

# Confessions **OF A**



# GALLEY SLAVE

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**C**ruisers will surely delight in a dinner of salmon poached in white wine with steamed vegetables and a side of couscous served on a china plate. This dish, and other easy recipes, can be served right from your galley as you cruise along the waterways. You might agree that it can't be much fun to make all your meals in advance just to freeze them, either. If you only use your galley to microwave TV dinners while you are underway then I can help make meals more fun. All my galley recipes are easy, easy, and did I mention easy? They all work perfectly on a small boat stove, when your counter space isn't much bigger than a hatch cover. It's all an adventure when you're cruising—even when you are the galley slave!

Let me first confess that I did not cook in our house or on our boat. In our almost 30 years of marriage, my husband Chris has prepared so many more meals than I, that even if he never again touched the stove, I could never catch up. So then, how did I become the galley slave?

Chris and I have lived and cruised aboard our 44-foot Gulfstar Motor Cruiser for over 17 years. We are both licensed captains and today, we can be found training aboard our trawler in Florida or your boat anywhere. In addition to navigation, maneuvering, anchoring, and other safety issues, we also review all onboard systems with those who want to cruise one day. We specialize in opening your eyes, your ears, and your soul to the trawler lifestyle. But it wasn't always this way.

Living on Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans, we met many Loopers coming down the Mississippi River who had wonderful stories to tell. Like many of you, we planned to travel once we retired. After hearing about so many cruising adventures, we got the fever ourselves and decided that we couldn't wait until retirement. So, we took a one-year sabbatical in order to cruise before we grew too old to do it. We left New Orleans over 12 years ago and we haven't been back to the real world yet. We grew old anyway and are probably better humans for having left the corporate rat race when we did. We've picked up some strange jobs while we continued to cruise and at one time or another each of us has been paid to cook. If you know my husband, his stint as a chef at a soul food restaurant isn't much of a stretch since he grew up in the Big Easy where cooking is like breathing. Me? I'm a Jersey girl but that's another story for another day.

After a few months into our one-year cruise I began to relax and enjoy the lifestyle. No schedules, casual atmosphere. Then, I started to cook. First it was out of a sense of obligation. What else did I have to contribute to a typical cruising day? Navigating and steering within a channel at 7 knots isn't really difficult once you are shown how. We dropped anchor most every night so there wasn't even much of the docking factor. Forcing myself to become familiar with the workings of a galley, I pondered why I couldn't have done this when we had a big house with a large modern kitchen! It must have been because Chris enjoyed it and I didn't want to deprive him of such bliss.

Anyway, after much trial and error, a few delectable delicacies were born. I discovered that if you name your meals and present them with panache that even on a trawler you can turn a ho-hum meal into a tasty ta-da! Fortunately for Chris, I have progressed a bit further than "Boy Scout Surprise." At some point, the galley



*Improvise! A wine bottle becomes a rolling pin to flatten out the sausage for Spinwheels.*

became my ally and I challenged myself to get creative and have fun. Otherwise what's the point, right? Let's just say I'd rather slave over a hot stove

### **GALLEY GADGETS ABOARD SANDY HOOK**

- Good cutting board that spans the sink
- Copper/aluminum clad pots
- Pressure cooker
- Muffin pans both traditional and mini muffin size
- Proper knives to chop, slice, and dice
- Blender or food processor
- Restaurant-quality china
- Attractive glass stemware
- Koozies or fluffy socks to protect glassware
- Coconut extract
- Tony Chachere's Creole or Old Bay Seasonings
- Sea Salt in a grinder (no clumping!)
- Nido powdered milk
- Pretty toothpicks
- Bendable straws
- Cloth napkins

than a hot engine anytime!

Since I've had this cooking epiphany, I've had the pleasure of sharing my experiences with others. Today you may find us presenting seminars at Trawler Fest in Anacortes, Baltimore, and Ft. Lauderdale, where I whip up a few creations and even let you taste-test some, all the while using nothing more than a toaster oven and a few galley staples. In this classroom seminar, I share what I learned as a galley convert, what works on a boat, and sometimes, what doesn't. It is always about what brings us joy.

