

# Junks!

The remarkable junk is an ancient Chinese sailing ship design that has been sailing the seas for almost 2,000 years...and is still in use today. Junks were developed during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) and were used as seagoing vessels as early as the 2nd century AD. They evolved in the later dynasties, and were used throughout Asia for extensive ocean voyages. They were found, and in lesser numbers are still found, throughout South-East Asia and India, but primarily in China. Found more broadly today is a growing number of modern recreational junk-rigged sailboats.

The first records of junks can be found in references dating to the Han Dynasty (220 BC-200 AD\*). The enormous dimensions of the Chinese ships of the Medieval period are described in Chinese sources, and are confirmed by Western travelers to the East, such as Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta and Niccolò da Conti. According to Ibn Battuta, who visited China in 1347: “A ship carries a complement of a thousand men, six hundred of whom are sailors and four hundred men-at-arms...The vessel has four decks and contains rooms, cabins, and saloons for merchants; a cabin has chambers and a lavatory, and can be locked by its occupants.”

Today, modernized junks are becoming popular. In 1968, Bill King sailed off on a junk schooner in the controversial *Sunday Times* Golden Globe Race. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junk\\_\(ship\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junk_(ship))] *\*I refuse to use the current BCE/CE designation in place of the traditional BC/AD. The former is just another extension of political correctness*

