

???Caribbean Cruising Questions??? ©2006

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This is a tongue-in-cheek look at cruising questions in the Caribbean. Anyone who has been cruising down in these little latitudes for any length of time has come to appreciate the evening cocktail hour and the antics of our fellow sailors. We've all had our share of fun, mistakes and even a few laughs at the expense of our friends. I'm sure every one of you has your own experience to tell. Here are just a few of ours – and the list could go on and on and on...!

Why is it that charter boats strike terror in the hearts of all cruising sailors? Didn't we all charter at one time or another? Were we really that bad back then?

Why is it that the most feared sound in the Caribbean is not the boat boy paddling next to us on their surfboard as we attempt to anchor but it is that of chain running through a boat's anchor roller. This means of course that someone is anchoring much too close to us!

Why is it that Switch catamarans always have naked people jumping into the water from their boats? Is this a French law or something?

Why is it that the most feared sight in the Caribbean is not the plume of smoke rising from Montserrat but it is watching a charter boat enter the harbor at 7 knots with their anchor dangling in the water. We know for certain that they will be anchoring right on top of us!

Why is it that the weather conditions in the Caribbean are always unusual for this time of year (just pick your month)? A few examples include: Hurricanes never form in December; This weather is just like the conditions we have in January (when it is September); It should be clear and dry today throughout the island chain (as a horrendous squall is pummeling you on your way to St. Lucia); or my favorite, the tides are never this low at this time of year, it must be because of global warming!

Why is it that every sailor in the Caribbean has instantly become an expert weatherman? Some commonly heard expressions include, "Eric has it all wrong", "Chris is out to lunch", "George is off having cocktails" and "NOAA, with all their millions of dollars worth of equipment and manpower, can not even tell me what the weather will be sailing around Antigua"! "I can surely predict the weather better myself!"

Why is it that mega-yachts want to be first in line to get through the bridge into Simpson Bay Lagoon on St. Maarten? Is it because the captain and crew need to get to the crew bars that quickly?

Why is it that Salt Whistle Bay is always overcrowded while Saline Bay is usually a pleasantly empty anchorage? Maybe it is because there are no boat vendors at Saline?

Why is it that Mustique has a mandatory 3-day charge for a required mooring when you can only roll this badly for 1 night before leaving?

Why is it that catamarans don't have a forestay that attaches to the top of their mast? All of the forestays are actually about a quarter of the way down from the top of the mast. The headsails look like staysails. Maybe that is the reason catamarans motor all the time with their full battened mainsail flying and flapping in the breeze?

Why is it that after I anchor at least 3 charter boats decide to anchor right on top of me? Do I have the absolute best anchoring spot in the entire harbor or maybe I am just that good at picking the places with the best views?

Why is it that crewed charter captains **must** enter a harbor after dark? Is this a rule made by the Charter Company?

Why is it that mega-yacht crews must never reveal the owner's name? In the Caribbean no one cares – we just worry about the weather.

Why is it that all of the several hundred anchorages in the Caribbean except 4 roll? Can you name the 4?

Why is it that Switch catamarans must anchor in the shallowest water next to Princess Margaret Beach on Bequia regardless of the swell? Is this a French law?

Why is it that the French islands are the most affluent in the Caribbean? Even though the French cannot anchor you have to appreciate the selection of cheeses, wines and pan au chocolate on Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Martin.

Why is it that the X-British islands are the poorest in the Caribbean? Did the Queen not like the scenery or the beaches?

Why is it that the morning broadcast of the Safety and Security Net on SSB 8104.0 cannot be heard by anyone except Don in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela? Could we all take up a collection and buy Melody a good radio?

Why is it that an 18 foot dinghy from a mega-yacht cannot fit into La Palapa's dinghy dock pen on St. Maarten? Can't the crew just walk off their yacht onto the dock instead of using a dinghy?

Why is it that bareboat charters hold the time record for throwing the anchor off the bow and getting into the dinghy to head to shore? This record is unbeatable at 2 minutes flat.

Why is it that the islands that offer the least rolly anchorages, cleanest marinas, best security, reasonably priced bars/restaurants, easiest customs/immigration, best beaches and lively nightlife attract the most cruisers? Duh!!!

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