what you want especially regarding the size and layout. Bigger is not always better and can cause extra stress and problems further down the track.
- Buy a boat that has had systems and equipment already updated or upgraded.. This will save on time, money and will get you out cruising quicker.
- Do Sea trials on a less than idyllic day, and get a feel for how the boat handles on different points of sailing.
- Would a Power/ Trawler type vessel better suit your needs?
- Your choice of build material can have long term advantages and disadvantages!





Can you pick the boats



Designed specifically for cruising!



Preparing to Sail Over the Horizon

Preparation is everything and remember, starting out we often don't know what we don't know! Many production boats are built to a budget and the machinery and systems are designed to cater for occasional use. There is nothing more frustrating than sitting in a marina or at anchor while constantly undergoing repairs,. Breakages are going to happen while cruising but you can minimise the impact by being careful with your choices in the first instance and getting to know your various systems aboard.

Don't make it too complicated, stick to the K.I.S.S. principle - **Keep It Simple Stupid**. The more complicated the system, the less likely that diagnostic tools or skilled Tradesmen will be available to solve breakdowns along your sailing route.

- Get to know how each system works. When you're having work done, lean over the tradesmen's shoulder and ask questions where necessary. Learn how to service your motor, make emergency sail repairs, etc.
- Have a regular servicing regime in place and have plenty of spares onboard for all your systems.
- Upgrade any equipment and systems so that they are robust.
- Prioritise new equipment additions - Make 3 lists - List A is essentials, List B is what you would like, and List C - is the wish list. Remember some things are luxuries and are not necessary to have right from the start.
- Look at every system and ask yourself, is it going to live up to 24/7 and 365 day use and abuse year on year, remember you'll likely be cruising in harsher climates, both warm and cold!
- Start buying spare parts. '**John's Law on Spares**' - Buy a spare, fit that spare! Two reasons, first you've got a new unit fitted and you know it fits! - Now, the unit you've just repaired, take to get serviced then put IT in the spares locker!



Getting the Crew Ready for Adventure

This is one of the harder aspects of offshore cruising, especially for crew that have little experience at sea. Again preparation is the key. **Having confidence that you can cope in different situation.** Being familiar with your boat, having confidence in its seakeeping ability goes a long way to calming anxiety and apprehension.

Noodle, walk around marinas and take a look at cruising boats that have sailed some miles, you'll easily recognise these in comparison to the weekend warriors, **seek out experienced people** to give you qualified advice. Be careful of the know it all's at the club that have plenty of advise but zero experience.



Above all else, have fun, enjoy the experience!



- Do a Sea Survival Course and an Offshore Medics Course- practising in a controlled environment gives a great boost to confidence levels.
- Navigation is a necessary skill, take a suitable course. RYA, Coastguard.
- Read up on diesel and electrical maintenance.
- Learn about Weather.
- Seasickness - be prepared. 90% of Offshore Cruisers get seasick to some degree or other. Some come right after a couple of days but others are cured by some form of medication for the entire time on passage. Find the best seasickness remedy for you and stick with it.
- Practise! Practise! Practise! -: Man Overboard drills; reefing sails and shaking them out: heavy weather sailing tactics. Familiarity builds confidence.
- Sail out of sight of land, preferably overnight. Find the watch systems that everyone is comfortable with.

Dropping the Dock Lines

This is not only the most scary part but also the most exciting. You are as prepared as you can be, the cupboards are stocked with food, spares, cruising guides, and charts. This is the moment that you have worked towards and now it is time to make it a reality. Check the weather, plot your course and throw off the dock lines. Now is the new chapter in your lives, leave the dock and set a course for the adventure of a lifetime.

If these **5 Key Steps** have answered your questions we look forward to seeing you out there soon. If on the other hand they've **Raised more Questions than Answers**, don't despair, all your questions can be answered!

Offshore Cruising Academy, the training arm of Coastal & Offshore Cruising Intl. have a Cruising Preparation Course scheduled for early next year and we'll be releasing pre registration information shortly to you by email. Stay tuned and we'll give you all the tools to **Turn Your Cruising Dreams Into Reality**.



Couldn't have done it without you! Thank you John & Lyn!



Fabulous, awesome brilliant! We're Here & Loving It!



We're here & what a Welcome! Thanks for getting us here J&L.



About Us.

Coastal & Offshore Cruising Intl. is an association of like minded people that want to get out on the water and enjoy the adventure and camaraderie. Run by cruisers for cruisers!

John & Lyn Martin started cruising back in the 90's and now have more than 150k ocean miles behind them with over 120k under the keel of their own boat Windflower.

Over those 30 years they've accumulated resources and written hundred's of articles, visited almost every cruising destination in the South Pacific & written the Cruising Guides too.

Our first offshore passage starting on a fixed date came back to bite. *"We had to do better"* John admits *"I read every resource on weather in the Pacific and it soon became a Passion"*. Since 2007 The Martin's have shared their weather and cruising knowledge across the Pacific in Association with PredictWind as Weather Ambassadors, at cruising events and festivals and in 2019 Ocean Tactics was established. [MORE on OCEAN TACTICS](#)

The Martin's also have a longstanding pedigree running Rallies for organisations such as the ARC, Oyster World & Island Cruising and bring that expertise to the rallies, Rendezvous, Training & Events C&OC run in the South Pacific, the US, Australia & SE Asia.

About Us...cont.

For the expectant cruiser C&OC offer Cruising Preparation online and live courses, and Mentoring via the Zoom Platform to help keep those new to Cruising heading in the right direction. "We took some wrong turns when we were first starting out" say's John Martin & with One Boat Buck equaling a Thousand Dollars it's expensive when you get it wrong.

It doesn't matter if you're an experienced cruiser or a novice, C&OC has something for everyone. Aside from the resources available to members there are also many discounts on equipment and services that will make the membership fee well worth spending. Above all it's about having a great time in the company of others, so come on in and join the fun! [More on C&OC Intl.](#)



Cruising with C&OC & Loving it!

It's FREE
&
You're Invited!

Here's a Bonus for getting through the 5 Key Steps

**We know there are so many questions you're itching to ask so we'll be starting regular live Q&A's and you're invited.
Tap or click the button below to get started!**

Let's Get Started...



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