

Tarpon Club - Isla Holbox

Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico



The Fly Shop


Travel & Tackle Planner

GPS Coordinates: 21°31'20.59"N | 87°23'5.46"W

WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM



QUESTIONNAIRE (IMPORTANT)

As soon as you have an opportunity, please take a few short minutes to complete this online form to better help both The Fly Shop and the Tarpon Club Isla Holbox Staff in coordinating the best possible fishing experience for you during your stay in Mexico. Trip Questionnaire: [Click Here](#)

ABOUT THIS PRE-TRIP PLANNER

This pre-trip planner & outfitting guide is your go-to resource for questions about your trip from now until you return home safely. It is loaded with information about travel, lodge policy, sample itinerary, and of course lots of clothing, gear, and tackle recommendations. Feel free to contact us anytime with questions or concerns, but know this is a great reference to keep handy.

GETTING TO ISLA HOLBOX

BOOKING AIRFARE TO CANCUN, MEXICO (CUN)

Now is also the time to secure your commercial airline reservations to/from Cancun, Mexico. You will need to make these arrangements on your own, however we highly recommend Alicia at Holdy Tours. She is amazing at handling travel in and out of Central and South America. alicia@holdytours.com (800) 446-1111

Cancun is serviced daily by nearly every airline with multiple flights daily to/from the U.S.A. American Airlines and United Airlines are most often the carriers of choice for most anglers. There are multiple non-stop flights from LA, Dallas / Ft. Worth and Miami with American Airlines and direct flights with United Airlines from LA and Houston.

IMPORTANT NOTE

A U.S. Passport valid for at least six months beyond your travel dates is required for entry into the country of Mexico. Remember, passports are now required for all land and border crossings into and out of the United States.

ARRIVAL DAY

Guests are instructed to **ARRIVE IN CANCUN NO LATER THAN 2:00pm** on arrival day. If you must arrive after 2:00pm, you will want to get a hotel in Cancun for the evening and transfer to the lodge the next day. This is not included in the cost of the trip. Shuttle departure time to the lodge will be 10am the next morning.

From Cancun, you will be driven approximately 2 hours west then north, to the little town of Chiquila. There you will catch a ferry boat to the island of Holbox, the ferry ride only takes about 30 minutes. Once you pull into the dock on the island, you will be met by a taxi driver with a golf cart to take you the 7 minutes from the dock to the lodge, across the island.

DEPARTURE DAY

Guests must plan for a scheduled **DEPARTURE FROM CANCUN NO EARLIER THAN 2:00 PM**. You will do the above in reverse, taxi to ferry to ground transfer, 2.5 to 3 hours, back to Cancun. Booking flights out too early will set you up to miss them.

BEFORE YOU BOOK YOUR COMMERCIAL AIRFARE

Before you solidify any non-refundable commercial airline reservations, please verify with us that your



perspective flight schedule is suitable for your specific itinerary and ground connections onward to the lodge. Once you have made your airlines reservations, we will need a copy of your itinerary in order to coordinate meeting your driver at the airport.

IMMIGRATION CARD (DON'T LOSE IT)

During your flight from the U.S. to Mexico, your international carrier will provide you with a Mexican Immigration and Customs Declaration Form. You will need your passport and a pen to complete this information card. A portion of the card will be submitted upon entry to Mexico during the immigrations process. The bottom section will be turned in upon your departure from Mexico. It is a good idea to keep the bottom portion of this card with your passport.

CUSTOMS

Once you have gone through immigrations and collected your luggage at the baggage claim, you will go through customs. There you will be asked to push a button that looks like a traffic stoplight. If you get a green light, you will be waived through. If you get a red light your luggage will need to be inspected. This should not be an intimidating process - and usually only takes a few moments.

MEETING YOUR DRIVER

After going through immigrations and clearing customs, you will proceed through the terminal and exit to the outside, they cannot go in to meet you as it is a secure area. If you did not arrive at Terminal # 3, you need to make your way over there to the "Meeting Spot" at the "Berry Hill" Restaurant at Terminal # 3. A Tarpon Club Isla Holbox representative will be there to meet you before long, immediately outside as you exit the terminals secure area.

Your driver will meet you there holding a sign with either your name on it, or with "Tarpon Club Isla Holbox". If at first you do not immediately see your transfer driver, simply wait on the patio at the Berry Hill Restaurant until he arrives. Oftentimes, the lodge has multiple parties arriving from multiple terminals or coming from Cancun hotels. Your driver will promptly show up if he is not there upon your arrival.

NOTE ABOUT TERMINALS

If on the slim chance you arrive into Terminal #2, there is a free shuttle service just outside that will take you to Terminal #3. Take this shuttle and head to the "MEETING POINT" sign at the Berryhill Restaurant.

