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Where to sail – 3 to 4 day trips:

Longer weekends give you the opportunity to leave the Solent, and enjoy the open seas. We advise crew intending to sail outside the Solent, to have sailed inshore before going offshore, as the swell can be much bigger in the Channel. If the trip is a completely new experience, it can be overwhelming.

In 3 or 4 days you can go Cross Channel to France or the Channel Islands, or along the Jurassic Coast to Poole, Lulworth Cove, Weymouth and Portland.

The Jurassic Coast <http://www.jurassiccoast.com>

Out through either the Needles or the North Channel, the bustling ports of Poole and Weymouth beckon. You should make time for an anchor stop in beautiful Lulworth Cove. Don't forget once in Poole harbour – it is still quite a distance to the marina/Town Quay and watch out for the Chain Ferry!

The brand new Portland Marina, the venue for the 2012 Olympic sailing events offers particularly good value to Haslar berth holders, so don't forget to mention that when paying. The new Boat That Rocks Restaurant is well worth a visit. <http://www.theboatthatrocks.co.uk/>

Channel Islands

Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney are all possible overnight stays. Sark is probably best visited for a day, anchoring or picking up a visitor's buoy in one of the bays. Sailing to the Channel Islands is exciting, exhilarating and can be challenging.

France

Our favourite French destinations include St Vaast La Hougue, Honfleur and Deauville

We would advise an early Saturday morning departure, rather than going straight into an overnight sail on Friday night, when the crew are tired from the working week, and unfamiliar with the boat.

Depending on wind and tide, an early start should get you to your destination by early evening. You will then have your second day to explore, and we suggest you leave in the evening, returning by an overnight crossing. Night sailing will be easier now that the crew are familiar with the yacht.

St Vaast La Houge

This is a charming, typically French harbour, steeped in history and surrounded by oyster beds. It is a locked harbour, so you will need to check your tides and times carefully, and be aware of time differences.

We recommend a trip on the amphibious boat to Isle de Tatihou and a visit to M.Gosselin's emporium is a must to stock up on all things French. There are numerous cafés and oyster bars to chose from, and if Nouvelle Cuisine and elegance is your scene, you should try the Fuschia Hotel.

Honfleur

Another very pretty French port approached by the River Seine. It might be convenient to spend the first night in Le Havre, if the crew are getting tired, then make the short trip on the next day to Honfleur and spend the day exploring the town. Again, we would recommend an evening start for the overnight crossing home

Deauville

This is a pretty town with a marina and an inner basin. If you get the tides right, you can berth in the middle of the town. Deauville is famous for its racecourse. There is also a casino and beach on the other side of the river.

Tim's Tip for Cross Channel:

Everyone (however experienced) should take Stugerol.

Jenni's tip for overnight crossings:

Cook bacon rolls for breakfast! After an exciting night sail, sometimes in considerable swell, once the watch systems start being abandoned in the morning, cook half baked French baguette rolls in the oven and fill them with fried bacon and tomato – absolutely delicious, and your crew will love them whilst celebrating a real achievement.