



Syllabus

Course description

Quarterdeck Life Co has created the Skipper Academy to train exceptional skippers to work with our partners and external companies' staffing needs. The course teaches expectations within the industry; highlighting the safety issues that can occur while working on charter with inexperienced guests; how to interact with clients; and how to overcome challenges and unexpected events. The onus is to encourage excellence through safety, sailing skill, leadership and crew management to become a professional QD skipper.

However, this is not a beginners course. Applicants *must* already be advanced sailors. Going out on the water with your sailing buddies is one thing, but as a QD skipper you will be responsible for up to 10 paying guests who may have never stepped on a yacht before. You must be in total command of the yacht, be comfortable sailing in any weather condition, and be a strong leader/communicator. A good attitude is also imperative!

Format

The course is 9 days long and based in Split, Croatia. You must be in Split for 10am on the Friday your course begins. We will spend all day Friday and Saturday morning in lectures and group discussions going over shore based theory. From Saturday afternoon to the following Saturday morning you will be on a yacht learning the practicalities of being a professional skipper.

You will share the yacht with other skipper and hostess students (see Hostess Academy) who you will treat as your "guests". You will begin the week by going through the yacht check in procedure and giving your guests an in depth safety briefing before moving into a week of practical skills. The instructor will demonstrate and walk you through scenarios, maneuvers and skills. They will guide you with exercises, standards, tips, tricks and situations; providing constant feedback on how you can improve. Each skipper will have designated periods to implement their knowledge and gain feedback from their instructor.

Course objectives

We train and mentor students on 5 key competencies:

Sailing skills - How to adapt your current skills to working with inexperienced clients, and learning how manage a yacht calmly and effectively in any situation. As stated above, you must consider yourself a strong sailor. We aren't asking for olympic class racers, but you must be comfortable handling a yacht in heavy seas. As part of the course we will spend some time going through emergency situations and how to act with your novice crew.



Communication - An essential skill as a skipper. Giving an in-depth crew briefing at the beginning of the week, sailing lessons, asking your crew for mooring assistance, or instructing your crew how to put a reef in when the wind picks up, it must all be done with calm, clear and concise communication.

Crew management - Knowing the ins and outs of crew management psychology as well as living in confined quarters with guests. This is where experience in the service industry is key; knowing how to speak, identify and resolve issues on the ground with clients is vital.

Preparation - Key to a successful charter is preparation. Contacting the guests prior to the trip, finding out their expectations then doing some research to plan the perfect itinerary is the first step to a perfect charter. Part of the skipper's job is to anticipate the guest's needs and be prepared, whether it's filling up the water tanks, buying ice, taking out the trash and paying mooring fees so you can depart as soon as the guests wake up, or having the contacts for the best restaurants and activities on each island.

Teamwork and attitude - Whether it's working with your hostess or getting your guests involved on deck, teamwork and the right attitude is essential on board. Throughout the week we will see how you integrate and cooperate with your fellow students. In a flotilla situation trust and teamwork with your fellow skippers is essential for an efficiently operated event.

Course prerequisites

Minimum age: 20-years-old

A recognised international sailing licence¹

Fluent in English

High level of sailing experience

A great attitude

Evaluation

At the end of the course the instructors will ask themselves: "Would I feel comfortable sending you out on charter with my friends or family?" This decision will be based on 4 aspects and will determine if you pass or fail the course.

1. Safety as a first priority - Instructors will evaluate your safety consciousness throughout the week. As a skipper you must have the safety of your guests as the first priority. Do you have the knowledge and understanding to safely skipper a yacht?
2. A sailing and mooring focused exam at the end of the week. This is to show us your skill and progression of learning throughout the week. Are you a confident sailor who can handle a yacht with novice guests?

¹This is not necessary at the time of your application, but if successful you MUST have gained the licence before attending the course.



3. Communication ability - Will you be able to deliver clear and concise instructions to your crew? Are you able to break down complicated sailing related tasks into simple clear instructions? Can you deliver a crew briefing that covers the important safety basics while keeping the crew engaged?
4. Attitude and personality - Will the guests enjoy your company on board and will you add value to their vacation?