SAILING

hey, sailor

Phaedra Hise relives her first nights and days navigating the open water

IT'S NOON OFF THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY, and I'm manning the 3-foot-high steering wheel, or helm, of a sailboat the size of a tour bus. Direction: southeast. Speed: 8 knots (9.2 mph). My two friends and shipmates, Angus and David, are attempting to nap, but a stiff wind has the boat heeling so far to one side that they've probably rolled off their bunks. Three days ago we set sail from Boston Harbor to Deltaville, Virginia, where, in another 3 days, we hope to dock. Surrounded by blue waves on all sides, I'm thrilled to be facing a whole new challenge. For the first time on an open-water trip, I'm not just a passenger—I'm part of the crew. I'm the one with rope-burned hands and a sleep-deprived squint, gnawing away at energy bars while glued to the helm. And I'm loving it!

INSIDE

Fitness
Jump-start your workout, page 32

Nutrition
Grab these sport drinks, page 34

Health
Nip allergies in the bud, page 42

Beauty
Score the perfect self-tan, page 48

YOU CAN DO THIS

Water Talk | Words: Bow, stern, port, starboard

I'm hardly an expert. At age 10, I took a week of sailing camp (my only formal training) on a Florida lake. When my single-person Sunfish sailboat flipped over on a botched turn, I was plunged underwater and, after resurfacing, frantically treaded water and looked for help. The instructor came to my rescue, then taught me to climb over the boat's belly, flip it right side up, and start sailing again. I realized the boat was my safety net, and that's when I began to relax and fall in love with the process of using the wind to my advantage.

In following years I begged trips whenever I could, borrowing a friend's single-person sailboat for an afternoon on a Tennessee lake or taking day trips with friends on bigger boats in Chesapeake Bay. When David, a fellow writer, asked me to join him last September on this trip, I jumped at the chance.

David introduced me to his friend and fellow sailor Angus, and gave us a pre-trip briefing and gear list. I'd be thankful later for the gloves and the waterproof jacket that kept me dry, but would regret taking just a baseball cap and street sunglasses—not nearly enough sun protection. I also brought the book *Fatal Storm,* thinking I'd have time to read. Ha!

Smooth sailing from here.

For 6 days and nights, David, Angus, and I share this perpetually moving, 34-foot world. We're supposed to sleep in 4-hour shifts, but we stay up in pairs whenever we can to keep each other company. Angus and I hang out during a night watch, marveling at the radiant stars and distant lights on the shoreline. When the sun is up, we're too busy to shower or cook, much less maintain a fluid conversation. We try to have at least one meal a day together, usually fruit, energy bars, or anything else we can hold in one hand.

One evening in the middle of Long Island Sound, a strong wind rips a rope and our mainsail collapses. At the helm I struggle to steer the boat, which heels over so hard that I'm sure we're going overboard. David helps me regain control. I realize then, as I did in my little Sunfish years earlier, that boats can usually handle whatever the sea dishes out.

When we arrive in port, I'm ready to go back to a world with bathtubs and real mattresses. I stumble around and try to balance on the flat, stable ground. Sunburned, filthy, and exhausted, all I can think (besides "god, I need a cheeseburger") is "when's the next trip, guys?"

Score Your Sea Legs in 4 Steps

1 | Keep an eye on the "boom." That's the metal bar that sticks out horizontally from the mast and is attached to the bottom of the mainsail. Tacking or changing direction will cause it to swing side to side. If you ever hear someone shout "Coming about!", duck. Fast. Or you'll be swimming with the fishies.

2 | Sit on the high side. When the boat tilts, always aim for the side farthest away from the water and the sails. Not only is it the driest seat in the house, it allows your weight to help balance the boat.

3 | Obey your captain. "Mi casa, su casa" doesn't apply on a boat. Maritime law dictates that a ship, no matter how small, is the captain's domain. He or she boards first, and all visitors must ask permission to follow aboard—even if the captain is your uncle Ted.

