

# Charter me this

There's a whole world out there waiting to be explored and one of the most exciting ways to see it is from the water, says Emma Love, who rounds up the best boat charters

Photograph by Jack Johns

## ***Kudanil Explorer, Indonesia***

Whether surfing lesser-known breaks off Sumba and Rote, hiking through the rainforest to a secret waterfall on Papua or snorkelling colourful coral reefs around the Spice Islands, a bespoke charter on *Kudanil Explorer* taps into blissfully remote areas of Indonesia. Guests are looked after by co-founder Thibaud Epstein and the minimum 21-strong crew, which includes a chef (there is usually a sushi night on every trip; food is both Indonesian and international), dive instructor and massage therapist. A former ocean tug reimaged as a luxe expedition yacht in 2018, it has eight almost identical cabins, each with a daybed on a private balcony, ideal for an afternoon snooze. On the main deck is a library that doubles up as a cinema; the top deck has sun loungers, a Jacuzzi and a shady communal table for long lunches and refreshing banana *lassis* in between activities in this vast, pristine archipelago that still feels thrillingly undiscovered.

*Available for a week's charter with Ultimate Indonesian Yachts from \$178,710 (about £140,300) ([www.ultimate-indonesian-yachts.com](http://www.ultimate-indonesian-yachts.com))* →



# Travel Safari and adventure



Getting up close to whale sharks (*preceding pages*) is one of the activities on offer for guests on luxury expedition yacht *Kudanil* (*above*)

## **Ibra** by Hud Hud Travels, Oman

A wildly beautiful archipelago off the coast of Muscat, the uninhabited Dimaniyat Islands are Oman's only protected marine nature reserve and breeding sanctuary for birds—and a must-visit destination for guests onboard *Ibra*, a newly revamped four-cabin *dhow* owned by Hud Hud Travels (best known for its luxury tented camp experiences in Oman). The boat showcases the country's rich history of craftsmanship through local materials and thoughtful details, such as the artisan-made pottery and woven placemats used at mealtimes on deck (one evening is usually a beach barbecue, followed by toasting marshmallows around a campfire). Other highlights include dropping anchor at Bandar Khayran and Ras Abu Daud—both great for diving—and the fishing town of Qurayyat, a jumping-off point for *wadi* exploring. From \$44,176 (about £34,900) for a week's charter ([www.hudhudtravels.com](http://www.hudhudtravels.com))

## **Kaiara, The Amazon**

From hiking through the primary Tapajós National Forest—a conservation area spanning more than half a million hectares (more than 1.2 million acres)—to swimming in →



The exquisitely revamped *Ibra* takes guests to the uninhabited Dimaniyat Islands off Oman

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freshwater Caribbean-like bays, Kaiara's tailor-made trips delve deep into the Amazon, typically navigating three rivers and their tributaries. Founded in 2022, the company has a trio of boats available for charter, ranging from four to 11 cabins, and close relationships with the riverside communities mean guests gain real insights into the local way of life, such as learning about fish farming, traditional handicrafts or keeping Melipona bees. From July to March, low rivers reveal sensational white-sand beaches; the rest of the year, flooded forests allow for the surreal experience of canoeing along the Igarapé creek almost level with the treetops.

*From \$22,800 (about £18,000) for a week's charter on four-cabin 'Tupaiú' (www.kaiara.com.br/en/kaiara)*

## **NaiSabah, Kenya**

A 75ft traditional live-aboard Omani *dhow* that has been repurposed for ocean exploration, *NaiSabah* began to be used for private charters in Kenya's Lamu Archipelago last year. The waters around Lamu, with its World Heritage Site Old Town—the oldest and

best-preserved Swahili settlement in East Africa—are the focus of one itinerary; another, longer route takes in the reefs and mangrove forests around Kiwayu Island (here, a beach hut for guests makes an ideal picnic spot). Tailor-made experiences range from weaving workshops to visiting historical ruins, dolphin spotting to creek swimming.

‘Flooded forests allow for the surreal experience of canoeing level with the treetops’

At night, bed down in the trio of cabins (one is a double bunk room), or choose to sleep on deck under a starry night sky. Underpinned with a sustainable ethos, the ship is powered by solar energy and wind and has a built-in conservation fee that supports local communities and marine ecosystems. *From £25,840 for a week's charter (www.naisabah.com)*

## **Set Nefru, The Nile, Egypt**

Originally built nearly a century ago for a member of the Egyptian royal family, this five-cabin *dahabiya* (a traditional wooden boat with two sails) has recently undergone a sensitive two-year renovation. It took a team of some 50 craftspeople in Cairo to restore *Set Nefru* (below) to her former glory using reclaimed wood from historic palaces in Alexandria. Inside the boat, there's vintage French and original in-built furniture dating from the 1940s, plus antique Limoges china, Malaika bed linen, marble bathrooms and a previously hidden Art Deco painting discovered in the saloon—the heart of the ship, which is a dining area and library, stuffed with books on Egyptology and archaeology. Sailings go from Luxor to Aswan (the minimum stay is three nights). Along the way, expert guides will take guests around a mix of well-known temples such as Esna, Edfu and Silsileh, as well as less-visited tombs and sights away from the tourist crowds. 🏹

*From \$26,600 (about £21,000) for a week's charter (www.setnefru.com)*

