



6

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Anchorage on the Turkish coast

General

The Mediterranean is more of a cruising area than one for making passages. Bits of land and islands obstruct direct passages and most yachts will plan cruises and passages around and between the different countries depending on time and inclination. I detail just three of the main passages between the western and eastern end of the Mediterranean. These are very generalised passages and variations on this theme and other passages can be put together on an ad hoc basis from other sources.

Note This chapter is briefer than the others as it is the only 'sea' in a book about ocean passages. It is included because it is the joining link between ocean passages to the E and W and because many yachts cruise the Mediterranean before setting off on an ocean passage.

Weather and sea

PREVAILING WINDS

In the Mediterranean most of the prevailing winds in the summer are sea breezes. There are a number of special cases and a few interruptions from depressions passing over Europe or unseasonably through the Mediterranean, but for most observations the sea breeze prevails and can be relied

upon for over 50% of the time for most places and for up to 75% of the time in a few places during the summer months.

The following should be noted in relation to the sea breeze:

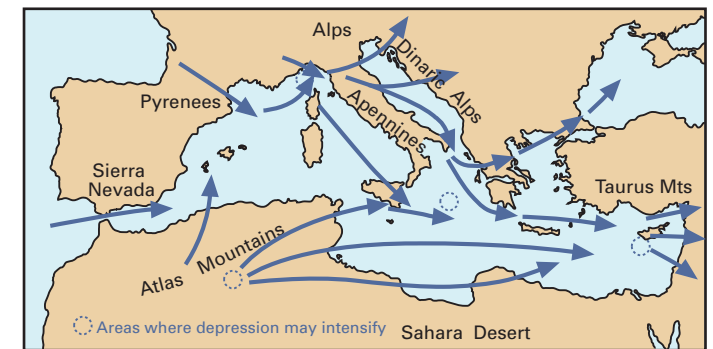
1. The relatively high temperatures of the Mediterranean mean that sea breezes are not the gentle zephyrs encountered in more temperate climates. In many places the temperature differences generate winds up to Force 5–6 and can reach up to 50 miles off the coast.
2. There is a fairly accurate wind clock for the sea breeze. As the land warms up in the morning the sea breeze will begin to blow at 1100–1200 local time at around Force 2–3. Usually within an hour the wind will get up to Force 4–6 and will blow through the afternoon until early evening. The wind will die off fairly quickly around 1900–2000 local time. The abruptness of the change is linked to the air temperatures and geography of a region. In general the higher the temperature, the more abrupt the transition between morning calm and the onset of the full force of the sea breeze. The terrain affects the sea breeze according to altitude: low-lying plains or gentle S-facing slopes will heat up more quickly than mountain ranges with valleys in shadow for much of the day and so generate greater pressure differences and stronger winds.

3. The direction the coast faces will affect the sea breeze clock. In general S-facing coasts will have an earlier sea breeze than N-facing coasts. Likewise, E-facing coasts will have an earlier sea breeze than W-facing coasts.

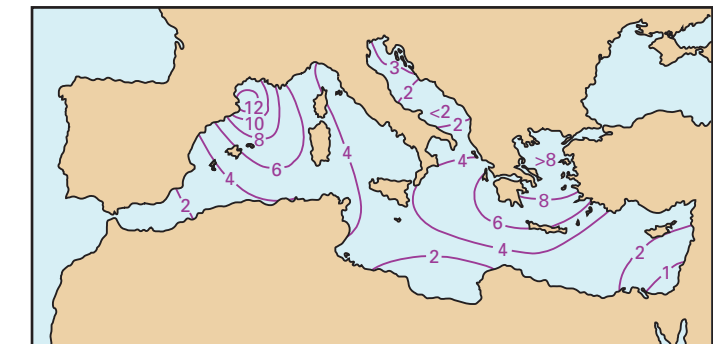
The *meltemi* is a special case in that it is the prevailing wind over the Aegean caused by pressure differences at a macro level. It blows throughout most of the summer, starting gently in June and ending around the end of September. It can blow at Force 6–7 and although there may be a slight thermal component lessening its strength in the late evening, it usually blows night and day for anything from 2–3 days up to a week or more before there is a brief respite for a few days. It is caused by a pressure gradient between the Azores high and the monsoon low over Pakistan. Only in the Aegean is the pressure gradient pronounced enough to produce these constant summer winds. From the Dardanelles it blows from the NE, curving down through the Aegean to blow from the N and NW before curving to blow from the W around Rhodes.

GALES

Between summer and winter there is a marked difference in weather patterns. In the summer pressure gradients are relatively stable and there are few cyclonic changes. In the winter nearly all weather is from disturbed cyclonic patterns, with depressions entering the Mediterranean and directly causing bad weather or passing over Europe or North Africa and indirectly causing bad weather. The following points are general observations on gales in the Mediterranean.

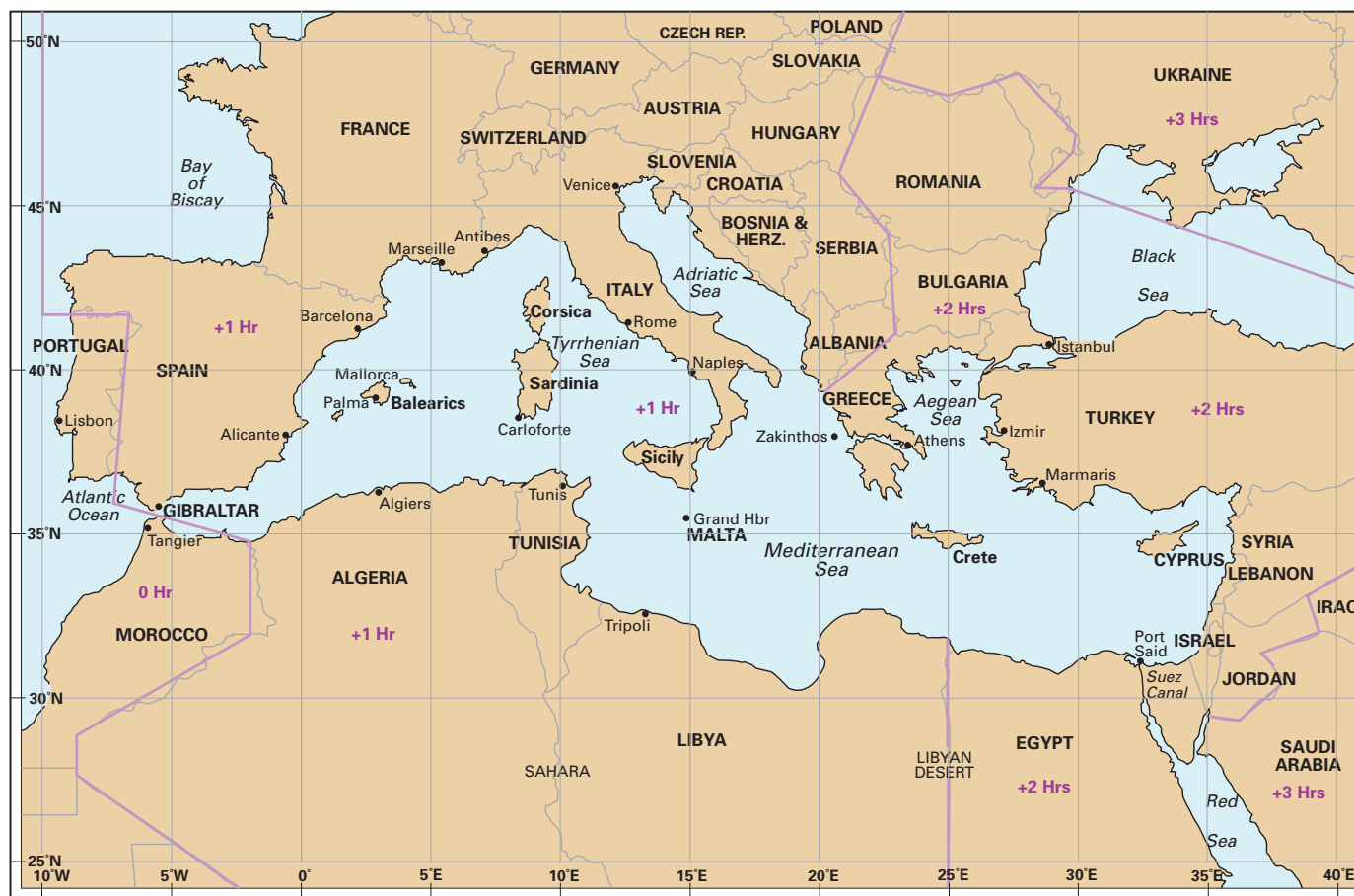


PRINCIPAL DEPRESSION TRACKS INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN

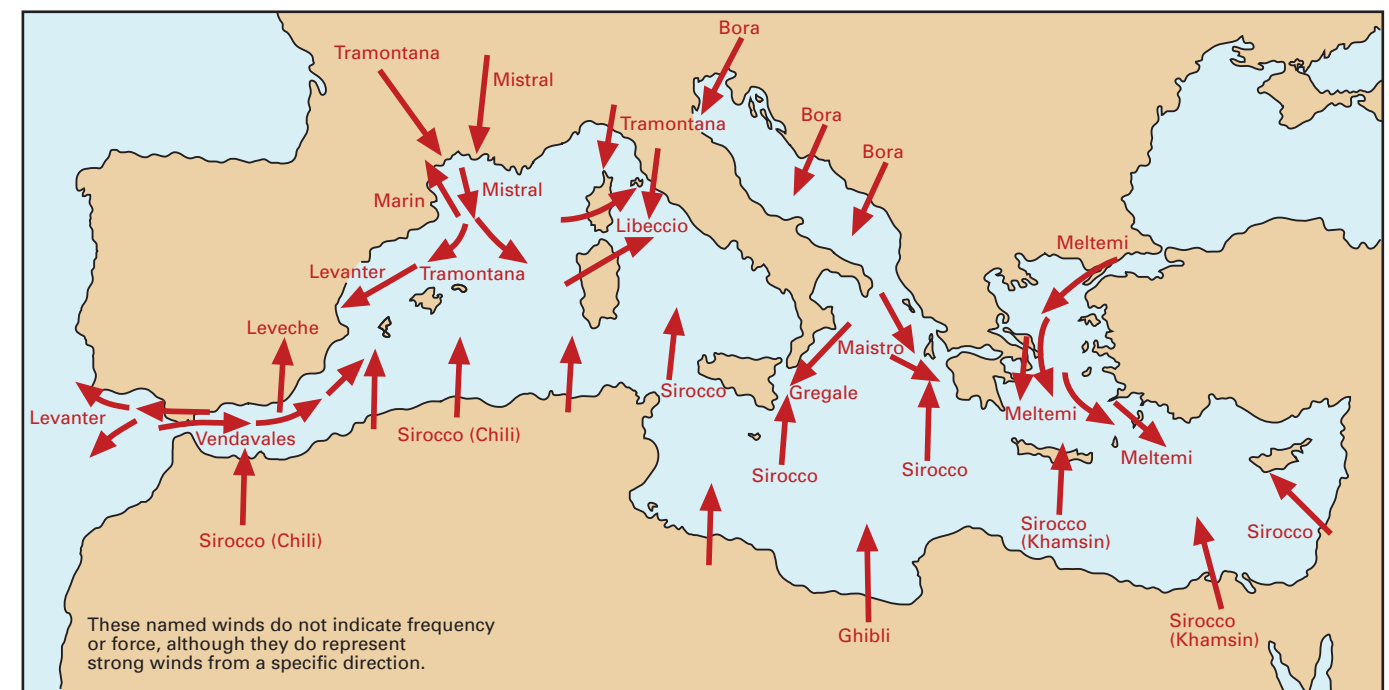


PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF GALES IN THE WINTER

1. Depressions from the Atlantic tend to enter the Mediterranean directly through the Strait of Gibraltar, drop down from Europe into the Golfe du Lion or Gulf of Genoa, or swing up from North Africa across the east coast of Tunisia. Because depressions passing through the Mediterranean follow an erratic path at an erratic speed compared to the fairly predictable tracks and plodding speed of depressions across the



MEDITERRANEAN SEA COUNTRIES, PORTS AND TIME DIFFERENCES ON GMT



NAMED WINDS

Atlantic, they are difficult to track and weather forecasts cannot be relied upon to give accurate predictions of the speed and direction of a depression.

