Fall Boating: Don't Put the Boat Away Just yet

As the days get shorter and the leaves begin to change, many boaters start thinking about winterizing and putting the boat away for the season. But before you call it a year, consider giving fall boating a chance. Across the country, some of the most beautiful days on the water come after the crowds have thinned, the humidity has disappeared and the leaves begin putting on their annual show.

For us here in the Mid-Atlantic, October is probably our favorite month on the Chesapeake Bay. The days bring sunshine and a crispness that didn't exist during the humid days of August. Temperatures can range from the mid-70s down into the low 50s—not exactly swimming weather, but perfect for cruising into the coves, creeks and rivers that make the Chesapeake so special.

As the shoreline changes from green to brilliant shades of red, yellow and orange, the Bay becomes a mirror for the colors of autumn. There is something pretty special about seeing those colors reflected off the water while you're cruising along with a warm drink and a jacket instead of sunscreen and a bathing suit.

A Few Chesapeake Favorites

Some of our favorite spots in the Upper and Mid-Chesapeake region for enjoying the fall colors from the water include:

- **Choptank & Tred Avon Rivers** – The narrower waterways offer miles of tree-lined shoreline, allowing you to get close to the changing foliage. The Tred Avon also makes for a great cruise through the Oxford area.
- **Chester River** – Narrow in parts and lined with trees, the Chester offers beautiful fall scenery from the water and the opportunity to cruise into historic Chestertown.
- **Rhode River** – Just south of Annapolis, the Rhode offers a beautiful mix of wooded shoreline, coves and waterfront homes. Fall decorations along the water make it even more fun to explore.
- **Sassafras River** – With its winding waterways and heavily wooded shoreline, the Sassafras is another great choice for a crisp fall cruise.

And Beyond the Chesapeake...

Of course, the Chesapeake isn't the only place where fall and boating make a great combination. If you're fortunate enough to boat in other parts of the country, fall is a great time to explore somewhere new.

New England is hard to beat in the fall. Places like Mystic, Connecticut; Newport, Rhode Island; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and the coast of Maine offer a wonderful combination of changing foliage, historic waterfronts and classic New England harbor towns. The foliage can be spectacular, and the cooler temperatures make for some beautiful days on the water.

Further south, Charleston and Savannah offer a completely different take on fall boating. You may not get the same explosion of autumn color, but the cooler temperatures, marshes, rivers and coastal scenery make fall an especially enjoyable time to be on the water.

And for our friends in Florida and Georgia, fall is when boating season really starts getting good. As the summer heat and humidity ease, the cooler weather makes it much more comfortable to spend a full day on the water.

Wherever you boat, don't be too quick to put the boat away. Fall offers something different from summer boating: fewer crowds, cooler temperatures, beautiful scenery and, in many places, some of the best cruising of the year.

So grab a jacket, check the weather, and head out for one more cruise. You might find that fall becomes your new favorite boating season.