

Babine Steelhead Lodge

BABINE RIVER – BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



The Fly Shop

TRAVEL & TACKLE GUIDE

GPS Coordinates: 55°27'23.50"N | 126°42'18.88"W

WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM

Trip Questionnaire: 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! Click [HERE](#)

IMPORTANT: ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS

Entry into Canada is solely determined by Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials in accordance with Canadian law. Please see the CBSA’s website for details. <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>

Non-Canadians Entering Canada:

When you enter Canada, a border services officer will ask to see your passport and a valid visa, if you need one.

If you are a citizen of the United States, you need a passport to fly to or transit through a Canadian airport, but not to enter Canada by land or by boat. You must carry proof of your citizenship, such as a birth certificate, certificate of citizenship or naturalization, or a Certificate of Indian Status, as well as photo identification. If you are a permanent resident of Canada or the U.S, you should bring your Permanent Resident Card with you.

U.S. citizens entering Canada from a third country must have a valid U.S. passport.

When returning to the United States from Canada, it is very important to note that all U.S. citizens are required to present a valid U.S. passport to enter or re-enter the United States **via air**. For entry into the United States via land and sea borders, U.S. citizens must present either a U.S. passport, passport card, NEXUS card, Enhanced Driver’s License, or other Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)-compliant document.

You must claim your luggage on your first point of entry into Canada and clear immigrations and customs. Failure to claim your luggage will result in your luggage not showing up at your end destination.

Inoculations & Health Concerns:

There are no formal requirements, or recommendations for immunizations and very little risk of infectious disease in Canada. The risk would be about equivalent to what it would be for trip to Colorado. You should check with your personal physician if you are concerned. We recommend that anglers be up-to-date on their Tetanus, Hepatitis-A and Hepatitis-B vaccinations.

On Your Way To British Columbia

The magnificent sea-going trout enter their natal Skeena drainage in late July, and move upstream into the clear headwaters of the Babine River by the end of August. Fresh fish continue to accumulate in the river right through the end of October and into November.

The Babine produces some of the largest steelhead to enter the Skeena system, it is a river known for its truly monster specimens! Fly fishing for these wild, native steelhead can be fantastic from the 1st of September right through the beginning of November.

Floating lines and dry flies, or very light sink tips with small unweighted wet flies are the name of the game for the better part of September and into October, due to the fact that the Babine is one of the warmest of the Skeena tributaries. Heavier tips and large flies seem to be more productive through the later part of the season when the water temperatures become increasingly cooler and the fish are more reluctant to move long distances to a hit a fly. While many who visit the Babine year after year do so strictly for the top water action, one shouldn't overlook the late season potential this river possesses when the entirety of the run is holding in the pools you are casting into.

The Babine flows west from its head waters below Babine Lake, and winds downstream for 60 miles (100km) where it enters the Skeena just upstream of the confluences of the Bulkley and the Kispiox. One major advantage of selecting the Babine as your destination of choice over other renowned steelhead fisheries (like the Bulkley, Sustut, Kispiox, Copper) is the amount of time the river takes to clear and drop after a big storm, which is common in the fall in British Columbia. The upper Babine comes right out of the lake and will come back into shape in even the heaviest of rains. The Babine generally remains fishable in all but the worst of weather. It is also one of the fastest dropping and quickest clearing of all other rivers in the Skeena region, so anglers do not need to feel too threatened by the thought of traveling all this way and not being able to fish. The river can virtually be blown out one day and fishable the next.

Babine Steelhead Lodge guided trips are conducted with 18 foot jet boats to provide access to the very best runs, riffles, and tail outs the river has to offer. Fishing on the Babine is strictly catch-and-release. There are literally hundreds of runs on the Babine and with minimal pressure from the general public and other lodges, anglers enjoy a rare opportunity to fish untouched water every day of the week. With 9 rods in Camp per week, with 3 guides and boats, there will be 3 anglers per guide every day.

Each day anglers are rotated on 3 different beats of the river so that every day is a fresh exciting new adventure. Everyone fishes each beat twice per week, many times in different runs (Except the exceptional runs you will want to fish twice!) Days are long at Babine Steelhead Lodge, as our guides understand the importance of taking the time to fish each piece of prime water as thoroughly as possible in order to maximize your steelhead catching potential. Babine Steelhead Lodge prides itself on having assembled an elite guide staff that possesses the instructional skills and knowledge of the Babine River system to ensure a memorable experience!