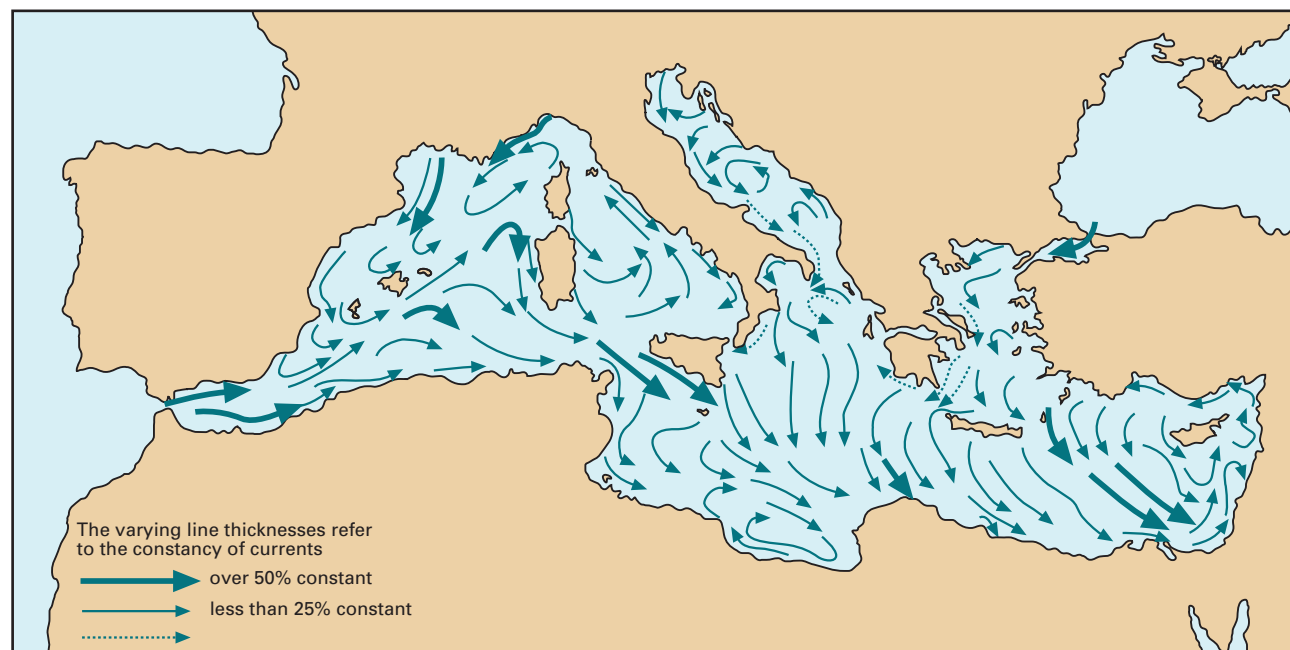
2. There are a number of places where depressions tend to linger and deepen. The most well known are the Gulf of Genoa, around the Atlas Mountains, in the Ionian, and to a lesser extent in the SE Mediterranean off Cyprus.
3. A lot of gale force winds are the indirect result of depressions passing over Europe from mountain gap or coastal slope winds and are not from actual depressions in the Mediterranean itself.
4. *Mountain gap winds* These winds result when cold air from a depression passing across Europe is bottled up behind mountains until it finds a gap to escape through. The classic examples are the *mistral* and *tramontana*. These result from a depression passing across central France and cold air finding an escape route down the Rhône valley between the Massif Central and the Alps (producing the *mistral*) or through the Toulouse Gap between the Massif Central and the Pyrenees (producing the *tramontana*). In the winter these two winds are much to be feared, blowing out of a clear sky with little warning and often reaching gale force and sometimes Force 10–11. The *levanter* blowing in the Strait of Gibraltar is another example of a mountain gap wind.
5. *Coastal slope winds* These result when cold air from an unstable airstream falls off plateaux and coastal slopes onto a warm sea. The classic example is the *bora* in the Adriatic which can blow at gale force and up to Force 10–11 out of a clear sky with little warning.

6. *Desert winds* These blow off the hot desert when a depression passes through the Mediterranean. The classic example is the *sirocco* which blows off the North African coast. It is dry and dusty but is more often sultry and humid by the time it passes over the sea and reaches Europe. It will often blow at gale force, though rarely more.

CURRENTS

Although there are virtually no tides of consequence in most of the Mediterranean, there is a complex hydrology at work. Evaporation from the Mediterranean is the driving force for the roughly anticlockwise circulation of water around the basin. Rivers and rainfall replace around 50% of this loss and the 50% deficit flows in through the Strait of Gibraltar. This surface current is predominantly into the Strait, with a reverse current of heavier salty water flowing out on the sea bottom. There is a tidal angle on all this although the upshot is more of a lessening of the inflowing surface current rather than a reversing of it.

For more information see *Gibraltar*.



SURFACE CURRENTS - JULY

Routes and passages

The passages shown are for either westabout or eastabout routes. The prevailing westerlies in the Mediterranean would appear to favour the eastabout routes although in practice actual weather patterns vary so much that it makes little difference. It is important to remember weather changes a great deal more quickly in the Mediterranean than over larger oceans and it can very quickly go from a gentle Force 3 to a sustained Force 7 in under an hour. Yachts in a hurry can motor through the night in settled conditions when it is often calm. Yachts intent on sailing will need to have good light airs performance for some parts of the sea and good heavy weather sails for other parts.

Yachts tend to make these longer passages in the summer months, with June to September the most settled months in weather terms. However, the large number of possible ports of refuge mean that passages can be taken in any season, though in the winter months you cannot rely on good weather for the whole passage from one end to the other.

Yachts heading across the Atlantic will usually want to be in Spain or Gibraltar by August or September so that the passage to the Canaries is undertaken in relatively settled weather. Yachts arriving later at the Strait of Gibraltar (in October and November) will have to watch the weather more carefully for the passage to the Canaries.

Yachts heading down the Red Sea should aim to be going through the Suez Canal in July–August so they can get down the Red Sea and catch the tail-end of the SW monsoon to cross the Arabian Sea or drop down to the Seychelles.

Incoming yachts from the Atlantic and Red Sea will usually be entering the Mediterranean in the spring, so they have the whole settled summer season in front of them.

*** MED1 Port Said to Malta and on to Gibraltar**

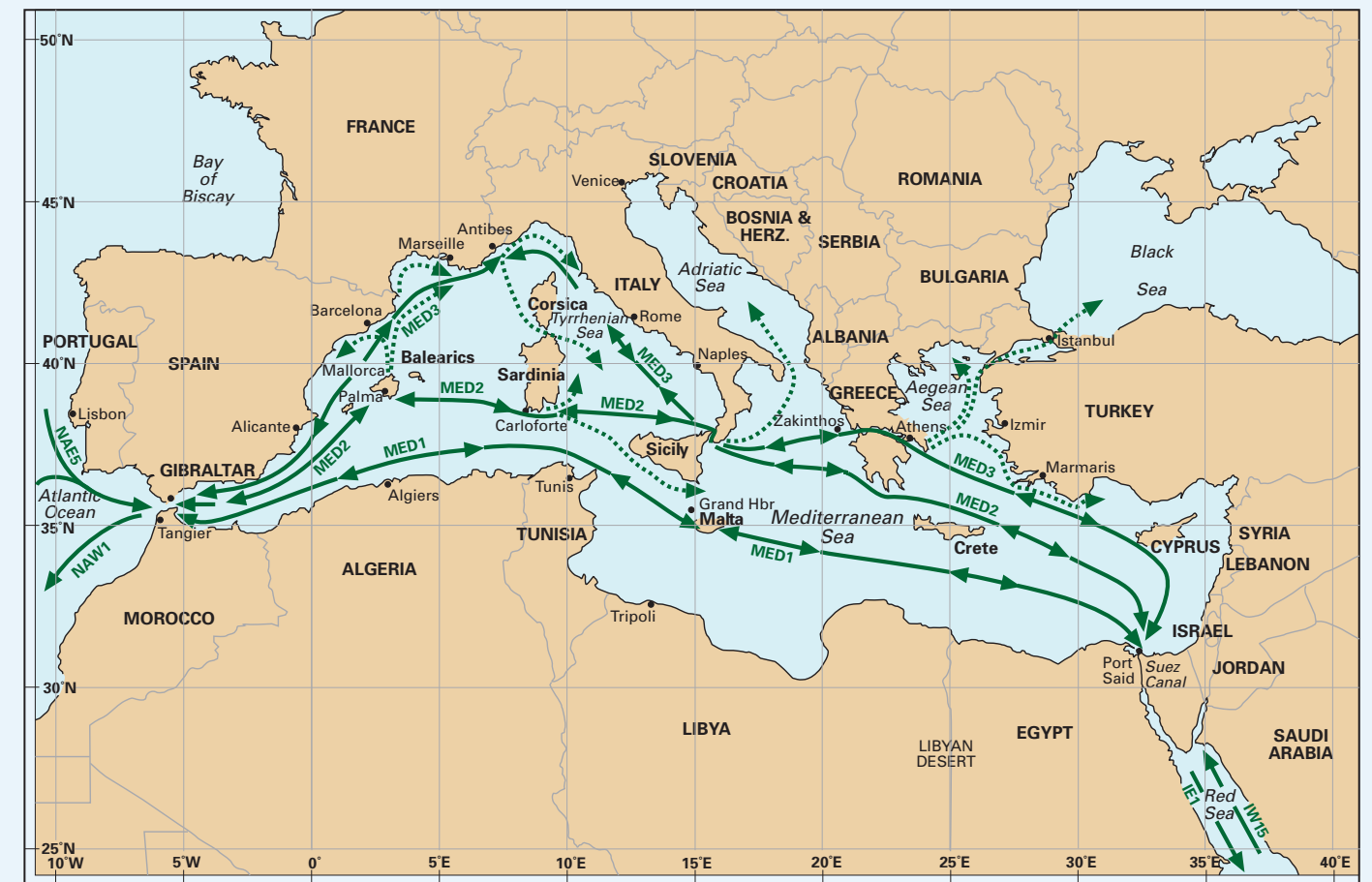
Port Said to Malta 1,025M

Malta to Gibraltar 995M

Best time May to September

This is the quickest route through the Mediterranean between Port Said and Gibraltar. Only a few large yachts use this route, usually taking on fuel at Malta before continuing E or W. In the early and late season and in the winter you will probably have to divert to somewhere for shelter, so ports of refuge should be planned in advance. Care needs to be taken to keep a reasonable distance off the Moroccan and Algerian coasts (suggested 25M) so you are not mistaken for a smuggling vessel. You can close the coast at Tunisia without problems. There are numerous variations on this route depending on weather and time. Some care is needed of the large amount of shipping using this direct route and a good watch should be kept at all times.

