

2nd and 3rd ABC
(Dutch Caribbean) Islands sailing adventure aboard Billabong
5-19 May and 24 June -July 8, 2020

Following the success of the first tour at February, Billabong shall sail around the wonderful Dutch Caribbean islands again!

The planned route: Aruba - Curacao - Klein Curacao - Bonaire - Curacao - Aruba.

Dates: First tour: 5-19 May 2020, 14 days.
Second tour: 24 June -July 8, 2020, 14 days.

The exact dates are subject to reconciliation with the applicants.

Participation fee:

First tour: 1090 €/person in the owner's cabine, 890 €/person in the guest cabins
or: 5200 €/ 2 weeks of renting the whole boat with captain

Second tour: 1300 €/person in the owner's cabine, 1000 €/person in the guest cabins.
or: 6000 €/2 of renting the whole boat with captain

The participation fee includes:

- accomodation on the boat (naturally),
- the captain's salary
- the costs of fuel
- the costs of anchoring permits
- the regular entrance fee to the Bonaire Marine Park for each participant

The participation fee does not include:

- the costs of the air ticket and other travelling expenses
- the costs of food (see later)
- the costs of the special entrance fee necessary for scuba diving at the Bonaire Marine Park
- the costs of other entrance permits and programmes
- costs related to scuba diving
- fees of local marinas if the participants decide to moor there
- the costs of local traffic (bus, taxi, car rental etc.)

Price reductions:

- Cabin share reduction: 200 € if the cabin must be shared with the captain. (Further details subject to the personal reconciliations)

Introduction to the ABC Islands and the planned sailing adventure:

The ABC islands or Dutch Caribbean Islands includes three islands from west to the east: Aruba - Curacao - Bonaire. Officially the islands fall under the authority of the Dutch Kingdom, however they enjoy quite a relevant

independence.

They are the southern islands of the Caribbean region, and practically laying outside the hurricane belt. Thanks to this fortunate location, they can be visited safely all year. Since they are north from the Equator only 12 degrees, the precipitation is much more less, the temperature of the sea is higher than around the other Caribbean islands. Indeed, whilst between June and March water temperature may fall to 21-22 C° in the northern Caribbean islands, it never sinks below 25 C° at the ABCs.

The character of these islands and the places of interest are in line with the geographical and climatic conditions: it is worth to plan both sea and shore programmes as well. All three islands have breathtaking nature parks, exiting settlements, interesting museums and above all, when you are tired at all of them there is the beautiful deep-blue and warm Caribbean sea, with plenty of beaches.

The climate is arid, the inland regions are of semi-desert type, the subtropic rainforests of the northerly islands are not present here. On the other side whilst the degradation of the underwater life is markable at the North, there is no sign of that here. Thousands of creatures -fishes, crabs, crayfishes, lobsters, shells, mussels, snails- are living at the warm water of the coral reefs around the islands. One can see them any time just jumpt into to water! Bonaire is officially within the 10 most beautiful diving destinations of the world either for scuba diving or snorkeling with about 100 diving spots. Aruba and Curacao are not falling much behind that.

I recommend especially Billabong's tour especially for those who want to explore the underwater life of the Caribbean Sea.

But I recommend it also for those who would like to taste the life of the ocean-wanderer cruisers, or simply want something else than the usual, all inclusive, do-nothing, lying-in-the-sunchair vacation.

Billabong's sailing adventure is recommended especially for families, couples, friend groups. Please be noted that the lower age limit for participation is 14 year. There is no upper limit, but the good phisical condition is inevitable.

It is very important to underline, and keep in mind, that this tour is not a luxury pleasure trip as in its common meaning. Sailing on the South Caribbean Sea is rather a man-proving activity, than pleasure sailing. We are sailing often in 40-50 km/h wind and among 2-3 metres high waves. There are no crew or staff to attend on us. The participants have to form a small community where everyone has to find his/her own role. The provision should be done ourselves, and everyone participates in the navigation and the steering of the boat - according to his/her abilities. The decisions concerning the routes to be followed and the programme to be implemented shall be made jointly (of course with a certain limit). The programme that I suggest (see further) is really just a suggestion, it may be modified upon the common decision of the participants. But as a result of all of this the participants can visit places and live through experiences wich cannot be reached at a conventional vacation.

