



Cruise Captain Guide

A “How To” Guide on Hosting a Safe, Efficient,
and Enjoyable Overnight Cruise

SYC Fleet Committee

Sarasota Yacht Club Cruise Captain Guide **Updated 1/7/22**

Note: Please be sure to send the Fleet Captain the final list of attendees after the cruise ends so that it can be presented to the SYC for billing.

This document is intended to be a guide for SYC Cruise Captains on overnight cruises. The objectives of a successful cruise are to be safe, efficient, and enjoyable. This is intended to be a living document, updated with the lessons learned from past cruises. As a Cruise Captain, please accept the challenge of capturing any lessons learned for the next Cruise Captain.

Prior to the start of the watch year in October, the Fleet Committee will draft the cruise schedule for the following calendar year. Our cruises are planned to depart on Friday and return on Sunday, but adjustments to this schedule, as for severe weather, may be warranted.

As soon as the cruise schedule is published, the Fleet Committee will begin to solicit SYC member Cruise Captains for each cruise. Cruise Captains should be from one or two of the boats participating on the cruise, but any member planning to attend the cruise is eligible. For most cruises, one crew is sufficient, but for larger cruises such as South Seas Resort or St. Petersburg, two crews may be able to better handle the planning, logistics, and coordination requirements.

Planning the Cruise:

Step 1: Contact the destination Dockmaster

- Provide the destination Dockmaster with the estimated number of boats you expect to have on the cruise. The previous year's number may be used as a guide. If unsure, suggest 10-12 slips as a "best guess" estimate. The Dockmaster will want to be kept updated as registration and/or cancellations are received.
- The Dockmaster will let you know the number of slips available.
- If the destination marina requests a contract to be signed, obtain a copy and provide it to the Fleet Captain or SYC Dockmaster who will coordinate with the SYC Executive/Management Team.

Step 2: Plan the Agenda

- Research opportunities for onshore activities. The Dockmaster is a valuable source of information, as is the internet.
- Plan for Friday night dinner. Member feedback has shown preference for casual dinners at the marina grill with individual checks, or restaurant nearby offering buffet or catering service. Cruise Captains may, however, choose any other type of meal service for both Friday and Saturday nights including having members plan meals on their own.
- Plan for a Saturday night sit-down meal. It is recommended that a private area be reserved with SYC members ordering from the restaurant menu or a limited menu provided by the restaurant. Individual checks are encouraged.
- Plan for Saturday morning bocce, corn hole, or other game or activity if possible. Determine a location for the games and an area for serving breakfast treats and drinks (check on whether alcohol can be served at the breakfast location).

- In the event that either Friday or Saturday dinners need to be preordered, establish the menu choices and pricing so it can be published on the Cruise Agenda.

Tips to help Plan the Agenda

- Look at previous SYC Cruise Agendas, in particular the one(s) for your destination.
- Reach out to the last year's Cruise Captain for their thoughts and experience for this destination.
- If possible, visit the yacht club/marina. It is not necessary to visit by boat; usually the SYC destinations are an easy drive. A car gives you the flexibility for pre-planning and exploring interesting things to do and restaurants you may want to use.
- Once you have an idea of what you are planning to do, determine costs:
 - If you plan a dinner at a restaurant that will not allow individual checks, then you must plan the menu options and cost of each.
 - If you plan a dinner or event that needs transportation (e.g., taxi or van), then you need to plan for that and determine the cost per person.
- Get the cancellation deadlines for each event. The marina will have a cancellation policy for boats. If you are having a dinner catered (as with a buffet), or are reserving a room, make sure you know the cancellation policy/date after which the number of participants cannot be changed. For dinners that are pre-ordered, as from a limited menu option, get the date after which members will be charged for their meal(s) even if they do not attend.

Step 3: Publish the Agenda

- The Agenda needs to be completed 8 1/2 weeks prior to the Cruise. It must be submitted to the SYC Communications Team so they can prepare the Agenda for the SYC Cruising Registration and Blasts on the SYC website.
- Standard Agenda looks like:
 - Friday
 - Dinner at xxxxx
 - Saturday
 - Game at xxxxx
 - Dinner at xxxxx
 - Sunday
Depart
- The SYC Communications Staff can provide you with samples you can use.
- Review and approve the final Agenda document with the Communications Staff.
- Prepare yourself for Registration Day!

