

Isle Royale Circumnavigation 2014

The Trip-- In the northwestern portion of Lake Superior is a unique and remote island archipelago. Isle Royale National Park preserves 132,018 acres of land that was federally designated as wilderness in 1976. The park consists of one large (47-mile-long) island surrounded by over 450 smaller islands. The entire area is the destination of our most advanced sailing voyage—the Isle Royale circumnavigation. This is an adventure that only miles of wilderness, a seaworthy sailboat, and a seasoned captain and crew can provide. NHFS partners with Amicus Adventure Sailing to provide this 10-day trip.

We, the Gordon family, are your Captain and Crew. Mark and Katya have paired together as Captain and 1st mate for over a decade. Our daughters grew up sailing and at 11 and 9 are willing voyagers who adore Isle Royale and love to share their knowledge with you. Living aboard with us is the single biggest part of the trip, and one which we look forward to as much as you.

How do we spend our time? We have completed many trips to Isle Royale, and not one of them has been the same. So rather than promise a specific itinerary, we give you a picture of the possibilities. What we know is that we will be without cell phone or internet coverage and our only companions will be Rangers and backpackers. We have yet to see another sailboat there in June. Sometimes we make it out to Passage Island, a spectacular remote island off the northern tip of Isle Royale. Other times, we concentrate our energies on the main island. The secluded bays that line the island become our home bases for trips inland to hike, camp, fish, and backpack. By water, we explore in kayaks and dinghy.

Ideally, participants have a strong desire to visit Isle Royale and come prepared for any weather. Daypacks and hiking shoes are essential. Some bring backpacking gear and head inland for a night or two, or fish inland. Others choose to live aboard the entire trip and take only daytrips inland. The weather often dictates the nature of the trip; gentle breezes and brisk winds make for great sailing days; rain and fog create hiking, fishing, and cozying-in-the-cabin opportunities. One warm, sunny year we swam frequently; another year the ice had barely left the island and we saw a lot of fog. The trip is not always predictable but it is always a blast for those who are open to enjoy whatever comes.

Two or three long passages (to and from Grand Marais to Isle Royale) begin and end the trip. During these, if there is wind, participants get the total sailing experience. Other days, we hop from bay to bay on shorter day sails. Some days we don't sail at all. During the trip we will teach nautical skills such as navigation and chart-plotting, points of sail, nautical terminology and parts of a sailboat, anchoring, and even galley cooking for bold or adventurous chefs. Visits to the Visitor Centers, the Park-sponsored classes, and even an old copper mine spark discussion on topics such as ancient copper mining, invasive species, climate change, the surviving wolf pack on the island, and more. The

shipwreck of the “America” lies below one of the inlets we use frequently; weather permitting, we kayak over to view the remains.

If you are excited by the opportunity to experience Isle Royale by both land and lake, are eager for some long sailing experiences, enjoy the intensity of small group bonding, want to try living aboard, and are open to many types of adventure, this is the trip for you. We welcome participants of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities and are enriched by the mutual benefits of a diverse crew.

Participants from trips with Amicus Adventure Sailing have said:

“[We] met as strangers and we are leaving as friends.”—Shirley,

“I have learned so much about sailing, hiking, flora and fauna of Minnesota and, most importantly, about myself. “—Molly,

“Man what a fun way to learn how to sail.” –David

The Boat and Captain and Crew—Mark and Katya Gordon are co-owners of Amicus Adventure Sailing, a small family-owned charter business that operates out of Knife River, MN. Mark (captain) has more than 25 years experience in leading trips and over 20 years as a licensed Captain and EMT, he currently holds his 50 Ton Masters license. Katya (first mate) is a lifelong sailor and is a veteran of outdoor wilderness experiences, with more than 20 years of experience leading trips in mountains, lakes, deserts, rivers, and oceans. Together they have sailed thousands of miles on Lake Superior and beyond with their two daughters, Cedar (11) and Lamar (9). In June of 2013 they completed their second cruise to the Bahamas and back from Lake Superior, logging more than 5,000 miles in ten months aboard Amicus II.

Amicus II is a custom-designed 40-ft. steel cutter designed for big water. She weighs 27,000 lbs with an 11 ½ ft. beam and 5 ½ ft. draft. Because of her heavy, full keel she is a joy to sail and moves smoothly through large waves. Her hard dodger and well protected cockpit make her comfortable to sail in challenging conditions. She sleeps eight (including 3 double bunks). She is outfitted to minimize her carbon footprint and to spend extended periods cruising in remote areas away from docks and marinas. She has two 120 watt solar panels and a wind generator to power her two battery banks; she carries over 100 gallons of water and 70 gallons of diesel fuel. She is equipped with a small propane galley (stove) and both conventional marine and composting heads (toilets). A diesel cabin heater makes early summer and late fall cruising cozy and warm on brisk days. In short, Amicus II embodies our core values: Simplicity, Sustainability, Seaworthiness, and Safety.

Detail: Limited to four students – discounts for a group of four. Tuition includes food and lodging throughout the course. Separate tuition payment & cancellation policies apply to this course.

Dates: June 17 to 26th Starting 5:00 pm on the 17th.

Level – * Beginner to Advanced

*While no sailing experience is required for this course, participants should understand the rustic nature of the accommodations aboard Amicus II and the potential for challenging weather conditions. There is no shower onboard (except an on-deck solar shower) and all hot water must be heated on the stove. Living space on any sailboat is limited and while Amicus II is a spacious 40 footer, participants will have limited “personal space”. There is one private “cabin” onboard; all other berths are enclosed by privacy curtains. Temperatures on land and in most anchorages will be in the 60s and 70s. Temperatures on the water can easily dip into the low 40’s and even 30’s due to the cold lake temperature in June so proper clothing is a must. There will be four passages of 8-12 hours each during this trip. Please do not hesitate to call Mark and Katya Gordon – 218-290-5975 with any questions you may have.