

★ SCHOONER ZODIAC ★

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What time do I board the ship for my cruise?

The boarding times are written on the confirmation letter that is emailed to you after making a reservation or can be found on each individual cruise page at www.schoonerzodiac.com/cruises. Most overnight cruises board at 9:30 am and return at 3:00 pm of the last day of the cruise, but there are some exceptions so please be sure to check your cruise times.

We recommend that you arrive to the location of docking 30 minutes to the designated boarding time. The Zodiac is on a secure dock and passengers are required to board as a group accompanied by a badge-holding crew member. After boarding all passengers are shown to their berths to stow their baggage and after a brief safety orientation the crew will get the ship underway. This process typically takes about a half hour after boarding.

Do I have to pay for parking while on my cruise?

If you are boarding in Bellingham; there are parking spaces in the far southwest corner of the cruise terminal parking lot. The Port of Bellingham does charge \$6 per day or \$30 per week to park in that numbered lot. There is a pay machine located in the parking lot and payment can be made by credit card or cash. Please note that the pay machine does not give change for cash. The lot is well lit with cameras and regular security patrols day and night. Vehicle prowling has not been an issue here.

There is a cat on board?

The Zodiac's only year-round live aboard crew member is Abby the cat. She has lived on board since she was a kitten and is now an old salt. Folks with cat allergies are often concerned about having a cat on board, but we have never had someone have a serious allergic reaction to Abby. Despite that we urge anyone with a cat allergy to bring any medication they have with them and to keep their cabin or bunk curtain closed as a precaution. Please call or email us with any questions or concerns regarding Abby the cat!

What if my family needs to contact me during the trip in case of emergency?

Most cell phones have coverage in a majority of the San Juan Islands, if you cannot reach a passenger please call the Zodiac's office at (206) 719-7622 and the staff can put you in touch with the ship.

Are meals included on the trip?

All meals and snacks are inclusive in the cost of your cruise. Our professional ship's cook prepares three wholesome meals a day, with snacks in-between. If you have any dietary restrictions, please mention them when booking your trip or at least a week prior so the chef can accommodate them.

Sleeping Arrangements

Think of this adventure as glamping (glamorous camping). Each passenger is assigned his or her own individual berth with a mattress, bottom sheet, pillow, and light fleece blanket. Since we are in the Pacific Northwest and sleeping over the water, nights can get chilly. We highly recommend bringing a sleeping bag or warm blanket of your own for comfort. Sleeping on deck is an option as well (no Zodiac gear is permitted on deck so pack accordingly). For more information on what to pack, see the packing list on our website.

Is there alcohol served on the ship?

Passengers are welcome to bring alcoholic beverages with them, but we ask that our passengers drink responsibly. Some cruises do include alcoholic beverages in the booking cost such as our Brewery Tour and Seafood and Winery Tour. The rule of thumb on the Zodiac is no drinking while underway, or if passengers are imbibing, they do not participate in sail maneuvers. Once the anchor is down, drinking is allowed. Overnight passengers are welcome to bring their own alcoholic beverages aboard without being charged a corkage fee; everyone's safety is the crew's paramount concern.

Can I access the internet while on my trip?

The Zodiac does not have WiFi for passenger use aboard. You may be able to set up a personal hotspot with a mobile device, but cell coverage in the islands cannot be guaranteed though it is usually reliable depending on the phone carrier.

I need to use a CPAP machine when sleeping - will I be able to plug it in?

Many passengers are now traveling with a particular type of ventilation (breathing) therapy machine. (If you have one, you know what this is.) These machines typically run on 110v power, but they do come with a 12v adapter. Since the Zodiac runs on 12v for most of the night while our generator is switched off, please read and comply with the following important instructions:

The Zodiac cannot accommodate machines that run humidifiers as well as the breathing application — as this type of device draws too much amperage and blows the fuses. However, if the humidifier feature can be turned off in your machine, you will be able to use it aboard.

During the day the ship has power from the generator that plugs into standard outlets just as you would use in your home. At night (from 11pm to 6am) we turn off the generator and all power is provided by our 12volt battery system. If you require a CPAP machine at night you will need to

Be sure to bring your own 12v inverter with the plug-in (the plug-in looks like the one that goes in a car cigarette lighter). If you don't have an inverter, please purchase one only from the manufacturer of your device. Due to the variety of CPAP machines, we cannot be responsible for providing appropriate inverters.

Please inform the registrar when making your reservations that you require a bunk with a 12v socket for your machine, as not all berths are equipped with 12v sockets.

May I sleep on the deck of the ship?

Every passenger is designated a specific berth onboard. However, should you wish to sleep on deck, you are most welcome. We ask that if you plan to sleep on deck that you bring your own pad and sleeping bag/pillow. The ship's blankets, pillows and mattresses are not allowed up on deck for hygiene reasons and to reduce wear and tear on them. The Zodiac requires any passenger that is opting to sleep above decks to check in with the crew member on watch prior to moving above decks and, should they wish to return below during the night, to check in with the crew member on night-watch to inform them of the change.

