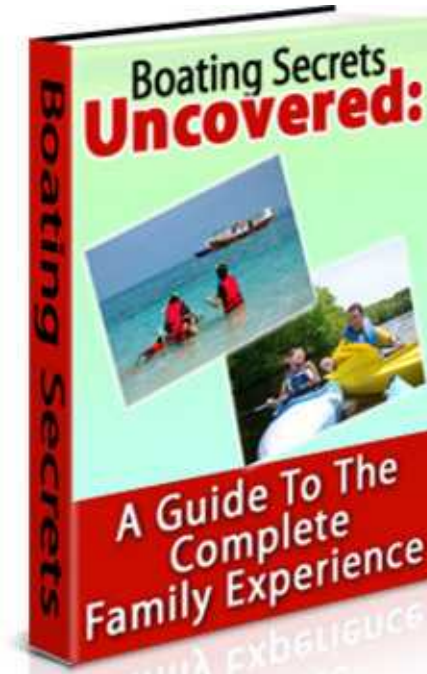


Boating Secrets Uncovered

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INTRODUCTION

For some people, the perfect day is clear and sunny. It's not too cool and it's not too warm. There is a gentle breeze blowing and the water is like a smooth plate of glass and they are happily riding along the water in their new boat enjoying the scenery along the way.

If this sounds like your perfect day too, there are some things that you need to know about before you begin your boating adventures. Boating is much more than just putting a craft on the water and switching on the motor or hoisting the sails. While it may seem like an easy undertaking, you should still become an informed boater knowing the rules of the water as well as boat safety.

Boating has lots and lots of advantages that you may have never thought about. It can help bring you together as a family, it can ease stress, and it is a lot of fun. Experienced boaters can share with you their love of boating and why it's something they pursue heartily.

Recreational boating provides a constructive outlet for entertainment that reduces stress and provides ample opportunities for self-enrichment. It doesn't matter if you're learning to water ski, relaxing as you try to catch a fish, or just relaxing on deck and enjoying a sunset, boating can bring quality to your life.

About ninety percent of Americans live less than an hour away from a navigable body of water. That means that boating is also a convenient

means of entertainment that requires just a little travel time.

Believe it or not, boating can greatly reduce the amount of stress in your life as well. In fact, a 2005 National Marina Manufacturers Association survey of over 1,000 American households listed boating in the top-three of all stress-relieving activities.

There are many activities you can do while boating that can also contribute toward your overall well-being. Water skiing is great exercise. Some people believe that just breathing in the fresh air from the deck of your boat can have healing qualities as well. Nutritionists know that fish is good for you. Boating allows you to catch your own fresh fish thus improving your health as well.

If you're new to boating, don't fear. There is a lot to learn, but the good news is that it's easy to learn. This book will explore all aspects of boating from picking out a boat to boat safety. Whether you are interested in boating for recreation or as a way to connect with family and friends, with our help, you'll be on the water in no time.

With the information contained in this book, even a person with no boating experience will be able to enjoy this great activity like more experienced sailors. This is Boating 101 – let class begin!

BUYING A BOAT

Many people would love to get into boating as a regular activity in their lives, but they think they can't afford to own their own boat. While buying a boat can be a large expenditure, there are actually many options prospective boat owners can use when buying a boat.

Almost all boat dealers will offer financing for your boat, and most of the time, your payments will be under \$200 a month. You can also look into securing a personal loan for your boat through your local bank.

Many new boat owners will buy a previously owned boat as their first watercraft. A lot of times people will upgrade their choice of boats and then sell their old boat. This can be a great way to get into boat ownership without spending a lot of money.

Let's start by identifying what exactly certain boats are. Sometimes the terminology can get lost on beginners, so we'll look at some of the most common boats and what they're called.

Bass/Fishing Boat

These boats are exactly what the name implies. They are meant to be used for fishing. Most fishing boats are powered by outboard motors, and many also have a trolling motor mounted on the bow.

