

MARS BAY BONEFISH LODGE

SOUTH ANDROS, BAHAMAS



TACKLE & OUTFITTING GUIDE

GPS Coordinates: 23°51'54.95"N | 77°30'53.41"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](#)

Getting to Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge

Day of Arrival into Congo Town (South Andros Airport):

Check in time at Mars Bay is after 2:00 pm on the day of arrival and check out is before 10:00 am on your day of departure.

An excellent option for flights into Congo Town is with Makers Air out of Fort Lauderdale. They offer private charters and seat fares. You can look them up on their website at <https://www.makersair.com/>. To book a fare it's best to give them a call for available seats and pricing at (954) 771-0330. These flights are more expensive but can off-set the cost of having to overnight in Nassau. With Maker's Air, you'll clear customs in Fort Lauderdale at their terminal.

Another option in travel to South Andros is flying to Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport (NAS) and then taking a short, 20 minute flight into Congo Town (also sometimes called South Andros Airport, code: (TZN) with Western Air. You can make a reservation on their website (www.westernairbahamas.com) or by calling them in the Bahamas at (242) 377-2222. Please note that Western Air has a limited flight schedule and may not meet your travel timing.

Makers Air
Phone: (954) 771-0330
Email: info@makersair.com | <https://makersair.com/>
Hangar 19
2331 NW 55th Court
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
Seat fares and charter flights available to Andros and other islands.

Staniel Air
Phone: (954) 900-2739
Email: info@stanielair.com | <https://stanielair.com/>
Hanger 11
2201 NW 55th Ct
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
Seat fares and charter flights to Andros and other islands.

Once you arrive at Congo Town a pre-arranged car and driver will be waiting at the airport for you and your party. From there it's a twenty-two mile drive to Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge.

Departing Flights:

When booking your departing flight from Nassau back the states, be sure to allow enough time to get from Western Air to your connecting flight. Western does not arrive in Nassau until 9:30 AM some mornings, so scheduling a departing flight at 12 PM or later is best.

Please reconfirm your flight arrangements with the lodge the night before departure. Again, you will need to take a shuttle from the lodge to the Congo Town Airport. As you leave Nassau, a Bahamas departure tax of approximately \$15 is assessed at the airport. There is generally no fishing on departure day unless by special arrangement.



Passport and visas

All U.S. citizens are required to present a valid U.S. passport in order to enter or re-enter the United States when travelling by air. U.S. citizens do not need visas for short trips to the Bahamas for tourist/business purposes. It is important to note that although the Bahamian government only requires proof of citizenship and identity in order to enter the Bahamas, the U.S. government requires that Americans have a valid passport in order to fly home.

You will complete an immigration card upon arrival. It will be checked at your first point of entry and a copy will be given to you. Be careful not to lose this copy as it must be given to Immigration upon departure. For charter flights only, there is a departure tax payable at the airport upon departure; the tax is \$25 for most points of departure.

Communications

The lodge has Star link internet throughout the property. Phone calls to the states are complimentary through their VOIP line. Mars Bay does have cell service. Most cell phones usually work. AT&T seems to work best on the Bahamian network. Check with your carrier prior to departure to be sure you have international coverage. . If you're not sure please remember to turn your roam feature off.

Electrical power

The electrical outlets are AC 110 volts (same as the U.S.) and most appliances will work fine. Make sure that you have plenty of spare batteries for cameras and other small appliances, as the cost for replacements in the Bahamas is high.

Contact Numbers

Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge

Bill Howard, owner/operator

Cell Phone: (242) 357-2106

Email: marsbaybonefishlodge@yahoo.com

The Fly Shop®

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

U.S. Embassy Nassau

Queen Street #19

Telephone: 242-322-1181

Emergency after-hours telephone: (242) 357-7004

Laundry Service:

Water is limited on the island. There is no same day service. They ask that guests combine their laundry, and when they have a load the maid will wash and fold your laundry. She does this from the kindness in her heart and a tip. Please leave her a gratuity at the end of your stay.

Gratuities:

All tips must be paid in cash. Please be sure to bring enough cash to cover tips and other incidentals while on the island.

- **Guides:** \$125 per day per boat - Please tip your guide daily
- **Lodge staff:** \$40 per night per guest, collected by the manager at the end of your stay
- **Taxi driver:** as appropriate

**Fishing License:**

Included in your package.

