

OYSTER CREW SALARY SURVEY 2026

Crew Compensation Report for the Oyster Fleet

(Published December 2025)



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1. INTRODUCTION

Your crew salary discussions have just become easier!

The Oyster Crew Salary Survey is published annually to provide owners, Captains and crews with a benchmark of current compensation levels across the Oyster fleet. This 2025 edition reflects current industry conditions, recruitment trends, and crew-retention expectations.

Salary data remains expressed in Euros (€) per month, representing base salary only. Additional benefits—such as charter tips, bonuses, travel allowances, medical coverage, and leave structure—are not included, as these vary by vessel and contract.

This year's survey was sent out to 141 crew members working on Oysters between 50ft to 90ft running with between 1 and 4 crew. We received a 71% response rate so thank you to all who participated. We asked the following 10 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/Private and 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 a Crew agreement/Employment contract? Yes / No
 6. What was your agreed salary per month?
 7. What benefits (apart from food and board) are in addition to your salary?
[eg. Charter Tips / Medical insurance / Flights home / Time off / End of year or rally bonus. Annual pay increase]
 8. How many years of professional yachting experience do you have?
 9. What has been your longest time working for one employer on yachts?
 10. What is your gender? (Optional) – to measure equality of salaries
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2. MARKET TRENDS SINCE 2024

Oyster salaries: Insights from 2025 recruitment industry sources show that although the global crew market has become more competitive, Oyster yacht owners continue to offer attractive and market-aligned compensation, particularly on 70ft+ models.

Across all Oyster models, 2025 salaries have moderately increased compared to 2024, with upward pressure clearly visible in:

- Captain/Engineer and couple team packages for vessels over 80ft
- Skilled Chefs with fine-dining or high-volume charter experience
- Skilled Stews with high profile superyacht/hospitality experience

Oyster yacht ownership: “Carpe Diem”

Not so long ago, our 50 – 65ft Oysters were mainly purchased by experienced sailors who captained their own yacht. The market has been changing for the buyers of our Oysters over the last 5 years. The Oyster World Rally, as well as attracting experienced sailor/owners, has also been a goal for owners relatively new to sailing who realise they can ‘seize the day’ and learn through their adventuring; that sailing around the world *is* an accessible dream. This has led to a demand for more highly experienced Captains and Crew which subsequently increased the average of Captain’s salaries on the smaller yachts.

Attitudes to crewing: “Why are crew so expensive these days, aren’t they basically on holiday?”

We have also noticed dramatic changes regarding attitudes (from crews and owners) and the types of crew needed within the Oyster fleet. Gone are the days of highly experienced sailors asking for expenses only for that opportunity to sail on an Oyster! Almost gone are the days when yacht owners think it is just one big holiday for the crew! 😊 This is now most certainly and officially **an established and respected professional career path** for many crews that choose the world of sailing and superyachts.

Competitive Positioning:

Oyster yachts remain highly desirable placements for crew due to:

- The Oyster brand’s strong reputation for looking after the owners and crews.
- Stable owner profiles and owners who generally love to sail their yachts!
- High-quality living conditions onboard
- Clear career-progression pathways

Salary levels reflect this positioning, often sitting mid-to-high within the global sailing-yacht employment market for this size range.

Influences on Salary Variation: Crew pay can vary based on:

- Whether the vessel is private, charter, or mixed-use.
- Seasonal intensity and guest frequency
- Certifications held (STCW, ENG1, Yachtmaster Ocean, culinary qualifications)
- Engineering credentials (AEC, MEOL, Y4/Y3 equivalents)
- Experience - Offshore passages, regatta participation, or remote/adventurous/hi latitude cruising.
- Multi-role responsibilities
- Exceptional salaries—especially for Captains on sub-60ft yachts—are typically linked to number of years on board, higher experience/knowledge and ability to teach owners. Sometimes simply it is down to the generosity of the owner!

3. SALARY TABLES FOR 2025

All values represent monthly base pay in Euros (€).

Ranges reflect typical minimum–maximum amounts reported for the 2025 season across various currencies.

OYSTER 885	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 3 or 4 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	5,500 – 8,000
	Chef or Chef/Stew	4,000 – 6,750
	Deck / Stew	2,750 – 4,000
	Mate or Mate / Stew	3,250 – 4,500

OYSTER 825 / OYSTER 82	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 2 or 3 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	4,500 – 7,800
	Chef / Stew	3,500 – 5,000
	Deck / Steward	3,000 – 4,000
	Mate	3,250 – 4,500

OYSTER 745 / 72 / 725	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 2 or 3 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	4,100 – 7,100
	Chef / Deck / Stew	3,800 – 5,000
	Deck / Stew	2,800 – 3,000

OYSTER 675 / 655 / 625	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 2 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	4,700 – 6,500
	Chef / Mate	3,500 – 4,500

OYSTER 54 / 55 / 56 / 565 / 595	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 1 or 2 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	3,500 – 6,000 (€7,500+ noted as unusual exception)
	1 st Mate (for sailing owners)	6,000
	Cook or Chef / Deck / Stew	2,500 – 5,170

OYSTER 495	Position	Typical Monthly Salary (€)
Runs with 1 or 2 professional crew	Captain / Engineer	2,300 – 3,500
	Chef / Deck / Stew	2,000 – 2,500

Freelance Positions:	Daily rate (€)
Teaching Captains for new owners / Delivery Captains	250 – 350
Chef	200 – 300
General Crew - From Deckhand to Yachtmaster qualified Mate	120 – 200

4. 2025 CREW SALARY STATISTICS:

- The top salary ranges in all roles on Oysters have increased on average by 12 % since March 2024. This is consistent with the previous salary surveys since 2021.
- 79% of Oyster crew surveyed were paid in Euros (plus 11% in UK Pound Sterling / 9% in US Dollars) – again this is fairly consistent with previous surveys.
- 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.
- 97% of crews surveyed had a written Seafarer Employment Agreement in place. This demonstrates the increased awareness and understanding of the need for solid crew contracts. 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.
- 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.
- 93% of crews had medical insurance covered by the owner.
- 40% of respondents have an end of contract / end of year / end of world rally bonus. (10% increase since March 2024) - 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.
- 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.
- 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 yacht or a 5-star quality chef.
- 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.

5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE MAKING OR ACCEPTING AN OFFER:

1. **Previous experience** – The lower end of the salary scales shown in the above tables 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.

2. **Time off and paid holidays** – The standard contractual offer is 4 week paid holiday per year according to Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006). 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/End of contract 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 more of an industry standard for Seafarer Employment Agreements, it is now accepted that the employer 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 not usually 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 are also dependent on the itinerary and crew skillsets required. An adventurous charter yacht in high latitudes may need very experienced crew with particular skills (ski guide/dive expert/ice climbing). 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.

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 yacht 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 and clearer sometimes to employ the crew and have clear guidelines/rules!

11. **Charter Tips** – When negotiating the crew salary for busy private yachts, it is an idea to consider what crew may receive in tips were it a busy charter yacht. ***Please remember that tips are always discretionary and are not written into a charter contract.*** However, a likely tip is around 10 – 15% of the cost of the charter, split between the crew members.

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.

CONTACT OYSTER CREW:

For any further information or advice regarding crew salaries or placements, please contact Charlie Durham crew@oysteryachts.com or call +34 619147056