Bass boats can be made of aluminum or fiberglass. Aluminum is

lighter and easier to maneuver thus requiring a smaller motor than would be required of a fiberglass boat. An aluminum boat is easier to transport and requires a smaller vehicle when towing on a trailer.

The most common size of fishing boats range between 16 and 20 feet long and provide anywhere between 50 and 200 horse power in the motors. Almost all will have bait and fish well for storing your catch as well as separate compartments to store rods, reels, and tackle.

Aluminum bass boats can be a little cheaper than the fiberglass variety with prices between \$7,000 and \$30,000 new depending on the package you choose. The most popular size of aluminum fishing boats is 17 feet with a 50 horsepower motor.

Fiberglass boats are designed to be flashier. They can come in a variety of colors and are capable of much higher speeds than their aluminum counterparts. A fiberglass bass boat can handle rough waters more easily and are high performance boats. If you are looking to angle professionally, you will want a fiberglass boat.

The price range for buying a new fiberglass boat would begin at around \$10,000 and can get up in the \$75,000 range top end. Most fishers prefer a 18 foot boat with a 150 horse power motor.

Cruising Boats

These are wonderful boats for taking trips on. They are designed to

be a sort of home away from home albeit smaller, obviously! Cruising boats generally come with TVs, microwaves, and other homey touches. They generally have 2 or 3 sleeping compartments so overnight trips are much easier.

There is usually a galley for cooking on cruising boats as well as a separate bathroom/shower area. They have a large fuel capacity; so long trips are definitely possible with a cruising boat.

Cruising boats are between 24 and 33 feet long. They have powerful motors and can be taken on large bodies of water such as an ocean. This power and style doesn't come at an easy price. Most cruising boats can cost between \$25,000 up to almost \$200,000.

Pontoon Boats

These are great boats to choose when you like to enjoy leisurely boating with a lot of people. They are lightweight vessels designed to make maximum use of space. They have wide open decks with lots of seating so they can accommodate large numbers of people.

Pontoon boats have a variety of uses. You can use them for fishing, cruising, and over night trips. Depending on the size of motor you have, it's not uncommon to be able to use a pontoon boat for skiing or tubing as well.

These boats are very appealing to new boating enthusiasts because

they are usually lower priced than other boats and they have a variety of uses. They are easy to customize to your unique needs as they are made in a variety of models.

Pontoon boats are great for socializing on and can be used on lakes or even larger bodies of water. Bring along the family and friends and throw a party on board your pontoon boat. That's what they're designed for!

House Boats

We don't really need to tell you what a house boat is as the name says it all. House boats are designed to become a home away from home and are most often used as weekend getaways and retreats for families and friends. They are floating homes with a 360 degree swimming pool surrounding them.

They are best suited for inland waters and lakes, but they can also be taken on larger bodies of water. Do so only with safety first and foremost in mind.

Many houseboats have all the comforts of home. There are several different sleeping cabins, a galley for cooking, even air conditioning. Some can be outfitted with a washer and dryer and a dishwasher as well.

Common sizes of houseboats range from 20 to 65 feet with an average cost for a new boat at around \$60,000. They are ideal also for long vacations and slow cruising.

Ski Boats

Also known as speed boats or motor boats, these crafts are made for skiing, inner tubing, or wake boarding. They can have either outboard or inboard motors alike and are capable of fast speeds. They make a minimum of wake that is ideal for skiers.

Ski boats range from 18 to 22 feet and when purchased new cost an average of about \$25,000. They are generally used on lakes, but they can also be taken on larger bodies of water.

Bowriders

This boat is traditionally called a “runabout” and is very similar to a power boat. They are popular with many traditional boaters because of their versatility.

They range in size and features, some having a freshwater supply and a head compartment. They are perfect for water sports including skiing and wakeboarding as well as cruising. Top speeds can vary from 30 mph to 70+ mph. Some manufacturers have hybrids that include fishing features.