A Day at Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge:

The ladies arrive early and get the coffee brewing, ready at five, on time for a hot cup in hand and the sunrise over the ocean. Breakfast is served at seven, and shortly thereafter everyone climbs into the truck and heads down to the marina to meet the guides. It's a one minute drive from the lodge to the marina, where the guides and their skiffs will be ready and waiting. Bill does the guide assignments the previous night, typically rotating the guides, so guests have the opportunity to fish with different guides during their stay.

A delicious homemade lunch is in your cooler, ready when you are. These are full fishing days and you should be back to the boat ramp before six, in time for a well-earned shower, cocktails, some great appetizers, followed by a delicious Bahamian dinner at seven. They serve classic Bahamian dishes, cracked conch, conch salad, fritters and chowder, lobster, and fish a couple different ways. They also serve grilled ribeye steak and New Zealand lamb rack, and occasionally a stuffed pork loin or chicken. It's certain that you'll never leave the table hungry and wanting for more.

Staying in Nassau

There are many options for your stay in Nassau, ranging from small family-owned inns situated in quieter areas to full-scale resorts. There is an array of restaurants and clubs, day cruises and other activities available. Below are some of our recommendations, and we encourage you to do some research of your own. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions.

Hotels

Orange Hill Beach Inn

West Bay Street

(242) 327-7157 | <https://orangehill.com/>

Orange Hill is a quaint family-owned inn 5 minutes from the airport. It is a convenient, economical choice for our traveling anglers. It sits across the street from a nice quiet beach and has a small bar/restaurant and a refreshing outdoor pool. Several good restaurants are just a short taxi ride away.

Sandy Port Hotel and Resort

West Bay Street

(242) 327-4279 | <https://www.sandyportresort.com/>

Sandy Port Hotel is part of the greater Sandy Port Development. It is located 10 minutes from the airport and can be a great choice for your over-night in Nassau. You will find a variety of dining options, stores and even a health club within walking distance of your accommodations. It has a relaxing atmosphere and a very professional staff.

British Colonial Hilton

No. 1 Bay Street

(242) 322-3301 | <https://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/bahamas/british-colonial-hilton-nassau-NASHIHH/index.html>

The British Colonial is a beautiful, well-appointed, luxury hotel situated right in the heart of the action on famous Bay Street. The grounds are amazingly quiet considering where it is situated. It is everything you expect from an International Hilton property and places you within walking distance of all the shops and restaurants of downtown.

Atlantis Resort and Casino

Paradise Island

(242) 363-2000 x 65401 | <https://www.atlantisbahamas.com/>

The grandeur of "The Atlantis" is hard to describe. It truly is a "mega" resort in the spirit of Las Vegas. It houses one of the largest aquariums in the world, a Vegas-style casino and numerous shops and restaurants.



It hums with energy and activity 24 hours a day. If you are staying elsewhere in Nassau, it is worth taking a taxi to Paradise Island and wandering through.

Restaurants:

The Poop Deck West
SandyPort on the Beach/West Bay Street
(242) 327-3325

An island favorite, the Poop Deck features a full bar, great steak, seafood and traditional Bahamian dishes.

Twin Brothers
Arowak Cay
(242) 328-5033

Located at the Arowak Cay Fish Fry Grounds, Twin Brothers is a fun, relaxing place to enjoy great local Bahamian cuisine. It is a favorite among the locals.

Green Parrot
Paradise Island / Hurricane Hole
(242) 363-3633

A well-known, very popular outdoor bar and grill that sits on the Hurricane Hole Marina. This is a fun place to hang out day and night watching the boat traffic in and out of Nassau Harbor, while chatting with the crews of the many yachts that are parked in the marina.

General Information

Insects on Andros:

Mosquitoes and “doctor flies” in the Bahamas are always a possibility. Wearing long pants and long sleeved shirts is your best protection, and insect repellent (with DEET) will deter these bugs. Pesky “No See’ums” may come out at dawn and dusk, especially when the winds are calm. A light pair of socks with your pants tucked in will eliminate any bites.

Clothing & Sun Protection:

Andros may be the most informal place on the planet Earth. Comfortable, casual wear is accepted and encouraged. Flip-flops, sandals, shorts, T-shirts...casual is king. Expect air temperatures in the mid-80s during the days and high 60s to low 70s in the evening and early mornings. We recommend long-sleeved shirts and long pants while on the flats. Apply a waterproof sunblock of at least 30 SPF to all exposed skin including your ears and lips each morning. Re-apply occasionally throughout the day and consider wearing a wide-brimmed hat and/or Buff. After applying sunscreen, scrub your hands with a scoop of sand and water as bonefish can smell lotion on your fly resulting in refusals. Applying sunscreen with the back of your hands minimizes transferring sunscreen to your fly and leader.