Is it a requirement to perform sailing duties on the cruise?

Because the schooner Zodiac is a sail-training vessel, it is generally assumed that passengers want to participate in the programs. It is not required, however, for all passengers to take part in sail maneuvers. We request that you let us know upon boarding if you are unable or unwilling to haul sails, as this will affect the sailing-station assignments. The passenger watch rotation is also considered a voluntary opportunity and we do not require that you participate. The passenger watch rotation is as follows:

30 minutes in the chart room with a crew member (learning to read charts and basic navigation)

30 minutes at the helm with a crew member (steering the ship under captain's direction and crew assistance if required)

30 minutes as bow-watch (looking out for floating debris or oncoming small craft)

30 minutes at the messenger post (listening for bow-watch warnings and radio hails)

If you do not wish to take part in these duties, simply alert the Mate at beginning of the trip and your name will not be included in the watch billet. No one will think any less of you if you prefer to simply enjoy the ride!

Will I be able to shower during my cruise?

Depending on the length of your cruise, this is typically an option. On longer trips (such as Desolation Sound), water tanks are carefully monitored. The ship is equipped with 750 gallon tanks and that amount is for all shipboard water-usage. The ship has two showers, one forward and another aft. When you wish to shower, please check with the Mate first who will be fully aware of our water supply status.

When showering aboard, we require that passengers take "navy showers": briefly running the water and shutting it off while you lather up, then running it again to rinse. In this fashion, we can extend our water supply.

Are children allowed on the Zodiac?

The age restriction for children on overnight trips is usually 13 years and up. The exception is if the cruise is one of our family themed cruises on which there is not an age minimum. If you are chartering the ship for a private trip, the age minimum is up to your party. The Zodiac advises that young children be kept with a supervising parent at all times on deck. Children are not permitted to be forward of the lifelines (cable railings) while on deck unless a crew member and parent are supervising them.

Should we tip the crew?

The crew members on Zodiac are primarily a volunteer crew. It is customary on charter vessels to tip crew and gratuities are greatly appreciated. There is no hard and fast rule for tipping aboard the Zodiac. Anything is appreciated, especially by our live-aboard interns. Typically, at the end of the sail a tip box is set out in the galley or charthouse. Tips are shared equally between all ship personnel.

Where can I stay locally prior to or after my cruise?

There are many local options for lodging in Bellingham. For a full list of hotel options please visit Bellingham.org. Our dock is also only 150 yards from the Amtrak and Greyhound station, so taking either of these transportation options from out of town, or even Whatcom Transit from downtown Bellingham, is very convenient. Please call (206) 719-7622 with any questions or for transportation advice.

What if I need to cancel my trip?

Reservations and deposits for multi-day trips are fully refundable until 30-days prior to the cruise. Within 30-days all payments are non-refundable. If you are worried about needing to cancel your reservation, we recommend you purchase trip insurance. Reservations for day sails are subject to a 48-hour cancellation policy. We do conduct cruises rain or shine. Private Charters are subject to the cancellation policy outlined in their respective charter contract.

All itineraries and stops are subject to the Captain's discretion and may vary due to weather and unforeseen conditions. Safety and comfort are always a priority and if changes occur to a proposed itinerary it is in the interest of making any given cruise as enjoyable as possible.

What about Trip Insurance?

If you are making a reservation on the Schooner Zodiac and feel that you may be at risk of needing to cancel within 30 days of the cruise we strongly suggest purchasing trip insurance. The Schooner Zodiac does not endorse any particular service, but more information on trip insurance options can be found at: [Travel Insurance Review](#).

*NOTE: Should the vessel be forced to cancel a trip for any reason, we will refund all fares.

What can I do if I leave something behind on the ship?

The Schooner Zodiac does not have a lost and found on board. We strongly recommend that passengers clearly label all of their belongings and check bags carefully upon departure. Should you leave something of value onboard the ship, you may email info@schoonerzodiac.com, but there are no guarantees that the crew will be aboard once docked. During our sailing season we are often out sailing on another cruise the next day. Items left behind do not stay onboard. The best way to ensure against loss is to clearly label and inventory your belongings.

How can I come back and volunteer for the ship?

Many passengers are eager to return as volunteers. We ask that you contact our volunteer coordinator Richard DePartee. Volunteers typically start their tenure during winter re-fit season (November through March). The Zodiac is docked year-round in Bellingham and work parties take place nearly every Saturday throughout the winter. Individuals who volunteer their time during work parties are eligible to train and become crew during the sailing season.

Other volunteer opportunities are available through the Northwest Schooner Society based in Seattle.

Thank you for your interest and participation with the Schooner Zodiac please call us at (206) 719-7622 or email at info@schoonerzodiac.com if your question was not addressed!