

Boating with Missy

By Melissa Gervais

Ice, Ice Baby



One of the most important ingredients in my life is ice. When I bought my boat, she had a 1988 U-Line ice maker installed in the back deck bar. It would make perfect cubes, but at the last moment would spray water on top, so when I finally got to it the next morning, the ice was a disheveled blob that was stuck to the bucket. I removed the ice maker and replaced it with a very low draw, Engel portable fridge/freezer on a floor slider.

I have a half-sized galley fridge that holds enough food for five days. There is a small freezer on the top of the fridge for meat and bread. I tried a couple of ice cube trays but they took most of the weekend to freeze through the middle. I also have two coolers on board, one for all my beverages and one that only holds clean ice. It is boldly marked, so no odor-causing items can be put inside. Ever. The journey to this solution was riddled with experimentation, and I met a lot of dud coolers along the way.

I will spare you the frigid details. In the end, I chose the Igloo Maxcold Quantum 52-quart Roller Cooler. Another lesson learned from an experiment that went terribly wrong—make sure the wheels are on the back and not the side. With the wheels on the back, you can actually put your overnight bag on the cooler and roll everything down the dock, eliminating an extra trip with the wheelbarrow. The coolers with wheels on the side fall into the “slinky” category, fun to watch fall down the stairs but kind of useless.

The Maxcold cooler also has the drain spout on the back at the bottom. The trick is to keep the spout open so the ice does not sit in water.

The coolers are kept on the back deck, usually in full sun, and will keep ice for five days. If you purchase bags of ice at the marina, make sure that you take the ice out of the bags first. For some reason, it lasts much longer. I am fortunate that a friend has a commercial ice maker and I can fill up the cooler on my way to the boat. I know, it's cheating.

Another option to keep your ice longer is to put an ice pack in the cooler the night before you leave for the boat. By “pre” cooling the cooler, your cubed ice will last longer. You can also put a couple of fresh ice packs in the bottom of the cooler before you fill it with cubed

ice. I use the inexpensive Rubbermaid Blue Ice hard-sided packs but I have friends who swear by the Engel hard shell freezer packs.

For my beverage-only cooler, I used to purchase block ice at the marina, but it was really the wrong shape for the cooler. I measured the bottom of the cooler and purchased three Tupperware containers that fit the space perfectly. Each time I arrive home from a weekend away, I refill the containers with water and place them in the freezer. Voilà! Custom ice blocks at no additional cost.

During water restrictions, some boaters even use sea water instead of fresh water. The theory is that the salt content lowers the freezing temperature and because the blocks are in sealed containers, there is no worry that your cans will be salty.

A number of people, who I boat with, use portable countertop ice makers from manufacturers such as Danby, Frigidaire, Della, Newair, and Avalon Bay. These units are compact, draw very little power, and can make up to 26 pounds of ice per day. One bucket of ice, enough for a couple of drinks, can be made in as little as 10 minutes. The claim is that these ice machines make ice 20 times faster than a tray in your freezer. Most come in at under \$100, which will pay itself off in only a couple of weekends.

Another option for your five o'clock libation is a reusable ice cube, often referred to as a whiskey stone, that you simply leave in your freezer overnight. They come in various shapes and sizes and are made of stainless steel, stone, or plastic. Some are shaped like diamonds or cactus and even have color changing LED lights for evening entertain-

ment. Or as I like to say, never lose a friend at night on the dock, again.

When it comes to ice on your boat, sip back and relax. And if all else fails, moor next to a 58-foot Riviera. They make the best ice ever.

NWY



• A signature Missy cocktail, Sunshine in a Glass. Mix two ounces Dubonnet with two ounces club soda. Serve over ice with a lemon wedge.



Missy grew up boating with her family in the Gulf Islands. She works for a yacht services company based in Vancouver, B.C. and boats most weekends from April to October. A self-proclaimed weekend warrior, she enjoys blogging about everything cool for women who boat at missygoesboating.com.