



Food that float

Brittany blue lobster anyone? The delights of a junk trip no longer end with a sausage and the scenery. Food lovers can enjoy a fine-dining experience on the open water. Vicki Williams sets sail

Junk catering is taking a step up. Elaborate menus now include fresh pasta dishes, Mediterranean classics and onboard barbecues. Those sailing out in the evening can even try squid fishing and have their catch barbecued for them.

Whatever the menu, junk trips are a quintessentially Hong Kong experience and have an enduring appeal.

For Rose Torrance, who receives about 10 junk trip invitations over a typical summer, such cruises represent "a small part of a decadent lifestyle that's affordable".

Kiri Sinclair has her own take on why junk trips are so popular. "Hong Kong has the unique advantage of being a mega city surrounded by natural beauty. Junks allow easy and fun access to the outer reaches [or even inner reaches] of the countryside, with spectacular views and a day on the water," she says.

Cruising to a picturesque spot where the water is clear, the wine and beer are flowing and the company is enjoyable are the key to junk trips' appeal.

But between the swimming and

sunning, there's eating. For Sinclair, the food should be easy to nibble on.

"Lots of finger food is essential. People like to nibble all day. Dips with healthy dippers like carrots are a treat. Pre-prepared sandwiches and pasta are easy to eat. I also love a seafood barbecue."

Charlotte Bliss, a junk food regular, likes easy snacks such as crisps, quesadillas and pizza. "Tasty salads are appreciated," she says.

Torrance prefers to bring her own food and wine on a cruise, rather than have it supplied. "I like to eat well when I'm on a junk. As long as the food is tasty and of good quality, I am not picky."

If you want someone else to do the work, there are plenty of catering options, including three new players on the market.

Irene Moore was so sure she had discovered a niche that she gave up her job as an accountant to launch her business, Lazydays, which offers both the craft and the catering.

"I found that there was a gap in the market where I could combine the three things I enjoy the most: cooking, sailing and entertaining." Attention to detail and a little added

luxury were missing, according to Moore.

"It's often the small things that are missed on traditional junk trips," she says. "It's the small things that make the difference. For example, our menu features the best ingredients and everything is made fresh on the boat, even the pasta. We only serve craft beers and ales, as well as brand-name spirits, and I like to make frozen cocktails from fresh fruit during the trip. Plates, glasses and cutlery are used, not the flimsy disposable paper plates and plastic cutlery typically found."

She adds that unlike other junk experiences, "we realise that not everyone wants a beer at 10am". So they offer gourmet teas and have a coffee machine onboard. "You can have a gourmet cuppa from freshly ground beans to go with our breakfast of bacon butties and cinnamon rolls," Moore says.

The catering can get elaborate, even ritzy. At night, Moore offers a full sit-down dinner service with tailored menus, from a simple three-course affair to a more elaborate six-course meal. Moore's repertoire includes five-spice duck breast with

