

KING FISHER LODGE

FORT SMITH, SOUTH EAST MONTANA



The Fly Shop

PRE-TRIP TACKLE & TRAVEL PLANNER

GPS Coordinates: 45°20'40.39"N | 107°51'49.55"W

WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM

Trip Questionnaire: Once you have arranged your travel details, please click on the link below. This will take you an electronic questionnaire form that we ask you to complete and submit to The Fly Shop. Please be sure to click the **“Submit”** button at the end of the form. The information provided will help us -- and the outfitter best coordinate your trip. THANK YOU!

Trip Questionnaire: [Click Here](#)

Getting to King Fisher Lodge

King Fisher Lodge is located just outside of Ft. Smith Montana which is an hour and a half drive from Billings Logan International Airport (Airport Code BIL). BIL hosts 7 major airlines and 24 flights arriving daily so there are a number of options to get you there. Once at the airport, you can rent a car at the Billings airport and drive to the lodge or KFL recommends Wilson Transport's shuttle service 406-256-9793.

Personal Aircraft:

If you have your own plane, Fort Smith has an excellent 3,800 foot runway (no tower). Contact us prior to arrival for shuttle options to the lodge.

Driving:

From the West - Take I-90 south from Billings to Hardin. At the Hardin exit follow the signs for Yellowtail Dam and Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area to state HWY 313. Travel 23 miles to St. Xavier. At St. Xavier (post office on the right), take a left toward Big Horn National Recreation Area. Travel on HWY 313 until mile marker 35. At mile marker 35 take a right on War Man Loop. Travel 3.9 miles to the lodge.

From the South - Head north on I-90, take exit 509 at Crow Agency. It winds through the Crow Reservation and connects with Hwy 313, take a left and continue as listed above through St. Xavier toward Bighorn Canyon and mile marker 38.

Directions from the East - Head west on I-94 exit at Custer and take Hwy 47 south to Hardin. At Hardin Hwy 47 becomes 313, follow directions for "from the west".

Trout Tackle & Equipment

Kingfisher Lodge provides all rods/reels/flyes/leaders and tippet. Of course, we encourage you to bring your own rod/reel set up and of some of your favorite fly patterns.

Fly Rods:

Multi-piece 6, 5 & 4 weight fly rods will cover most of the fishing situations you'll encounter. If you enjoy streamer fishing, we recommend bringing a nice light weight, fast-action 7 weight. We strongly recommend a multi-piece travel rod (3, 4 or 5 piece). Rods you might consider are:

- Scott Fly Rods
- R.L. Winston Fly Rods
- The Fly Shop Signature Fly Rods

Fly Reels:

Good quality, lightweight fly reels, with simple disk drags or pawl drags, are the best choice. Reels should be filled with fresh 20 pound backing. Reel brands to consider might include:

- The Fly Shop's Signature Reels
- Galvan Reels
- Ross Reels

Fly Lines:

Floating lines are used almost exclusively. If you have a type III sink tip for a 6-7 weight, be sure to bring it along.

- Scientific Anglers & Rio Freshwater Floating Fly Lines

Leaders & Tippet:

Keep it simple on leaders; 9' leaders tapered to 5X, 4X and 3X (throw in a couple of 7.5' 0X leaders for throwing big bugs). Two - three of each leader size should be plenty. Bring fresh tippet in sizes, 5X, 4X, 3X and 0X. Scientific Anglers, Rio, and Seaguar make some of the best tippet and leader material available.



Note:

Guides will provide fly patterns and this is included in the cost of your trip, but you might bring some of your favorite trout flies as outlined above.

