



Practical information from A to Z

Animals

Dogs and other domestic pets are welcome on board. It is possible now to take domestic pets to Ireland; however the conditions are quite strict. The Irish Tourist Office will give you all the necessary information. Make sure you bring everything your animal needs (blanket, feeding bowl...), as you won't find anything on board, nor at the base. Don't forget to look after them particularly when mooring and going through locks. A charge will be collected for your pet by the base. Please don't let your pet sleep on the bedding. While at the departure or arrival base, please keep your dog on a lead. However, if your dog stays on the boat, you can take off the lead.

Barbecue

The banks of rivers and canals are tempting spots to have a barbecue. Theoretically you are forbidden to light fires on the banks, but it has to be said that many boaters ignore this byelaw... In any case take the greatest care, particularly in dry weather. It is strictly forbidden to use a barbecue on board a boat.

Barge

Commercial barges are becoming ever rarer. You will still meet a few on the larger rivers, but hardly any on the canals. You will however, depending on the region, come across hotelbarges and trip-boats. Just like commercial barges, these crafts always have priority.

Bicycles

Bicycles are a great complement to a cruise. You can bring your own ones or hire some at the departure base. Each base has bicycles for children as well as for adults. Helmets for children and babies are offered for free. Ask the technician at the base to adjust the bikes to suit you, and to show you where to stow them on board so that they don't get in the way or fall overboard. You are responsible for the bikes, and you will be given a lock and chain for each one.

Bimini

The Europa boats and the Pénichettes® Flying Bridge in Italy are equipped with a bimini (solar panel). Damage costs on the Bimini are not covered by the buyback of the damage waiver or the 'inclusive pack'. At your arrival, you are asked to sign a declaration, that you are aware of your responsibility in case of damage. For the other boats, you can hire a parasol (see 'parasols'). Please remember that bridges, trees and strong wind can cause damages.

Binoculars

If you own a pair of binoculars, take them along, it will add to your enjoyment by watching wildlife. (In Germany, Ireland and Poland, a pair of binoculars is included in the boat's inventory).

Boat users book

You will find a boat users book on every boat, which contains all information about the river, the tourist sites, the telephone number and the opening hours to call for the base or for emergency, instruction for the heating, oven, hobs, toilets and all the on-board equipment. This handbook does not replace the initiation, but allows you to find out forgotten information. Do not hesitate to consult it during the cruise.

Breathing assistance devices

All our boats are equipped with a 230 V socket for quayside connection. You will find the socket in the center of the boat, some boats have several sockets. If you must use a respiratory assistance device, please remember to bring with you an extension cord long enough to be able to use your device in your cabin (at least 8 m for the biggest Pénichettes®). Do not forget to ask our staff at the departure base about the ports along your cruise that supply a quayside connection.

Captain

The captain must respect the navigation rules of the waterways, as well as the instructions the hirer or the waterway authorities might give. The Captain must only navigate in areas that are approved by the hirer. He must not drive after dusk, tow other boats or sublet or rent the boat. Also, he must not board more persons than allowed for the boat. He is personally responsible to pay the fine for any violation of the rules, including speeding or illegal mooring. He obligates to pay the fines, also in retrospect. He also is responsible for his illegal acts by criminal and civil proceedings and the occurring consequences

Clothes

Only take with you clothes that are practical and easy to wash, like jeans, sweatshirts, T shirts etc. Bring a jersey for the evenings as well as a waterproof or anorak in case of rain (which we do not wish for you).

Complaints

Any comments you have to make will be gratefully received, as it is always our aim to improve the quality of our product. Do ask for whatever you need or tell the base what's wrong. It is no good getting a missing saucepan or corkscrew after your return if you needed it from the start. We can only remedy faults that we know about.

Dictionary

If you don't speak the language of the country you're going to, we suggest you to take a little phrasebook such as a Collins, Roberts...; that way you'll be able to learn quite quickly a few words and useful phrases.

Doctor

If you need a doctor, ask in the nearest village, or at the closest lock. Alternatively ring the base, and tell them your exact position. Don't forget that 112 is the international emergency call number.

Electricity

The electricity on your boat is supplied by a battery refilled by an alternator induced by the motor. Battery autonomy is very variable according to the type of boat and your usage. Certain devices, if they are used intensely, can empty the batteries in less than 24 hours. This is the case of the refrigerator and lighting. If the heating or the fridge shuts down, this is probably a sign of a weak tension of the battery. In such a case please let the engine run for one or two hours.