Babine Steelhead Lodge is strategically located a little more than 10 miles downstream of the weir, below the lake. This creates the ideal location to minimize run time in the jets every day, whether you are fishing the upper or lower beats of the Upper River. Babine Steelhead Lodge is one of only 2 full service fly fishing lodges located on the upper Babine, and without public access, there is plenty of water to go around!

The Camp style lodge is rustic, but extremely comfortable. Accommodations at the camp are cabin style, with 3 guests per cabin. Extremely comfortable bunk beds with cozy beds & linens and in-room heaters keep the rooms as warm as needed. Each cabin has its own bathroom with a sink and

toilet. The shower facilities are separate, with 4 stalls to prevent a bottle neck before dinner. The water gets as hot as you need after a long day in the river. The lodge itself is very warm and inviting, sporting a comfortable array of fly-fishing décor, photos and river history. Guests can expect delicious hearty meals both in the lodge and on the river. More importantly however, the fishing is exceptional, and the boats and equipment are 1st class.

As with all steelhead angling, if you're looking to catch obscene numbers of fish, this trip probably isn't for you! Babine Steelhead Lodge clients generally average 1-3 hook ups per angler per day, but keep in mind this is not always the case! There are many days that accomplished anglers and good students will grossly exceed these numbers, and other days when even the best effort won't come close to putting a fish up. Steelhead fishing is not a numbers game, it is about catching the most prized freshwater game fish that swims. Anglers willing to fish hard, cover a lot of water, listen to their guides, and put in a long day, will have the best potential of landing a trophy.

Steelhead on the Babine average between 8 -16 lbs. Specimens up to and exceeding 20 lbs are caught almost daily, at least weekly, by someone. The first fish arrive in August, and by the 1st of September, top quality fly fishing is in full swing. The big bucks are usually in the river by early September and fish continue to accumulate in prime holding water right through the end of November.

BC Fishing Licenses:

Fishing licenses are not included. Anglers will want to purchase their basic fishing licenses, steelhead report cards, and classified tags for the Babine per day, for the duration of their stay at BSL, online before the trip. Purchase all licenses online at the British Columbia Government website: www.fishing.gov.bc.ca . You will need a valid credit card in order to purchase licenses online. Print a copy, and bring a copy with you to the lodge of your license, steelhead card and classified tags. Please keep a copy of your angler license number as well. If you have ever purchased an e license, your angler ID number remains the same in. If you have not kept a copy of your angler ID number you can simply re-register yourself in the system. After purchase, print copies of all of your valid licenses and carry them on you at all times on the river.

You will need the following licenses for your weeks stay with us:

- General Fishing license: Resident / Non resident
- Steelhead Tag
- Classified Waters Tag: Babine River, 1 per day, purchase 7, including the Saturday you arrive.
- GUIDE – Derek Botchford

****All fishing licenses will be paid for with your personal credit card****

Contact Numbers

If you have any problems during your trip with missed connections, or want to leave an emergency number for family members or office:

Bulkley Basecamp

Derek Botchford and Andrea Soto
(250) 846-9153 | dbotchford@gmail.com

The Fly Shop®

(530) 222-3555 | (800) 669-3474 | travel@theflyshop.com

U.S. Consulate General

1095 West Pender Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
Telephone: (604) 685-4311 | Facsimile: (604) 685-7175

General Information

Fishing Methods:

Babine Steelhead Lodge swings flies only. You can leave the indicators at home, these fish are aggressive, you won't need them. Spey rods are the game up North in Skeena Country. It is hard to argue that they cast further, more often, with less effort... which equals more fish to grass. Rods from 12.5ft to 13.5ft are the go to, in line wts 7 or 8. You can fish all week with only your spey rods, but single handers can be useful and fun to swing flies as well, so do not hesitate to bring along a 9 or 9.5 foot 8wt if you would like.

Currency:

The Canadian dollar is the official currency in BC. However, US dollars are widely used and accepted, but you will not get a fair exchange rate. Credit cards will also be accepted anywhere. Remember to call the Credit Card Company and inform them of your travel dates before you depart, or you will have trouble.

Gratuities:

We recommend guide and staff gratuities of approximately \$1,000 to 1,500 per angler to be divided amongst the staff, obviously some people will leave more if they believe their trip and the service was outstanding. Tips are pooled and can be left in an envelope provided to you. If you find service by any individual to be exceptional, feel free to give them additional direct compensation. US dollars are preferred. All tips must be paid in cash.