Month	Insect/Bug	Sizes	Patterns
MARCH-	Midges	#16-20	BH Zebra Midge, Skittering Midge, CDC emerging Midge
MAY	Blue Wing Olive (BWO)	#16-20	CDC Dun, Missing Link, Film Critic, Micro Mayfly Nymph
	Aquatic Worms	#8-12	Old San Juan, SJ Vernille Worm, GB San Juan, Squirmy worm
	Sow bugs	#14-18	Ray Charles, Firebead sow bug, FB pink sow bug, Pink Crush
	Streamers (Leech & Sculpin)	#2-8	Slumpbuster, Home Invader, Sparkle Minnow
	Scuds	#12-20	UV hunchback, Pink Ultra scud, orange scud, Sparkle Scud
JUNE	Yellow Sally	#14-16	Missing Link Yellow Stone, Silvey's Chubby Sallie
	Aquatic Worms	#8-12	Old San Juan, SJ Vernille Worm, GB San Juan, Squirmy worm
	Sow bugs	#14-18	Ray Charles, Firebead sow bug, FB pink sow bug, Pink Crush
	Streamers (Leech & Sculpin)	#2-8	Slumpbuster, Home Invader, Sparkle Minnow
	Scuds	#12-20	UV hunchback, Pink Ultra scud, orange scud, Sparkle Scud
	Midges	#16-20	BH Zebra Midge, Skittering Midge, CDC emerging Midge
JULY	Yellow Sally	#14-16	Missing Link Yellow Stone, Silvey's Chubby Sallie
	Aquatic Worms	#8-12	Old San Juan, SJ Vernille Worm, GB San Juan, Squirmy worm
	Sow bugs	#14-18	Ray Charles, Firebead sow bug, FB pink sow bug, Pink Crush
	Streamers (Leech & Sculpin)	#2-8	Slumpbuster, Home Invader, Sparkle Minnow
	Scuds	#12-20	UV hunchback, Pink Ultra scud, orange scud, Sparkle Scud
	Midges	#10-12	Foam Profile Green Drake, Missing Link, Hunchback GD
	PMD (Pale Morning Dun)	#14-20	Film Critic, Sparkle Stacker, Missing Link, GB Poxyback PMD
	Hoppers	#6-14	Hopper Grande, Morrish Hopper, Head Turner Hopper
AUGUST	Hoppers	#6-14	Hopper Grande, Morrish Hopper, Head Turner Hopper
	Beetles	#10-18	Hi-Vis Beetle, Carl's Cicada, Chubby Chernobyl
	Ants	#16-20	Hegan Ant, Carl's Foam Ant, Parachute Ant, Schlotter's Ant
	Tricos	#20-24	CDC Trico spinner, Parachute Profile Spinner, LC Cripple
	Aquatic Worms	#8-12	Old San Juan, SJ Vernille Worm, GB San Juan, Squirmy worm
	Sow bugs	#14-18	Ray Charles, Firebead sow bug, FB pink sow bug, Pink Crush
	Streamers (Leech & Sculpin)	#2-8	Slumpbuster, Home Invader, Sparkle Minnow
	Scuds	#12-20	UV hunchback, Pink Ultra scud, orange scud, Sparkle Scud
	Midges	#10-12	Foam Profile Green Drake, Missing Link, Hunchback GD
	PMD (Pale Morning Dun)	#14-20	Film Critic, Sparkle Stacker, Missing Link, GB Poxyback PMD
	Caddis	#12-18	Missing Link, E/C Caddis, Jiggy Caddis, Poopah
SEPT	BWO	#16-20	Missing Link, Film Critic, Hackle Stacker, Micro Mayfly nymph
OCT	Hoppers	#6-14	Hopper Grande, Morrish Hopper, Head Turner Hopper
	Ants	#16-20	Hegan Ant, Carl's Foam Ant, Parachute Ant, Schlotter's Ant
	Beetles	#10-18	Hi-Vis Beetle, Carl's Cicada, Chubby Chernobyl
	Midges	#16-20	RS2 Sparkle Wing, Midge Hanger, Harrop's CDC Midge
	Tricos	#20-24	CDC Trico spinner, Parachute Profile Spinner, LC Cripple
	Aquatic Worms	#8-12	Old San Juan, SJ Vernille Worm, GB San Juan, Squirmy worm
	Sow bugs	#14-18	Ray Charles, Firebead sow bug, FB pink sow bug, Pink Crush
	Streamers (Leech & Sculpin)	#2-8	Slumpbuster, Home Invader, Sparkle Minnow
	Scuds	#12-20	UV hunchback, Pink Ultra scud, orange scud, Sparkle Scud
	Midges	#16-20	BH Zebra Midge, Skittering Midge, CDC emerging Midge
	Caddis	#12-18	Missing Link, E/C Caddis, Jiggy Caddis, Poopah