Weather:

Andros Island lies just north of the Tropic of Cancer, with a moderate temperature range affected by the surrounding waters. Average daytime temperatures range from the high eighties in the summer to the low seventies in the winter. Relative humidity holds at approximately sixty five percent throughout the year. As with most tropical climates, summer is the wettest season, with the majority of the rainfall occurring between May and October. Often dry and sunny for extended periods of time, Mars Bay is superbly located for year ‘round fishing.

Personal Gear:

You’ll need an assortment of personal gear for your days on the flats, and a boat bag to keep them in.

**Boat Bags:**

Your boat bag will contain all your gear for the day in the boat and in transfer to and from the dock. Anglers often prefer some organizing dividers inside, and quick access pouches on the outside. It needs to be large enough to hold your rain jacket, fly boxes, sunscreen, extra leaders and tippet, camera, and back up glasses and fly lines. Fishpond, Patagonia and Simms offer quality boat bags.

Wading Pack:

You may be wading for hours and the boat will be just a spec on the horizon. Be sure to bring a wading pack to carry your flies, leaders, tippet, clippers, a water bottle, snack bars, camera, etc. The design is your choice, with sling, fanny and backpack the most common. Fishpond, Patagonia and Simms offer proven models in these designs.

Tools:

Pliers, hemostats, leader snips, hook sharpener, and release tool.

Rain Gear:

Lightweight and breathable is the best for warm climates. Bring your rain gear with you on the boat everyday no matter how clear it looks. Squalls pop up quickly and the boat ride can be wet.

Sunglasses:

Polarized glasses with amber or copper lenses are the most popular for flats fishing, and having an extra pair in your boat bag is a darn good idea.

Tackle & Equipment

Multiple Rods:

We strongly suggest that you have a few fly rods strung-up, handy and ready to fish. Although Andros is primarily a bonefish destination, and depending on the season, there are opportunities to fish for barracuda, jacks, snappers, permit and tarpon. If you have three or four rods, bring them with you. Have the rods ready to fish, one with a bonefish fly, and another with a permit crab, or maybe a 'cuda fly, and another with a tarpon streamer or shark fly. If you are wading the flats, have your guide take one of the other rods along. At the least, it will double as a great fish pointer.

Bonefish Tackle

The primary focus of fishing South Andros is sight fishing for bonefish. On the average, bonefish will be in the 3 - 5 pound range. Smaller bonefish tend to swim together in large schools, a natural defense against sharks, barracudas and other predators. Large bonefish generally travel alone or in pairs. We have found that most times when fishing to big schools of moving bonefish, the largest fish tend to be in the back of the pack. Bonefish are active feeders and a variety of flies and fishing strategies are effective in taking them.

Rods:

We strongly suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 7, 8 and 9 weights. Fast action rods that generate high line speed are the most popular, and rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category, we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston rods. Traveling with a spare rod is always good idea.

Reels:

Reels designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for are smooth drags, sufficient backing capacity, and a machined, anodized aluminum, one-piece frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice, quickly retrieving line and backing. Proven saltwater reels are manufactured by Abel, Ross, Hatch, and Galvan.

**Lines:**

A weight forward floating line designed for the tropics is extremely important. Scientific Anglers Bonefish and Redfish Warm are excellent lines, as well as the Rio Flats Pro series. These lines are specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing and have a specifically designed core that provides the proper stiffness to allow excellent shooting while resisting tangles, even in tropical heat. They are extremely accurate lines, and the running portion is a large diameter and floats on top of the water, making it a pleasure for wade fishing. Traveling with a back-up fly line is strongly suggested. It weighs almost nothing, takes up little space in your luggage, and won't spoil before your next trip.

Flats Boots & Socks:

There are daily opportunities to get out of the boat and wade the flats. If you prefer wading, your guide can have you on foot most of the day. This means that you'll need a pair of quality flats boot for both foot protection and comfort. Quality boots that fit well are important, and proven models are made by Simms. Simms lightweight neoprene socks will add an additional layer of protection, absorbing the friction from sand that gets inside your boots.

