



# Provisioning for passages

From paella to tarte tatin, Sodastream and sauerkraut... Hermione Pattison has top tips and healthy recipes for an Atlantic crossing

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**F**our years ago my husband took part in the ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) in our Sigma 362. As he left the dock in Las Palmas I thought to myself that, next time, the children and I would go too. They were only two and four years old at the time, and we felt too small to cross the Atlantic in such a small boat.

So instead the three of us flew out and joined the boat in St Lucia and we spent 11 months sailing through the West Indies, across to Jamaica, up through the Bahamas and then up the East Coast of America. We reached New York in July 2016 by which time we'd run out of time. Our son Arthur was to start school in a couple of weeks, and our tenants were handing our house back to us.

However the trip was hard to get out of our heads and we just knew we had to do it again, but next time in a slightly more comfortable boat which would accommodate the children who were getting taller and where sharing a bunk was becoming too much of a squash!

For the next three years we focussed on one thing – our next trip. We compiled a list of features that we deemed absolutely necessary in our next boat. Having lived on our Sigma for nearly a year, our list of 'non-negotiable boat features' was remarkably small, but very specific. With that in mind, my husband, Douglas, spent all his time (when he wasn't working as a builder, or sailing his international 14 dinghy), boat hunting.

In early 2018 he found our perfect boat. She was bigger than we'd originally specified, but she ticked all the 'non-negotiable' items on the list. We went to see her and, although in the yard undergoing extensive works, we could see her potential. The work required was a bonus as we could do much of it ourselves and thus make our budget stretch to a larger boat.

After a very busy year and a full-time three month refit by Douglas, our 2001 Moody 47 *Alisara* was ready to become our home. We moved on board in April 2019 and did some shakedown cruises during the school holidays and weekends to test out the new gear. On 1st September we left Falmouth and headed south in preparation for the ARC.

**MAIN IMAGE, LEFT** Supplies delivered direct to the pontoon in Las Palmas

**RIGHT** Carefully washing and drying fresh fruit and veg helps preserve it for longer

**BELOW** Ready for the washing-up!



I found the prospect of provisioning for the Atlantic a very daunting prospect, but having now done it I realise this needn't be the case. Here's my personal strategy, planning tips and some recipes for even the most unwilling ocean cooks!

### Stay healthy

One of my passions is healthy eating, so this was something I wanted to make sure was continued right across the Atlantic.

To achieve a well balanced, healthy and delicious diet for the 2,800-mile crossing would require careful planning and uncharacteristic organisation! I also needed to include contingency meals in the event of

**While we were provisioning the kids were busy loading toys on board!**

refrigeration or gas cooker breakdown.

The ARC gave a brilliant seminar on provisioning, which covered which foods keep well, how to store them and other invaluable advice, and following this helped enormously with my preparation.

As a mother, cooking can end up being rather boring and we tend to stick to the same recipes. Often a flick through a suitable cookery book gives some much needed inspiration, which I did before preparing my Atlantic meal plan.

With four adults and two children on board (now aged six and eight) it was vital that food was tasty, healthy and exciting. If nothing else, when things are getting tough on deck there is nothing better to boost morale than the prospect of a delicious bowlful of food!

Importantly, my chosen dishes needed to be quick and simple to prepare with minimum washing up. Many dishes used the pressure cooker as it saves gas and is safer with its fixed lid.

I devised a plan which catered for 21 days at sea, with extra supplies of tinned and long life food in the event of a longer passage. The main dish of the day was in the evening, and lunch was usually a hearty salad, sometimes with bread, or omelette. I made sure that I had a good supply of ingredients such as olives, pickled gherkins, seeds, and feta cheese, which can turn a normal salad to an outstanding one in seconds.

More often than not, the evening dish would come with a serving of stir-fried cabbage or cauliflower, instead of a large helping of stodgy rice/ pasta/ potato. The crew were very enthusiastic about this. ➔





as an alternative. It is, of course healthier, but avoids the heaviness of carbs, which you don't need in large quantities for the type of cruising we were doing.

Within my plan, I rotated the flavours of my dishes daily so it was something different every night. I like to think in 'countries' (English, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Indian, Mexican, Italian, etc), to make choosing recipes easier. We had a wide variety of more adventurous dishes mixed with old favourites from home.

Although initially a little time-consuming, sticking to these rules and making a comprehensive meal plan was totally worth it when we were at sea. It also meant that, apart from cabbages and onions, I didn't over- or under order provisions.

Being part of the ARC meant provisioning was easy with recommended suppliers, order forms and delivery to the dock. For meat, I ordered chicken breast, diced lamb, beef, mince and bacon – all portioned to feed four adults and two children – in vacuum packs which arrived frozen, the day before departure. The meat needed to be used in a particular order due to how long it lasts (chicken has the shortest shelf life, followed by lamb, mince, diced beef and finally bacon). If our freezer still worked well in the warmer southern waters and the meat remained frozen, I'd have the flexibility to switch dishes around.