See *NAW1



MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES

MED2 Gibraltar to the Balearics, Sardinia, Strait of Messina, Ionian/Crete and Port Said (or reverse route)

Gibraltar to Palma (Mallorca) 455M
 Palma to Carloforte (Sardinia) 280M
 Carloforte to Strait of Messina 345M
 Strait of Messina to Zakynthos (Greece) 280M
 Zakynthos to Khania (Crete) 210M
 Khania to Port Said 500M

Best time May to October

This route is reasonably direct between Gibraltar and Port Said, but with shorter passages between ports. In the summer months of July and August, when most Europeans go on holiday en masse, some of the harbours, especially in Spain and Italy, will be crowded, and you should either book ahead or plan alternatives if there is not a secure anchorage nearby. As above, there are numerous variations on this route.

MED3 Gibraltar around the coasts of Spain, France, Italy, Strait of Messina, Corinth Canal and Aegean to Cyprus and Port Said (or reverse route)

Gibraltar to Barcelona (Spain) 430M
 Barcelona to Antibes (France) 260M
 Antibes to Livorno (Italy) 135M
 Livorno to Strait of Messina 405M
 Strait of Messina to Corinth Canal 385M
 Corinth Canal to Marmaris (Turkey) 285M
 Marmaris to Larnaca (Cyprus) 315M
 Larnaca to Port Said 230M

Best time May to October

This route allows for a lot of sightseeing along the way and is really just an illustration on which there are a large number of variations. In general weather in the western Mediterranean settles down more slowly than weather in the eastern Mediterranean, so those at the eastern end can start the season earlier.

COUNTRY AND PORT GUIDE

EU COUNTRIES

The relevant EU countries in this sea area are: Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus and Malta.

For EU regulations pertaining to the Mediterranean EU countries see Chapter 1 North Atlantic.

Port information

Information is eastabout from Gibraltar to Port Said. For most entries no tidal range is given as it is negligible for most of the Mediterranean.

See Chapter 1 North Atlantic for country information.

 **Gibraltar**

General Gibraltar is somewhere you stop at when on passage in or out of the Mediterranean as it has good communications, good provisioning and good chandlers. It is also used as a base by some yachts to cruise the nearby Spanish and Moroccan coasts.

Formalities All yachts can complete formalities from one of the marinas.

Telecom IDD +350. GSM network. Internet cafés.

Currency Pound sterling (GBP) or Gibraltar pound. Major credit cards widely accepted. ATMs ashore.

GIBRALTAR PORT

Tidal range 0.9m

Navigation

The approach is straightforward although care is needed of the large amount of shipping in the vicinity and of numerous ferries and supply boats. Report to Waterport and then proceed to a berth or the anchorage. A night approach is possible though with all the lights ashore and afloat there is room for confusion.

There is currently no facility for yachts at anchor to clear into Gibraltar.

Yachts are not permitted to enter Marina Bay (or the fuel station) when the runway lights are flashing.

Berths

VHF Port authorities Ch 06, 12, 13, 14. Pilots Ch 16, 12, 14. Sheppards Marina Ch 68, 69, 71. Marina Bay Ch 71. Queensway Ch 71.

Ocean Village Marina Part of the Ocean Village waterside apartment development. It is likely that many berths will be for apartment owners. Limited visitors' berths. Max LOA 30m.

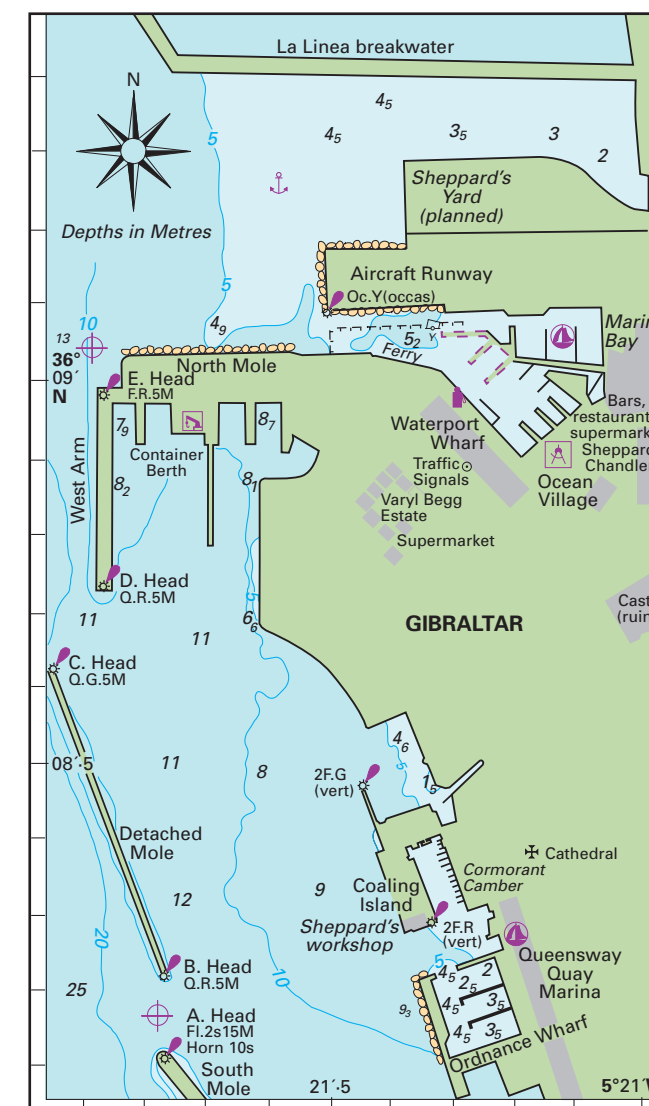
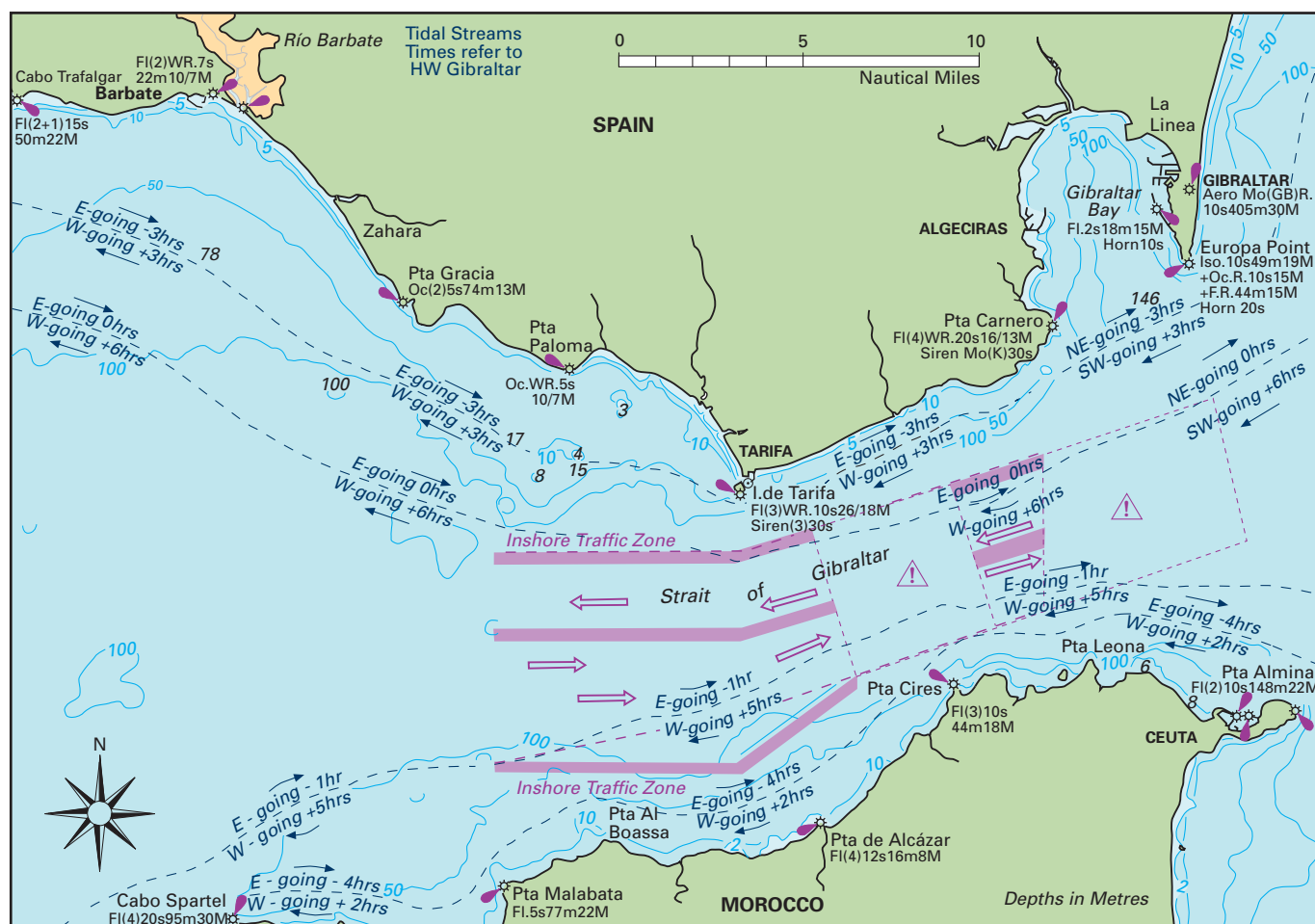
Resources

