

Sailing Virgins

Ultimate Guide to Sailing



Portland

Tips and Tricks on Getting into Sailing in Portland

Sailing Virgins

Ultimate Guide to Sailing — Portland



Introduction

Sailing in Portland offers a wide variety of river and coastal sailing. The Columbia River forms the northern border of Oregon, and offers fantastic sailing conditions. Bays and lakes offer places to anchor and hide from the weather coming in from the Pacific side. The Willamette River is another great body of water to explore while in Portland during the summer.

If you're wondering how to get yourself into the sailing scene, this guide will help answer all your questions.

We will cover how to begin sailing, which clubs to join, how to fine-tune your skills, how to find sailing buddies, and tips on how to rent or buy your first sailing boat.

?

I Have Never Really Sailed Before. How do I Start?

Sailing may seem like a daunting challenge to those who are new to it. We broke it down to 3 simple steps that anyone can do.

1

Step

Learn to Sail & Get Experience. Join sailing schools or sailing clubs to get experience and learn how to sail.

2

Step

Get Access to a Boat. You can rent or buy boats. We'll go over some options later.

3

Step

Go on Sailing Adventures. We go over some popular sailing activities, races, and fun trips you can take around Portland.

4

Bonus

Become a Captain. If sailing becomes your life, we'll also discuss how to further improve your sailing skills.

1

Learn to Sail & Get Experience

If you know nobody in sailing but want to get a start, you have two main options:

1

Get yourself to a sailing school for a 101 course

2

Join a sailing club



Where Can I Learn to Sail in Portland?

There are many sailing school options in Portland. Here are what we consider to be some of the best sailing schools in the area:

❶ [Portland Sailing Center](#)

❷ [Passion Yachts](#)

❸ [Island Sailing](#)

If you are looking to escape a cold Portland winter and knock out a course, come hang out with [Sailing Virgins](#) in the Caribbean, Croatia or Tahiti!

1

What Should I Consider when Choosing a Sailing School?

Sailing schools have curriculums from different sailing organizations. Some popular options include:

- ❶ NauticEd
- ❷ US Sailing
- ❸ American Sailing Association (ASA)
- ❹ International Yacht Training (IYT)
- ❺ Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

[Here](#) is a brief article we put together comparing a few of the major organizations. All of the above organizations are credible. Obtaining the appropriate level from them will be accepted by charter companies which allows you to charter your own boat.

When choosing a sailing school, your instructor can make or break the experience. Ask about who the instructor is likely to be, and read reviews of the school so you can be confident your instructor will be fun to sail with and knowledgeable. Students *rave* about good instructors. On top of their personality, the training and experience of the instructor is also key. For example, at Sailing Virgins, our courses follow the ASA curriculum yet are taught by instructors who are also RYA Yachtmasters. This combination allows us to provide the practical experience RYA focuses on with the detailed theory covered by ASA. Our students earn internationally-accepted ASA qualifications.

Should I Join a Sailing Club/Yacht Club?

There are many yacht clubs around Portland that offer sailing courses. The clubs are also a great way to meet other boaters since they host social events and seminars.

What are the Best Sailing Clubs in Portland?

- ❶ [Portland Yacht Club](#)
- ❷ [Rose City Yacht Club](#)
- ❸ [Corinthian Yacht Club](#)
- ❹ [Island Sailing Club](#)
- ❺ [Willamette Sailing Club](#)



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2

Get Access to a Boat

You've done a course or two and want to take your sailing further. You need to find a boat.

Making the most of Portland's relatively short sailing season can be tough but luckily we're here to help.

The cheapest option is usually finding a friend with a boat but if that doesn't pan out you can look into these options.

Where Can I Rent a Boat in Portland?

Periodic day rentals are possible, or season-long leases, which can be surprisingly affordable if you plan to sail a lot during the summer.

Where can you find daily rentals or seasonal leases? Companies like [Island Sailing](#) or [SailTime](#) offer ownership alternatives.

Essentially you sign up for partial or full share leases, which determine how much usage you'll get throughout the season.

For example, if you put down between \$5,000 — \$8,000, then that gives you about 10-20 uses throughout the summer. It breaks down to \$250 — \$900 per use, depending on your membership and the boat you take out.

A major perk that comes with membership leasing is you get to avoid dealing with maintenance costs.

2

Daily sailboat rentals can be more difficult to find especially during popular tourist weekends in Portland but it can still be a cost-effective way for you to go sailing.