Weather:

Being in the mountains, the weather can fluctuate greatly, especially at this latitude. Live by the layering system so you can be prepared for everything. It can be warm, especially early season, skating dries in a T-shirt. Later in the season it will get predictably colder but not miserable most years. Storms can come through anytime during this period, so be prepared for all conditions all season long. Be prepared for anything Mother Nature could throw at you!

Power & Communications:

Babine Steelhead Lodge has wireless broadband internet access, but it can be very spotty, and get bogged down if everyone gets on after they get off the water. There is no standard phone service at the lodge, Cellular or land line. If it is imperative that you have voice contact with home or work, please rent or bring your own Satellite phone to the lodge. Power outlets in every room will allow you to charge all of your devices every night, or operate a CPAP machine.

Other Amenities:

We do offer limited laundry service at the lodge, for if you fall in the river, but do not plan on having regular laundry service. Pack enough clothes for the entire week.

The lodge also offers a variety of toiletry articles' including shampoo/conditioner, hand creams, and lindy's handmade soaps so feel free to keep your toiletries to a minimum.

Alcohol:

Alcohol is not included. Stop at the liquor store when you arrive in Smithers to pick up your favorite steelhead trip cocktails and beer. If you have a specific brand of alcohol that you prefer, you might consider bringing it with you as the selection in Smithers is limited. You may also try and take advantage of the Duty Free on the way into Canada.

Liquor:

Due to the Camp's remote location, it is important to purchase any liquor or personal supplies prior to departure from Smithers. We do not provide liquor, mixers or tobacco. If you email us your order, we would be more than happy to pick up your items for you. There is also a government liquor store attached to the Hudson Bay Lodge Hotel that you can get all provisions you will need for the trip.

Canadian Liquor Laws are different than ours here in the States. Beer and wine must be purchased in special stores. These stores usually stay open well into the evening and are open on weekends. However, "spirits" or hard liquor must be purchased at a Government Store. These stores do not stay open past 6:00 p.m., and are closed on Sundays. If you like a specific or special type of cocktail at the end of the day, plan on bringing your own from the States. You are able to bring 1.5 liters of wine, 1.14 liters of liquor or 24 x 355 ml cans or bottles (8.5 liters) of beer or ale. There is an opportunity to purchase beer, wine and spirits at a Government Store at your end destination.

Food:

The Chef at Babine Steelhead Lodge takes extraordinary pride in preparing some of the finest meals you will ever see at a fishing lodge. Top quality ingredients and an excellent presentation are paired to serve you hearty meals with ridiculous proportions.

Recommended Equipment

Fly Rods:

The Lodge has rods and reels you may borrow and use during the week, although we recommend bringing your own equipment that you are familiar with. Depending on your preference, both single hand and Spey Rods will prove effective on the Babine.

Due to the nature of the Upper River, with you back against a wall quite often, Spey casters will certainly have an advantage without having to backcast. If you have not already joined the two handed revolution now is the time to start! Spey casters can simply cover more water more effectively and our teams of expert instructors have all the tools to work with novice and veterans alike!

The most popular choice of Spey rods for the Skeena system and the Babine are in the #7 and #8 weight category between 12.5 and 14 feet long. Your choice of rod for the trip is a matter of personal preference, though we have found that the lighter, relatively shorter rods are about perfect for every situation in the runs of the Babine. If you are having trouble deciding which rods are the most suitable for you, we would be more than happy to give you some expert advice, based on our experience there!

Fly Reels:

This is probably the most important part of your tackle system! A Reel of mediocre quality will not withstand the brute force of a fresh sea run trophy. Any high quality single action reel with 150 + yards of backing capacity with a good drag system will work fine. You hard-core guys know your classic Hardy's and other noise makers will sing regardless of the drag system.

Fly Lines:

Below are some examples of what we feel are the most suitable Spey lines for fishing the Babine. This will serve as a general guideline that anyone with any questions about equipment should follow. If you are uncertain which line you should select to properly match your rod, do not hesitate to contact us. We are experts in this field and we are happy to assist you in preparing the correct rod/line combinations.