THE TRANSFER TO ISLA HOLBOX

It takes approximately 3 hours to transfer guests from the Cancun Airport to Holbox. You will start in a comfortable air conditioned van for a 2 hour drive to the little town of Chiquila. The drive is very easy, on a fast moving, modern paved highway. Once there, the transfer driver will go get you a ticket for the ferry boat to the island. This takes about a half an hour, then a short 7 minute taxi ride to the lodge from the ferry dock. There will be people to help at every corner, identifying themselves with signs for Tarpon Club Isla Holbox, or with your name.

STOPPING FOR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Holbox is a very small town, but there are stores and plenty of little bars and restaurants to get drinks. You may still want to ask your driver to stop at a store before departing Cancun to pick up any liquor or wine you may desire to bring with you to the lodge. Your driver is accustomed to this request - so feel free to ask him to stop for any last minute shopping in town before you head out.



There is no guided fishing on your arrival day. Sometime after checking into your room in the afternoon your guide will stop by to introduce himself, check out your gear, and fill you in on the fishing schedule for the coming days.

FISHING DAYS

Fishing Days start early on Holbox! The guides and fish really like the low light and light winds of the very early morning, so be prepared for an alpine start! Meet times will usually vary during the season to take advantage of fishing at first light.

The guides will fish you super hard for over 8 hours, getting you back to the lodge sometime around 3pm.

5:30 AM Coffee is available.

5:30 AM A breakfast Burrito is available for you by the staff to enjoy in the downstairs dining area or to take on the go.

6:00 AM The guides will pick you up from the Hotel and take you to the Pangas. Bring light colored sunglasses for eye protection that can be worn in very low light!

12:00 PM Your choice of water and other beverages will be packed in a cooler on board your boat. Lunch will be served in the boat, on the fly or in the shade of the mangroves. Lunches are simple, sandwiches with chips and cookies.

2:00 PM You will return to the lodge after another great day on the water. Upon return to the lodge, your rods, reels and lines should be rinsed with fresh water right at the Lodge. Hang your rods to dry.

4:30 PM After getting cleaned up you can enjoy the beach or just relax.

6:00 PM You can head out to town whenever you feel like it, for dinner and drinks, or just relax until after the beautiful sunset over the Gulf.

DEPARTURE DAY

At the finish of your last day of fishing you will want to thoroughly rinse your rods and reels and get yourself partially packed up the night before. After a leisurely breakfast, you will load up in Golf cart taxi, dropped at the Ferry, and then met in Chiquila for the ground transfer back to Cancun and the airport for your international flight home or hotel if you are staying on in a hotel in Cancun. **DEPARTURE FROM CANCUN NO EARLIER THAN 2:00 PM**

COMMUNICATIONS

CONTACTING HOME / GUESTS

Guests are welcome to contact the United States via the lodge's Wi-Fi. WhatsApp, Facetime and Messenger are all great apps to communicate via Wi-Fi from any smartphone. These forms of communication are free of charge and a pretty good connection. Cell service works great on Holbox, but you will be charged international rates for all calls, texts and emails and internet use. This can get ridiculously expensive. Do yourself a favor and either get an international plan, or just leave your phone on airplane mode while out of the country and use Wi-Fi only.



In the case of emergency, we have provided you with ample contact numbers your family may use to reach you. Family and friends are also encouraged to contact us at The Fly Shop if you need assistance tracking down a guest at the lodge.

EMAIL / INTERNET

The lodge is equipped with wireless internet access, Wi-Fi. Please feel free to bring your laptop if you intend on using a computer to check email or the web. Ask lodge manager for the wireless log-in information.

Contact Information

TARPON CLUB HOLBOX

Bill Marts – Director in the USA: (530) 410-4771

camile1144@comcast.net | sabalogrande1144@gmail.com

Casa Luz Holbox Villa

CARLA-HOTEL MANAGER

Phone: 011-52-984-316-5036

GUIDES

Sandflea- 011-52 984-157-5837 | mrsandfleaholbox1@hotmail.com

Carlos- 011-52-999-127-9360 (in charge of guides when Sandflea is away)

THE FLY SHOP®

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

GENERAL INFO ABOUT MEXICO

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To enter the country of Mexico you must have proof of citizenship in the form of a valid Passport. Birth Certificates are no longer an acceptable form of identification when entering Mexico.

TOURIST CARD

This document is essential and will be issued by the air carrier flying you to Mexico along with your customs and immigration declaration. **DO NOT LOSE THIS DOCUMENT.** You will be asked to present it upon departure from Mexico.

ARRIVAL TAXES

There is sometimes an entry fee to the country of Mexico of roughly \$20.00. This fee is most often included in the price of commercial airfare.

DEPARTURE TAXES

While departure taxes have not been enforced in a few years, approximately \$20US may be payable at the airport when leaving Mexico. Airlines usually include this tax as a part of your fare.

