



## **New to Boating?**

**I am new to boating, but I would like to get into it. I am thinking about living on a boat, how do I get started? Which is better a power or sail boat? Is it safe to go on the ocean in a 16 (or whatever length) foot boat?**

These are all questions that commonly appear on boating forums. It is plain by the way the person phrases the question, they know little to nothing about boats or the boating lifestyle. So where do they go?

Since they have asked the question it is also obvious they are eager to learn and are taking the right steps by first asking questions and not just running out and buying a boat. People who do that usually end up hating it, or getting in serious trouble. The best approach is to go slow and learn. Start small and move up.

So where do they go?

My first recommendations are: read, read, read, and take a boating course.

Recommended reading:

Boating Magazines: they can be found at any book store or newsstand or the library. There are lots of them. Just keep reading until you decide what you are interested in. This will introduce you to the wide world of boats and you will pick up a lot of the language of boats.

Books:

**Chapmans Piloting, Seamanship and Small Boat Handling.** This can be found in any library or bookstore. It is the bible of boating. Everything you need to know to get started is in there. If you decide to take up boating you will want your own copy. As of 2010 it is in its 64<sup>th</sup> edition. But one a few years

older is just as good. You can find used ones at used book stores and thrift shops.

**The Nature of Boats, Dave Gerr:** A good introduction to how boats are designed and built, and a lot of history of boats. This book will answer a lot of questions, such as: what's the difference between a boat and a yacht?

**The Complete Sailor, Learning the Art Of Sailing David Seidman**

"*The Complete Sailor* takes the reader from the first sail to a mastery of small-boat handling." "*The Complete Sailor* goes beyond other learn-to-sail books to cover navigation, boat design, and seamanship. Encyclopedic in scope yet warm in style, it conveys the magic as well as the techniques of sailing. Among the other topics covered: anchoring, ropework, rigging, weather, fog, squalls, currents and tides, rules of the road, trailering, and working the winds. The book is a gentle introduction for those just starting out, and a guide to new horizons for those who already sail." Amazon.com

#### **Courses :**

There are courses available in everything from basic boating or sailing to advanced navigation and boat maintenance. Start with a basic boating course from one of the below organizations.

US Coast Guard Auxiliary: <http://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/>

US Power Squadron: [http://www.usps.org/e\\_stuff/public\\_ed.htm](http://www.usps.org/e_stuff/public_ed.htm)

State and Local law Enforcement: Approved Courses

<http://www.nasbla.org/content.asp?admin=Y&contentid=313>

#### **Also Try;**

**BoatUS** <http://www.boatus.com/newtoboating/>

Red Cross

Sailing and boating clubs.

#### **For young people:**

The Boy and Girl Scouts,

Sea Scouts.

Naval Sea Cadets.

Last, but no way least: talk to boat owners. The quickest way to get rides on boats is to volunteer to help a friend work on their boat. There are routine tasks that need doing, cleaning, painting, varnishing, changing engine oil etc. Volunteer to be crew on sailboats, even if it's as the cook. Hang out at boat yards and talk to people working on their boats (don't bother the yard workers they have a job to do, even though they will most likely be happy to talk to you.)

### **Get involved in on-line boating forums.**

BoatUS (the Boat Owners Association Of The US)

<http://www.boatus.com/newtoboating/>

Cruisers and Sailing: <http://www.cruisersforum.com/>

Sailnet.com: <http://www.sailnet.com>

BoatDesign.net: <http://www.boatdesign.net/>

WoodenBoat Forum: <http://forum.woodenboat.com/>

Performance boats forum: <http://www.performanceboats.com/>

Houseboating Magazine forums: <http://www.houseboatmagazine.com/>

About.Com: Power boating. <http://powerboat.about.com/>

### **And don't forget the Safety web sites:**

US Coast Guard Boating Safety: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

US Coast Guard Auxiliary: <http://www.cgaux.org/>

US Power Squadron: <http://www.usps.org/>

Boating Safety.com : <http://www.boatingsafety.com/>

### **Boat Shows.**

Go to boat shows. Most are in the winter and early spring. But there are some in the fall and summer. The biggest is the Miami Boat show in March but there are other really good ones. Every major city in the US and Canada has a boat show. This is the short list.

### **US Boat Shows**

[AGI Events- Boat Shows](#)  
**[US Sailboat Show and US Powerboat Show, Annapolis MD](#)**  
[Atlanta Boat Show](#)  
[Atlantic City International Boat Show](#)  
[Atlantic City In-Water Power Boat Show](#)  
[Baltimore Boat Show](#)  
[Boat Sport and RV Show, Reno, Nevada](#)  
[BoatUS Boat Show List](#)  
[Boats Afloat Show Seattle](#)  
[Chicago Boat, RV and Outdoor Show](#)  
[Cleveland Boat and Waterfront Lifestyle Expo](#)  
[Detroit Boat Show](#)  
**[National Houseboat Expo Louisville Kentucky](#)**  
**[Houston Boat and Sport Show](#)**  
**[Los Angeles Boat Show](#)**  
**[Miami International Boat Show](#)**  
[Marine Industry Assoc Of the Treasure Coast \(FL\)](#)  
[Maine Boats, Homes, and Harbors Show, Rockland Maine](#)  
[Minneapolis Boat Show](#)  
**[Mystic Seaport Wooden Boat Show, CT US](#)**  
[National Capital Boat Show, Chantilly Virginia](#)  
[Newport Boat Show, Newport Beach, CA.](#)  
**[Newport, RI, International Boat Show](#)**  
[New Orleans Boat Show](#)  
**[New York International Boat Show](#)**  
[Palm Beach Boat Show West Palm Beach FL](#)  
[San Diego Boat Summer Boat Show](#)  
**[Seattle Boat Show](#)**  
[Texas International Boat Show Corpus Christi TX](#)  
[Upstate South Carolina Boat Show \(Greenville\)](#)  
[Virginia, Southwest Virginia Boat Show \(Roanoke\)](#)  
[West Kentucky Boat Show](#)  
**[Wooden Boat Festival Port Townsend WA](#)**

### **Canada Boat Shows:**

[Mid Canada Boat Show, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada](#)  
[Toronto International Boat Show, Canada](#)  
[Vancouver International Boat Show, BC, Canada](#)

I have marked in bold some that are really worth seeing, even if just to see what a really good boat show is like. All the bigger shows have seminars in everything from basic boating to advanced navigation and boat maintenance.

See the links page on my web site for more shows (about half way down the page) <http://newboatbuilders.com/pages/links.html>

Learn by doing. After taking a course and doing your reading invest in a small trailerable boat. Do some weekend boating or sailing. Build on your knowledge by trying different areas, lakes river, sounds. After a year or two when you feel comfortable, then move up to something bigger. There is an old saying that goes like this: What does every sailor want? A bigger boat! With a bigger boat you can try for a week or more.

Move up slowly and learn slowly. Take your time. As you get more experience you will meet other boat owners and learn things from them.

So get started. Have fun.

**SAFE BOATING IS FOR LIFE**

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