Step 4: Registration Day

- Seven and ½ weeks prior to the cruise, on Tuesday at 12:00 p.m., the SYC online Cruise registration will open on www.sarasotayachtclub.org for registration (boaters and non-boaters).
- The SYC Communications Staff will be responsible for ensuring the online registration is open.

- The Cruise Captain and the Fleet Captain receive emails of the SYC members' reservation forms.

Step 5: Marina Registration

- The Cruise Captain is responsible for making the member marina reservations for the cruises.
- SYC members are not allowed to make their own marina reservations.
- The Fleet Captain will provide Cruise Captains with an Excel spreadsheet that you will need to record the member information.
- If the Cruise is to another Yacht Club, the member will be billed through their SYC account number that members will provide on the cruise registration spreadsheet.
- Within the first two weeks after initial cruise registration, email the Dockmaster the completed Excel spreadsheet.
- The Dockmaster will try to assign member slips in the order of their reservation time. Therefore, it is important to list the registrations in chronological order on the registration list. Priority members should be listed first, ignoring chronological order. These include: Cruise Captain(s), Fleet Captain (if attending), and Cruise Captains from the previous year who are using their privilege of priority registration for this particular cruise (Policy implemented 2019).
- Member reservations are **not** approved until the Dockmaster assigns a slip and approves the reservation. Sometimes the Dockmaster may pass over a member's reservation due to marina limitations (e.g., the length of the boat will not fit in an available slip).
- The Dockmaster has final say on which members' boats will be allowed on the cruise.
- Approved members may need to contact the Dockmaster with their credit card information.
- Cruise Captains should advise the approved members that they have been approved for a slip, but that they must call the Dockmaster with their credit card information to reserve the slip in their name (if required by marina).
- Boats not approved will be put on a waiting list which the Cruise Captain needs to update regularly.
- Boater cancellation:
 - The Cruise Captain is responsible for informing the Dockmaster that a member has cancelled and ask the Dockmaster to see if another boat on the wait list can be approved. If another member is approved, the Cruise Captain will then notify the wait listed member that they are approved and they need to call the Dockmaster with their credit card information (if required).
 - The member cancelling is responsible for calling the Dockmaster to cancel their reservation.
- Cruise Captains are responsible for keeping the registration list updated and report any changes to the Dockmaster as those changes happen. *NOTE: Keeping up with registration changes is the most time consuming aspect of being a Cruise Captain. Try to stay on top of boat registration information as it comes in online.*
- NOTE: Some members have inadvertently signed up for a slip both through the SYC website and also directly with the destination marina. Notify these members that if they intend to be part of the SYC cruise and associated events, they must cancel

any reservations made *outside* the SYC website and abide by the “first come, first served” lineup from the SYC online reservations.

Step 6: Dinner and Transportation

- The Cruise Captain needs to compile from the member reservation form the number of members who will be eating Friday and Saturday dinners. If transportation is needed and the member has requested a transportation reservation, then the Cruise Captain will need to compile that list for the transportation company.
- The restaurant and transportation companies will give you the date by which they require the final list of reservations and the final cancellation dates. **Make sure to list the cancellation deadlines on the Agenda.**
- If there is an event/resort fee or other payment needed, the Cruise Captain should direct the restaurant to contact the SYC CFO to get the SYC Club Credit Card information.
- Provide final count as needed by date specified.

Step 7: Non-Boater Registration

- SYC Fleet Committee has encouraged non-boating members to attend our monthly cruises.
- Non-boater registrations will be sent to the Cruise Captain and the Fleet Captain.
- Non-boaters can request on the reservation form to ride on a member’s boat to the cruise venue.
- Cruise Captain will ask approved boating members if there is someone willing to provide a ride for members requesting a ride to the cruise venue. If a boating member agrees to give another member a ride, the Cruise Captain will contact both the requesting member and the boating member. It is the responsibility of both to make contact with each other and make arrangements regarding times and locations.
- Non-boating members arriving by car or riding on a member’s boat are responsible for making their own hotel reservation.

Step 8: Two Weeks Before the Cruise

- Confirm slip assignments with the Dockmaster
- Confirm dining reservations. If there is a preset options menu, the member must make their choice and the Cruise Captain will provide the numbers of each of the choices to the restaurant. Members are responsible for remembering their choices. Cruise Captains can post a list of the member choices at the restaurant to avoid accidental changes of choices at the time of serving.
- Compile cruise information packet of Agenda and any supplementary information. Include cruise itinerary, cruise roster of participants (be sure to hide account numbers), times, and locations of activities.