Leaders & Tippet:

We typically fish 9' - 12' tapered saltwater leaders made from clear monofilament or fluorocarbon, with 12 - 20 lb. test the most popular choices. 12lb. leaders are common, but there are situations where you want to go heavier, 16lb. or 20lb, making the release quick and easy.

Both nylon and fluorocarbon leaders are popular among bonefish aficionados, with each having their specific properties. Nylon sinks slower than fluorocarbon and could be a good choice for presenting to fish in extremely shallow water. Fluorocarbon is less visible and more abrasion resistant, possibly the best as your last few feet of tippet.

Bonefish Flies:

Experienced anglers typically agree that having the right fly can make the difference between a good trip and a great one. Having a broad selection of bonefish flies will help to ensure that you have a successful trip. An important aspect of fly selection is sink rate. When tying or purchasing bonefish flies, vary the sink rate of your flies by including some with no eyes, bead chain eyes, and lead barbell eyes. This allows you to fish different depths of water and to fish tailing fish and cruising fish.

As a general rule, use light colored flies on a sand bottom, and dark colored flies on turtle grass or rubble bottoms. On the flats, high visibility can turn any creature into prey. Most prey on bonefish flats are well camouflaged. Try smaller flies for fish that are spooky or tailing on shallow flats in calm weather conditions. On deeper flats, or in windy conditions, larger flies work well, especially on fish that are cruising fast. Larger flies should typically be cast further away from bonefish.

Subtle earth tone flies often work best on sunny, bright days in shallow water when bonefish are spooky. Bright flies generally work best on cloudy or overcast days.

Year after year the Gotcha has proven to be a go to fly, spawning a number of effective variations including the Beck's Sili Legs. Spawning and Mantis shrimp patterns are important flies on South Andros, and it seems like every guide and angler has their favorite patterns.

Bring your favorite Gotchas, spawning shrimp and crab patterns, in white, pink, pearl, brown, and tan in sizes 2, 4 and 6. Include weighted flies for fishing the deeper edges and high tides, and unweighted flies for fish in skinny water. You may need to change the pearl Gotcha that worked all morning to a Spawning Mantis in the afternoon.

With these thoughts in mind, we have prepared a list of flies with which we have found success.

**Bonefish Flies:**

- Gotcha - #2, 4 & 6
- Orange Butt Gotcha - #4, 6
- Shallow Water Clouser - #6, tan/white, & chartreuse/white
- Mini Puff - #4 & 6, pink & tan
- E.P. Spawning Shrimp - #4, Bead chain and lead eyes, tan and translucent
- Borski's Bonefish Slider - #2, 4
- Squimp - #2, 6
- Miheves Flats Fly - #6
- Beck's Silli-Legs - #6, tan
- Bonefish Junk - #2, 4, 6
- Spawning Mantis - # 2, 4, 6
- Sandy's Cracked Crab - #4
- Raghead Crab - #6, tan

Tarpon Tackle

Although bonefish are what most fly fishers are chasing in the Bahamas, tarpon are available. Tarpon in the Bahamas are most often seen in and around creek, freshwater springs and blue holes. Most tarpon in the Bahamas range in size between 30 - 60 pounds. Big tarpon, up to and over 100 pounds, are often sighted in the spring and summer. If you own a 10, 11 or 12 weight rods, bring it to Andros if you intend to hunt tarpon.

Rods:

Fast action 9', 4 piece travel rods in 10, 11, & 12 weights are standard. The Sage, Scott, and Winston rods are excellent choices.

Reels:

A heavy-duty saltwater reel is a must here. Look for a reel with a smooth drag, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy one-piece, machined, aluminum anodized frame. Models to consider are built by Hardy, Abel, Galvan, Ross and Hatch.

Lines:

Ninety percent of tarpon fishing is done with a weight forward floating line and the Scientific Anglers Mastery Tarpon Taper is one of the best. A good second choice in a tarpon line is a full sinking intermediate line, and we fish the S.A. Sonar in this situation.

Leaders:

Leaders for tarpon can be simple, or complex. The knots used in building class tippet tarpon leaders take some practice to learn, and it can be very rewarding to acquire those skills. We often build a simple tarpon leader with 8 foot of 40# fluorocarbon followed by 2 feet of 60#, 80#, or 100# bite tippet. You can also purchase Hand-Tied Tarpon Leaders from Rio.