Recommended Clothing and Equipment

Clothing:

The weather in South East Montana is constantly changing. One afternoon it may be 90° (+) and sunny, down right hot; then only a few hours later it may be windy and hailing. July and August are more stable month and typically high pressure, sunny and hot. You are typically dressing light and wearing sun protective clothing and trying to stay cool. Early and late season brings more unpredictable and cooler weather, so you should always plan for any possible weather. Clothing strategies should be based on the "layering system." By using the "layering system," anglers can adapt to whatever Mother Nature dishes out. The whole idea behind layering is to trap heated air (generated by your body and stored between the different layers of insulation), thus keeping you warm.

Here is the formula preferred by the staff at The Fly Shop®:

1... Base Layer: Start off with a synthetic fabric next to your skin. This often is a pair of thermal underwear (tops and bottoms) and they usually come in three weights: light, mid and expedition. According to your individual metabolism, pick what is best for you. Synthetic (non-cotton) materials retain little moisture and "wick" moisture away from your skin. This is very important when you are walking in waders or when outside temperatures heat up.

2... Thermal Layer: Your second layer of insulation should match the weather and conditions you are going to be fishing in. Lightweight insulation for cool weather, midweight for colder conditions and heavyweight for really frigid days. Fleece is an outstanding choice here in either tops and bottoms or overalls. Merino Wool is also a good choice as it stays warm when damp, though dries very slowly.

3... Outer Shell (Rain Jacket & Waders): Your final layer should be a breathable rain jacket and waders.

- 1 set light or mid weight – Patagonia, Simms, and others (tops and bottoms)
- 1 set heavyweight – Patagonia, Simms, and others (tops and bottoms)
- 1 layering jacket – A lighter weight jacket that can fit under your wading jacket or that can be used by itself

Rain Jacket:

High quality Gore-Tex® type products are the best. Your rain jacket should be 100% waterproof and breathable. Rain jackets must be seam sealed, multi-layered, of QUALITY construction and from a recognized outdoor clothing company. Jackets specifically designed for fly fishermen are the best. We have listed a few of our favorite brands below.

- Skwala
- Patagonia
- Simms

Wading Equipment:

Stocking foot, breathable waders are the only way to go. Neoprene waders are antiquated, do not permit moisture to escape, are heavy and cumbersome and only appropriate for sedentary fishing (float tubing) where insulation is the only concern. "Breathable" waders have totally revolutionized wading equipment. You will experience little or no moisture build-up inside the waders, even after a long hike; they wear like iron, and are comfortable to be in all day. Lastly, "Breathable" waders take up a fraction of the space neoprene waders take-up when packed in your duffel bag. All waders should be worn with synthetic fiber under-wader wear for maximum comfort, minimum moisture retention, and warmth. For safety we strongly recommend wearing a wading belt at all times.

- Simms Waders
- Patagonia Waders
- Skwala Waders

On the hot summer days of July and August wet wading can be a great choice. This does not mean leave your waders at home, but a pair of wading socks and quick dry shorts is all the extra things you need and you will have the option to wet wade.

Socks:

Anglers should bring enough socks to alternate on a daily basis. For a week's fishing trip, three pairs should be fine. Do not wear the same socks every day, but alternate, leaving one pair to dry and air while wearing the other set. Wool, polypro or a combination of both are the best choices in sock material. Try on your socks with your waders and wading boots before you leave for your trip to ensure that you have plenty of room to move your toes. Being unable to move your toes and cramping of your feet in your wading boots are the biggest reasons for numb toes and cold feet. We've experienced great success with the disposable air-activated heating pads available at many outdoor stores. Removal from the cellophane wrapper activates them and they then simply stick to the outside of socks for hours of cozy warmth.

- 3 pair of Wading Socks.