4 | Get certified. Certification is not required in order to sail. But completing a certification program established by a national organization like the American Sailing Association or the U.S. Sailing Association is a smart idea: You'll learn all the basics, such as how to tack and who has the right of way on the water. For affiliated schools near you, visit ussailing.org or asa.com.

sea yourself here

GET BLOWN AWAY AT THESE THREE SAILING DESTINATIONS

1 Southeast ▲

The calm waters and pretty shoreline towns make the **Chesapeake Bay** an ideal starting point for beginners. Take a class at America's oldest and largest training facility, Annapolis Sailing School, and learn everything from navigation to offshore cruising in just one weekend. Dock at the Crab Claw restaurant, a local hangout, for steamed or fried blue crabs. *$375 weekend beginner course, annapolissailing.com, 800-638-9192*

2 Northwest ▶

The **San Juan Islands** off the coast of Washington offer marine parks accessible only by boat on islands such as Doe and Sucia. Join an all-woman crewz at Windworks Sailing Center and charter one of their cabin sailboats. *Starting at $99 a day (nonmembers), windworkssailing.com, 206-784-9386*

◀ 3 International

If you're eager for open water, head to the island-littered Caribbean. **The Bahamas** and **Virgin Islands** boast year-round sailing in warm crystal waters and short hops between countless tourist-friendly harbors. At Offshore Sailing School, an instructor takes you and three other students on a 26-foot keelboat (a flat river boat) and teaches you the basics. *3- to 6-day courses start at $1,195, including accommodations, offshore-sailing.com, 800-221-4326*

PREVIOUS PAGE: ONNE VAN DER WAL/CORBIS; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID MCLAIN/IPN; RAYMOND GEHMAN/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC IMAGE COLLECTION; DALLAS & JOHM HEATON/IPN; CAMERON DAVIDSON/IPN

Definition: **Front of the boat, rear, left (when facing the bow), and right, respectively** | Phrase: **By and large** Definition: **Ship is holding up well, "by" (into the wind) and "large" (with the wind)** | Word: **Sheet** Definition: **Rope that moves a sail** | Phrase: **Three sheets to the wind** Definition: **Loss of control of the three main sheets operating the sail**

◀ | Stow a **Henri Lloyd Axis jacket,** made of a breathable, waterproof polyester fabric, for those inevitable foul days. You'll be thankful for its foldaway hood during surprise storms *($99, henrilloydonline.com).*

▲ | The **Watership Trading Vineyard Supplex hat,** made of SPF 30 Supplex nylon, comes with a 3-inch-wide brim that'll protect you from the sun even during strong winds, thanks to its stay-put drawstring *($40, westmarine.com).*

▲ | A personal flotation device is a must for any sailor–particularly beginners who often end up in the drink. The **Guy Cotten Oceanic Flotation Vest's** super-comfortable closed foam liner fits under a jacket in cool weather or over a bikini in summer *($99, guycottenusa.com).*

◀ | Get **Costa del Mar MP2 sunglasses** that wrap around the eyes. Their smaller design makes a good fit for women, and the polarized lenses help reduce water-reflected glare *($149, westmarine.com).*

all decked out

Watertight essentials that will float your boat

▶ | The nonslip rubber soles of the **Sebago Wave Extreme performance shoes** are so grippy you'll feel like Spiderman on the slipperiest of decks. Water-resistant and flexible, they can handle repeated splashings and won't leave marks on the boat's slick surfaces *($90, sebago.com).*

JEFF HARRIS

◀ | It's always cooler on the water than on land, even on scorching summer days. Pull the **Helly Hansen Cruise short-sleeve shirt** over your two-piece. This light, form-fitting cotton-blend top will keep you warm, sexy, and sunburn-free *($40, hellyhansen.com).*

◀ | For a firm, blister-free grip on heavy ropes, grab a pair of these **half-finger West Marine Sailing Gloves** (way cooler than the full-finger kind). They have synthetic leather palms and quick-drying nylon spandex backs for ventilation and a snug fit *($20, westmarine.com).*

◀ | When you set off to explore a lake or coastline, the handheld **Garmin GPS 76 computer** will always get you home again. With a built-in basemap of nautical navigation aids, such as buoys and sound signals, this waterproof, portable unit is built specifically for marine use. And it floats! *($300, boatersworld.com)*

◀ | Maneuver freely in the capri-style **Navigate Pant by Helly Hansen**–a company founded in 1877 by a Norwegian fisherman who got sick of being wet. This stretchy cotton/spandex blend with a water-repellent finish will keep you dry *($55, hellyhansen.com).*