PILOTS AND GUIDES

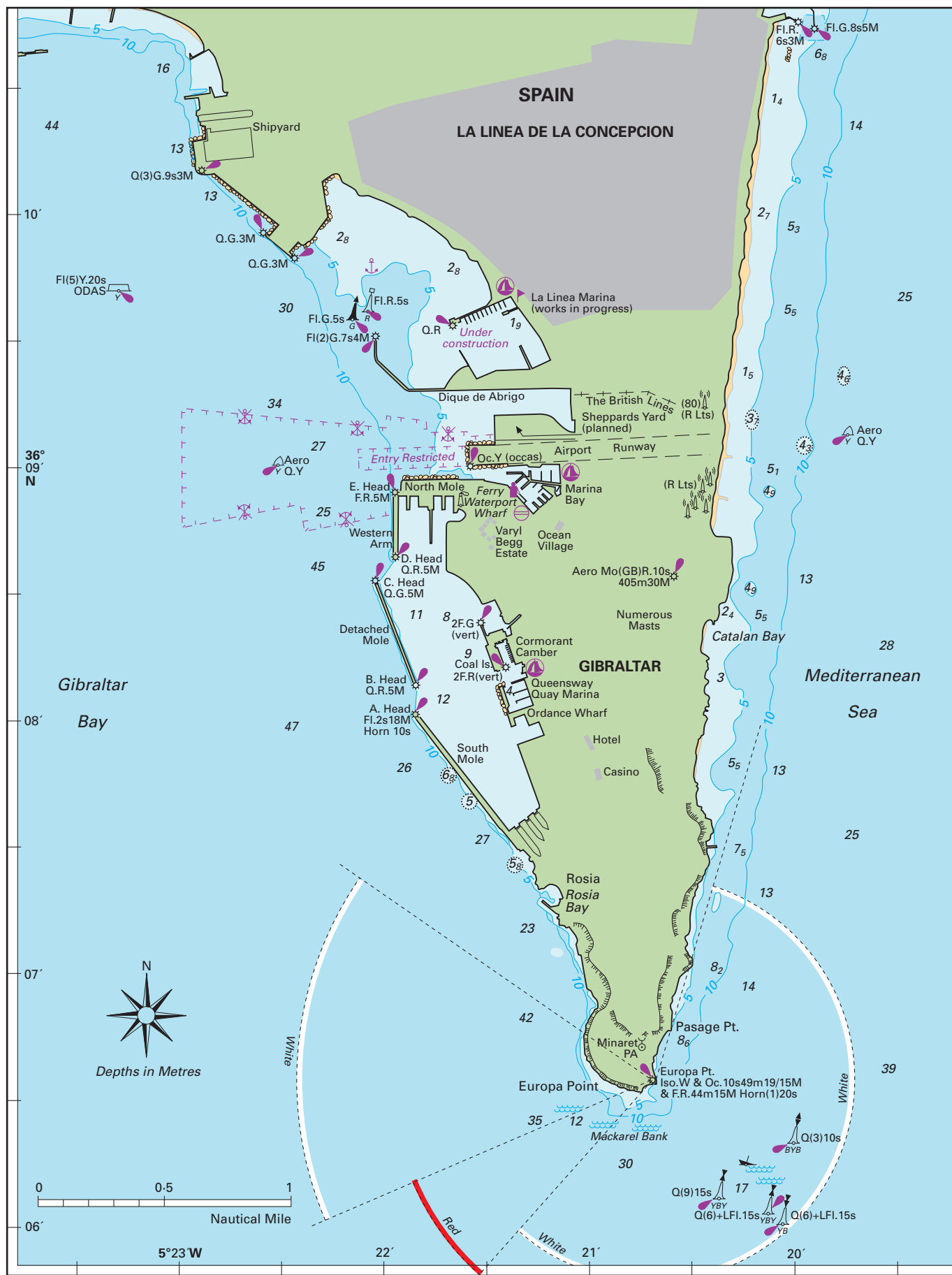
Imray Mediterranean Almanac Ed. Rod Heikell and Lucinda Michell (Imray) Biennial publication
Mediterranean Cruising Handbook Rod Heikell (Imray)
RYA Book of Mediterranean Cruising Rod Heikell (Adlard Coles Nautical)

SSB

Mediterranean net: 7085kHz at 0700 zulu



GIBRALTAR YACHT HARBOUR



Marina Bay
209 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 65m.
Depths min. 3-4m. Charge band 2.
www.marinabay.gi pieroffice@marinabay.gi

Queensway Quay Marina
150 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 50m.
Depths 4-7m. Charge band 2/3.
Email qqmarina@gibnet.gi

Call up one of the marinas for a berth. During the autumn exodus to the Canaries for the E to W Atlantic crossing the marinas are often full.

Anchorage

If anchoring in Gibraltar waters you are requested to obtain permission from the Port Captain. Anchoring near the runway is discouraged due to height restrictions, and yachts are advised to anchor N of La Linea breakwater (in Spanish waters). A new marina is under construction here and will be the logical alternative to berths in Gibraltar.

Facilities

Usual amenities. Fuel quay near Marina Bay. Good chandlers and most repairs afloat. Limited yard capacity. Reasonable shopping for provisions.

Remarks

Gibraltar is pretty much a traditional stop when entering or leaving the Med. It is a good place to provision for English specialities in the supermarkets here. Regular flights to the UK.



Morocco

Formalities Yachts must clear in at a port of entry. Somewhere like Marina Smir is used to dealing with yachts and is a good place to clear into. You may be checked by the coastguard who regularly patrols the coast to stop illegal smuggling of immigrants and kif (marijuana).

Telecom IDD +212. GSM network. Internet cafés in larger centres.

Currency Moroccan Dirham (Dh). Euros widely accepted. ATMs in larger centres.

MARINA SMIR

Navigation

Make the approach from seawards and don't stray too close to the coast.

Berths

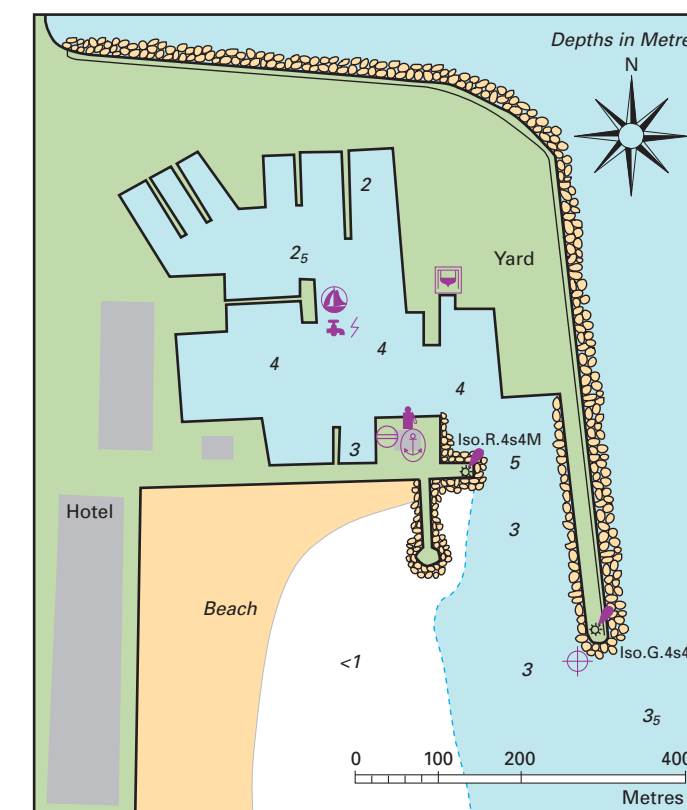
Marina Smir VHF Ch 09, 16.
450 berths. 100 visitors' berths. Max LOA 60m.
Charge band 3.

Facilities

Water and electricity. Fuel. 150-ton travel hoist. Some yacht repairs. Limited provisions and restaurants.

Remarks

Duty free port. Bus into town for shopping.





France

See Chapter 1 North Atlantic for country information.

ANTIBES

Navigation

No dangers in the approaches. La Garoupe lighthouse and Fort Carre easily recognised. Approach by night straightforward. Report to capitainerie for a berth.

Berths

VHF Ch 09 for marina (24/24) and IYCA. Port de Plaisance 1700 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 65m. Depths 2–7m. Charge band 3/4. IYCA 19 berths. LOA 70–165m. Depths 5–7m.

Anchorage

Possible in Anse de la Salis just S of the port in settled weather. Open S and E.

Facilities

Usual amenities. Fuel quay. All yacht repairs. Provisions, restaurants and bars.

Remarks

A popular port although it is usually possible to find a berth.



VAUBAN-ANTIBES (France)
 43°35'4N 07°08'0E

Currency Euro. Major credit cards widely accepted. ATMs everywhere.



Italy

Formalities EU formalities. Registration documents and insurance papers must be carried.

Telecom IDD code +39. GSM network. Internet cafés in larger centres.



BONIFACIO STRAIT

BONIFACIO STRAIT

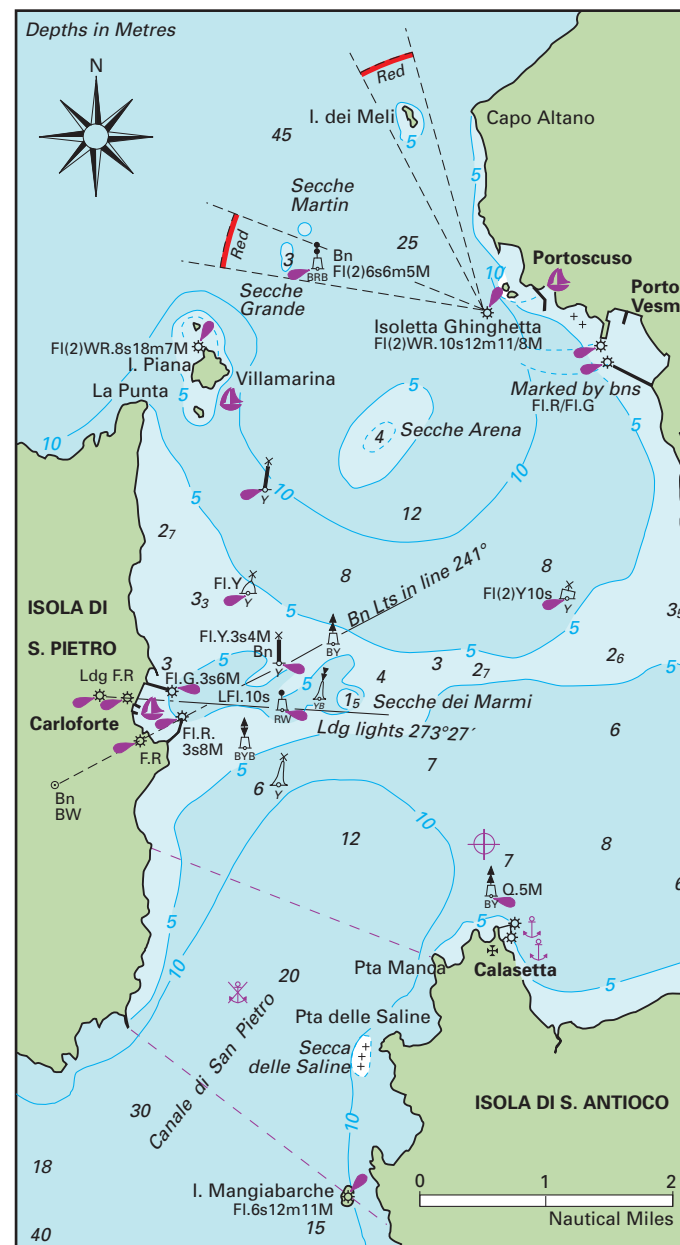
The middle route through the Western Mediterranean uses the Bonifacio Strait to get E or W. There are lots of good anchorages, harbours and marinas on either side of the strait and there are also good yacht facilities.

See Imray *Mediterranean Almanac* or more detailed pilots for pilotage information.

CARLOFORTE (Sardinia)

Navigation

Situated on the E side of Isola di S. Pietro on the SW corner of Sardinia. Care needed of shoal water in the channel between Isola di S. Pietro and Sardinia. Night approach possible with care.



SAN PIETRO CHANNEL (CANALE DI SAN PIETRO) AND APPROACHES TO CARLOFORTE (Sardinia)
 39°07'22N 08°22'00E WGS84

Berths

VHF Ch 11, 16 for port authorities. Ch 09 for Marina Sifredi.

Marine Sifredi 160 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 50m. Depths 2–5m. Charge band 3.

www.marinesifredi.it

Marine Service Carloforte 100 berths. Max LOA 40m. Depths 2–6m. Charge band 3.

Facilities

Some amenities on pontoon berths. Fuel quay in fishing harbour. Limited repairs. Provisions and restaurants and bars ashore.

