

---

**WHAT IS THE MARKET RATE FOR CREW?**

This, our 4<sup>th</sup> Oyster Crew Salary Survey report, is shared with both owners and crews and helps to put everyone in the same boat when it comes to those all-important salary discussions. The report shows actual crew earnings on the various Oyster models over the last 18 months. This year's survey was sent out to 71 Oyster crewed yachts between 50ft to 90ft running with between 1 and 4 crew. We received a 73% response rate so thank you to all who participated.

**LINKS IN THIS DOCUMENT:**

[ACTUAL SURVEYED SALARY RANGES IN EUROS](#)

[CREW SALARY STATISTICS AND TRENDS SINCE 2021](#)

[OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE MAKING OR ACCEPTING AN OFFER](#)

**OVERVIEW**

*Oyster crew salaries have risen 7% overall since 2021 with a higher rate of increase for Captains and couple teams on the 65ft+ yachts. Why is this?*

There has been a marked change over the last few years in how attitudes to crews and salaries have developed within the Oyster fleet and the wider superyacht (sail and motor) industry. Crews are now having to pay for and accumulate endless, expensive certifications just to get a foot in the door of what is now a highly competitive arena. We are also competing with the lure of the larger Superyacht salaries bringing high expectations to initial salary discussions. Lastly, Oyster Owners, especially those with extended cruising itineraries eg. Oyster World Rally, are very appreciative and aware of the key role that good, experienced crew can play in their long term yachting plans. They want to encourage and motivate the right crew and develop an excellent working relationship that lasts. For this to happen, careful consideration of the salary, holidays and benefits package is vital.

Oyster yachts certainly have many superyacht qualities but we also hold tightly onto our practical sailor roots when it comes to life on board and choosing our crews. Although each boat and program differs greatly with varied character fits, service and skills requirements, all our Oyster crews have one characteristic in common. In order to know you want to work on a sailing boat, you need to have experienced 'sailing' and you really have to like it! This one requirement narrows the field of candidates considerably and helps direct the right crew our way.

**There were 10 salary related questions:**

1. What Oyster model are you currently working on or have worked on within the last 18 months?
2. How is your yacht used (Private/Charter/Mix/Oyster World Rally)?
3. What is/was your role on board?
4. How many professional crew does the yacht run with?
5. Did you sign an agreement/employment contract?
6. Is/was your contract MLC compliant?
7. What was your agreed salary per month?
8. Did you receive additional benefits on top of your salary? Eg. Charter Tips; Health insurance; Time off, End of year bonus?
9. What has been your longest time on board one yacht?
10. What is your gender? (Optional) – to measure equality of salaries

**ACTUAL SURVEYED SALARY RANGES IN EUROS**

The salary ranges for one role are sometimes very wide and depend on a number of factors including not only experience and qualifications but also holiday, benefits, itinerary, yacht use, crew skillsets required.

YACHT SIZE	POSITION	MONTHLY SALARIES IN €EUROS
<b>OYSTER 885 (27m)</b>	Captain/Engineer	5600 – 8000
<i>Usually runs with 3 or 4 crew (rarely 2) If 3 crew, the 3rd is a usually a Mate/Stew and Chef/Stew combination.</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> Mate or Mate/Stew	3000 – 4500
	Stew	3000 – 3750
	Chef or Chef/Stew	4500 – 5500
<b>OYSTER 82 / 825 (25m)</b>	Captain or Captain/Engineer	3500* – 6500
<i>Usually runs with 3 crew in a variety of roles</i>	Mate/Engineer or Deck/Stew	3000 - 5000
	Cook/Stew or Chef	3600 – 5500
<b>OYSTER 72/725/745 (23m)</b>	Captain/Engineer	4000 – 6400
<i>72/725 are ideal for a permanent Crew Couple. Additional crew for charter/daywork.</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	3200 - 5250
<i>745 is usually running with 3 crew</i>	Mate on 745	3500 - 4000
<b>OYSTER 625/66/655/675 (20m)</b>	Captain/Engineer	3750 - 5800
<i>Runs with sole Captain/Engineer or a Couple</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	3500 - 4000
<b>OYSTER 495 – 595 (15/18m)</b>	Captain/Engineer	3750 – 5000
<i>Runs with sole Captain/Engineer or from 575+ a Couple team or 2 crew.</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	3000 – 3500
<i>*Black Asterisk signifies an unusually low salary for this role on this size yacht – this can be down to several factors: less experience, light use of the yacht or more than the 4 weeks standard holiday.</i>		

<b>Freelance Teaching or Delivery Captains</b>	for new owners on all sized yachts	250-300 per day
<b>Freelance Chefs</b>		200 – 250 per day
<b>Freelance Delivery Captains</b>		250 – 350 per day
<b>Freelance Crew</b>	From deckie to Yachtmaster qualified Mate	120 – 200 per day

