



## Home Sweet Home?



Look at the picture above.

Where do you think it is?

Who do you think might live there?

How would you describe the house and the landscape?

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of living in a place like this?

Would you live there? Would you like to stay there on holiday?

Look at the pictures on the next page.

Discuss the same questions and decide which place you'd most like to a) stay in for a week long holiday b) live in.

Choose one picture and give a description of how you think it would be inside.

### Your Fantasy Home

Imagine you have the funds to design and build your own home anywhere in the world. You want it to be a remarkable building so think about:

- Where it would be (landscape, climate etc)
- What makes it spectacular/impressive/intriguing
- What materials you would use
- Describe in detail the exterior and interior
- Why it would be a great place to live



## Living on a Boat

Before you read the article below discuss these points:

- o Do you know anyone who has chosen to live an alternative lifestyle? If yes, describe where and how they live and why you think they made that choice.
- o What things do you think you would need to learn if you decided to live on a boat?
- o Now quickly read the six headings and compare them to your own answers. Any surprises?



### 6 things you learn pretty quickly if you live on a boat

Metro News - Sirena Bergman - 4 Jan 2018

More than 10,000 people live on canal boats across London. Some do it for the love of the lifestyle, while others choose it as a way to try and save money while living in the capital. Then there are those of us who find ourselves living on a boat and wondering how on earth this actually happened – I can't even change a fuse on a lamp and now suddenly I sleep on a giant floating piece of metal that needs constant TLC. Regardless of how you ended up living the boating dream, there are certain things that you subconsciously learn when you're living aboard the waterways – here are a few.

#### 1. Always go to the toilet before heading home

Regardless of which toilet system your boat has, it's not going to be plumbing, and eventually the tank will need emptying. This isn't as gross as it sounds, but it is a tedious, time consuming, physically demanding job which you probably try to avoid – or at least make the experience as rare as possible. As a result, you find yourself with the uncanny ability to sense the nearest toilet and make sure you've made the most of it before heading home.

**2. Don't waste any space** Every single corner of your home needs to be maximised, which is easier said than done when most storage solutions aren't built for boats. It's amazing how quickly you learn to look at your space differently. I have it on good authority you can even find ways to do yoga in a tiny barge corridor if it comes to it.

**3. All manners of DIY** Nothing on a boat is straightforward. If you want to put up a shelf you need to find a way around the slanted wall; if you decide to invest in a washing machine rather than braving the local launderette you'll need to factor in space, water usage, and voltage; even if you just want to buy a dining table you need it to be one you can fold away in case you have more than three people around at any given time. Professionals in boat-related issues are few and far between, which means they usually have a long waiting list and charge a fortune.

**4. The unique relationship with your neighbours** People love to talk about the 'sense of community' among boaters. While it's true that there's a very active (and helpful) Facebook group, anything beyond that is really a matter of who you happen to be moored up by – the difference being that you might only be next to each other for a few days. If you're lucky enough to have sociable neighbours, you'll quickly internalise the rules of boating life: don't ever ask to use their toilet (see point 1), if they invite you over for drinks take your own glass (just in case) and don't ever ask to borrow a limited resource such as gas, coal or toilet pump-out cards unless it's an absolute emergency (a hangover probably doesn't count).

**5. The unique relationship with the actual vessel** There is no doubt that boaters have a sixth sense. You can tell immediately if the water level has changed, if the boiler is making a funny noise or if the wood you're burning is slightly damper than usual. All this before anyone else – even a fellow boater – can spot the signs. It's similar to a mother knowing exactly what a baby's cry means. It's weird and a bit creepy but very satisfying when you nail it ('I'm pretty sure we're going to run out of water in three, two, one...').

**6. How much you can do for the environment** Yes, you may have half-heartedly recycled in the past but you weren't about to chain yourself to a tree, were you? But living on a boat gives you a broader perspective of how much waste we take for granted. When you're constantly aware that you're running out of water and don't know when you're next going to be able to fill up your tank, you're more likely to notice how much time you've been spending in the shower. When the next place to dump your rubbish is four days away, you'll probably go out of your way to minimise it; and when your electricity runs from a solar powered battery that gets little energy in the winter, you're not about to leave the light on when you're not in the room. Suddenly the amount of waste we used to accumulate seems unfathomable. Living on a boat teaches you to put things into perspective and stop taking the ordinary for granted, right down to the basics.

### Post reading discussion

- What do you think you would find difficult about living on a boat and what would you find enjoyable?
- Would you prefer to live in a boat in a city or in the countryside? Why?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the place where you live or about your lifestyle? Describe what kind of changes you'd like to make and what is stopping you from making them.