Wading Boots:

Felt soled wading boots are highly recommended as they offer superior ankle support and are exceptional for hiking to and from waters. Felt is still allowed Montana, but keep in mind it is illegal to use felt boots in Yellowstone National Park. Simms, Patagonia and Korkers make some good models to consider. Korkers are nice because you can change out felt soles for rubber, or studs depending on each situation. For the most part the rivers fished by Shields River Lodge do not pose any real difficult wading situations, however the mostly gravel bottoms do get covered in algae (slime) and can be slippery. In these situations, studded boots can be handy. Gravel guards are a must. Make sure if you are bringing felt wading boots, they are clean and dry to prevent the spread of invasive species.

- Korkers Wading Boots
- Simms Wading Boots
- Patagonia Wading Boots

With some notice, King Fisher lodge can arrange to rent waders and boots for your stay at the lodge. This is not included in the package price of your trip.

Wool or Polypropylene Gloves:

For Early and late season, fingerless gloves are great for cold and or rainy days. Neoprene gloves are fine, but retain a lot of water when wet. We have had the best success with synthetic or wool gloves.

- Simms Half-Finger Gloves or Flip-Mitt Gloves

Fishing Vest or Tackle/Vest Pack:

For vests, we like high quality products that offer options. Many of the best new vests can be attached to your favorite backpack, sling or pack. Choose one that has room for a rain jacket, or camera in the back. Brands we like are Patagonia, Simms and Fishpond. If you prefer a tackle pack, take a good look at Fishpond, Patagonia, or Simms.

Small Day Pack:

This can be an important article to include while packing. We like a waterproof, top-loader day pack that can hold extra gear, clothes, flies, camera, snacks, etc.

Boat Bag:

A waterproof boat "dry bag" can be extremely handy for storing extra clothes, tackle and camera equipment while on a raft. The whitewater type "dry bags" are the best.

Fishing Hat:

July and August in Montana can be clear and bright with lots of sun. A good hat to keep the glare off your eyes and the sun off your face is imperative. Look for a hat that is comfortable and that has a good size brim.

Line clippers, Pliers, Hemostats, & Hook File:

These are essential to any fisherman and should not be left behind.

Polarized Sunglasses:

Fly fishing is often a very visual experience. Spotting the fish is part of the excitement, and part of the challenge. Good quality polarized sunglasses are a must. Polarized sunglasses not only let you spot fish more effectively, but also protect your eyes from the intense sunlight experienced in Montana, as well as hooks. Costa and Smith make some of the best in the industry.

Camera:

Waterproof digital or splash-proof digital cameras are handy. If you are going to take your digital SLR camera, make sure you have a waterproof case for it. The best waterproof cases we have found to protect expensive camera equipment are made by Pelican Products, www.pelican.com. Don't forget your flash unit.

Headlamp:

You shouldn't leave home without one. Great if you hit the water in the evening for a late hatch. Our favorite is the Loon Nocturnal Headlamp, preferring models with LED bulbs and that can be recharged.

Sun Protection:

The summer weather in Montana is generally pleasant with average temperatures ranging between the low 60's and mid 90's. Wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and frequent use of sun block (SPF 30+ UVA/UVB) are highly recommended. Sun gloves will save the backs of your hands.

Bug Repellent:

Although bugs are usually not too big a problem in Montana especially mid-summer. But there are spots with some biting insects and mosquitos in the spring and a bottle of bug dope with active ingredient DEET is not a bad idea to include in your tackle bag.

Camp Shoes:

After a long day of fishing, it's nice to get out of your waders and slip into a comfortable pair of shoes to wear around the lodge. Crocs are a great choice and super lightweight.

Wading Staff:

If you use a wading staff on your home waters, then bring it, it will come in handy.

Gratuities:

Gratuities are a personal decision based on services rendered. Normally, guides are tipped daily as you may have a different guide each day. We recommend that you tip your guide on a daily basis, somewhere in the nature of \$125 - \$150 per day, per boat/guide (usually shared between two anglers). For the lodge staff, (chefs, housekeeping, wait staff, etc.) we recommend \$50 per day per person. If you have any questions concerning gratuities, please feel free to call or ask the lodge owner for guidelines.