Step 9: One Week Before the Cruise

- Distribute cruise information packets by email to all participants. Add weather and tide information if available and any essential information for approach and docking at the destination.
- Include dress requirements, if necessary.
- *Remind members to bring name tags!*
- Encourage all cruise members to take pictures that can be collected after the cruise for publication in the post-cruise Spars and Tacks. Send photos to the SYC Communications team.
- *Collect bocce or corn hole sets from SYC (contact SYC Dockmaster in advance for assistance) if being used.*
- *Collect water, wine, napkins, and flatware setups from Chef Anthony for the cruise. Call in advance.*

Step 10: Day of the Cruise

- Contact any changes to Cruise members as soon as possible.
- It is recommended that Cruise Captains arrive a day early to ensure sufficient time to coordinate activities and dockage.

Step 11: During Cruise

- Arrive early to all events to make sure everything is set up and ready to go.
- Ask for help if needed. Get other SYC members involved!
- Encourage picture taking.
- Keep an eye on return weather or Local Notices to Mariners (LNMs) that may impact a safe and efficient cruise back to SYC. Communicate any significant items to the cruise members as soon as possible.
- Have fun!

Step 12: After the Cruise

- Provide any suggestions for improving subsequent cruises to the Fleet Captain so this document can be updated.
- If you incurred any out-of-pocket expenses, keep a record and receipts and provide these to the SYC Accounting for reimbursement. SYC will credit the amount to your next month's SYC statement.
- Provide a list of members on the cruise to SYC Accounting.
- Provide a list of special expenses (taxis, vans, etc.) to SYC Accounting.

NOTE: *If any cruise participant cancels, they must cancel through the SYC website and get a confirmation. In addition, the member must call the Dockmaster to cancel the marina reservation. Failure to do either may result in the member being charged a cancellation fee. Some reservations cannot accept late cancellations and any charges that result will be the member's responsibility.*

BOAT – CRUISE CAPTAIN TAKE LIST (*only as needed*)

KEEP RECEIPTS TO TURN IN FOR ITEMS PURCHASED FOR THE CRUISE

1-2 ICE CHESTS

ICE (BUY THERE IF POSSIBLE)

GALLON JUGS (IF PRE-MIXING BLOODY MARYS/MIMOSAS)

LABELS FOR JUGS (SUCH AS “NOT WATER”)

WINE GLASSES OR OTHER GIFT FOR CRUISE CAPTAINS (Fleet Captain can bring)

BOTTLE OF WINE FOR CRUISE CAPTAINS (Fleet Captain can bring)

CERTIFICATES FOR CRUISE CAPTAINS AND GAME WINNERS (Fleet Captain can bring)

BOCCE FLAG (Fleet Captain can bring)

BOCCE/CORN HOLE GAMES IF NOT PROVIDED BY HOST MARINA – stored at SYC – pick up ahead of time)

CASE OF WINE/ WATER/NAPKINS/CUPS/PAPER OR PLASTIC PLATES/PLASTIC FLATWARE FROM CHEF ANTHONY (call week before to plan when to pick up from him)

GOODY BAGS AND ITEMS FOR GOODY BAGS (INCLUDE ITINERARIES, CANDY, CHIPS – CRUISE CAPTAINS’ CHOICE – not essential, but nice to give when participants arrive)

BREAKFAST SNACKS (pastries, fruit, water, other snacks – Cruise Captains’ choice) AND BEVERAGES (see below – water, juice, and if alcohol is permitted, ingredients for Bloody Marys and Mimosas)

FOLDING TABLE (if none available on site for breakfast snacks)

PLASTIC TABLE CLOTH(S)

CLOTHESPINS (to help hold plastic tablecloth(s) to picnic or other table)

PENS/PENCILS/CLIPBOARD/PAPER PAD FOR SCORING GAMES

TRASH BAGS

ZIPLOCS/ALUMINUM FOIL

HAND SANITIZER

PAPER TOWELS

TOOTHPICKS

CELERY STICKS

OLIVES

BLOODY MARY MIX OR MR T (ORIGINAL AND SPICY)

NO-PULP ORANGE JUICE

TOBASCO SAUCE

LIMES

VODKA

WATER! (Especially important to bring lots in the hot weather)

CHAMPAGNE OR PROSECCO

FOLDING CHAIRS (for yourself)

CAMERA (or use cell phone for taking photos)