Bowriders are between 16 and 24 feet long with prices between \$8,000 and \$40,000 for a new boat. Most have an inboard motor, but some can have outboard motors as well with horsepower capable of 50 to 400.

Cuddy Cabins

These boats are very similar to bowriders as they share many characteristics and features. These boats have below deck amenities such as porta pottys, freshwater supplies, and seating areas.

Cuddy cabins are good for overnight trips and can have enough power to pull water skiers or wake boarders. Many people like to use their cuddy cabins for day trips to the lake and like having the convenience of sleeping quarters in case the day runs long!

These boats are between 19 and 26 feet long with an average new cost of around \$22,000. They generally have inboard motors with 90 to 400 horsepower possible.

Sailboats

These boats are powered by the wind that hits their sails and generally doesn't have any type of mechanical propulsion system.

Sailboats come in three categories:

- **Day sailer** - A day sailer is a small boat designed for comfortable sailing but without sleeping accommodation. It has a roomy cockpit and can have an outboard auxiliary engine.
- **Cruiser** - A cruiser is a medium-sized or large boat that has a cabin with sleeping quarters, head (toilet), galley (where food is prepared) and generally has an auxiliary engine built inside.

- **Racer** - A racer is a boat designed for speed and ease of handling, often at the expense of comfort. The two popular styles are the racer-day sailer designed primarily for racing and secondly for day sailing, and the cruiser-racer designed mainly for overnight cruising and secondly for racing.

When choosing what kind of boat to get, you will first want to consider what types of activities you are most interested in. Do you want to get into waterskiing? Will you be doing a lot of fishing in your boat? Is it most important for you to just have a boat to enjoy nature and the water? Would you like to take overnight trips on your boat or be having large amounts of people along with you during excursions?

Another consideration when buying a boat is to make sure that it is affordable for you. You won't want to strap yourself with a payment that will cause financial problems for you. Figure out how much you want to spend and find the best boat within that price range. And don't fall for a flashy salesperson's spiel as they will try to get you to buy out of your price range.

This seems like a good time to take a quick look at what you can expect to pay as a boat owner in addition to the cost of the boat and trailer. This can be important since you need to make sure that you'll be able to operate your boat once you get it, so factor in these costs before you even start making a choice. Expenses may vary by your location, but this can give you a rough estimate.

- Damage/liability insurance: \$400-\$800 year

- Towing insurance \$100/year
- State registration \$50-\$200/year
- Routine mechanical maintenance \$1000/year
- Major mechanical repairs \$500-\$4,000/year
- Fuel (depends on use) \$100-\$1000/month
- Miscellaneous expenses \$750/year
- In water marina storage \$200-\$800/month
- "Dry" marina storage \$200-\$400/month
- On-trailer storage \$60-\$120/month

What kind of vehicle do you have available for hauling your boat?

Most often, a truck is the best vehicle for hauling a boat on a trailer. They can be heavy, and the truck should be able to easily handle the extra weight behind it. If all you own is a compact car, you won't be able to haul a boat on a trailer, so consider this part carefully.

What are your boating skills? If you are a beginner, you won't need a huge bay boat that is difficult to handle. You also won't need a fast power boat either. Match your boat to your skill level so that you aren't stuck with a boat you can't drive easily.

You will also need to think about what type of water you are going to be boating on before you buy a boat. If the only place close to you is a small lake, you won't want to buy a 30 foot cabin cruiser. Then again, if you want to cruise around the ocean, a 15 foot power boat isn't a good idea either.

If you have the money or plan on keeping the same boat for a very long time, go ahead and buy it new. However, often your best bet is to buy a used boat.

BUYING A USED BOAT

New boats are great to have. Just like new cars, there's something satisfying about knowing that you are the only person who has ever piloted that craft. Having something brand new is a great feeling, but it does come with a price tag! Many people, especially new boaters will want, instead, to buy a used boat which can be just as nice as a new one at a much lower price. (...)

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