Important

To avoid electric breakdowns, you have:

- To sail or let the motor work to 1500 t/min, for a minimum of four hours a day (more if you intensively use the electrical fittings), for two different times in the day (morning and the afternoon) – To

connect your boat to the electric supplies of the harbors when you are moored. We advise you to plug in automatically when it is possible.

Fauna and flora

It's quite usual during your cruise to come across all sorts of aquatic wildlife like wild geese and ducks, coots, herons etc. The banks of rivers and canals are often wellwooded, with a rich birdlife. Wild flowers equally tend to be numerous, as waterways keep well away from towns and highways; with little pollution, vegetation on the banks is as varied as it always has been. If the water often looks dirty, it's usually only because the bottom of the river or canal is muddy, which makes the water look murky. Bring with you guides to birdlife and wildflowers and they will add even more to your holiday enjoyment. If you care for the vegetation and wildlife, please do keep your speed down on canals and rivers. High speed erodes the banks and damages their ecosystems.

Fines

In every country, the waterway police can hold controls. In Italy, the navigation in Venice, especially on the Canale Grande is under surveillance. Close to Amsterdam, as well as in the surrounding of Berlin, speed monitoring is frequent. Offences like speeding, illegal mooring, navigation in restricted areas, driving under the influence can be sanctioned. Whoever incurs a penalty is responsible for his illegal acts by criminal and civil proceedings and the occurring consequences. The departure bases can, especially in these three countries, demand from the client to sign a exclusion of liability for Locaboat.

First aid kit

All Pénichettes® and Europas carry a small first aid kit, suitable for treating minor cuts and bruises. If you have your own, bring it along as it could be useful. Don't forget to bring along any medication you take regularly, as it may not be easy to find them during your cruise.

Floods and Drought

Rivers only can be subject to floods, mainly in springtime or occasionally in autumn. In this case we may have to restrict your cruise to canals only or possibly to switch departure base, but it should not be necessary to cancel your cruise. The Rivers Lot and Baise are the most prone to flooding. Likewise, in case of drought, some rivers can be impassable. It's often the case with the Garonne River. You should check on river levels before starting out for your holiday.

Games

Don't forget to bring along your favourite games – cards, chess, Scrabble, Monopoly etc. They will make for enjoyable family evenings.

Gangway

All our boats carry a gangplank for getting ashore. If you have elderly people in your crew, check that it's on board.

Gas

The cooker rings, the oven, the heating system as well as hot water on board of some of our boats are run on gas. Your boat is equipped at least with two tanks of 13 kg gas (10.5 kg in Holland, 11 kg in Germany). At your departure, a bottle is full and the other started. The supply of a full bottle is included in the price of your stay, the extra ones are payable (approx. € 20). For the Pénichettes® equipped with gas heating, at certain periods of the year, in certain areas, it is necessary to heat the boat in a more intense way. You may be forced to buy an additional bottle during your cruise. Some boats have a electric-diesel hybrid engine. These boats have a oil-fired central heating and a electric cooker, therefore there are no gas bottles on board.

Gastronomy

Let yourself be tempted by the specialties of the region you are cruising through. Restaurants offering haute cuisine are not everywhere, but do not worry as virtually every village has its bistro or café where you can taste good & fresh local dishes, at moderate prices.

Gloves

Don't forget to use gloves for handling ropes. If you don't have any, you can buy them at your departure base.

Insects

We suggest bringing some insect repellent for use against flies and mosquitoes, particularly in summer and autumn. Be aware that our boats don't provide any mosquito nets.

Insurance

All our boats are covered for civil responsibilities and damages. The captain may still also be liable for additional penalties if he has broken navigation rules or willfully caused an accident. Passengers on board the boat, their personal effects and their public liability are not covered by this insurance. The damage deposit you pay over on arrival is the amount of the excess on the boat's insurance. Hirers can opt to take out an accidental damage waiver to protect against loss of deposit.

Keys

When you take over, you will be given a key for the cabin door. If you take good care to lock it, you can leave your boat anywhere. But please remember that a boat is not a safe, so don't leave any valuable belongings or papers on board, when you leave the boat. Remember to close the curtains too. Also, if you aren't using the bicycles, store them inside the boat.

Life Jacket

All our boats have sufficient life-belts and enough life jackets. If you travel with children, please ask for life jackets of their size (size of life jacket according to child's weight, from 10 kg upwards) when you arrive at your departure base.