Skagit style lines are basically shortened condensed shooting heads developed in the Pacific North West by a hard core group of anglers that were looking for a way to cast sinking tip and large weighted flies long distances, with a very short compact casting stroke, and small D-Loop. These lines have become very popular with steelheaders due to the fact that they are easy for both the expert and novice to cast, not to mention extremely useful in situations where room for a back cast is limited. These lines also work very well for people who prefer to fish shorter 12'-13'6 foot rods. The Airflo Skagit Compact heads can be very efficient tools on the Babine. These lines should be paired with the MOW sink tips in Heavy(T-14) or Medium(T-11) for these rivers. Many Skagit casters prefer to prepare their own sink tips using varied lengths of T-14. We prefer these custom tips in 2.5ft increasing length increments.

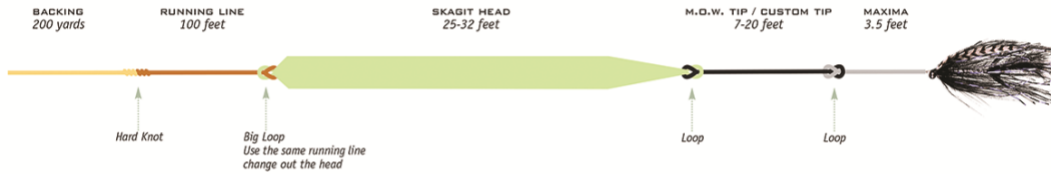
Scandi lines are the full floating version of the Skagit. Also short belly shooting heads, they are amazing at very efficiently loading the rod with a compact stroke and little effort, even in tight conditions. Long leaders are necessary to anchor these Scandi heads. This is what you want to use early season when the fish are grabbing flies off of the surface.

Skagit & Scandi Lines

Skagit Style Shooting Heads – *easiest to cast spey system*

These lines were developed by steelhead anglers to fish deep sinking tips and larger flies in winter conditions. The compact heads allow anglers to fish very dense, heavy tips and larger flies than is possible with longer spey lines. They also excel in windy conditions and help cast smaller D-loops when you've got your back to the wall.

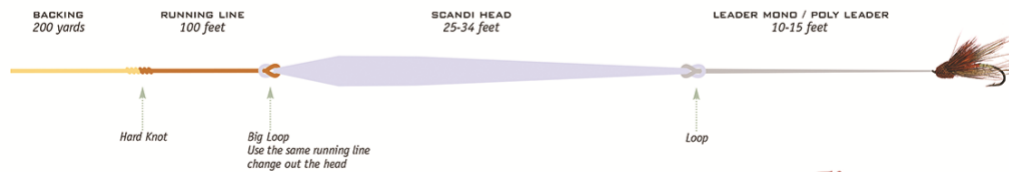
Skagit shooting heads have short, dynamic tapers designed to generate enough power to deliver deep sinking tips. Head lengths vary from 20 to 30 feet with looped ends. The rear is attached to running line, and tips (either MOW, iMOW or custom) are added to the front, creating a full head and maximum versatility.



Scandinavian (Scandi) Style Floating Shooting Heads

Scandi heads are designed to cast tight loops and make long distance casts as easily and effortlessly as possible. These type of spey lines are ideal for summer and fall steelhead, Atlantic salmon, and sea trout when the fish are aggressive and move to the surface. All our Scandi heads are factory looped on each end.

Scandi-type floating shooting heads attach at the rear to any shooting line, which is in turn attached to the running line then backing and then reel. At the front end most experts just attach a 10' to 14' poly or mono leader. Poly leaders are ideal to fish just below the surface while a tapered mono leader is the best choice to skate dries.



Be sure to give us a call if you have any questions on how to set up your spey rig **800-669-3474** or email us at: info@theflyshop.com. www.theflyshop.com

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Leaders:

Leaders for fishing sink tips in steelhead fly fishing are very simple...15lbs Maxima. You may want to bring a larger selection simply to insure that you will be prepared for any and every situation.

For the Scandi Lines, you will want long leaders, between 12 and 16 feet long, to provide the line stick of the anchor point. Rio's nylon mono Steelhead Leaders are great and inexpensive, Airflo's Poly Leaders are the best casting, but cost more.

Waders:

Chest high breathable waders are recommended when fishing any cold water these days and these rivers are no exception. Durability and comfort are key elements to consider when selecting a wader, there are many different manufactures that make quality products.

Rain Gear:

This is extremely important in Skeena Country. The Babine is in the mountains, in the Fall, at very high latitudes. You do not want to get caught with less than excellent rain gear and layering. Be prepared for what Mother Nature has in store and you will fish much longer hours... and catch more fish! Your choice of garment must allow freedom of movement and keep you dry, even in a downpour. We would be happy to suggest ideas for a raincoat.