If you would like to tie your own tarpon leaders, some good reference books are Lefty Kreh's "Fly Fishing in Saltwater" and "Practical Fishing Knots by Lefty Kreh and Mark Sosin." We like to use clear, stiff monofilament or fluorocarbon when constructing our class leaders.



Tarpon Flies:

In general, tarpon flies for the Bahamas should be tied on 1/0 through 3/0 size hooks. Slight variations in shape and color can be all that is needed to entice tarpon into striking. Flies to consider are:

- Tarpon Rabbit Toad - #1/0; purple/black, tan, chartreuse
- Cockroach - #1/0 & 4/0
- Bigeye Tarpon - #3/0; orange/grizzly, sand devil, yellow
- Black Death - #3/0
- Tarpon Toad - #2/0; yellow, chartreuse, red/black

Permit Tackle

There are very few permit on Andros. However, they are occasionally seen so if you want to have a rod rigged up, below is what we suggest. Permit in the Bahamas range in size from 3 - 30 pounds. Most often you will sight permit in deeper water (4 to 6 feet), along the edge flats or at the top of a high tide change. We recommend taking a 9 or 10 weight rod if you are after permit and having it rigged and ready in the boat.

Rods:

We suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 9 or 10 weights. We like fast tapered fly rods that generate high line speed. Rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category we like rods built by Sage, Scott, and Winston.

Reels:

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for in reels are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and take up line and backing very quickly. Reels to consider include those built by Hardy, Abel, Galvan, Ross and Hatch.

Lines:

The Scientific Anglers and Rio saltwater floating lines are a couple of our favorite permit lines. They cast permit crab and shrimp flies with ease, and both are very accurate.

Leaders:

Fluorocarbon leaders are your best choice for permit as they are virtually invisible in water, and highly abrasion resistant. Fluorocarbon 9' leaders and tippet in 16 & 20 lb. test are standard.

Permit Flies:

There are a lot of permit flies marketed these days, and here are a few of them that have hooked permit.

- Squimp - #2; tan
- Raghead Crab - #2; tan, olive
- Contraband Crab #2, 4; olive, tan
- Casa Blanca Raghead Crab - #2; tan, white
- Avalon Permit - #2
- Puglisi's Spawning Shrimp - #4; tan, translucent
- Puglisi's Bead Chain Spawning Shrimp - #4; tan

Barracuda & Jacks

Barracuda in the Bahamas get big, and they are very aggressive. They attack a fly at an unbelievable rate of speed, and often skyrocket into the air when hooked. When hooked, few fish can match a 'cudas initial run for speed and sheer violence...hold on!



Jacks are very fast, pull like a freight train, and will destroy both surface poppers and streamers. Watching them blow up on your popper while you strip it as fast as you can is a sight to remember. Endurance is their strong point, and no jack gives up without a fight that you will remember.

Rods:

Flies for these fish are often large streamers and poppers, so 9', 4 piece travel rod in 9 or 10 weights are good choices. Your permit rod is also a barracuda rod. Fast tapered rods that generate good line speed like those built by Sage, Scott and Winston are good choices.

Reels:

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. The same reel that you brought for permit, your 9 or 10 weight, will perform well for barracuda fishing.

Leaders:

Leaders for barracuda and jacks can be simple. We often build a leader with 8 foot of 40# fluorocarbon for jacks, and add a bite tippet of 40 lb. Rio Powerflex Wire Bite Tippet or Scientific Anglers Wire Tippet for barracuda.

Flies for Barracuda & Jacks:

- In-Shore Popper – #3/0; chartreuse
- Tandem Cuda Fly - #2/0
- Cuda Killer – #4/0

Bonefish Behavior

Bonefish are the target species on Andros Island, and have three basic modes of behavior.

Feeding Fish:

Bonefish feed on the bottom, and through the water column. While feeding on very shallow flats their dorsal fins and shimmering tails are often visible out of the water. While bonefish are feeding, the condition of the surface of the water affects their feeling of security. Bonefish are more nervous in calm water. Conditions determine how best to present the fly. On most days there is a light wind chop on the water's surface and presenting the fly three to five feet in front of them is successful. On very calm days the fly should be cast further from the fish and stripped back into his area of awareness.

Mudding Fish:

During the warmer months very large schools of bonefish will often back off the shoreline into 3 to 8 feet of cooler water. While feeding on the bottom they stir up silt, creating a visible cloud of mud. This cloud of mud moves as the bonefish feed, making them feel quite secure because they are not visible to predators. Fishing muds can be an excellent experience for beginners, allowing them to have repeated opportunities to hook and handle multiple bonefish.

