

# THE BOAT THAT

*rocked*

Jessica Oliver leapt aboard a luxury yacht to sail along Turkey's exquisite south-west coast and discovered that chilli prawns, ancient ruins and azure sea make a brilliant combination



Clockwise from top left 'Navigai' means 'Navigation'; one of SCIC's elegant yachts; Jessica and Crispin enjoy a competitive game of onboard poker; a colourful food bazaar in Fethiye; the ghost village of Kayaköy is preserved as a museum. Opposite, from top Fethiye harbour; the crew mix up farewell cocktails.



**B**oats were never my thing. As a little girl I would always end up with my head slung overboard, my face moss green - this regardless of whether I was aboard a small rowing boat or a luxury cruise liner. But by age of 20 I had, thankfully, grown a pair of sea legs. A sailing trip down the Turquoise Coast of Turkey was certainly one way to put said legs to the test.

My partner and I touched down in Dalaman on a Saturday afternoon and were whisked off to Göcek Harbour - an exclusive yachting village with gorgeous views just 20 minutes from the airport. Here, we found our 26-metre long, seven-metre-wide home for the week, *Naviga I*, which was floating magnificently in the harbour, framed against the mountains and the setting sun. We were welcomed aboard with a glass of rosé, a table teeming with mouth-watering appetizers and a group of holidayers from Wales, Scotland, Belgium, England and Germany - with whom we instantly became friends.

## DAY 1: delicacies and icy seas

After being woken by the cacophonous 360-horsepower engine at 5am, we set off into a slightly choppy sea, which managed to rock me back to sleep. Four hours later, I woke again at the sound of the clanging breakfast bell.

Although the boat's incessant rocking made me a little queasy, once on deck, the swaying was less noticeable and I relaxed into some cushions with a glass of fresh orange juice. Breakfast spread conquered, we lay tanning in May's spring sunshine until we anchored for lunch at the lush Green Bay. Here, we were served a traditional Turkish delicacy of green beans in tomato sauce, topped with an egg and served with fresh yoghurt. Then a courageous few braved a swim and a waterski (even in May the water is cold), while the rest of us chose tans over frostbite and stuck to the sunbeds.

Later on, the crew hoisted up the four enormous sails (us girls ogling their bronzed biceps) and we cruised down the coast to the beautiful little seaside town of Kalkan. The shopping is excellent here, but don't be fooled by the

'genuine fake' watches - my new rose-gold Chanel timepiece ticked itself silly by day four. By night Kalkan is a vision of multicoloured lights reflecting off the water; music and the tantalizing smell of grilled fish waft between the line of exquisite boats docked along the harbour's edge. That evening we devoured prawns and calamari and played games into the early hours.

## DAY 2: ruins and ghosts

We ventured inland with a personal tour guide to visit the infamous Turkish ruins. Our first stop was Patara, much of which still remains undiscovered, but recent excavations have revealed many structures previously hidden by the dunes. Another must-see is Xanthos, a city in ancient Lycia that dates back to the eighth century BC and is home to fascinating structures like the Harpy Tomb, the Xanthian Obelisk, the Amphitheatre and the Acropolis.

Lunch was in a quaint little village and included Turkish flatbread and Ayran, a Turkish drink made of yoghurt and salt - it's surprisingly more tasty than it sounds, and the fact that it is said to rehydrate you was much appreciated after the previous evening's antics.

Next we visited the ghost village, Kayaköy. It was abandoned after the Greco-Turkish War and is now, with its hundreds of run-down Greek-style houses and churches, preserved as a museum. As the sun set on another perfect day, we sailed to Gemiler Island, where we anchored for the night.

## DAY 3: apple tea and fish markets

We set sail this morning via Ölüdeniz (Dead Sea) and anchored in Samanlık Bay where we ate lunch beneath clear blue skies. Our destination for the evening was Fethiye, one of Turkey's tourist centres - particularly popular because of its less expensive lifestyle and the hospitality of the locals.

Fethiye is a vision of greenery - a charming little mountainside town with a harbour at its feet. It is known for its bazaars and fish markets and we soon came upon a maze of alleyways lined with stalls selling jewellery, clothing, watches, sunglasses, incense and every flavour of Turkish delight and tea you could ever imagine. (Turkish apple tea became my favourite.)

