

The advice you wish you could give the captain's wife

**Just a disclaimer up front, I am not a captain's wife. Nor do I have any ambition to become one. This brief foray into the life of a liveaboard captain's wife is a work of fiction, and any characters/incidents that may seem recognisable are pure circumstance.*

**Double disclaimer – in the interest of 2017 and our abhorrence of sexism in any form, the term 'captain's wife' should be applied to the partner of a captain of either sex.*

To the wives that marry in – are you ready for this?

If you married a captain without ever having worked on boats, you now hold a unique position as you simultaneously have the least experience and arguably the most say onboard. Apart from the captain himself of course, although you've probably got more say within the marriage, so maybe that's debatable too.

Walking onto a boat without experience is daunting at the best of times, even if a career in yachting is something you wanted. So I can only imagine what it must be like if you left your normal life to follow love out on the high seas. Now you are in a position you have no interest in, as a stewardess. Or a position for which you are completely unprepared or unqualified, as a chef or purser.

Either way, the crew are going to judge you

There is undoubtedly a gap between you and the crew, be it age, personality, interests or just the straight up fact that

you're sleeping with the man in charge. Everyone is well aware of the tender ground they tread when dealing with you in any capacity. So bear in mind, that when you decide, as the purser, that the boat no longer needs any type of antibacterial cleaners, including those amazing wipes that sanitize even the most filthy toilet, because you don't like the smell, and all the stewardesses agree, it might not be because they think it's a great idea.

Find some allies quickly.

Always remember to pick your favourites, the crew is a smorgasbord of people to make friends with. It is also an opportunity for you to divide and conquer. Divide the crew by seeking out those few who know the drill and will agree to anything you say and lend their support should one of the non-favourites dare to question why someone who has never done laundry on a boat is deciding how the laundry should run. Throw in a couple of extra service shifts or a strategically planned watch schedule every now and then to really cement the friendship.

For the wives that do the cooking... here's how not to do it.

You only cook the food that you and your husband like, because the other 12 people on the boat don't mind pizza, pasta and burgers for every meal, right?! Then when one of the stews starts to gain weight, you make sure you mention this fact to her repeatedly and that maybe she should consider sizing up her uniform. Don't consider adding salad, vegetables or anything low carb to the menu, that would just be unreasonable.

A brief thought for those who married their captain

This tip is aimed at the lovely ladies (or men) who worked their way up through the industry and met and married their captain along the way. Some of you have been through it all, working from the bottom all the way to the top, or maybe you're fairly new to the industry, but you've seen a bit and you know the job. Either way, please try to remember the times when you weren't married to the captain.

Remember how you didn't enjoy cleaning the captain's cabin, knowing full well that his stewardess girlfriend was down in the laundry at that very moment, rocking out to her music while you snaked her hair from the drain. Think back to how hard it was when you were down a girl during a 12 guest charter because the captain's wife didn't feel like getting out of bed that day. Remember...

Thank you to the unicorn wives

Now to the ladies who have come into the role and taken it as an opportunity to see the world, make some new friends and lend a hand along the way, I want to say thank you. You are a rare and magical breed, the unicorns of captain's wives. You help to spread the workload and your unique approach to the position leaves those around you feeling at ease and appreciated.

Captain's wives who fill any of the descriptions above, I do not envy you, I just beg you try to put yourselves in the rest of the crews' shoes. Be an active crew member and try to remember we work with you, not for you...