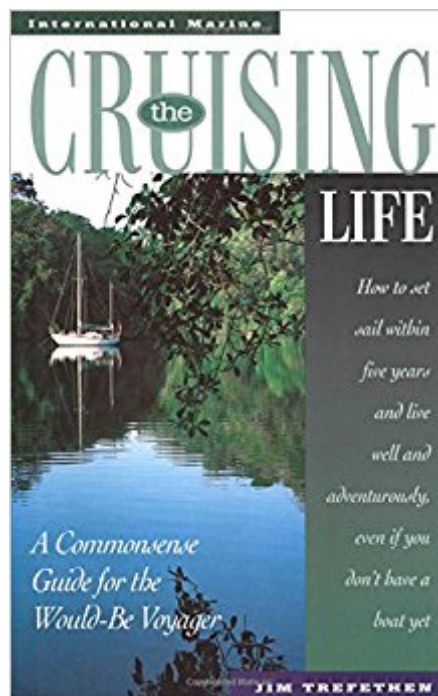




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# The Cruising Life: A Commonsense Guide For The Would-Be Voyager



## Synopsis

The Cruising Life: A Commonsense Guide for the Would-Be Voyager, Jim Trefethen. The funniest, drollest, wisest book on the shelf for the would-be cruiser. Trefethen pulls no punches—he tells you just what will be involved if you and your family decide to "let slip the surly bonds of earth" and set sail. How to get ready, how to finance the voyage, how to live on your boat with maximum peace of mind and minimum hassle, and what equipment you do and don't need. (What you don't need may surprise you.)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

How to make your dream of voyaging come true (without winning the lottery). No, you don't need to be rich to sail around the world. You don't even need to have a boat (yet!). What you need most is to know what you don't need--if and when you and your family decide to "let slip the surly bonds of earth" and set sail. So says the author of the droll, practical, and highly enjoyable Cruising Life: A Commonsense Guide for the Would-Be Voyager. And he speaks from personal experience. Jim Trefethen tells how his family managed to simplify their life, cut shore ties within just two years, and sail around the world. You too can realize your dream, he says, one step at a time. He tells you exactly how to Get the money for your "cruising kitty," and determine how much you'll need Find out if the cruising life is right for you--before you go Pick the best boat for you, and sort out real value from misleading claims Live aboard comfortably--tips and tricks that will save you headaches Find out what you need (and what you don't need) aboard your vessel and much more. Jim Trefethen's wise and funny account of his own voyage is full of instructive anecdotes about his

family's adventures aboard their 40-foot ketch Sultana. Most important, he says, successful cruising means embracing the joys of the simple life.

Jim Trefethen is the author of *Wooden Boat Renovation* (International Marine, 1992) and *Inflatable Boats* (International Marine, 1996). In 1993 he, his wife Susan, and their two children cut the cord and went cruising. Currently they are in New Zealand.

Sure, the author is opinionated and, at times, dwells too much on the aspects of the "cruising kitty", and there are errors at least in the electrical aspects of a cruising boat. However, I strongly advise any would-be-long-term-cruiser to read this book, preferably before buying a boat. I have cruised and read most of the standard cruising books: technical, narrative and whimsical. This book is one of the few that gives the would be cruiser a reality check without the sugar coating. This book may not be for you if you are already emotional attached to your (would be) boat, her fine qualities and the many gadgets on board; or if you are just after the usual yachting/boating or live aboard life style. One should read the Pardeys and similar authors for the technical aspects of passage making. On the other hand, buying a boat is an emotional rather than practical process, and embarking on a long term, long distance cruise, on a small boat, is arguably not an entirely rational decision ... travelling slowly in some discomfort at considerable expense, and all that. The straight talking parts of this book give the would be passage maker, aspects which he or she may not find in other cruising books. If you are still at the planning stage, smile at the opinionated parts, pick the parts that apply to you; this book may save you from some of the unpleasant surprises and regrets associated with boat buying and cruise planning.

A long time ago, I did some sailing with friends, at least once a month for a year. I was a 'deck hand' on a tiny sailboat. It was fun, and I always enjoyed being out on the ocean. Many people dream about sailing away maybe at retirement. This book will tell you how to go about it. And it will also help you a bit with thinking about it, whether it is right for you. At this point I am still 10 years or more from retirement, but I will start planning, just in case. Of course what it means is you have to save up. It cost more to live on a boat than on land. I was curious to see if Jim is still cruising, but could not find info about that. Not only is this book a useful guide, but Jim actually writes in a pleasant style and I often find myself picking up this book rather than my latest story book and read a few passages.

I liked this book and very much recommend it. It can be a long, wordy read at times, but it covers a lot of material about cruising, how to perhaps get cruising, and life in general. This is the author's story so it is his insights and his opinions so you can take it or leave it as you think applicable. Be warned that the author is very opinionated about almost every topic imaginable. Some readers might think the book biased and bigoted, but that would be wrong and unfair. Clearly the author has a lot of experience with boats and cruising, he has put a lot of thought into the cruising life (and life, in general), and he writes well. The author is a guy who "has been there and done that" and who is (thankfully) sharing his wisdom; much of it is excellent. A young person in their twenties might want to read this book cover to cover as the fatherly advice is worth it. Someone who is a thirty something might want to just scan parts and closely read others. Folks nearing retirement will want to thoroughly read some, but completely skip some, as applicable.

This book was well written, both in a grammatical sense as well as being well laid out as a plan. His "path" is actually very similar to what we're taking in our lives and had it all laid out already, long before I read this book. In particular his idea matches Larry and Lin Parday's idea for "Go simple, go small, go now". After listening to and hanging around many of the cruising and sailing forums I've discovered that everyone has their own opinion about the subject of cruising for a few years. No two are precisely alike and every, single opinion out there is "Right" and everyone else is "Wrong". Unfortunately, this is not true and the author lays this out. Some folks he had as friends didn't like him taking his children out of school and accused him of turning them into uneducated people. While this opinion is held by many about taking children out of school for Home Schooling, the truth is that home schooling, or in this case boat schooling is not only a viable alternative to "normal social life" but is head and shoulders above and beyond a "government paid, public education". His ideas to go cheaply, with a good, sea worthy vessel are sound ideas. A lot of people on the forums on the internet disagree with anyone who wants to do something on a budget. There is a distinct and elitist attitude - because, it appears both in real life and in the author's examination that people are either jealous of you following your dreams, they want to keep the idea of yachting in the "High Society" level preventing the middle class from enjoying the same things the Rich and Famous can simply pay for out of their pocket change. This book wasn't an inspiration when it comes to doing the "Plan" - but it confirms some things I was thinking, and will accomplish. I think that Mr. Trefethen was honest, light hearted and funny about the whole story and took efforts to be accurate. He admonishes you to check things for yourself, and he really doesn't leave out the important things

like getting a survey before you buy a boat, telling you to follow the sound principles of good seamanship and most important of all, telling you that "Yes, you too" can cruise. I found the electronics portion of the book somewhat dated, but I will point out something he points out. Do you need a brand new, off the shelf radio? No. Radios - which happens to be this author's expertise - don't change much. As a professional radio maintainer for over forty years I can say that radios that are over forty years old still work, and work fine. Mr Trefethen suggests not to make expensive changes to an old boat simply to satisfy your neighbors in the next slip or anchorage. He stands out as a person who is a "Do it myself" sort of person and someone I can respect. Doing things for yourselves has been the norm for thousands of years of human history and if Columbus can sail a sea with nothing but a compass anyone can do it, with the right training and experience. Those of us who've waited all these years to follow our dreams can take heart from this book and follow the path of others who have done what we wish to do.

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