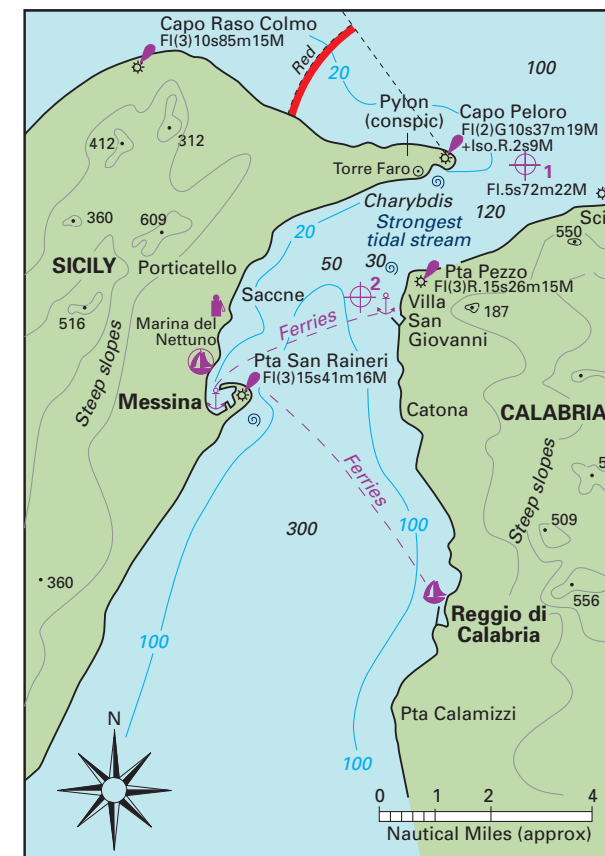
Remarks

Convivial and useful port for MED2 route.

STRAIT OF MESSINA

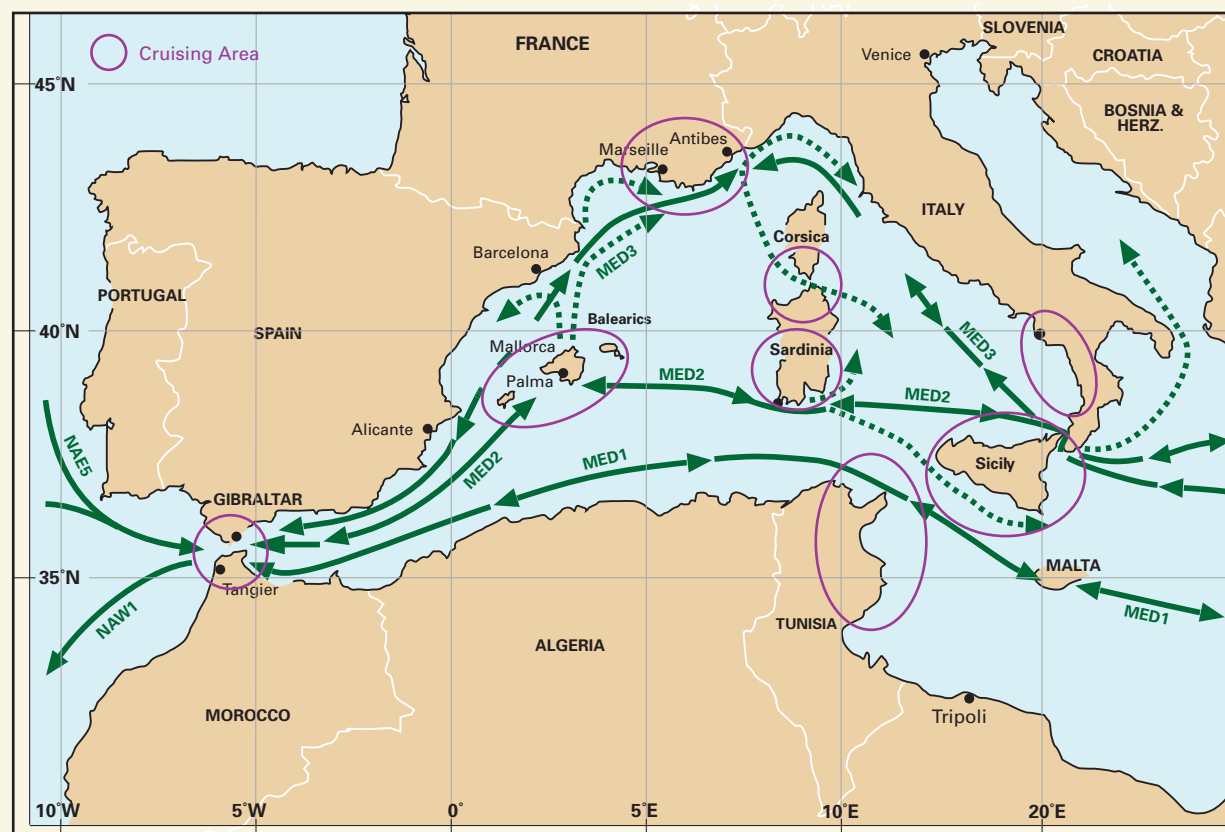
Yachts heading to or from the Eastern Mediterranean will often choose to transit the Strait of Messina to explore cruising areas like the west coast of Italy, northern Sardinia and Corsica or to explore northern Sicily rather than taking the route around southern Sicily. The Strait of Messina is used by a lot of commercial shipping and also has a lot of ferries running back and forth between the mainland and Sicily, so some care is needed and the transit is best made by day.

See Imray *Mediterranean Almanac* or more detailed pilots for pilotage information.



STRAIT OF MESSINA

Western Mediterranean



WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

It's handy to take a line down through Italy and then on through Sicily and Malta to Libya which roughly divides the Mediterranean into west and east. It's as much a cultural line as a geographical one, splitting Italy down the middle and enclosing the Orthodox Balkans and Greece and the Muslim countries of Turkey around to Libya in an eastern bloc and Roman Catholic Spain, France and Italy and the Maghreb into the western bloc. Like all dividing lines it can obscure as much as it reveals, sailing-wise as well as culturally, but it's a convenient start for looking at the western Mediterranean.

The western Mediterranean to Italy is the more sophisticated cousin of the eastern Mediterranean with a lot more marinas and fewer anchorages. You will likely have to make more use of marinas and harbours and this needs a bit of planning in relation to costs, some of the marinas are very expensive, and to ensure you get a berth in popular marinas in the high season when it can get very busy. With planning you can anchor in quite a few places in settled weather, but you will need to research options carefully and study the charts and pilots with an eye to where you can anchor and where you might run to if the weather turns.

On the plus side there are a lot of marinas around the coast of mainland Europe and the off-lying islands and not all of them will be over-budget. There are seven very different countries around the western basin ranging from the Latin-based countries of Europe, Italy, France and Spain, to the countries of the Maghreb, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. At the western end there is also the enclave of Gibraltar, traditionally a stop-over into and out of the Mediterranean. The mix of cultures, cuisine, architecture and history are all interwoven in complex ways and from the Islamic influences in Spain to the French influence on the Maghreb there is much to do and see ashore.

Cruising strategies

Cruising yachts coming from the eastern Mediterranean will often leave in the late summer and potter through parts of the western Mediterranean until



Gibraltar. The 'Rock' looking up from Marina Bay

they get to somewhere around the Strait of Gibraltar. The fast route will take you north or south of Sicily and then up to the bottom of Sardinia where you can wait for a weather window to hop across to the Balearics and then on along the Spanish coast to around Gibraltar. A slower route might head up the west coast of Italy to around Naples or Rome before heading off across to the Strait of Bonifacio and then on across to the Balearics and Spain. Alternatively yachts can head north either around the west coast of Italy or more usually across to Corsica and then around the French coast to Spain and onwards.

Yachts coming into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic will usually be going to spend a season or more here and there is a mixed bag of routes they can take. Some will stay in the western Mediterranean and others will cruise through to the eastern Mediterranean to spend the winter there. In Spain popular areas to spend the winter are along the Costa del Sol, Costa Brava and around the Balearics. In France cruisers will usually opt to spend the winter in the Côte d'Azur or Riviera where winter temperatures are milder than around the coast of Languedoc Roussillon and Provence. In Italy most cruisers opt for somewhere around Rome or south of Rome or in Sardinia or Sicily. Across the water Malta is popular and an increasing number of cruisers are wintering in Tunisia where marinas like El Kantaoui and Monastir are popular.

Seasons and winds

The western Mediterranean has settled summer weather and quite boisterous winters and the normal sailing season is from April through to October. In the summer once the Azores high and the relatively stationary high over the Tyrrhenian Sea in Italy are established winds are predominantly thermal winds with quite strong sea breezes blowing onto the land in the afternoon. Pressure variations over Europe and northern Africa will also have an influence, but by and large sea breezes and light land breezes at night dominate the weather patterns.

In the spring and autumn depressions moving over the Mediterranean and over Europe and northern Africa can bring unsettled weather and gales, though normally these will be over in three days or so.



Collioure in France

In the winter any passages through the western Mediterranean need to be planned carefully as there can be severe weather with winds up to storm force. Several areas are renowned for strong gales and big seas with the Strait of Gibraltar, Golfe de Lion and the Gulf of Genoa areas where special care must be taken.

Weather forecasts for the western Mediterranean are good with 5-day forecasts available over the internet from the various met offices around the basin and GRIB files available for up to seven days. Care needs to be taken interpreting GRIB files in the Mediterranean as the effects of large land areas influencing thermal winds and the erratic paths of depressions

through the sea or over the land make forecasting particularly difficult in the area. Shorter 48 hour forecasts are available on Navtex, VHF and SSB.

The Mediterranean has its own special climate and geographers refer to the Mediterranean climate as the region between the olive tree in the north and the large palm groves in the south. Temperatures in the summer are in the region of 22°–30°C range although heat waves are known where the temperature can get up over 40°C. Humidity is low compared to the Tropics which means the heat is dryer and easier on the body. Although temperatures are high, you are at comparatively high latitudes so in the summer you get



Etrusca Marina on the Tuscany coast in Italy



Ta' Xbiex on Malta Malta Tourist Board



Erice on Sicily

long evenings before the sun goes down. In the spring and autumn temperatures are less and in the winter there can be snow at sea level in some areas and it is colder than you might be led to believe. Look at some temperature charts for the winter when you are thinking of where to spend the winter.

Ashore

In the summer the western Mediterranean is a popular place for land-based tourists and in fact the first packaged tours were to the Spanish 'costas'. Everywhere you will find restaurants and bars of all types and prices. Local restaurants in Spain, France and Italy can provide

excellent value and you will often find there is a set menu, a *menu del dia*, *menu du jour* or *menu del giorno*, which can be excellent and budget beating. Many of the restaurants and bars in the tourist spots will close in the winter so if wintering over somewhere it's important to choose one that doesn't become a ghost town in the winter. Along the coast of North Africa there is less tourism than along the European coast, but still enough in Tunisia and Morocco to keep most happy.

Shopping is good all along the coast of Europe and you will have no difficulty in finding everything you want. There are also lots of local markets where fresh fruit and vegetables and other local produce will be found.

Provisioning for the Atlantic

Cruisers leaving the Mediterranean for an Atlantic crossing used to provision in Gibraltar where there were excellent supermarkets which catered for cruisers with stores like 'strong' flour for bread-making and Fray Bentos pies. In recent years Gibraltar has become less cruiser-orientated and along with others I think there are better places nearby to stock up for the crossing.

Try Almerimar where there is a good supermarket and chandlers within the marina and you can trundle the supermarket trolley to the boat. Ceuta has good supermarkets and local markets and is a duty free port

as well. After provisioning in one of these harbours you can still put in at Gibraltar for some last minute shopping or when the new marina at La Linea on the border with Gibraltar is complete this may be a better place to stop before the passage through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Atlantic.