The boat

Billabong is custom-made Colvic Victor ketch, a 50 feet (15m) long two masted bluewater cruiser, built between 1995 and 1998 at the Colvic Crafts boatyard according to the original designs of the Champion 50 ketch by John A. Bennett. She is equipped with AIS transceiver, VHF DSC and MF/HF radio, NAVTEX reciver, marine RADAR, GPS chartplotter, EPIRB, liferaft and a dinghy with outboard.

There are 3 cabins, 1 galley, 1 saloon and 2 heads as follows:

- The saloon and the pantry is at the centre of the boat.
- The owner's cabin is located at the stern. It can be reached from the saloon through an aisle. There is a double bed in this cabin which can be widened with one more single. 3 persons can be accomodated here. A bathroom with shower and toilet is opened from the owner's cabin.
- Towards the bow from the saloon to portside a shower and to starboard an automatic toilet can be reached.
- There are 2 guests cabins. Each guest cabin include 1 bunk-bed. The lower bed can be transformed to double bed. Thus 2 or 3 persons can sleep in each guest cabin.
- Besides the above there is a locker under the foredeck of the boat.

Hot water is available.

The deck is covered by teak, with large surfaces available for sunbathing. There is a sweet water deck shower at the stern of the boat.

Provisioning:

The participation fee does not include the costs of food and drinks. This should be dealt with by the participants jointly including the provisioning for themselves and the captain as well.

There is a large fridge on the boat. It can keep 10-15 C° average temperature (with regards to energy saving as well) This should be taken into consideration when planning of procurement of food. (In practice fresh or frozen meat can be stored for 2-3 days at the bottom of the fridge without problem.) Freezer is not available.

The suggested programme:

Day 1: Arrival to Aruba, probably in the afternoon. The captain shall welcome you at the airport transfer everybody by a rented car to the Bucuti lagoon where to boat is waiting at anchor.

Day 2: Acclimatisation, getting acquainted with the boat and the surroundings, swimming, walk at Oranjestad (capital of Aruba), purchasing food and other consumables.

- Day 3: Whole day excursion to the Arikok National Park.
- Day 4: Free programme until 4 pm. Around 5pm departing for Curacao. Sailing during the night, watchkeeping according to the schedule approved and ordered by the captain.
- Day 5: Arrival to Curacao and anchoring at the Spanish Water (it is a big lagoon with a lot of water sport activities) before noon. When we are at anchor, there is a possibility for a quick swimming around the boat, and eat something. After that we go to Willemstad, the capital of Curacao by bus to clear in at the immigration and the customs.
- Day 6: Visit of the 'Shete Boka' National Park in the morning. Clear out and walk in Willemstad in the afternoon, and dinner in a local restaurant at the evening.
- Day 7: Departure to Klein Curacao in the morning, arrival at early afternoon.
- Day 8: Exploration of Klein Curacao, relaxing, swimming (possibly with turtles), snorkelling, enjoying the loneliness.
- Day 9: Departure to Bonaire early in the morning, arrival at late afternoon. Dinner and a short evening walk at the streets of Kralendijk (capital of Bonaire).
- Day 10: Clear-in at the customs and immigration. Organised trip (or by rented car) to the north (Washington) and/or the south (Flamingo) National Park, and the salt factory.
- Day 11: Free programme: scuba diving or snorkelling, on any of the world most beautiful diving spots, or just swimming and sunbathing.
- Day 12: Clearing out, and sailing back to Curacao or Klein Curacao.
- Day 13: Swimming, snorkelling, maybe shopping in Willemstad. Around 14-15 pm departure to Aruba. Sailing at night watchkeeping according to the schedule approved and ordered by the captain.
- Day 14: Arrival to Aruba in the early morning, clear in and then anchoring at Bucuti Lagoon. Packing, farewell launch, departure to Europe.

Good to know

Currency: However the ABC islands fall under Dutch authority each island has its own currency: that is Florin at Aruba, Gulden at Curacao and the American Dollar at Bonaire. Nevertheless the American Dollar is accepted practically almost as official currency both in Aruba and Curacao. If you pay in dollars there is a good chance to get back the change in dollars as well.

Prices: The average price of food is not higher than the prices in Europe. Interestingly the beer is expensive and one can hardly find a bottle or box bigger than 2.5-3 dl. Draught beer is not available for an unknown reason.

Security: Security is good on all these islands. The Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard is quite active in the region. They provide not only defence services but search and rescue as well. They are well equipped including high speed rescue boats and helicopters so they can reach any incidence in the region within 20-30 minutes.