---

**CREW SALARY STATISTICS AND TRENDS SINCE 2021:**

- The top of the salary ranges in all roles on Oysters have increased on average by 12 % since 2021.
- 80% of Oyster crew surveyed were paid in Euros (plus 13% in UK Pound Sterling / 7% in US Dollars).
- US employers tend to pay higher crew salaries than the rest of the world. This also continues to raise the salary expectations of crews worldwide.
- 6% of crews still have no kind of written employment agreement in place. This is a disappointing figure to see especially with the information that is out there now to ensure there are solid agreements/understandings between crews and owners.
- Those with employment agreements included a minimum of 4 weeks annual leave, food allowance, comprehensive global health insurance cover, travel expenses.
- In the main, base salaries did not vary much between privately owned and charter yachts. Crews talk about losing out on tips and base salaries needing to compensate but this depends on the private itinerary whether it is like for like and as busy as a charter yacht or a relaxed private program with little use.
- 87% of crews had medical insurance covered by the owner.
- 31% of respondents have an end of contract / end of year bonus / end of world rally bonus. (doubled since 2022)
- Salaries for Male and Female crews in the same roles on board the various models of Oyster Yachts show equal compensation. There has also been a steady increase in females applying for mainly deck roles and aiming for the Captain or Engineer career path.
- Financial incentives are still working to keep crews motivated and producing great results. Crews with very busy charter itineraries and demanding owner trips keep up the momentum when rewarded well for their hard work. The offers of annual bonuses and financial contribution towards crew training courses work well to keep crews on side and seem to be on the increase.
- We see a huge variation in the Cook/Chefs' salary ranges. These depend on whether the owner wants more casual home-cooking on his/her 80+ft yacht or a 5-star quality chef.
- Looking at salaries for the different genders in the same role on the same model yacht (mainly Mates, Captains and Chefs), it remains equal in the Oyster world when you take into account previous experience, additional charter tips, annual bonuses and paid time off.
- Charter gratuities can be anything between 5% and 15% of the charter cost but please be aware *these are and will always be at the charter guest's discretion*. They should be regarded as a bonus not an expectation.
- Thanks to MLC 2006, yacht owners are far more aware of crew welfare and adhering to industry standards when it comes to hiring crew. Bear in mind that the US doesn't recognize the MLC certification but owners are using the guidelines.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE MAKING OR ACCEPTING AN OFFER:**

1. **Previous experience** – The lower end of the salary scale is geared towards crew with less experience, less sea miles and minimum qualifications. The top end of the scale includes more experienced crews with higher qualifications. There will be other crews who have not completed the survey who will be outside of these salary scales.
2. **Time off and paid holidays** - The standard contractual offer is 4 week paid holiday per year according to MLC. In the wider superyacht industry, there has been a trend towards maintaining the crew work/life balance and it is now more common for crews to receive up to 60 days a year to achieve this and continuity of crew on board. It is also worth noting here that time off is different to paid holiday for crew. If the boat is safe in a marina with no guests planned to visit, there should be opportunities for crew to take the odd weekend off as we do in the shorebased world to recharge our batteries. *For the Oyster World Rally, please contact us for more information on how to deal with days off and annual holidays during the circumnavigation.*
3. **Annual bonus** – Sometimes a month's salary bonus and/or pay review at year end is part of the offer. There are yachts with an incredibly demanding schedule whose owners are very aware of the pressure that crew are under during the seasons and reward them accordingly for their hard work. In the case of the World Rally or

---

circumnavigation, a clear, encouraging payment structure included in the initial agreement plus end of trip bonus is a great crew motivator and helps crews to commit.

4. **Medical Insurance** – With the MLC 2006 guidelines becoming a standard for more and more Seafarer Employment Agreements, it is usual for the employer to cover the crew's medical insurance whether the crew find their own or the employer provides it. NB. The US does not recognize MLC but nevertheless it is a good set of guidelines to follow when employing crew.
5. **Food Allowance** – It is usual for the employer to allocate a budget for crew's food allowance when owners and guests are not on board. This is roughly around 15 - 20 Euros each per day but depends on the location of the yacht and local standard of living costs. *Please note that this allowance is never added to a salary, it is just part of the boat's budgeting to ensure that crew are not dining out on boat credit cards each day!*
6. **Flight allowance** – Depending on where home is and location of yacht, many owners cover 1 or more return flights for crew per year.
7. **Car allowance** – If the yacht is based in a remote location some owners will pay for a rental car for boat related journeys.
8. **Further training courses** – As another crew incentive, and depending on itinerary, owners may allow time off for crew to update their sailing certificates, others will also pay for the cost of the training and flights to do the courses. Some owners may pay for further training (even if not applicable to their own yacht size) to keep their crews happy and progressing their careers.
9. **Itinerary** – Salaries can also be dependent on the itinerary of your yacht. An adventurous charter yacht that needs very experienced crew, the itinerary/required skillset may dictate higher salaries the average. Whereas a yacht that the owner uses twice a year and is taken out of the water for the winters will likely be a lesser salary for the crews and possibly only a seasonal role.
10. **Voluntary Crews** - Those yachts cruising to far flung places for round the world family adventures (eg. Oyster World Rally) or some yacht deliveries, tend to attract voluntary crews. These crews may be willing to work for expenses only and will assist with the daily chores on board in return for the exciting sailing adventures. These range from lifelong leisure sailors who are retired from corporate lives to young, eager, green sailors looking for the experience and mileage with a view to a paid position after a few months. Depending on the yachts owner's own sailing abilities, will dictate the need for professional paid crew or volunteers. It is key to remember that accepting a voluntary crew on board, it can sometimes be harder to outline expectations of what work they must do. Much easier sometimes to employ the crew and have clear guidelines/rules!
11. **Charter Tips** - When negotiating the crew salary for a very busy private yacht, it is an idea to consider what crew may receive in tips were it a busy charter yacht. *Gratuities are always discretionary* but to give an idea of potential earnings: Eg. On an 82ft Oyster with 3 crew, each crew member could receive around 3,500 Euros per week in tips to split between 3 crew (around 10% of the cost of the charter).
12. **Crew Management companies** – For an owner, using a crew management company really helps to take the pressure off potential crew/employer disputes, contract drafting, pay roll and up to date crew employment procedures. From the crew's perspective, they have peace of mind of a legal Employment Agreement, regular salary payments, a clear channel and procedure for any dispute that may arise - in short it is a secure employment structure that historically was lacking in the yachting industry.