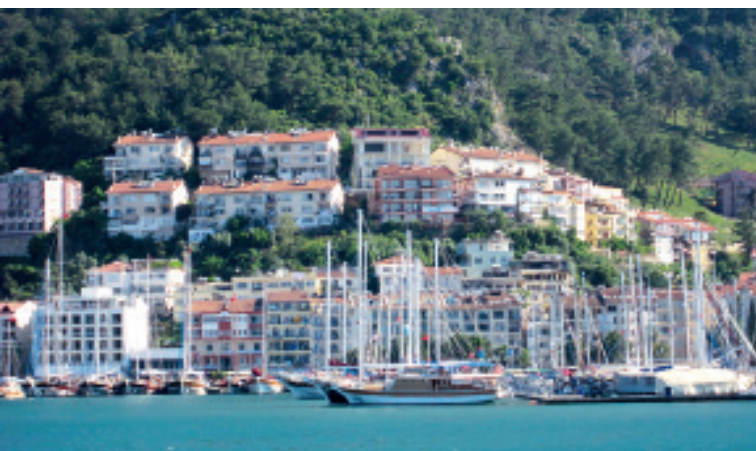
For dinner we headed to the fish market, where you can choose from a wide selection of fish and then take your pick to one of the nearby restaurants, where the chef will prepare it for you. We tucked in to the legendary Turkish cheese pastries before feasting on our garlic, chilli and olive-oil prawns, followed by deep-fried calamari rings. And, as if the experience could get any more satisfying, we were entertained by an exotic dancer while a Turkish band played happily in the background.

## DAY 4: dancing on the ceiling

As we left Fethiye and journeyed towards Kizil Ada, a spot of bad weather kept us indoors playing card games, poker and Jenga. Teatime (or 'G&T time' to be more accurate) started early and the international playlists, courtesy of all our iPods combined, soon emerged, along with some very questionable dance skills. Things really got moving when the Scotsman in our group broke into a local jig and we all followed suit, limbs flailing about wildly. We ended up dancing till the early hours - and were even treated to our very own full monty, thanks to the Scotsman's inebriated interpretation of 'You Can Leave Your Hat On'.

## DAY 5: a lesson in Turkish pastry

We departed from Bodrum Bay, where we had anchored for the night, and sailed towards Cleopatra's or Hamam Bay, where you can see ancient (underwater) ruins of the Roman Baths. On arrival, our chef surprised us with a Turkish cheese pastry workshop and we enjoyed a boat ride over the ruins.





*At Fethiye's fish markets, you can choose from a wide selection of fish and take your pick to a nearby restaurant to be cooked*



Clockwise from top Jessica wanders through Turkey's ancient ruins; Fethiye is abuzz with tourists; a local prepares Turkish flatbread; the fish market in Fethiye; Turkish apple tea; Jessica enjoys a dinner for two.



## DAY 6: cocktails and goodbyes

After a delicious chorizo and cheese omelette for breakfast, I flopped onto a daybed for my final sun session. Today, I decided, I was going to go for a swim, no matter how freezing the water temperature. I couldn't possibly come all the way to Turkey and not dip into the azure sea. My bravado came to a screeching halt the minute I jumped in, however, and I was back on my daybed in no time.

We anchored in Göcek Harbour in the afternoon and after a few rounds of cocktails, our group headed off arm-in-arm to Lotus, a lovely restaurant on the water's edge. Our final evening together drifted by in a blur of rosé, laughter and memories... our very own version of Turkish delight. **mc**

## WHAT TO PACK

High season starts in April and runs until the end of October. During April and May temperatures reach about 24°C during the day, but drop to as low as 15°C in the evenings. Expect some rainy days, too, so pack a hoodie, jacket and socks. The weather picks up from June onwards - the evenings are warm and the days reach into the high twenties and thirties, so a swimsuit is essential. Bring a light cover-up to throw over your costume during mealtimes. For evening-wear, loose pants, T-shirts or dresses will do. Turkey is at its hottest in July when the temperature hits 40°C or more during the day and the evenings are hot and humid.

## THE CRUISE OPTIONS

Apart from regular cruises - which include accommodation, meals, complete relaxation and plenty of pampering, and are excellent for families, couples or friends - Sailing Cruises in Comfort (SCIC) organizes themed cruises each year:

- **Passion and Talent Cruise** Training to help you identify your financial and spiritual goals, and discover your passions and talents.
- **Contemporary Art Cruise** The Turkish landscape offers a beautiful backdrop of nature and history. Learn how to evaluate art and how to select from the overwhelming range of museums, galleries and exhibitions.
- **Bodrum Cup** This October regatta is an annual sailing race in which about 70 yachts participate. Expect a variety of activities and nightly parties.
- **Other themed cruises include** Archaeology; Wine; Singles; Fishing; Kids; Theatre; Walking; Photography; Cooking; Yoga; and Honeymoon.

## GETTING THERE

Flight options include:

- Fly Emirates to Istanbul (from R6 000 return), then catch a Turkish Airlines flight to Dalaman (from about R800 return).
- Fly Emirates to London Gatwick (from R6 000 return), then jump on a Monarch flight to Dalaman (from £150, about R1 899 return).
- Fly Turkish Airlines to Istanbul (from R6 000 return), then catch a Turkish Airlines flight to Dalaman (from about R800 return).

## CONTACT

Cruises fill up quickly so get booking for 2012. For information or reservations call (0031) 334-220-055, e-mail [info@scicsailing.eu](mailto:info@scicsailing.eu) or visit [Scicsailing.eu](http://Scicsailing.eu).