CRUISING WORLD

# How to Entertain Afloat

## Socializing while cruising can be fun, but it will require some planning. These tips from a veteran voyager will ensure your next get-together is a hit.

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The evening is abuzz with talk of favorite anchorages, the next passage. As Kyle Hopkins and I organize the food, we have time to chat. She and her husband, Doug, arrived in New Zealand's Bay of Islands after spending two years sailing their 32-foot cutter, *Astrala*, from Connecticut via Pitcairn Island with two youngsters on board.

"I never guessed how social our lives would be when we set off cruising," Kyle comments. "First new anchorage we sailed into, folks rowed by. I invited them on board, then realized we didn't have spare coffee mugs to offer them." From etiquette to expectations, entertaining afloat was an unexpected part of Kyle's cruising education.

As Kyle found out, work and community commitments no longer dictate how you spend each hour of your day when cruising. This leads to the opportunity and need to entertain far more than many people expect. But ask returned voyagers what they miss, and the vast majority will say "the easygoing social life."

Easygoing is the word to remember. Entertaining afloat does not have the same constraints or expectations that often leave shore-based hosts exhausted. On the other hand, the casualness of this new lifestyle may hide potential pitfalls for unwary hosts.

Socializing afloat tends to break down into five categories: 1) row-by, come aboards; 2) casual, just happened because someone came by to trade books; 3) planned invites for fellow cruisers; 4) planned invites for folks from shore; and 5) potlucks.

The quiet of morning lures you out into your cockpit. Someone rows by and says, "I like your boat." A conversation ensues and you learn that cruising social life can be like a throwback to those days when folks used to sit on the front porch and greet neighbors as they walked by. Refreshments for these row-bys are simple: an offer of whatever it is you're having — coffee, a cookie or a piece of toast.

When folks come to trade charts or ask how to fix something, I like to offer a drink. Because many folks do not feel comfortable refusing alcoholic beverages, I offer coffee, tea or fruit juice, along with

## RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

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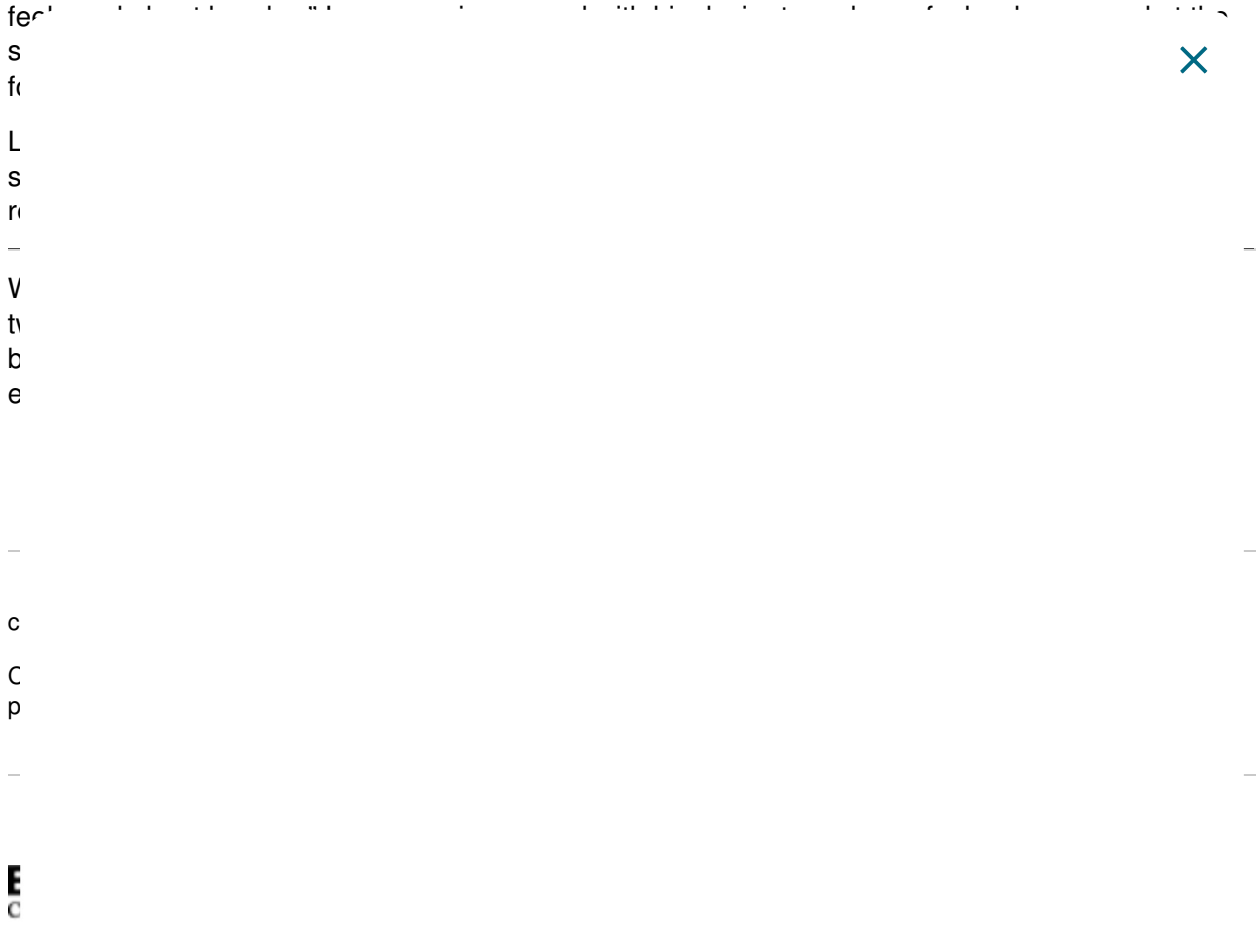

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