

The ocean has already ignited your passion...



Start boating

Sail

Dinghies provide an exciting and cost effective way of getting afloat whilst enjoying the thrills of sailing. Whether you want to follow in the footsteps of Great Britain's successful Olympic sailors, or just want to enjoy some more sedate sailing with the family, there will be a suitable style of dinghy available for you. You could take the family camping in the Lake District, participate in high octane and fast performance sailing or just sail on your own for fun.



Dinghy sailing is a wonderful way to learn to sail, whatever your budget and requirements there will almost certainly be something for you. Dinghy sailing is not only limited to elite international sailors, it is accessible to everyone and the RYA course structure makes it a very safe and affordable sport. If you are looking for fun and exhilaration afloat then dinghy sailing has to be worth a go.

Wherever you live there is almost certainly a club or RYA recognised Training Centre where you can learn to sail that is within easy reach. Inland there are many lakes, reservoirs and gravel pits all over the country, whilst along the coast Britain boasts some of the best sailing grounds in the world.

Dinghies come in many shapes and sizes ranging from an Optimist (for 8 – 15 year olds) up to high performance planing skiffs, such as the 49er, for the speed freaks and adrenaline junkies! If you are looking for a dinghy to sail with the family there are a whole range of options available which are perfect for cruising and family holidays.

Activity: Dinghies



What is it about?

Sailing dinghies is fun and exciting whilst bringing you closer to nature and the elements. You can sail on your own, with a friend or with the whole family. Dinghies are open boats which are suitable for day sailing in a variety of areas both inland and on the open sea.

One of the great things about dinghy sailing is that it provides one of the cheapest ways to get afloat and is one of the quickest and easiest ways to learn to sail. They are easy to prepare, anyone can handle them and they are very responsive providing limitless entertainment. Being very light, dinghies are easy to tow behind a car or put on a roof rack enabling you to launch in a variety of locations.

Activity: Dinghies



Try it out on the water

There are many RYA approved Training Centres all over the country, many of which run taster days from time to time and the RYA level 1 and stage 1 courses. These provide the ideal opportunity to get out on the water for the first time. [You can search here to find a sailing school in your area.](#)

Another option is to go on a beach activities holiday with one of the big tour operators. There are many centres in the sun which specialise in dinghy sailing and run RYA courses for beginners. Your local travel agent should be able to offer further advice.

It is also worthwhile contacting your local sailing club as they sometimes have 'open days' to attract new members. Many sailing clubs now run membership schemes

which enable you to 'pay as you go' and rent a dinghy for the day, with or without tuition. [You can search here for your local sailing club.](#)

On Board is an RYA initiative that aims to improve links between schools, RYA training centres and sailing clubs. The objective of On Board is to make sailing easily accessible and very affordable to all kids, whatever their requirements and location. [You can find out more about the On Board scheme here.](#)



Starter courses

The RYA runs the highly accredited and successful Youth Sailing Scheme, for under 16's and National Sailing Scheme for adults. Both schemes offer a structured format to learn to sail in a safe and fun manner, you will learn to sail in dinghies that are suitable for beginners, offering a stable and easy platform for effective learning.

Many RYA recognised Training Centres and clubs run regular courses for beginners; Stage 1 in the Youth Sailing Scheme and Level 1 in the National Sailing Scheme are the courses for complete beginners. They are two day courses and teach you all the basics that you will need to get afloat safely.

You could also undertake these courses in the warmer climates at locations like the Mediterranean and Caribbean. Many of the activity holiday specialists run the RYA courses and welcome beginners. Your holiday company should be able to provide you with more information as to what is available and remember to look out for the RYA tick of approval.

[Search for an RYA recognised training centre here](#)



What you might need

When starting out you will require minimal kit as the RYA Training Centre that you choose will provide all the safety kit and clothing that you require.

We would recommend some sailing gloves which can be purchased from most chandlers for as little as £15.00. Sun cream and sun glasses are also advisable accessories for venturing out on the water. Once you have found a training centre that you like, it is worthwhile speaking to them before making any purchase.

As you progress you may want to think about purchasing your own sailing kit such as a wet suit or dry suit, boots, rash vest and buoyancy aid. Your instructor will be well qualified to offer advice and it will depend greatly upon what sort of sailing you plan to do, at what time of year and the location.

Before buying your own dinghy it is worthwhile talking to your local sailing club or RYA training centre to see what is suitable for your requirements. You can pick up absolute bargains and could be afloat for as little as £200.00. On the other hand you could quite easily pay over £10k for a new performance racing dinghy!

Activity: Dinghies



Find a club

Once you have started sailing it is worthwhile joining a local club, most sailing clubs offer a good range of social and sailing events. Indeed, many of the clubs have fantastic facilities and welcome beginners to the sport. You may be able to rent a variety of different craft from your club on a daily basis, which provides a very cost effective way to sail without the capital commitment of buying your own boat.

If you do decide to buy a boat then it is worthwhile checking with your chosen club as to which classes they promote and run regattas for. You will almost certainly be able to keep your boat at the club for a modest annual fee.

You can search for a local yacht club here. Once you have located a club that you feel may be suitable it is worth while paying them a visit. You can get a good feel for the club by looking at the notice board and asking to see their latest magazine or newsletter. Some clubs are more proactive than others in encouraging novices to sailing and organising sailing events.



Where to buy

If you decide to buy your own kit then you should speak to the RYA sea school you are training with as they sometimes offer discounts on many of the leading brands. Most of the chandleries in the marinas offer a good range of clothing and there are some excellent mail order websites with a comprehensive range.

If you are considering purchasing your own motor cruiser then you should attend the National Boat Shows (London Excel in January and Southampton in September).

Many of the major manufacturers will be there with experts to talk to you about your requirements. The boat shows are also an excellent place to view the best range of kit available and you will possibly be able to pick up some bargains. Speak to as many people as you can and do plenty of research before committing to large sums of money.

The classified ads in magazines, notice boards in yacht clubs and e-bay are all other good places to look.



Books, websites and magazines

The RYA is a leading publisher and seller of sailing books and training manuals. You do not need to look any further than our website for the book that you require. We would suggest purchasing our Start Sailing book which is a beginner's hand book.

Also worthwhile getting is the RYA National Sailing Scheme or Youth Sailing Scheme Syllabus and Logbook. Do not forget, RYA members receive good discounts on all our books. You can see the full range of books available on the RYA website.

Further information and knowledge can be acquired from the comprehensive range of magazines that are available from most newsagents and various websites. Some of the main ones are listed below.

Magazines

- ❖ Yachts and Yachting
- ❖ Dinghy Sailing Magazine

Websites

- ❖ rya.org.uk
- ❖ yachtsandyachting.com
- ❖ dinghysailingmagazine.co.uk
- ❖ ukdinghyracing.com
- ❖ dailysail.com



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