LOST LUGGAGE AT THE AIRPORT

If you arrive in Mexico and you cannot find your luggage, you must report it to an airline representative before



you leave the baggage claim area. If you do not, it is likely that you will not recover these items. Do not surrender your original baggage claim ticket stubs when making a lost baggage claim with the airlines. Insist that they make photocopies for their records. After informing the airline, report the loss to the lodge's local representative.

CURRENCY

The Mexican currency is the Peso. U.S. currency is widely accepted and we recommend not exchanging dollars for pesos. Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are widely accepted in Mexico. **MAKE SURE YOUR CARDS ARE CHIPPED!** Magnetic strips only decline much more and are often not accepted at all in foreign countries.

Note: ATM machines oftentimes do not work in Mexico. We recommend gathering enough cash for your trip prior to arrival into the country.

TIME ZONES

The Yucatan Peninsula is on Eastern Standard Time. The Baja Peninsula is on Pacific Standard Time.

INOCULATIONS & HEALTH

There are currently no inoculations required or recommended for traveling to Mexico. However, you may want to check with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta for their recommendations on health precautions when traveling anywhere outside the United States. Toll Free: (800) 232-4636 or <https://www.cdc.gov/>

LODGE INFO & POLICY

GRATUITIES

Tipping is a personal decision based on good service and is completely at your discretion. The following recommendations are simply for your understanding of what the expected tip is for a satisfied guest. Feel free to tip a bit more if you are very impressed with the program and work ethic. Many clients will happily offer a larger gratuity to specific guides who help them catch a special trophy fish or work hard through difficult conditions.

ALL TIPS SHOULD BE GIVEN IN U.S. CURRENCY – CASH ONLY. WE CANNOT PROCESS CREDIT CARDS OR CHECKS FOR GRATUITIES.

GUIDES AND LODGE STAFF

We recommend around approximately \$100 per boat / per day to the guides. \$3-\$5 per person, per day to the lodge staff.

WHEN & HOW TO DISTRIBUTE GRATUITIES

Tip your guides at the end of each day; please give you gratuity directly to the guide. You can give the lodge manager. Please tip the restaurant and bar tender separately for your extra food, snacks and drinks. He will distribute it evenly to his lodge staff.

AIRPORT AND GROUND TRANSFER GRATUITIES

We recommend a \$15 per person gratuity for your ground transfer driver (each way), as well as a modest tip for the taxi driver on the island.



WATER

DO NOT DRINK THE TAP WATER in Mexico! If you are particularly susceptible to intestinal problems in the tropics, you probably should not brush your teeth with it either. There is purified drinking water found in your room and on the boat, always available and replenished daily.

FISHING LICENCE

Approximately \$23 per week, paid to the guide at the Hotel. You will receive a bracelet.

BOATS

Boats used by the lodge are very stable and comfortable Mexican Pangas. They will accommodate two anglers and your guide very comfortably. Each boat is equipped with 40-50 horsepower Yamaha outboards and is constructed with a forward casting deck, tandem passenger seats, rod storage for six rods and a poling platform. Before you board the boats each day, you should be sure to have reel covers on your reels. While running, the reels often bounce and can be scratched.

GUIDES

Holbox's guides are the best in the entire area. All of the guides are extremely knowledgeable about their water and accomplished fly anglers themselves. Most speak English well, but more importantly, they speak Tarpon fluently. They are very good at communicating where the fish are, direction and distance, and they are very enthusiastic about putting you on, and keeping you on the fish.

NOTE ON FISHING HOURS

The standard itinerary on Holbox is start time before first light, and fishing a full 8+ hours straight, getting you back to the lodge somewhere around 3pm. These guys are hard core and will fish you as hard as you can handle.

BOAT REFRESHMENTS

Every morning your boat's cooler will be well stocked with complimentary non-alcoholic beverages, plenty of water, and Cokes and Gatorade if requested. If want boat beers, be sure to buy it at the hotel the day before and give them to your guide for your fishing day. Be sure to inform someone if you would like more or less of a specific beverage.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is not included. You will either want to pick some up on you way out of Cancun or enjoy beverages at the local bars and restaurants of the island. You are welcome and encouraged to bring your own spirits.

DRESS ATTIRE ON HOLBOX

The atmosphere is very laid back on the Island. You're on vacation! Please feel free to wear whatever is comfortable.

ELECTRICALCURRENT & AIR CONDITIONING

There is electrical power (110 volts/60 cycles) identical to U.S. There is no need for converters or adapters. All rooms are equipped with individually controlled air conditioning.



TACKLE & EQUIPMENT AT THE LODGE

All anglers should plan on bringing their own fishing equipment and tackle, but there are some big fish rods available for rent if needed. Just remember, there is no guarantee that the guy the week before did not trash it. Always better to come prepared with equipment that you are sure is in perfect working order. You must plan on at least being prepared with the flies and leaders you will need. There is no fly shop on Holbox, and impossible for them to supply everyone with these items that are so easy for us to be prepared with. Their remote nature does not guarantee that these items will be well stocked.