As soon as you have your flight schedule finalized to Montana, please forward it to us at travel@theflyshop.com , so that we can coordinate your transfer to the lodge.

Important Tackle Note:

Kingfisher Lodge is a catch-and-release only facility.

Liquor:

Keep in mind, Big Horn County is a dry county and KFL is unable to sell liquor so please purchase supplies prior to arriving.

Communications:

With Kingfisher located just outside of the town of Fort Smith, Montana, you can expect modern communications, including Wi-Fi throughout the lodge and property. Cell service is consistent around the lodge and on the river depending on your carrier.

Fishing licenses:

Please purchase your Montana fishing license online at [CLICK HERE](#), prior to your trip. Non Resident Anglers 0-9 years old do not need a license. There is limited cell reception on the Bighorn. If you do not plan to print your license, it is a good idea to take a screenshot so it can be readily available.

Important Notice:

Beginning March 1, 2020, FWP will no longer use specialized license paper. Licenses, permits and carcass tags can be printed on 8½” x 11” regular white paper. Non-carcass licenses can be printed at home or displayed electronically.

Contact numbers

King Fisher Lodge

Lodge 406.666.2326

Matt Gotto 814.547.1492

Taylor Lang 814.282.3020

mail@bighornkingfisher.com

The Fly Shop®

800-669-3474 | BUS. 530-222-3555

(Open 7 days a week, 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

E-mail: travel@theflyshop.com

Dining:

Jason Bunn has spent his whole life in and around the food and service industry. And not just for fun, he is a professionally trained, SERV safe certified, chef with a long history at the lodge. He knows what it takes to create a world class dining experience that will keep you coming back. His menu is inspired by fresh; quality ingredients and He is flexible for any dietary restrictions or preferences. Let us know ahead of time and they will be happy to accommodate you. Whether its Chef Jason's Crispy skin duck and grits, house made pappardelle pasta or even family style flank steak tacos, He has something for every palette.

Other Activities:

We strongly suggest you take a half day and visit the Custer Battlefield Museum. It's just under an hour drive away from the lodge.

The Little Bighorn Battlefield is where General Custer met his fate when thousands of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors defeated his forces on June 25, 1876.



Kingfisher Lodge Travel Checklist

Must have Items

- Airline Tickets and this travel planner
- Valid Passport or Real ID
- Wallet (Cash for Tip, Credit Cards)
- Polarized Sunglasses
- Headlamp
- Waders
- Wading Belt
- Wading Boots
- Wading Socks (For Wet wading)
- Toiletry Articles
- Prescription Medications
- Rain Jacket
- Light Socks
- Heavy Socks
- Slacks, Pants
- Quick Dry Shorts/Pants (wet wading)
- Undershirts, under shorts
- Under-wader wear
- Light pile or fleece pants
- Fishing Hat (Sun Hat)
- Stocking cap
- Fleece or layering jacket/pullover
- Long-sleeved Fishing shirts
- Sun Screen SPF 30+
- Lip Balm
- Fishing License

Optional Items

- Bandana or Buff
- Smart phone/Tablet
- Fly Rods
- Fly Reels (Appropriate Line/Backing)
- Spare Spools, Spare Lines
- Leaders
- Tippet
- Split shot
- Fly boxes (Dry Flies, Streamers, Nymphs)
- Floatant
- Indicators
- Tools (Nippers, Scissors, Hemostats)
- Hook file or Stone
- Knot Tool
- Fishing Vest/Day Pack
- Boat Bag
- Garbage/Zip-Lock bags
- Camp Shoes
- Short-sleeved Shirts
- Shorts
- Fishing Gloves
 - Sun Gloves (Summer
 - Fleece Gloves (Fall/Winter)
- Pen and Pencil
- Reading Book
- Water Bottle (Hydro flask)
- Reading Glasses
- Extra pair of Sunglasses
- Camera, battery charger, storage cards
- Tape measure
- Insect Repellent
- Aspirin
- Alcohol
- Wading Staff
- Flask