### Favourite items

Selecting the right fresh provisions to take for the crossing was vital. My favourite long lasting items include butternut squash, which will last for months and is so versatile for roasting, curries and risotto. We stored half our supply of green apples loosely wrapped in newspaper in a crate, and hung oranges in our outside nets; surviving wind, rain and saltwater spray the whole way across. For pudding most days we had either a couple of slices of orange or apple, as you only need a tiny bit to satiate your tastebuds. My all-time favourite, long lasting vegetable is cabbage. We took lots with us, and four weeks later still had two left over! The whole crew enjoyed it in salads, coleslaw,

### Hermione's tips

- Keep recipes simple, quick and easy for 'at-sea' cooking.
- Pressure cook where possible – less gas and washing up.
- Rotate carbs, people get sick of rice and pasta very quickly!
- Don't be trapped by endless stodgy carbs like rice/pasta/potatoes. A large portion of stir-fried cabbage is great with bolognese sauce or chilli and superbly healthy.
- Rotate flavours to keep things exciting. Think in terms of different countries for inspiration.



Always wear a plastic apron and boots in case of hot liquid spills

stir-fried and chopped up in casseroles and curries. It really is 'king' and I'd not set sail without one tucked away somewhere.

Other items that last well include potatoes and eggs, which are great for a filling omelette, or hard boiled on a salad. In addition I ensured I had supplies for emergency meals made entirely from long life and tinned food, my two favourites being seafood paella and corned beef bolognese.

Breakfast had to be easy. The children are always hungry when they wake up, and sometimes I'd still be asleep, so anyone had to be able to produce it. I had initially planned to have something cooked every fourth day such as eggs or muffins, but I quickly realised that unless I was on the early watch (5-8am) this was impractical and in reality most of the crew would still be sleeping, so muesli and fruit it was most days!

Lunches tended to be a hearty salad with some homemade bread and cheese or omelette and as the seas picked up, a tortilla wrap filled with leftovers/salad/cheese/tuna meant crew could eat something quickly and there was no washing up

### Big seas, nifty gadgets

During the crossing we experienced big seas for 12 days. Therefore all our evening meals were eaten from a bowl with a fork.

It minimises the amount of flying food, and reduces washing up.

A roll of sticky mat for the table and a well placed Muggie cup-holder meant bowls and drinks were kept off the cockpit floor.

We have plenty of space and storage on our Moody 47 and I use this space for a few 'luxury' items which save time and effort at sea.

My Zyliss mandolin slicer means I can shred huge amounts of cabbage or matchstick carrots in seconds to add to



Aubergine tarte tatin anyone?

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## 'I had supplies for emergency meals made entirely from long life and tinned food'

dishes including salads. It avoids using a sharp knife when rocking and rolling around. I also use it for mincing onions, ginger vegetables for stir-frying and lots more. The NutriBullet blender enables me to make a delicious salad dressing, marinade, sauce or fresh curry paste in minutes and our Sodastream makes tank water much more exciting for special occasions!

Other than that, I have my favourite knives some good mixing/serving bowls and not much else. Less is definitely more in the galley – you can always improvise!

### Culture club

As a keen 'fermenter' I was able to keep alive my culture of kefir which provides us with a daily dose of probiotics. I also made yoghurt from powdered milk, which was surprisingly good.

In addition I make sauerkraut, which lasts for weeks in the fridge once fermented. My husband is in charge of our sourdough starter culture which provides us every few days with a delicious and healthy sourdough loaf or the base for his aubergine tarte tatin, which sounds very flouncy and impressive but is superbly easy and one of our crew favourites. I also sprout pulses which make a tasty addition to salads and stir fries and are bursting with goodness.

**Alisara leaves the Las Palmas start gate for the 2019 Atlantic Rally for Cruisers**

## Alisara's favourite recipes

### Aubergine tarte tatin

#### Ingredients, serves 4

- 500g bread dough for base (use normal yeast bread or sourdough if you make it) or puff pastry.
- 4 aubergines diced.
- Olive oil for frying aubergine
- 3 tbs Tomato puree
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tin of pitted olives
- 1 large handful of diced chorizo, or bacon
- 2 large handfuls of grated cheese or cheese slices to cover tart.

#### Method

- 1** Start with your chosen bread dough and get it ready to use.
- 2** Fry aubergine cubes in olive oil until soft. Turn off heat and add in tomato puree, garlic and stir well to mix.
- 3** Pour aubergine mix onto baking tray. Sprinkle on chorizo and olives, followed by the cheese (make sure it covers all the aubergine).
- 4** Pour (if using sourdough) or stretch your prepared bread dough or pastry on top of the aubergine mix and place in to the oven until crispy and golden.
- 5** Turn out onto a board and serve with a crispy green salad or coleslaw.

### Seafood paella

This recipe uses long-life ingredients so is great for whipping up in emergencies. I always make too much because it's also a delicious leftover straight from the fridge!

#### Ingredients, serves 4

- 500g white rice
- 800g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 stock cube
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- A large handful of chorizo, diced
- A splash of olive oil for frying



- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- A splash of red wine/vermouth if available.
- A large handful of olives
- 1 tin of mussels
- 1 tin of calamari
- A small tin of peas

#### Method

- 1** Fry the onion, garlic and chorizo in a pan with some olive oil until golden. Add in the smoked paprika, rice and stir to coat with oil.
- 2** Empty in the chopped tomatoes, wine, stock cube and olives and gently stir in with the rice. Allow to come to the boil and simmer on a low heat until the rice is al dente.
- 3** Add in the rest of the ingredients and serve. You can add in anything else you fancy, it's a very flexible dish but oh so tasty! Our crew requested this twice during the crossing. Thankfully I had stocked up on tinned seafood in Spain, which is great quality and very good value.

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