Layering:

The "layering" system works best with today's top quality synthetic and wool garments. The idea is that by adding or removing multiple layers of clothing, in varying thickness and insulation, you will be able to obtain ideal body temperature and comfort, instead of just one big layer that you are either hot or cold in. If you have any questions we would be pleased to offer advice on the many options of the layering system. **Do not use COTTON layers in these conditions.**

If unsure of what gear you need to fully enjoy a week at Babine Steelhead Lodge we would be pleased to recommend equipment options. Although we do not seek to endorse specific brand names, our extensive experience has shown certain products to be superior.

Flies:

The usual steelhead menu, in the full spectrum of colors commonly used, will work great on the Babine. Some are dark and somber. Others are vibrant and bright. This is because of the diversity of water conditions. Even the same river can display different moods and may go from low and clear to high and muddy in a matter of hours. Have dries, or skaters in the early season as well as a large assortment of wet flies in varying sizes, colors, and weights for the entire Fall. Flies that would spook fish in one condition may be barely visible in another. Remember to have flies also in varying weights and sizes as well as a variety of colors. It pays to carry a variety of patterns and be prepared for whatever nature and her fish can throw at you. Steelhead will always be deliciously unpredictable. Tube Flies are the newest fly design concept to hit steelhead fly fishing and the possibilities are endless. Tubes allow steelhead fishermen versatility when it comes to meeting changing conditions by changing the type of tube they use, allowing more control over the depth and action of the fly. They also have the advantage of having a larger fly with a shorter shank hook, exactly what is called for to drag out large steelhead. The stinger style flies will also allow this and the Intruder Style flies are a favorite on the Babine.

Ask us here at The Fly Shop® to put a package together for you that will work in all of the fishing scenarios you may encounter, we will have you prepared before you get there. There is also a wide variety of flies for sale at the lodge for you to fill in any gaps you find when you arrive.

Additional Babine Steelhead Lodge Information

Disclosure:

Babine Steelhead Lodge will not be responsible or liable for any loss, damage or injury to participants, personal property, or for any cancellations, expenses or delays incurred as a result of weather, transportation or other conditions over which we have no control. Management reserves the right to withdraw and/or cancel any excursions offered at any time and make changes in itineraries as may be necessary for safety and proper handling of said excursions. All guests have a responsibility to disclose to management any special medical, physical or dietary conditions. We make no compromise to assure a safe trip; however, outdoor activities of this nature are not entirely "risk free". We recommend that you secure travel and trip cancellation insurance. Check with your insurance broker for options on this type insurance. All rates are subject to change without notice but will not change once booking is confirmed.

Packing and Gear Checklist

Chest Waders w/ Belt	Airline Tickets and Itinerary
Wading Boots with Studs	Valid Passport w/ Spare Copies Separated
Rain Jacket - Top Quality	Fishing Licenses
Base Layer - Top and Bottom, Thin Wicking Layer - 2 or 3 sets	Wallet - Cash (Tips) / Credit Cards (Call - Report Travel)
Mid Layer - Top and Bottom, Medium Weight Fleece Insulators - 1 set	Prescription Medication
Insulator Layer - Top and Bottom - Heavier layer for cold - Nano Puff / Softshells - 1 set	Camera / Lens / Extra Battery / Chargers
Heavy Socks and Liners	Emergency Telephone Numbers – This sheet!
Hats - Ball Caps / Tooks	Reading Glasses
Fleece Fishing Gloves	Charger: Phone / Other Device
Camp / Lodge Clothes	Tablet or Kindle
Waterproof Camp Shoes / Lodge Shoes	
Polarized Glasses	
Headlamp / Flashlight	
Fly Rods - at least 2 Spey Rods	
Reels - at least 2	
Lines - Skagit and Skandi Heads	
Sink Tips - T-14 - in all sizes 2.5' to 15'	
12' Tapered Leaders for Skating	
10 to 15 lbs Maxima Tippet	
Fly Box – Full & Diverse Selection	
Day Pack - Ideally Waterproof	
Dry Duffel for Float Trips	
Tool – Nippers / Debarb Hemos / Hook file	
Tape Measure	
Sunscreen / Lip Balm	
Toiletries - Tooth Brush / Toothpaste / etc	
Duct Tape	