Here are a few other sites that can help you book bareboat or captained charters:

- ❶ [Yacht Charter PDX - for motor yacht chartering](#)
- ❷ [Scovare Expeditions](#)

Where Can I Purchase a Boat in Portland?

[Craigslist](#) is a great resource. Also a simple Google search for “Sailboats for Sale Portland” will display many options from old to new.

You could also check with local yacht yards which typically have boats listed for sale. One benefit of working with a yacht yard is that the boat has been stored and maintained there so they will know more about the boat’s history, maintenance records, or any past problems.

Which brings us to our next point...

Heads Up: Prices for bareboat charters are about \$150/hr or ~\$1,000/day, and captained charters range from \$125 - \$300/hr for daily charters. Larger luxury motor yachts can average out to around \$550/hr for charters with a minimum time of 2 hours.

2

How do I Store my Boat?

There are several marinas in the area, including the Portland Yacht Club. You can check out their fees [here](#).

Here's a general idea of storage costs:

- ❶ Storage:
\$150-400 per month
- ❷ Monthly Yacht Club
Membership: \$95-175
per month

In the winter, you have a couple of options:

- ❶ There's indoor storage, which is more expensive but you are more likely to launch earlier in the spring.
- ❷ Outdoor storage is less costly, but you won't have as much time for boat prep in the spring.

Tip: Moving from the city will provide better rates but also means a longer trip in typically poor weather at the end of the season.

Most leasing companies offer ASA 101 or a similar introductory course to all new members. It saves you the cost of attending a sailing school.

3

Go on a Sailing Adventure

We're big advocates for using sailing as a platform for adventure. Is there a better way to spend your summer than sailing with friends, family, coworkers, etc.?

What Are The Sailing Secrets In Portland?

- ❶ **Check out Portland's iconic bridges.** Sailing under several of the famous Portland bridges is one of the most popular excursions.
- ❷ **Enjoy the sunset views.** A view from the Willamette River is a beautiful sight and is the perfect way to end a full day of sailing.
- ❸ **Go to the historic Holgate channel.** Here you'll enjoy the city's riverfront views. Along the way, you will most likely end up spotting floating homes in the river.

3

Other Worthy Sailing Trips From Portland?

Columbia River, East of Portland

The riverside towns to the east of Portland are well set-up for sailors. [Cascade Locks](#) has its own sailing scene, as well as fishing, hiking and biking. Hood River is known for its orchards and the beautiful [Columbia River Gorge](#), and is home to the [Hood River Yacht Club](#), organising races (including the Double Damned Race each August) and instruction. Further east on the Columbia you can find The Dalles, which has its own yacht club, the [Dalles Yacht Club](#).

3

Astoria

Founded in 1811, Astoria is the oldest city in the state of Oregon and was the first settlement west of the Rockies. It is also the end of the Oregon trail and a base for sailors. The Astoria Yacht Club is worth visiting for some local tips and, if you're wanting to get more involved in the local sailing scene, membership. Astoria sits on the mouth of the Columbia River, and requires some consideration of currents when sailing given the flow of the river.

Newport, OR

Newport in Oregon was always destined to be a sailing hub, and even takes its name from the east coast mecca. It has a lively sailing scene. The Yaquina Bay Yacht Club runs an annual Bridge to Bridge offshore race in August, running down the coast from the mouth of the Columbia River in Astoria to the mouth of Yaquina Bay, a distance of about 100 miles.

Coos Bay

Coos Bay is the largest coastal town in Oregon, with around 15,000 inhabitants. It offers a charming place to sail, with free alongside docking during the day, restaurants, and proximity to North Bend. The Coos Bay Yacht Club, located north of North Bend on South Tenmile Lake, offers a gathering spot, sailing school and racing during the season.

3

Join the Pacific NW Offshore International Yacht Race

This [offshore event](#) starts out in Ilwaco, Oregon and ends in Victoria, Canada. It's a challenging race of around 200 nautical miles, but it's a great first-time race for those looking to do offshore racing.

Where Can I Find Other Sailors in Portland?

Portland has a small but well-established sailing community for you to tap into. Make contact with one of the several sailing clubs there (listed earlier in this guide) to find out about chances to sail.

Portland also has groups like [Oregon Women's Sailing Association](#) which provides a place to meet other female sailors and provides lessons from beginner level on.