Traveling Fish:

Traveling bonefish are intent on changing location, typically quite aware of their surroundings and not necessarily interested in feeding. When casting to traveling bonefish, present your fly well ahead of the fish and let it settle. When the fish is in range of seeing the fly, make a few short strips showing the fly to the fish, and let it settle again to the bottom. Hopefully the fish will stop and feed in your fly.



Bonefishing Technique:

On the flats and fishing from the skiff, your guide will be standing on the platform and poling the boat while scanning for fish. You will be standing on the casting deck with your rod in one hand and your fly in the other.

Another method will be wading the flats. When wading, walk slowly and stop often to look for fish. If you see the fish moving in a specific direction, move quietly into position so you will be able to present the fly in front the fish. You usually have more time than you think to make a precise presentation.

Bonefish are almost always moving, and movement is often the first sign of fish. From the skiff, scan the water slowly from side to side, within the range that you can cast. The guide will be looking further out, responsible for finding fish at a distance and poling the boat into good casting position. Look for the flash of an exposed tail, nervous water, a wave or wake on top of the water, or the dark shadow of a cruising fish. When casting to a fish that is moving towards you, land the fly in front of the fish, let it sink while the fish moves towards it, and begin stripping when the fish is close to the fly.

Typically, the guide will see the fish before you, and will put the boat in position for your cast. You will hear him direct you to the fish by saying something like “10 o’clock, 40 feet, going left”. Point your rod where you think he is directing you, and he will often help by saying, “more left” or “more right”, and tell you when to cast.

If you do not see the fish, do not cast until your guide asks you to. He will put the boat in position for the cast, tell you how far to cast and in which direction, and when to cast. Follow his directions in when to begin stripping your fly.

After you cast, let the fly sink to the bottom and make your first strips long and slow to get the fishes attention. Now you are going to “read the fish” by observing its behavior. If it moves quickly to your fly and stops, it probably ate your fly. Make a long strip to set the hook. If there is no resistance, stop, let the fly sink, and begin stripping again. If you do feel resistance, pull on your line to set the hook without lifting your rod, and prepare to “clear your line” as the fish runs. The first run often takes all the line quickly off the deck, and it is important that you guide the line off the deck and onto the reel. Your drag has been preset, so hold your rod tip high and enjoy the run! Occasionally the fish will turn and run towards you. If you can’t strip fast enough to keep a tight line, push your rod tip into the water and the drag of the fish pulling the line through the water will keep tension on the hook. Bonefish have tough mouths and having sharp hooks is important. Check your hook point regularly by pulling it across your thumb nail. If it digs into your nail, it’s sharp. If it drags across your nail without sticking, it’s time to sharpen the point.

Be certain to pinch down the barbs on your hooks. This makes it easier to release fish with minimal handling, and also minimizes the risk of injury to yourself and others.

You & Your Guide are a Team:

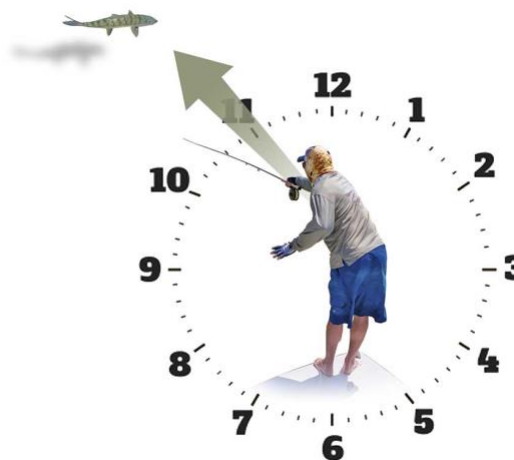
Please introduce yourself and get to know your guide. Discuss which species you want to fish, how you want to fish (wading or from the boat), your abilities and fishing experience.

Encourage your guide to guide check your equipment, knots, leaders, tippet material, flies, rod and reel, etc. When you first step up on the casting platform, strip out some line and make a short cast as the guide watches. Ask the guide how far you just cast. Next, make a medium cast. Then, make a long cast. Make sure you are both agreeing in judging distance.

