



## Beaver Island Passage

Beaver Island Passage (BIP) is a multi-day Coastal Passage Cruising itinerary built to move crew members from “comfortable” to truly capable on open water. The trip begins in Traverse City with a full departure brief—weather window selection, route planning, crew roles, and a clear plan for contingencies—then we commit to our first meaningful crossing to Beaver Island. The run to St. James Harbor sets the tone: real Great Lakes conditions, real navigation decisions, and the expectation that every crew member rotates through skipper-level responsibilities. Underway, we train the habits that matter most, maintaining a clean watch, verifying position, cruising log entries, making course and speed adjustments early, and staying ahead of changing sea state.

After arriving at St. James, the instruction shifts from “getting there” to “working the boat” in a protected harbor environment. Crew members practice arrival planning, VHF communication, docking management, line handling, and after-arrival routines. We debrief what went right and what needs tightening before the next leg. From Beaver Island we continue north to Naubinway, adding another open-water segment where crew members refine waypoint management, and chart plotter discipline. This leg typically brings more variability in wind shifts, building seas, traffic, and visibility changes, giving the group a realistic chance to practice decision-making without rushing and to understand how small choices early prevent big challenges later.

From Naubinway, we work back down the coast toward Leland while minding fatigue-aware watch standing. This leg blends island navigation, open water and another harbor approach that requires good setup and crew coordination. Crew members rotate as acting skipper, navigator, and deckhand, briefing the crew, executing the approach, and then evaluating the result. Docking isn’t treated as an afterthought; it’s trained as a repeatable process: assignment of roles, line sequencing, fender strategy, speed control, and calm communication. Evenings are used for structured debriefs and next-day planning, reviewing weather apps, discussing alternates, and building the mindset of “professional preparation” rather than “hope it works out.”

The passage finishes with the final run back to Traverse City, tying the whole experience together: open-water execution, clean crew rotation, and confident arrival management. By the end of BIP, crew members have not only logged meaningful miles and hours, but they’ve also practiced the full cycle of passage-making: selecting a weather window, planning legs, running watches, adapting to conditions, arriving and departing cleanly, and making sound go/no-go decisions. It’s a focused, practical trip that builds real confidence because the training happens where it counts: underway, in changing conditions, and in the moments that require calm leadership.