Facilities

Yacht facilities are well developed all along the European coast and you will not have problems finding somewhere to leave it afloat or ashore. The caveat to this is that in some popular marinas and yards you will need to book ahead for a berth or hard standing space. You can also leave a boat or haul in Malta and Tunisia although again these have become popular of late and it would be wise to book ahead. Some marinas and yards are more favoured by the cruising community than others with places like Malta, southern and western Sardinia, Port Napoleon and nearby yards in Languedoc-Roussillon in France, and around Barcelona and Almerimar in Spain all popular. There are of course lots more places.

In the northern European countries and Malta you won't have any problems finding spares and getting specialist repairs done. Communications are also good from Spain, France and Italy with budget flights flying to many European airports where you can get onward long-haul flights.

Strait of Gibraltar

There is a constant surface current flowing into the Strait of Gibraltar from the Atlantic of between 1–2kn and this must be taken into account when calculating the duration, set and rate of the tidal streams. What it in effect means is that the overall tide/current equation is most favourable for a W to E passage and least favourable for an E to W passage.

The Strait of Gibraltar has in effect three tidal streams: N, middle and S. The rate and direction of these streams varies and times are based on HW Gibraltar. Gibraltar tide tables can be found in a number of publications, including the current edition of the *Imray Mediterranean Almanac*.

Northern stream

E-going -3 to +3hrs
W-going +3 to -3hrs

Middle stream

E-going HW to +6hrs
W-going -6hrs to HW

Southern stream

E-going -4 to +2hrs
W-going +2 to -4hrs

By playing the three different streams it is possible to get through the Strait even if you are not precisely on time for the favourable stream. The different streams can be recognised if there is any wind by the usual 'wind against tide' or 'wind with tide' sea conditions. Any yacht moving across the Strait of Gibraltar must remember that there is a large volume of commercial shipping both in and out of this narrow waterway and that large ships cannot alter course quickly or easily. The overall tidal stream strength and direction can also be altered by surface drift currents set up by strong winds blowing consistently from one direction for several days.

Note If in doubt one of the authors (RJH) usually sticks to the northern side of the Strait. Leaving the Strait this is always the best option, aiming to be off Punta Carnero approximately 1½ hours before the W-going stream and then sticking very tight in under the N side. Keep going to Tarifa and then continue due W for another 10M before attempting to cut across and head on a course for the Canaries or head up around the Spanish coast towards Cape Trafalgar.



Almerimar. A popular place for cruisers to gather before leaving for an Atlantic leg

Reading

Imray Mediterranean Almanac
Ed. Rod Heikell & Lucinda Michell (Imray) Biennial publication
Mediterranean Cruising Handbook
Rod Heikell (Imray)
Costas del Sol & Blanca (RCCPF/John Marchment (Imray)
Costas del Azahar, Dorada & Brava (RCCPF/John Marchment (Imray)
Islas Baleares (RCCPF/John Marchment (Imray)

Mediterranean France & Corsica
Rod Heikell (Imray)
Italian Waters Pilot Rod Heikell (Imray)
North Africa (RCCPF/Graham Hutt (Imray)

My gem

The French Theodore Zeldin (Harvill)



Savona on the Italian Riviera



Boatyard at Marina Baie des Anges in France



Malta

Formalities EU formalities. Registration documents and insurance papers must be carried. Yachts should head for the customs office at Msida Marina, Grand Harbour or Mgarr on Gozo to clear in.

Telecom IDD +356. GSM network. Internet cafés.

Currency Euro. Major credit cards widely accepted. ATMs everywhere.

GRAND HARBOUR AND MARSAMXETT

Navigation

From the distance it is difficult to identify what is where. The Hilton tower at St Julian's and St Paul's dome in Valletta show up well. A night approach can be made with care.

Berths

VHF Ch 09, 12, 16 for Valletta port control. Ch 09 for Msida Marina, Ch 13 for Grand Harbour Marina.

Msida Marina

700 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 18m. Depths 4-14m. Charge band 2/3.

Grand Harbour Marina

285 berths. Max LOA 85m. Depths 4-15m. www.cnmarinas.com

Anchorage

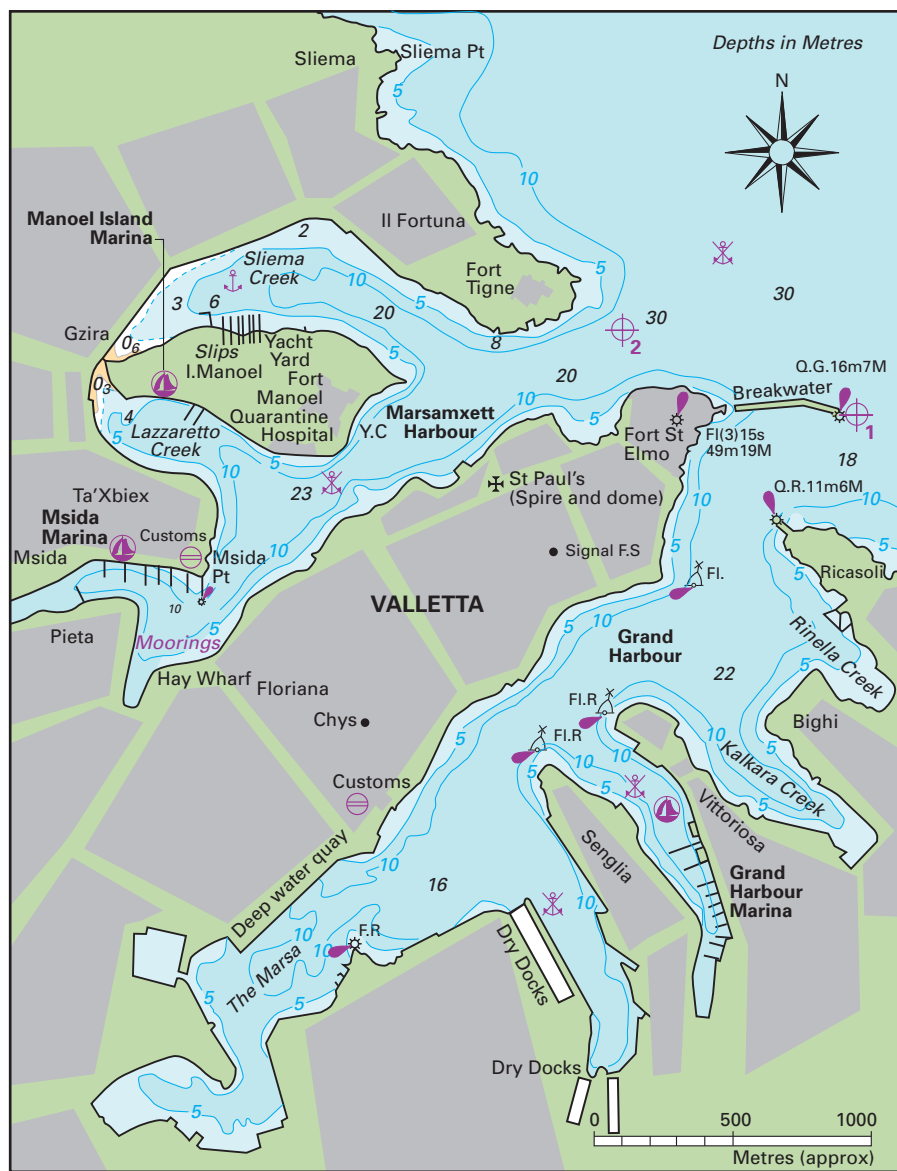
Limited space on N side of Manoel Island.

Facilities

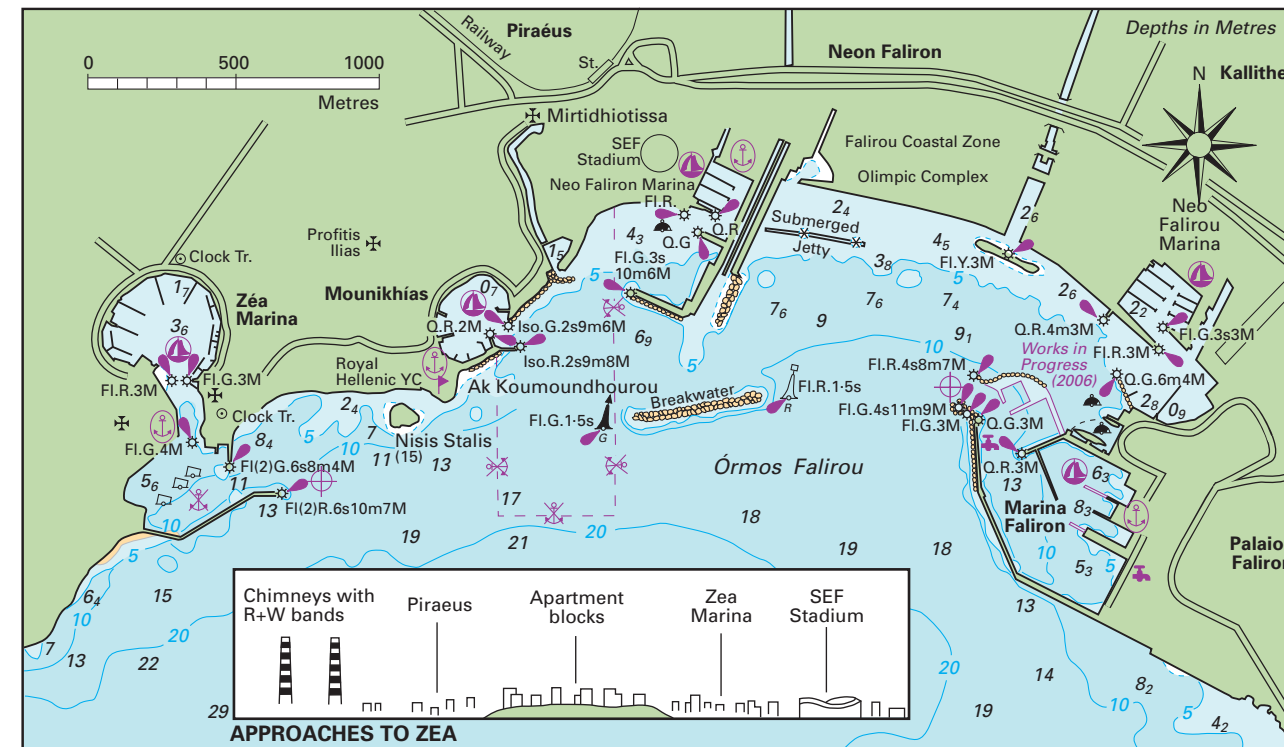
Usual amenities. Most yacht repairs and spares are readily available or can be ordered. Provisions and restaurants and bars.

Remarks

Popular wintering spot.



GRAND HARBOUR AND MARSAMXETT (Malta)
 1 35°54'17N 14°31'58E WGS84
 2 35°54'30N 14°30'98E WGS84



ORMOS FALIROU
 ZEa MARINA 37°55'93N 23°39'22E WGS84



Greece

Formalities EU formalities. Registration documents and insurance papers must be carried. Yachts should head for a port of entry and obtain a cruising log.

Telecom IDD +30. GSM network. Internet cafés common.

Currency Euro. Major credit cards widely accepted. ATMs everywhere.

