

# SAIL AWAY



*To understand the true meaning of bliss, take your place aboard a luxury yacht sailing around the Mediterranean Sea. Simply sit back and relax...*

Words KAT HOPPS



Admiring the exquisite sunsets over a glass of wine is a daily pleasure

PHOTOGRAPHY: MORITZ BRANDT

It's past midday and the sun is hot despite the thin veil of clouds above. My destination is two hundred yards ahead, a gentle swim through crystal blue waters to a softly bobbing sailing boat. We're moored off Sedir Island, commonly known as Cleopatra Island – the Greek goddess is said to have made it her private hideaway with lover Mark Antony – and it's a treasure of Turkey's South Coast.

Earlier, my passengers and I shared views of the unspoilt bay from the top of ancient Hellenistic theatre ruins, swathed in shadow by long-limbed trees. We marvelled at the tiny sphere seashells covering the protected golden beach and happened upon a chicken and cockerel's languid courtship walk.

At the end of my swim awaits a delicious lunch and the promise of more journeys along quiet coves. And as for tomorrow – who knows, for these are the unknown rewards bestowed upon those who sail.

A holiday unlike many others, sailing is not only the epitome of rest and relaxation – the chance to forget a world preoccupied with time and agendas – but also a delight for the curious minded. My blissful six days was spent aboard a 16-person wooden ketch, part of a small fleet owned by Dutch/English company ScicSailing. We boarded our luxury yacht at the port city of Bodrum, part of the southwestern Aegean Region of Turkey. Seeing the mahogany exterior and huge sails for the first time was enough to excite the child inside me but my other



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first impression was of how clean and spacious it looked.

A huge area at the hull doubled as a reception area with sofa cushions and table. Below deck, the varnished pine interiors were light and I found many a person seeking this cool spot for reading during our stay. Each air-conditioned cabin had its own en-suite bathroom with toilet and separate shower area and storage was practical although packing lighter comes to one's advantage.

Practicalities aside, the rest of your trip is to enjoy how you wish even if this involves nothing at all; I spent many happy explorations swimming or kayaking around the pretty bays. We also saw many delights: a trip to the ancient sandy ruins of Knidos and a morning's walk at a local's market observing the women shopping from



Captain Sirlahattin maps out the day's sailing ahead

market stalls stacked with spices and flatbreads, while at nearby tables their husbands clasped strong Turkish coffees while shooting the breeze.

A lovely surprise is the strong bonds formed between you and your fellow passengers, strengthened by sharing so many meals together. And the food – oh the food! We were spoiled with fresh mezzes of Turkish salads, buttery couscous and melt-in-the-mouth mousakas, garlic-infused yogurt dips and freshly caught fish, cooked by our talented chef, Cihon, and served by our attentive crew.

But of course, the sailing is what we came for and it truly is an invigorating experience to lie back to a gentle lull, disengaging from everything while the salty fresh air hits the senses. It's a sad time when you have to say your goodbyes but it's a certainty you'll be back, time after time.

## Travel notes

Individual sailing cruise: prices range from \$742 to \$836. One week per person includes breakfast/lunch/five dinners/snacks and all drinks including alcohol. There are approximately 15 different itineraries to choose from including some Greek islands.

Exclusive yacht charter: price starts from \$3,028 to \$6,315 depending on the period, and the size of the yacht, for one week excluding meals and drinks on board. The total for all meals and drinks on board is \$309 per person, per week. The amount will be charged for the number of people on board.

[scicsailing.eu](http://scicsailing.eu)