Linen on board

The bed clothes (bed linen, sheets and pillowcases) will be given to you at the departure base. Please check before you leave if everything is alright. As long as the base is still open, we can quickly change the linen.

Local customs

Do respect the traditions and customs of the area you are going to. Often a smile and a chat will make for really rewarding contacts with locals who are natural, straightforward, warm and welcoming. Make the first move, even if you have only a few words of the language, and you won't be disappointed.

Local events

Ask lock keepers and local shopkeepers about market days and local festivities; many traditions still exist in remote villages which can give a fascinating slant to your cruise.

Maps and guides

Your cruising guide shows shops, tourist attractions, the position of villages, locks and other navigation features. Your route is shown in great detail, and it is therefore recommended to buy this guide either when you book or when you arrive at the base.

Matches

On your boat, the cooking rings and the oven are gas fired, so don't forget to bring a good supply of matches or a lighter.

Medicine

Many of the villages and small towns you go through will have a chemist's shop. Ask the lock-keepers or people in shops to direct you to the nearest one.

Meeting people

Meeting the local people should be one of the highlights of your holiday. Do chat with the lock-keepers and shopkeepers you meet. They are usually delightful and are a veritable mine of good stories and useful information, but it's up to you to make the first move.

Mileage

Your boat travels at around 6–8 kph, or a little faster going downstream on rivers. Allowing for time spent going through locks, shopping and sightseeing, you are likely to cover around 20 to 30 kilometres per day.

Money

Don't take too much cash with you, that way you can't lose it or get it stolen. Use travellers cheques or credit cards which are more and more widely accepted (in Holland, Visa cards aren't always accepted). Cash machines are also widespread. Always have some change with you. Do not forget a phone number to block a credit card in case of loss / theft.

Nudity

Canals and rivers are often far from built-up areas, and you are completely isolated in some sections. We leave it entirely to you as to how far you undress, but do take care not to shock villagers and lock-keepers, whose ideas may be a little old-fashioned.

One-way cruises

As spelt out in our brochure, we can never guarantee a one-way cruise 100%. It only needs the client before you to cancel his holiday at the last minute for the boat to be left in the wrong place! That's why our bases reserve the right for operational reasons or for reasons beyond their control to alter the direction of your cruise or to alter a one-way cruise to an outand-back cruise. You must ring the reservation service to check the direction of your oneway cruise 3 days before departure. Should the latter occur, your one-way supplement will of course be refunded. Please note that the supplement does not cover the cost of transporting you and your crew. Taxi, Train and Vehicle transfers are available.

Parasols

The Pénichettes® do not come with sun umbrellas as standard. If you want one you can hire one at your departure base. Hire prices are € 5 for the week-end, € 10 per week and € 1 for an extra day. If you do use one on board, make sure you don't lose it going under bridges. It must not be fixed to avoid the table being lost or broken. In case of loss or damage we will charge € 30.

Post

If you wish, you can have post and faxes addressed to the base, so you can pick them up at the end of your cruise. Addresses and fax numbers of the bases are shown in the section "Your departure base" on www.penichette.com.

Power sockets

All our boats are equipped with a 230 V socket for quayside connection. The sockets supply 10–16 ampere (according to type of boat and equipment). This allows you to recharge the batteries of your notebook, your camera or your mobile phone, when you are plugged in an harbor. Also, all boats have a 12 V socket type 'cigarette lighter' which allows you to recharge your electric devices, too. Do not forget the necessary adapter.

Reading

Bring along some good books. The villages you go past will usually only have magazines that sell newspapers, and you're unlikely to be able to buy books.

Rubbish

You will find on board a plastic dustbin liner for your rubbish, but we suggest you buy an additional supply at the first opportunity. Never leave rubbish on the banks or throw it overboard. You will find rubbish containers or dustbins at many locks and at established moorings. Please keep the waterways clean, even if others fail to do so. Please, recycle your rubbish whenever it's possible.

Shoes

On board, we suggest you wear tennis shoes, trainers or espadrilles. Avoid anything slippery, such as leather soles, studded soles or high heels, and go for something comfortable. A pair of Wellington boots comes in handy in wet weather.

Shopping

You can stock up with food in virtually every village along your route: consult the Guide for details. It will show you exactly where to find a grocer, a baker, a butcher or a fishmonger. In France, sometimes lock-keepers sell wine, eggs, chicken or vegetables at very attractive prices. It's a good idea to make use of your car on the day you start your cruise for heavy items and a major shop. For those who wish, we can put together a shopping basket of essential items.