LIMIN ZAKINTHOU (Zakinthos)

Navigation

Situated on E side of Zakinthos Island in the Ionian Sea. Approach straightforward by day or night. Care needed of large ferries entering and leaving.

Berths

On the yacht quay or on the N end of the town quay. Good shelter.

Anchorage

Sometimes possible in the SW corner.

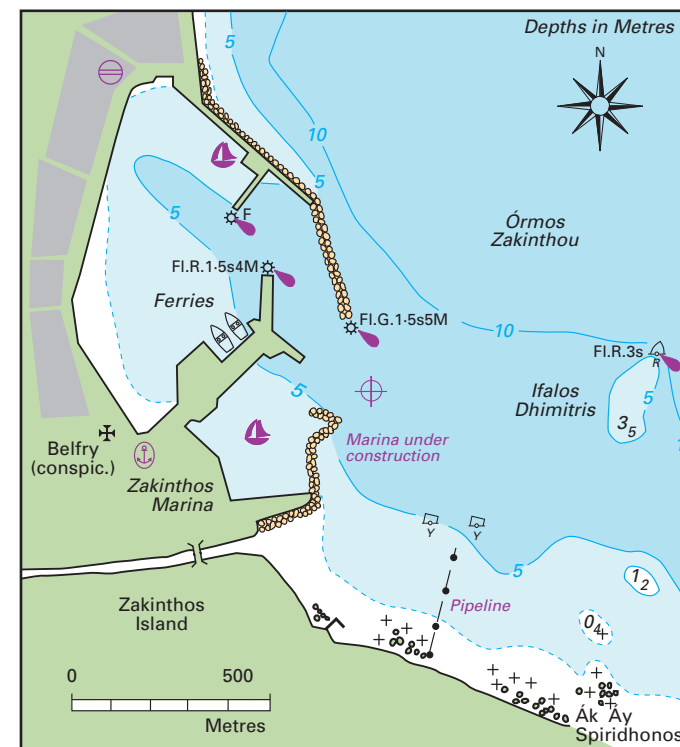
Facilities

Water. Fuel truck. Minor repairs. Provisions and restaurants and bars.

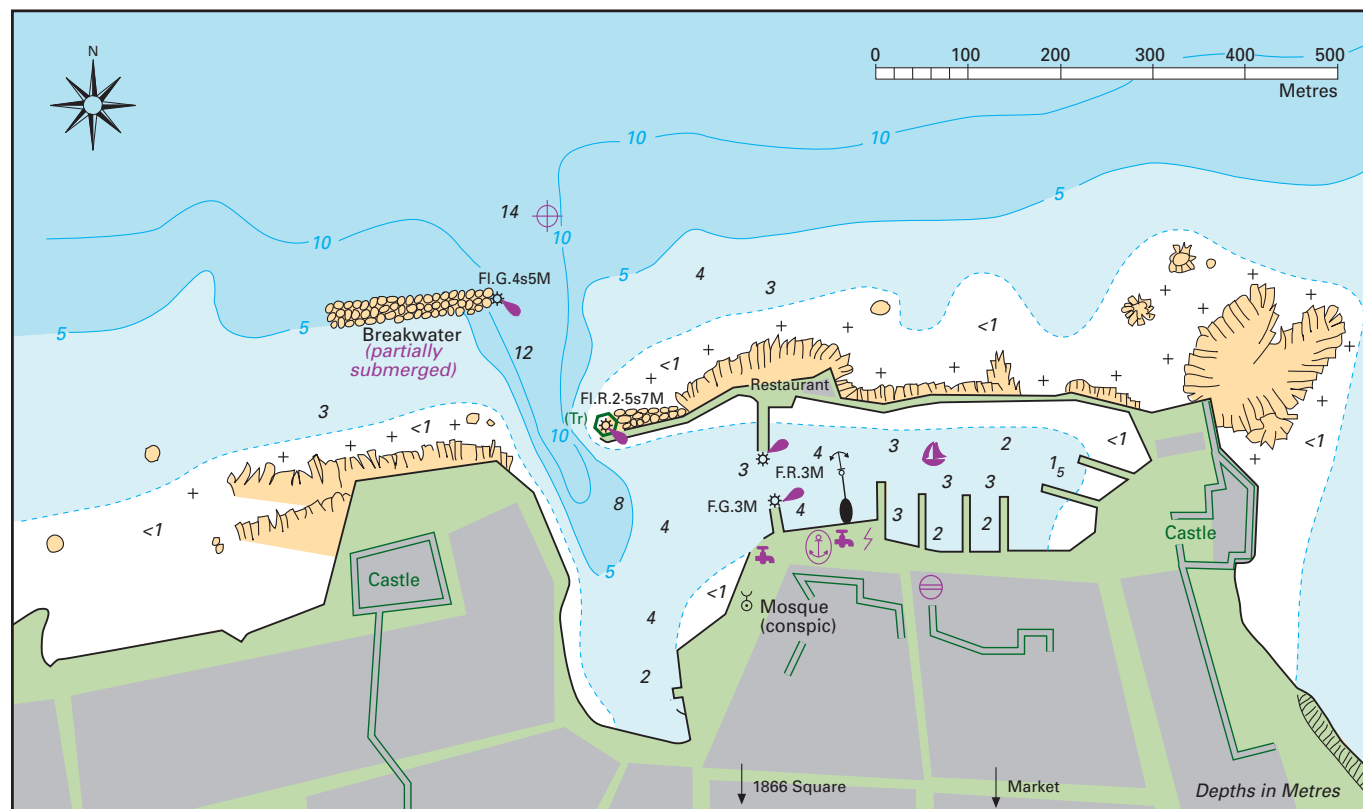
Remarks

Marina under construction on S side of harbour. Useful first port of call, with the option of heading through to the Corinth Canal or around the Peloponnese into the Aegean.

If you need to go to Athens for any reason it should be kept in mind that although there are numbers of marinas along the coast of Piraeus and the adjacent suburbs of Athens, these are all busy with Athens based boats and getting a berth is not always easy. It is best to try to book a berth before arriving. Zea Marina, Marina Faliron and Kalamaki



APPROACHES TO LIMIN ZAKINTHOU (Greece)
 37°46'69N 20°54'36E WGS84



KHANIA (Crete)
 35°31'35N 24°01'09E WGS84

Marina are the likely choices for a berth. One other option is to go to one of the nearby islands like Aigina or Poros and get one of the fast ferries into Piraeus.

See *Imray Mediterranean Almanac* or more detailed pilots for pilotage information.

Zea Marina www.medmarinas.com
 Faliron Marina www.faliro-marina.com

KHANIA (Crete)

Navigation

The city is easily identified. Care needed of the detached breakwater which is now 1m or less above water. Care needed with strong onshore winds which heap up big seas in the entrance.

Berths

Go stern or bows-to where shown. Good shelter although there can be a surge with onshore winds.

Facilities

Water. Fuel by mini-tanker. Minor repairs. Good shopping for provisions and restaurants nearby.

Remarks

Often used as a jumping-off point down to the Suez Canal if not going via Cyprus.



Turkey

Formalities Go first to a port of entry. Clear in with customs, health, harbourmaster and coastguard. A transit log valid for one year will be issued. Yachts can then cruise freely around the coast.

Telecom IDD +90. GSM network. Internet cafés.

Currency Yeni Turkish lira (YTL). Major credit cards widely accepted in larger centres. ATMs everywhere.

MARMARIS

Navigation

Marmaris is situated inside a large enclosed bay across from Rhodes. Approach straightforward by day and night. Yachts usually use Sark Bogazi, the E channel into the bay. A night approach is straightforward.

Berths

VHF Ch 06, 16 for Marmaris Marina (Port Marmaris)
 Ch 72, 73 for Marmaris Yacht Marine.
Marmaris Marina 700 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 40m. Depths 2–15m. Charge band 3.
Marmaris Yacht Marine 600 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 60m. Depths 1.5–8m. Charge band 2–3. You need to take a minibus to get into town (about 15 minutes). www.yachtmarin.com



APPROACHES TO MARMARIS
 36°47'.83N 28°15'.84E WGS84

Anchorage

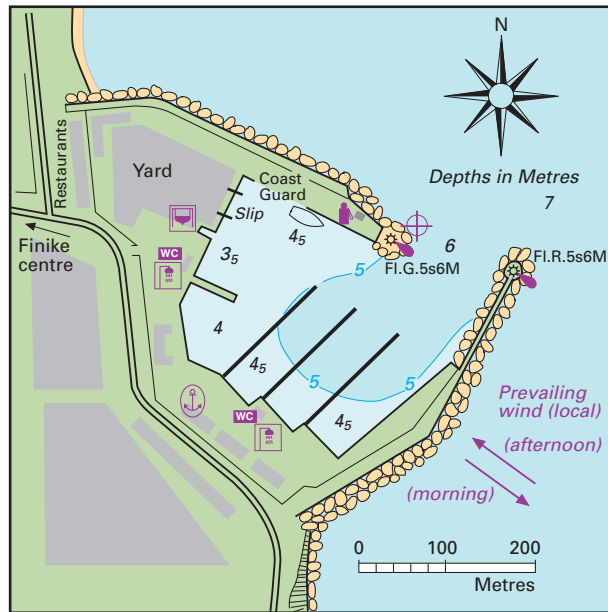
Off Marmaris Marina, around the NW side of the bay and off Pupa Yacht Hotel. The latter has the best shelter but is some distance from town.

Facilities

Usual amenities in marinas. Fuel quay. Most yacht repairs. Good shopping for provisions and restaurants and bars.

Remarks

Marmaris Marina is close to Marmaris town. Marmaris Yacht Marine is on the isthmus joining Nimara to the mainland in the SE corner of the bay.



SETUR FINIKE MARINA
 Ⓢ36°17'·69N 30°09'·11E WGS84

FINIKE

Navigation

The approach is straightforward and free of dangers. VHF Ch 73.

Berths

350 berths. Visitors berths. Depths 3-6m. Charge band 2. Call the marina to be allotted a berth.

Facilities

All the usual amenities. 80 ton travel hoist. Large hard-standing area. Provisions and restaurants.

Remarks

Popular marina to winter over. www.seturmarinas.com



Cyprus

Formalities Clear in with the authorities at Larnaca who are all close to the marina. Overtime charged at weekends and outside working hours.

Telecom IDD +357. GSM network. Internet cafés.

Currency Euro. Major credit cards accepted. ATMs.

LARNACA MARINA

Navigation

Give the reef and shoal water of Cape Kiti a wide berth. Difficult to identify exactly where the marina is until closer in.

Berths

Larnaca Marina VHF Ch 08. 350 berths. Visitors' berths. Max LOA 40m. Depths 1.5-5m. Charge band 2.

