

# Cruisin' & Cookin' Checklist

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Cruising season is upon us. I have many happy memories of years spent cruising the Chesapeake Bay and the challenges of cooking onboard. I may have retired from boating, but not from cooking. Some of the recipes I developed during my boating days are still my favorites.

While there are many differences between cooking ashore and onboard, the goal is the same...to prepare delicious meals with the least time and effort, using the supplies and facilities available. You would be amazed at what you can do with a tiny galley equipped with a 2-burner alcohol stove, ice chest or small refrigerator, toaster oven, and electric skillet. To maximize the fun of boating, it helps to simplify menus, plan ahead, and minimize the time spent in the galley. Planning ahead can minimize expense and waste.

First, take stock of the cooking and food storage options you have available. Is your galley equipped with a range or cooktop? Is there an oven? Do you have a microwave or toaster oven? Electric skillet? Grill? Is there a refrigerator? Freezer? Ice chest? Is your cooking and refrigeration equipment dependent upon shore current or a generator?

Consider your options for cookware, dinnerware, cutlery, and non-refrigerated food storage. Do you have cabinets and drawers onboard that you can use? Cookware can be stored in drawers. Dinnerware, cutlery, and cooking utensils might go in a drawer or have a separate caddy or rack in a cabinet, or above the sink and counter. You can tuck a few spices away in drawers or cabinets. Open cubbies are useful for bread and snacks. Get creative and organize the space to suit your individual style. It is a good idea to label drawers and cabinets or make a list of what you have and where it is kept.

Next, consider whether you are going to be spending a weekend on the boat in your home marina or cruising. Will you be anchored out or tied up in marinas with shore power and water available? How long will you be onboard with limited access to grocery stores? You will want to shop and pack accordingly. Be aware that running the generator for cooking and refrigeration uses fuel too, so you will want to choose foods that don't require long cook times. You may have to avoid using multiple appliances simultaneously or risk tripping circuit breakers.

Staples: It is wise to keep on hand what one of my boating friends refers to as "instant foods." Peanut butter and jelly; canned tuna, shrimp, or chicken; salami and cheese are good options for sandwiches or to serve with crackers for a quick snack. Canned fruit and applesauce in single serving sizes make a quick snack or dessert. Chips, salsa, and canned nuts are other "instant" snack items. Flour tortillas are great for easy quesadillas or wraps. Shelf stable or powdered milk is good on hot or cold cereal. Don't forget bottled water and beverages of choice. These can be kept on ice in a cooler or rotated in as needed.

Perishables: The limitation here is refrigeration. Take into account the amount of refrigerator or ice box space you have for deli meats, cheese, eggs, mayonnaise, meat, fish, or chicken for grilling, etc. Some fresh vegetables and fruits can be kept at room temperature for a few days, but you will want to refrigerate lettuce, salad blends, baby carrots, etc. If you have a freezer consider premade frozen dinners, frozen cooked shrimp, etc. Ice cream is probably better left for a shore excursion treat.

Transport: How far do you have to travel to get from your home to your boat? Be sure to keep perishables on ice in a cooler or insulated bag. Sometimes I would cook meatballs in spaghetti sauce at home, transfer to a large container and freeze. This frozen block would then help keep other perishables cold in an insulated bag or cooler on the way to the boat. Spaghetti or other pasta can be also be cooked ahead, drained, and placed in a food storage bag or container in the cooler for transport. Reheat the meatballs and sauce; drop the cooked pasta in a little boiling water and drain; open a bag of salad mix; and serve with Italian bread for an easy meal onboard.

Mangia bene, and smooth sailing!

This article is given the courtesy of your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico. Keep us in mind for your boating education and skill building that includes advanced courses as well as 2 - 4 hour seminars. To learn more about our boating courses, email our Education Officer at [psps@gmail.com](mailto:psps@gmail.com). We also invite you to reference our website at <https://pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org> to learn more about what we can offer in the areas of Boating Education & Safety.