### **GALLEY TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

To discover what makes a functional galley, let us start with equipment. There are galleys with a one-burner stove and just a cold plate that needs block ice, and then there are those posh galleys with a Force 10 oven and a side-by-side top-of-the-line refrigerator freezer. Mine is neither, but we make do with what we have and improvise when necessary. In life, we need the right tool for the right job. We say that everything on the boat must do at least two things or it shouldn't come aboard. That sounds like a good rule, but it might seem tough to justify a waffle maker and yet we have two on board. Rationale? Chris likes

waffles and I like everyone to eat at the same time. Imagine that when you are serving four or more on board.

Your equipment can make or break a meal. I never thought that I would care about pots and pans before I became the galley slave, but this is a key decision when you outfit your cruising boat. Copper clad bottoms help distribute heat when the pan just doesn't fit on the center of the eye. A two-burner stove can ruin more meals when one side of the pot is on the burner and the other side is not. Think about stacking and lid sizes too. Can they mix and match?

Muffin pans have also become essential equipment in our galley. Check out our website for recipes from breakfast to desserts, and see how many times we provide portion control using this age-old tool; cupcakes don't count.

No galley slave can be without a good cutting board. It should fit over the sink to help with nonexistent counter space. My "ah-ha!" moment came when I finally discovered that cooking is mostly about preparation. A dinky little plastic cutting board is no fun when you're rocking and rolling while underway. Also consider that wood cleans better than plastic as it holds fewer germs.

A pressure cooker is a godsend when you don't want to heat the entire boat, especially in the middle of summer. Your main course can go from the freezer to the table in no time. And when the vegetables start wilting and the next grocery store is two days and a dinghy ride away you learn not to waste anything. A hot crock of soup can warm your soul on a chilly September day cruising on the Chesapeake Bay. Does it get any better than that? Many meals are just as yummy in a pressure cooker and no one is the wiser.

Knives that are properly sharpened can make life sweet. If you've met me, you know I am frantic if I do not have my pocketknife handy. When Chris pulls out the honing stone and fine-tunes all my blades, oh! Be still my heart. But I get excited with a birthday present of a new spool of dockline too.

### GLASSES ARE FOR MORE THAN READING CHARTS

Real china and pretty glassware are often the difference between feeling like you are camping and imagining you are feasting at Antoine's in New Orleans. Plasticware just doesn't make the cut when I want to enjoy fine dining. Slicing into a beautiful filet then hitting a paper plate can ruin the moment. Sure, we use insulated Tervis



tumblers when we are underway for an iced tea—but it doesn't make sense to save that great bottle of Chilean wine for your boat trip, then drink it from a scuffed up plastic wine goblet. And a martini glass is terrific for more than just a martini. How about shrimp or crab cocktail in a stemmed dish. Present a dessert of sliced fruit and yogurt or

instant pudding with a chocolate kiss on top in pretty glassware and you've got something really special. How about the last crumbs of a cake with a small scoop of ice cream? Could you imagine mashed potatoes as a featured item? Another ta-da!

Now you're probably wondering how to keep these things from



Top: A refreshing alternative to soda, wine, or beer, Frozenateds can be leaded or unleaded. When the anchor is down, add a straw and it's a party. Above: Pretty stem glasses turn instant pudding and cookie crumbs into a "ta-da" dessert.

## BREAKFAST IN A BUCKET

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. (Don't all recipes start that way?) A conventional gas or electric oven, toaster oven or convection oven—any will do.

### Ingredients:

Eggs  
Thinly sliced sandwich ham or turkey, round sliced works best  
Seasoning to taste  
Shredded cheese (optional)  
Nonstick cooking spray  
Vegetables (optional)

Spray your muffin pan with Pam (To be honest, I didn't have any Pam, oil, or butter on our last trip and it worked fine without greasing the pans). Take ordinary sandwich ham (the cheaper, the better), and line each muffin cup with the ham as if each slice were a cupcake paper. If the slice hangs over the edge, that's even better. Next, take whatever chopped veggies are still in your fridge, sprinkle some into each ham-lined muffin cup. If you only have fresh veggies, that's fine. If you only have cheese then shred it with abandon.

Here comes the fun part. Crack open and drop one egg into each muffin cup. Ground black pepper or other seasoning to keep the eggs from looking too pale and pop 'em in the oven for about 10 minutes, depending on how hard you like your yolks. Once they're done, slide a fork between the ham and the muffin pan, and there's your breakfast in a bucket!



breaking while bouncing around on the high seas. If you can't convince your captain to stay docked when NOAA predicts more than 1- to 2-footers, then stock up on Koozies or fluffy socks; I bet you can find a few Koozies from a variety of marine companies at the next Trawler Fest. I also pick up packing boxes at the local mailing center and keep my Waterford crystal aboard for special occasions—repairing the water pump without breaking something else, changing a sidelight without losing tools overboard, spending one year on the boat together, and completing the loop. Anything becomes a celebration on the water. I promise you will break more glasses at your land house in the dishwasher than you ever will on your boat.