On the flats, the guide will often spot fish before you. When this happens, your guide will refer the numbers on a clock to give you the fish’s general direction. For example, the bow on the boat would represent 12:00 o’clock. Perpendicular to the boat off of your right is 3:00 o’clock; perpendicular to the boat off your left is

9:00 o'clock, etc. In addition to the direction, the guide will also refer to the distance and the direction that the fish is swimming. For example: "1:00 o'clock --- 50 feet, going left".

If your guide spots a fish and you do not see it, don't cast until you see that fish. Point your rod in front of you as if a pointer on a chalk board and have your guide direct your rod to where he sees the fish. Your guide might say, "2 o'clock, more right, keep going, stop!" That is where you should concentrate your vision and again do not cast until you see the fish, or your guide instructs you to do so.



Setting the hook in saltwater fishing is very different from what most of us have learned in freshwater. You want to learn and practice the "Strip" strike or set. This is not done by lifting the rod tip as in trout fishing, but by keeping your rod pointed at the fish and pulling on the line, or stripping. In this way, the hook is either buried in the fish with the static line driving the hook, or at least the fly will remain in front of the fish for another chance. Lifting the rod tip will likely pull the hook out of the mouth of the fish without a hookup and spook the fish from the area.

About Andros Island & the Fishing

Andros Island is the largest island in the Bahamas, 25 miles west of New Providence Island and about 125 miles east-southeast of Florida. A flat, heavily forested island, Andros extends about 100 miles from north to south and spans about 45 miles from east to west at the widest point. The island is crisscrossed with creeks, bights, and is home to some of the best bonefish habitat in the world. It is impossible to fish all of the water available to you in a week of fishing. Whether you like to wade fish or fish from a boat, you will have plenty of water to explore.

Andros Island can be divided roughly into three distinct parts; the creeks and bights, the hard sand flats of the East and Southern side, and the wilderness of the west side, aka "The Land of Giants." The bonefish in the Middle Bight and the South Bight are plentiful and average 3 to 5 pounds with regular shots at fish weighing 6 to 10 pounds. The fish of the outer, hard sand flats of the east and south sides of Andros also average between 3 to 5 pounds with bigger fish always lurking in singles and doubles. Andros is home to some of the largest bonefish in the world. Double digit fish are a distinct possibility.

Bonefish evolved their incredible burst speed to avoid being eaten by predators. Since they are the favorite food of sharks and barracuda it is very important to release them in good condition and give them a strong chance to survive. Please be careful when handling bonefish and be sure to fight the fish quickly. If it has been a long difficult battle, please consider taking photos of the fish only in the water. Trophy bonefish are old fish and what makes the fishery special, so please take good care of them. We hope all anglers realize that the release is more important than a photo.

We do not recommend ultra-light leaders and long fights with loose drags that tire the fish excessively. Leader should not be lighter than 12 lb. and we recommend 16 and even 20 lb. leaders.

For photographs, please revive the fish before removing it from the water for the photograph and please keep the fish out of the water for as short a time as possible. Handle the fish with clean, wet hands as little as possible. Please allow your guide to take the time to revive the fish before releasing.



We follow the recommendations of Bonefish & Tarpon Trust's "Best Practices for Bonefish Catch & Release". <https://www.bonefishtarpontrust.org/education-outreach-bonefish-catch-release/>

Mars Bay Clothing & Equipment Checklist

- Hat with bill & neck protection
- Polarized sunglasses (2 pair)
- Buff® neck gaiter
- Long sleeve fishing shirts
- Evening wear shirts
- Raingear (light-weight for thunder showers or wet boat rides)
- Wading pants
- Sun gloves
- Shorts & swimsuit
- Wading socks (we recommend the Simms light neoprene socks)
- Wading shoes or booties (should have heavy sole for maximum protection)
- Sandals or flip flops
- Belt
- Sunscreen SPF 30+ UVA/UVB
- SPF Lip balm
- Insect repellent (DEET as the active ingredient is best)
- Line dressing & cleaner
- Forceps / pliers / hook file / line clipper
- Reel lube / oil
- Zip-lock® bags & garbage bags
- Small flashlight or headlamp
- Flexx-Rap or finger guards
- Toiletries
- Camera & Battery Charger & storage Cards
- Smartphone / Tablet & charger
- Small binoculars
- Wading pack & boat bag
- Airline tickets
- Notebook & pen
- Passport
- 2 Copies of passport (packed separately in Zip-Lok baggies)
- Book & magazines
- Cash & credit cards
- Emergency contact numbers
- Prescription glasses
- Pre-trip information
- Aspirin & Prescription drugs