

8 tips for surviving your first winter on a houseboat!



The first question people ask when you tell them you live on a boat: Is it not extremely cold in the winter? Personally, I prefer the winter to the summer, with the lovely crisp mornings (I'm a bit of an early bird) and cosy nights in front of the fire. However, for the winter to be enjoyable its important we stay organised and I've put together a few pointers to help guide newbies to winters aboard.

- 1. Put a hot water bottle in your bed and re-fill it each evening.** This is a great solution for keeping your bedroom dry and warm, particularly if you're like me and have the stove at the other end of the boat.
- 2. Keep your water hot.** Whether you use your stove, engine or a separate boiler system make sure your water is being heated at least once per day (December to February) to prevent it freezing and bursting your pipes.
- 3. Keep the stove going:** We keep ours on all day during the coldest winter months, using just a few bits of coal during the day, with it turned right down. Then when you get in, put a small piece of wood on top of the coal and open it up. This really helps keep the boat warm and dry. You can even leave a window or two open to help with condensation.
- 4. Don't move if the canals frozen:** If the canal freezes its best to stay put, the ice is likely to damage your boats blacking, along with others around you.
- 5. Moor smart:** When mooring remember you could be waking up to the coldest frost of the year with ice all around you. Make sure you have good, secure access to your boat with facilities close by.
- 6. Run your engine for at least 15 minutes before moving:** this gives it time to warm up an get the oil pressure up before putting it under load. This is well worth doing all year round but most important during the colder months.
- 7. Get a cast iron casserole dish:** I believe living on a houseboat and slow cooking go hand in hand. You can pick one up for as little as £25 and cook lovely winter warming dishes on your stove to come home to. This will use little energy, especially during the winter when the stove will most likely be on all day.
- 8. Get a Dressing Gown!** Above all don't go for looks go for warmth with your winter clothing. Having a good set of warm clothing in case anything does go wrong with your heating system, is invaluable during the colder months.

Hope this is useful and please do drop us a line if you have any further suggestions!

hello@boatersyard.com