Sightseeing

Just because you're on a boat there's no need to limit your sightseeing to what you see on the bank. Often it's only a few hundred yards walk or bicycle ride to a well known sight, a medieval village or a Romanesque church that would be a great shame to miss. You can even use a taxi. Your waterway map will give full details of the must-see items in the area you are going to.

Stoppage

All navigable waterways are closed for two to three weeks each year, to enable necessary maintenance work to be carried out. In general these stoppages take place out of season, and the program is usually announced in March. We will let you know straight away if your cruise coincides with a stoppage. Should this happen, we may temporarily reposition our departure base, and you could have to cruise in a different direction.

Sundeck

The decks of our boats are excellent for sunbathing. Make full use of them but do take care not to burn, especially in the south of France and Italy.

Suntan lotion

On a holiday afloat you'll be spending most of your time out of doors... so don't forget to bring your suntan lotion.

Swimming

It's often possible to swim on your cruise whether you are on a lake, rivers or canals. Ask at your departure base if and where you can swim. Your swimming clothes might not just be used for sunbathing only!

Swimming ladders

On certain itineraries it is easy and pleasant to be able to swim. It is the case in the lakes in Germany or in Poland and certain lakes in Ireland. To help you get back onboard, the boats in these regions are equipped with a swimming ladder that can only be used when the boats are securely moored. Don't forget to lift it back on board when you restart the boat. It is part of the inventory and you will be charged for it in case of loss. Be careful: never go swimming before you have fixed the ladder in place, you could find yourself unable to get back on board, even with the help of someone who has stayed on board. It is advisable to always leave one person onboard of your boat.

Telephone

Your mobile phone can be used on the waterways almost everywhere except in wild & remote areas. Don't forget the international code of the country you are in. Leave your mobile number with the departure base before you leave.

Theft

To date there have only been a very few cases of theft from boats. Although it can be locked, your boat is not a strong box and when you leave it don't forget to lock it, to close the windows and to draw the curtains. Don't leave valuable items on board; it's the first security rule.

Timetable

Don't set yourself too tight a schedule. The greatest pleasure of this sort of holiday is spontaneity and making chance discoveries. Put your watch away in your suitcase and let yourself be ruled only by the rising and setting of the sun.

Tips

In France it is customary to give the lockkeeper a small tip. In Holland when you go through certain bridges you would have to pay a small sum and this is sometimes left to your discretion.

Tolls

See the information given for each country.

Tools

You don't need to bring a toolbox with you. Our engineers have everything necessary at the base. Just call the base if you break down and explain where you are and what has happened.

Torch

Remember to take a torch with you, with some spare batteries. You'll need it when returning to your boat at night, and if you moor away from civilisation.

TV reception

On the Europa boats you will find a TV with a satellite dish on board. The reception always depends on the local situation and cannot be guaranteed. Every move of the boat, trees, valleys or other obstacles can affect the reception of the signal.

Washing

It will help you for mini-washdays if you bring along some string and some clothes pegs. Only use biodegradable washing powders or liquids.

Water

Storage capacities of drinking water are optimized for each boat. Therefore, they give you only limited capacity; variable according to the number of people occupying the boat. You leave with full tanks and you have the possibility of filling them up in ports and certain locks. The cost varies according to the place and the capacity of the boat. The water points are mentioned on the river guides. Attention: At the beginning and at the end of the season, some of these stations may be closed. On board, distribution of running water is done by an electric pump. According to the type of boat, the hot water is furnished:

- By the motor. Water is heated at 70°C; the reserve is from 40 to 100 l according to the type of boat. The water is still hot in the morning. If you wish it hotter, just turn the engine on.
- By a boiler. In this case the quantity of water at 70°C is not limited and depends on the water tank. The central heating produces hot water in priority. Almost all boats are equipped with a grey water tank. Unfortunately, the network of pumping stations is very small, respectively inexistent, in France, Holland, Italy and Poland. Therefore, the tanks can only be used on our boats in Ireland and Germany. There, we recommend to empty them regularly every two or three days.

Weather

The weather you enjoy will depend on the area you are going to; but whatever the weather, living on board makes for a different sort of holiday experience. Do remember that holidays on water are always damper, so take an extra woolly with you whatever the time of year.