### FIRST YOU NEED THE TOOLS, NOW THE FIXINS'!

Space is often limited, so you need a helpful way to decide how much to bring aboard. Start by getting a Sharpie pen and marking dates on everything as you open it. Date those ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise jars and you'll quickly discover how much you use in a week, a month, a year. Even if you don't own your perfect cruising boat yet, this is a great exercise to determine usage of everything from paper towels to pet food. Next time you hang a new roll of paper towels just scribble the date on the inside of the cardboard roll. Before you know it, you'll have an excellent idea of how much is just right to provision.

Magic potions are more than fairy tales and come in the form of seasoning. Again, fresh is best and you'd be amazed at how long onions, celery, and peppers can last in your fridge. But sometimes you don't feel like chopping, or you've been away from the real world a bit too long and good grocery stores are far, far away. Stock up on Old Bay, Tony Cachere's, ground sea salt and ground pepper, and even Mrs. Dash, for those of you who are salt intolerant. Also, paprika sure pops some color when everything is white.

Dry goods are important, but if you don't eat something on land then chances are you probably won't enjoy it on your boat either. Don't just copy someone else's list no matter how well thought out it is. In an effort to prepare for all the what-ifs before we left New Orleans, Chris purchased six cans of spam and I bought more cans of tuna than I care to admit. It all got donated two years after we left the dock. Kind of like that revolving fruitcake from your aunt! Conversely, everyone has some food item they can't do without. If it's a non-perishable item then watch for sales and buy a lot. You'll find a place to store it. For you milk purists, there are a number of companies that produce powdered milk, which work in most recipes without the need for refrigeration. Try a few different brands before you leave the dock.

At some point on our journey we learned that a

cruiser's favorite four-letter F word is *free*; free dock, free ditty bags, and free charts. You get the idea. Most cruising kitties are not bottomless and you are on a boat, so it helps to be frugal. Not to mention that grocery stores are not always as accessible when you're underway. Just a few drops of coconut extract in your glass changes an \$8 bottle of rum or vodka into what tastes like a top shelf \$25 brand. You guessed it: ta-da!

## WHY WE GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS—I MEAN, TRAWLERS

Remember, this is supposed to be pleasure boating. If it's not fun why are we doing it? Meeting new friends, learning about new places to visit, and the camaraderie of cruisers are some of the things that keep us coming back to the waterways. Creating a few easy galley miracles is a wonderful way to accomplish all of this.

Now let's do a little imagining: You're at anchor after a few days of navigating along the Atlantic ICW. You just finished the task of cleaning out the clogged air conditioner strainer. Ta-da! It's definitely a cause for celebration. I see the crystal glasses starting to materialize. But wait, as you come out of the engine room you hear a faint "RRRR" sound that quickly loudens. You identify it as that of an outboard engine. It's the folks from "O Swell" dropping by in their dinghy. You met them at your first boating rendezvous and you haven't seen them since last year. Quick! Break out the good stuff and let's have pot luck tonight. There's nothing but a tin of smoked oysters, crackers, and mayo? Not a problem for a seasoned galley slave. It's all in the presentation.

This unexpected pleasure is but one of the joys of cruising we hope to encounter each time we head out on a trip. We boaters are a most social bunch. Whether it's gathering for appetizers at sunset with the sound of a conch horn or dinner for six on your back deck, it is all part of the cruising adventure. So you can cringe and apologize that you didn't know they were coming or slip on your galley slave apron and make it easy living the dream of a cruiser. See you on the water! 🍹

*Are you a reluctant Galley Slave who wants to learn more? Please visit the Galley Recipe section of our website <http://www.captainchrisyachtservices.com/section.php?id=80> and try some yourself!*



*Above: This can be a 2-butt galley if you play nice together. My sister and I concoct a sit-down dinner for six while on a family trip. Below: All the fixin's for Stingrays, a quick and easy appetizer easily adapted to what's in your fridge. Yum!*