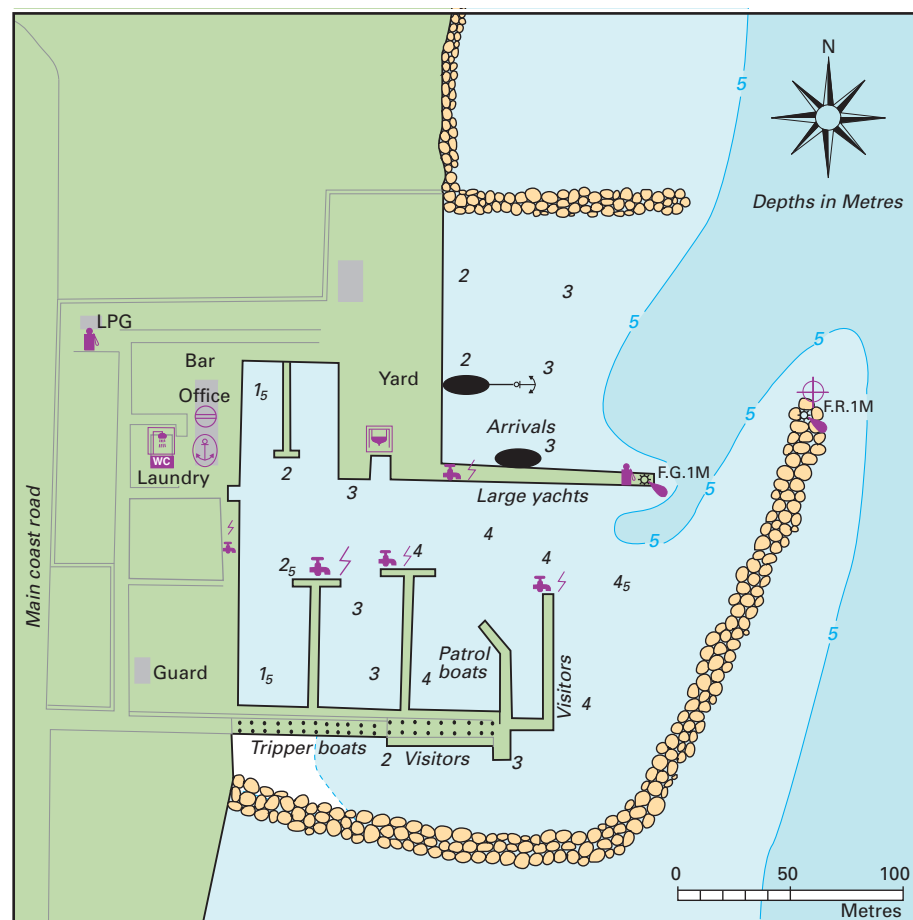
The marina is usually crowded and it can be difficult to find a berth although yachts are usually slotted in where possible.

Facilities

Water and electricity. Fuel quay. 40-ton travel hoist. Most yacht repairs. Provisions and restaurants.

Remarks

Good provisioning stop when heading down into the Red Sea.



LARNACA
 Ⓢ34°55'·1N 33°38'·6E



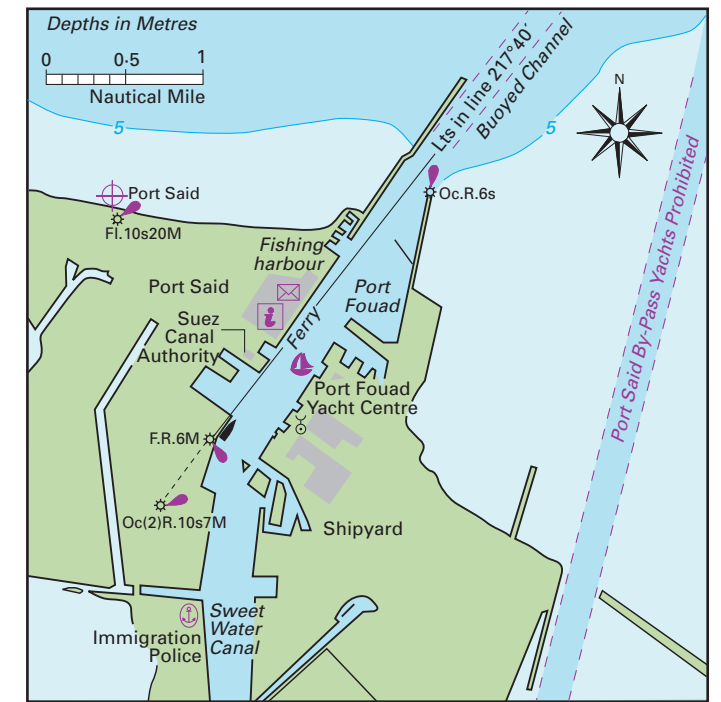
Egypt

General Egypt is one of the most liberalised of the Arab countries and on the whole the coast is safe to sail up as long as you steer clear of the disputed area on the Egypt/Sudan border. The main problems cruisers encounter here are the stultifying bureaucracy and the constant demands for baksheesh. Yachts tend to wend their way along the coast, stopping at just a few harbours where there are officials and for the rest of the time anchoring out in more remote places without officialdom intruding on things. There are a lot of wonderful anchorages among the reefs and some of the best diving in the world.

Formalities Yachts must clear in and out of every port. In most ports an agent will do this for you at an often quite substantial fee. If you elect to do it yourself, some baksheesh speeds things up. You need to see the health officer, harbourmaster, customs and immigration. In most anchorages you will not be bothered and many yachts elect just to cruise from anchorage to anchorage. At Suez you will need to engage an agent for the canal transit.

Telecom IDD code +20. GSM supported in towns and cities.

Currency Egyptian pound. Banks will exchange cash. ATMs in cities. Some larger establishments in the cities take major credit cards.



PORT SAID (Egypt)
 Ⓢ31°18'·1N 32°21'·5E

PORT SAID

Navigation

Numerous ships are always underway entering or leaving the canal and at anchor in the roadstead. Follow the buoyed channel into the harbour. Do not go outside the channel as the W breakwater is underwater for a considerable length. Night approach possible but not straightforward. VHF Ch 16 for port authorities. Often you will get a reply from an agent on this channel.

Berths

Stern-to in Port Fouad Yacht Centre. Good shelter although there is a lot of wash from the pilot boats and ships.

Facilities

Water. Fuel by arrangement. Limited yacht repairs. Provisions and restaurants.

Remarks

You need to come here either as the end-point of a transit through the Suez Canal or to arrange for a N to S transit. A lot of yachts use the Felix Agency to arrange a transit. www.felix-eg.com

Resources

PILOTS AND GUIDES

- Imray Mediterranean Almanac Ed. Rod Heikell and Lucinda Michell (Imray) Biennial publication
- Italian Waters Pilot Rod Heikell (Imray)
- Adriatic Pilot T & D Thompson (Imray)
- Greek Waters Pilot Rod Heikell (Imray)
- Turkish Waters & Cyprus Pilot Rod Heikell (Imray)
- North Africa RCCPF/Graham Hutt (Imray)

Eastern Mediterranean



EAST MEDITERRANEAN CRUISING ROUTES

Around the eastern basin there are 14 countries and a millennia of accumulated history and culture. All around the coast the vestiges of past civilizations can be seen, from the Phoenicians through the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Selçuks, Ottomans, and other Muslim nations as well as adventurers like the Venetians, Genoese, the French and the British. Visitors should make some effort to venture inland and not just touch on the coast.

Cruising-wise you have a lot more options for anchoring out and getting away from it all on this side of the Mediterranean. Between the archipelagos scattered around the coasts of Croatia and Greece and the much indented coastlines of Italy, Croatia, Greece and Turkey there are a lot of small harbours and anchorages and fewer marinas than in the western Mediterranean. The coast of the Levant from Syria to Egypt is a lot straighter with fewer safe harbours and good anchorages.

Cruising strategies

Yachts coming up from the Red Sea will usually potter up some of the Israeli coast or head directly across to Turkey. Southern Cyprus has only a couple of marinas which are notoriously hard to find a berth in and likewise Northern Cyprus also has little space for visiting yachts. Yachts cruise the Turkish coast and the Greek islands before heading west to Italy and the western Mediterranean before crossing the Atlantic.

Cruising folk often dally in this part of the world seduced by the easy day-sailing from one destination to the next and also by the relatively modern



Simi in the Dodecanese



Meganisi Island in the Ionian

western-orientated cultures that make it easy to refit, travel and fit into things ashore. Some never leave. There is a lot of cruising to be had here and you can easily spend a season in Turkey and then another season in Greece before heading up the Adriatic or dawdling around Italy.

EMYR The Eastern Mediterranean Yacht Rally is a cruise in company around the southeast corner of the Mediterranean taking just over a month. There is a feeder rally earlier from Istanbul. The rally usually starts mid-May in Kemer Marina in Turkey and visits Syria, Northern Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt depending on the political situation. It is a popular way to visit this part of the world and for yachts heading down the Red Sea in late July and August makes a convenient and very social start before going through Suez and onwards.
www.emyr.org

Seasons and winds

The normal sailing season here is from April through to October. The summer has a settled weather pattern that is predictable from year to year. In the spring and autumn

depressions move over the area or over the land masses to the north or south causing gales over the area. These are well forecast and there are safe anchorages and harbours everywhere.

In the summer the *meltemi* blows briskly down through the Aegean at anything from 15 to 30 knots. In the spring and autumn winds are generally less. Sea areas outside the Aegean are mostly subject to sea breezes in the summer which can be anything from a lazy 5–10 knots to brisker winds of 15–20 knots depending on the area.

Weather forecasts for the eastern Mediterranean are good with five day forecasts available over the internet from official met offices and other sources and GRIB files are available for up to seven days. Shorter range 48-hour forecasts are available on Navtex, VHF and SSB.

Temperatures in the summer are in the 25°–30°C range though unlike the Tropics the humidity is very low so it is a dry heat. Although the climate is benign you are in comparatively high latitudes so you get light until late into the evening and not the abrupt darkness early on



Meltemi blowing in the Aegean



of the Tropics. In the spring and autumn temperatures are less and in the winter temperatures drop to 10°–18°C except in the Adriatic where it can be a lot colder in winter. Greece and Turkey are popular places for yachts to winter over and there are numerous marinas offering good winter rates. Malta and southern Italy are also popular for the winter.

Ashore

The eastern Mediterranean is a popular place for people to visit both land-based and on the water. This means that in spring through to late autumn there are enough restaurants, bars and cafés to satisfy everyone. Eating out is a national sport in the Mediterranean and an evening stroll (the *volta* in Greece, *passaregio* in Italy) after the sun has gone down is a national pastime.

Shopping is good throughout the northern countries from Italy to Turkey where you can buy just about everything and local markets for fruit and veggies are excellent. In the south the shopping is less international apart from Israel and Cyprus. Larnaca in southern Cyprus is an excellent place to stock up in if heading down the Red Sea.

If you are living aboard through the winter it pays to make a few enquiries about how many of the restaurants, bars and shops stay open through the winter as in some places you will find more than 50% of them will close for the off season. Some marinas provide additional facilities to make life more social for liveaboards during the winter and its worth listening in to the grapevine to find out what's going on.

Cyclades to Methoni

Astipalaia in the Aegean



Turkish markets are a shoppers delight



Boatyard in Turkey

Facilities

Yacht facilities are well developed in all the northern countries and you won't have much trouble finding somewhere to leave the boat for the winter afloat or ashore. Deals can be done in some places though not everywhere. Most spares are readily available in the EU countries and can be ordered in the others although customs procedures can be bothersome. On the southern side yacht facilities are sparse and you will struggle to get most things.

Reading

- Mediterranean Almanac* Ed. Rod Heikell and Lucinda Michell (Imray) Biennial publication
- Italian Waters Pilot* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- Adriatic Pilot* T & D Thompson (Imray)
- Greek Waters Pilot* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- Ionian* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- West Aegean* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- East Aegean* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- Turkish Waters & Cyprus Pilot* Rod Heikell (Imray)
- North Africa Pilot* Graham Hutt. (Imray)

My gem

The Colossus of Maroussi Henry Miller (Penguin)



The Byzantine village on the 'rock' at Monemvasia and local



Kasos in the Aegean