Another great option is using [Meetup](#) to find sailing groups to join. It connects crew with skippers and can help fine-tune your skills.

The [Oregon Boating Foundation](#) is located in Newport and offers kids sailing lessons and kayak tours.

3

How to Get Involved with Racing in Portland (Even as a Novice)?

Some sailors prefer the thrill of racing over the relaxation of cruising.

The easiest way to get involved with racing is to join the [Sailing on Sundays](#) hosted by the Corinthian Yacht Club of Portland. It's casual racing held during the winter months of October to March. Usually 30-40 boats participate every week, so it's easy to join in on the fun.

During the summer, you can join [Wednesday Night Racing](#) in Newport. It's a casual race, focused on having fun and becoming better sailors.

Major Regattas

Aside from some of the more casual races in Portland, there are also well-known regattas that take place in the area.

Here are a couple of the more notable regattas; more can be found on the respective yacht clubs' websites:

- ❶ The [Al Morris Regatta](#) is hosted in July or August every year on Yale Lake. It's a great opportunity to go camping and sailing for the weekend.
- ❷ The [Columbas Day Regatta](#) is one of the last racing events held during the racing season. It takes place in the Yaquina Bay every year.

Tip: Many of the yacht clubs discussed earlier host many regattas throughout the summer.

**A view from
the Willamette
River is a
beautiful sight
and is the
perfect way to
end a full day
of sailing.**

4

Bonus: How do I Become a Captain?

There are captains and then there are **captains**.

You want to be a captain that is confident when the weather spikes and suddenly you are looking at 40 knots to deal with. To be that sort of captain, you need a variety of training and experience. You need to travel abroad to get this diversity.

Full disclosure, [Sailing Virgins](#) offers adventure sailing courses in the Caribbean to do just this and is widely known to be the best in the world at producing captains in the 20's-40's age range.

You can [click here](#) to read more about the 7-day fast track adventure sailing courses in the Caribbean, Tahiti, and Croatia.

How Can Sailing Virgins Help?

We're focused on developing great sailors and providing our students with an unforgettable experience.

We have the highest standards in the industry. [Our instructors](#) and our students are in their 20s-40s which helps us keep the energy high.

We think we've found the perfect recipe for a sailing school; but if you don't believe us, here is what some of our students have said.

[Trip Advisor — Sailing Virgins](#).

4

Courses

Our courses are designed to give you the hands-on experience you need to become a competent sailor while also integrating adventure and exploration into the week.

We're much more than just a sailing school and invite you to come to check us out.

- ❶ [Sailing Virgins — Courses](#)
- ❷ [Sailing Virgin Students Tell Their Story](#)
- ❸ [Preparing for a Course — FAQ](#)

Learning Resources

One of the best things about sailing is that there is always more to learn.

Taking a few courses is a good way to start but continuing to strengthen your practical skills and theoretical knowledge is how you become a great sailor.

- ❶ The [Sailing Virgins Blog](#) provides insight on a large variety of topics ranging from planning a charter vacation to knowing what type of gear a sailor needs.
- ❷ Our [Sailing Virgins YouTube](#) channel has hours upon hours of amazing instructional content with more added regularly.



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Join us on an Adventure

1 Caribbean Island Adventure

Sail between islands in the Caribbean, this course is the best introduction to offshore sailing on the market; it mixes full-on sailing with island adventures.

→ Held each June/July and October/November.

2 Tahiti — South Pacific Adventure

Sail around the incredible Society Islands, including Bora Bora, Raiatea, and Taha'a, experiencing the famed Tahitian food, hospitality and adventures. Swim with wonderfully docile stingrays and sharks.

→ Held each March and November.

3 Croatia — Mediterranean Adventure

The Dalmatian Coast offers excellent sailing and some of the best apres-sail food and culture in the world. Wonder through coastal villages that were built in the Austro-Hungarian period. Experience Europe.

→ Held each August and September.



About Us

We started our adventure sailing academy with the belief that people under 50 want a sailing experience that is more athletic, more exhilarating and more social than your typical cruising course.

The founders of Sailing Virgins started the business after some incredible sailing seasons in the Mediterranean and Caribbean working for sailing events company The Yacht Week. James then left the sailing school he was managing and started Sailing Virgins. We love how sailing is changing. If you're fit, social and are looking for some full-on adventure, you've come to the right place.

[Learn More](#)