RENTAL GEAR

The fly rod rental fee at Isla Holbox is \$50/day (12 or 11 weight rod, reel and line). You are responsible for providing leaders and flies which are available at The Fly Shop or can purchase through the guide at Holbox for \$6/each. You will pay for the rental gear and any other ancillary gear direct to the guide in \$USD.

Please let us know if you are interested in renting a fly rod and reel outfit and will reserve one for you with the outfitter.

PLEASE INFORM THE FLY SHOP IF YOU NEED TO RENT EQUIPMENT FROM THE GUIDE.

MANDATORY ITEMS

- 8 weight rod w/floating Tropical fly line (Baby Tarpon) or 9wt rod w/ floating Tropical line (Baby Tarpon)
- 11 weight – 12 weight rods during the summer months (Grande Tarpon!)
- Polarized Sunglasses (GOOD ONES!)
- Fly Selection
- Pre Tied Tarpon Leaders and Extra Shock Tippet
- Boat Bag
- Tropical Weight Rain Jacket

NOTES ON ROD & REEL SELECTION

Your sole objective when visiting Holbox is tarpon. This lets you be a little more focused on the equipment side than in other saltwater fisheries. An 8 weight will do it for the juvenile and baby tarpon fishery. In the summer months you will need to come prepared with 11wt-12 weight rods and sinking lines. You may want 2 rods set up with different flies for quick changing and backup, but you don't need to bring a ton of different line weights for multiple species.

We highly recommend 4-piece rods for all travel with commercial airline carriers. Fly rods for all saltwater flats applications should be fast action models with fighting butts capable of handling windy conditions and delivering heavier flies. Remember, wooden reel seats will corrode and rot in the saltwater, so make sure your rod is equipped with an aluminum reel seat. We highly recommend nine foot rods as the ideal length for nearly all line weights between six - twelve weights, for saltwater. We also always recommend bringing a backup rod in case of breakage.

A nine-foot, eight-weight rod is the standard universal rod used by the vast majority of all anglers targeting baby tarpon on Holbox. 11wt and 12wt rods are required for the big fish of the summer. You want a rod that has enough fortitude to deliver the fly in windy conditions and kick over the slightly larger tarpon flies. Casts



must also be long and accurate, with some presentations at closer casting ranges. Some anglers will also bring a 7wt, 9wt and 10wt rods for varying conditions.

REELS AND SPOOLS

Reels should be anodized, corrosion-resistant saltwater models that will hold a full fly line plus the appropriate amount of backing in accordance with the species you are targeting, which is never less than 200 yards, and maybe up to 400yds! Reels equipped with high quality; smooth, sealed drags are essential to preventing break-offs from the blistering runs of a hooked fish. We cannot stress the importance of acquiring a reel with a high quality sealed drag. If you are planning on chasing multiple species that require the same rod and reel but a differing line, we highly recommend the convenience of an additional reel or spool. Having an extra spool loaded with a differing line (or simply a backup line) can make changing fly lines infinitely easier and faster.

FLY LINES

Holbox is a very diverse tarpon fishery, requiring different lines for the different applications. Baby tarpon require nothing more than a standard tropical weight forward floating line. For the big boys, be prepared with Floaters as well as full sinking lines for deep fish and INT lines to cover fish in the middle. Fly lines can easily break on fish tangling in the mangroves as well as fall victim to sharks or barracudas, so make sure to bring additional lines as backup.

TARPON LEADERS & TIPPET

For baby tarpon some tarpon anglers like the ease of what is called a “Suicide Rig”: A straight piece of fluorocarbon or monofilament, 5’-12’, non- tapered, in about 40 or 50 lbs test. This system is super strong and easy to tie with a loop to loop connection onto your fly line. Unless you are interested in setting IGFA records, this is the simple way to rigging your tarpon leader.

For adult tarpon over 80 pounds, hand tied tarpon leaders from Rio are an excellent choice, with 80 or 100lb shock tippet.

EQUIPMENT ACCESSORIES

LINE CLEANER

Saltwater has a way of making fly lines sticky and dirty after a few days of use. Anglers should also bring along some sort of line cleaner to keep your fly line in good working order. Rio and Backcountry Laboratories both make excellent products. The staff at the Club will clean and dress your fly lines following each day on the water.

ROD CARRIER

For anglers who prefer to carry on rods, you should strongly consider investing in multi-piece rods (4-piece) that will fit in a quality rod carrier. This makes it simple to consolidate all of your rods into one case and is less alarming to airport security. Our favorite is the Fishpond 4-piece carrier called the Dakota Bag. It holds numerous rods as well as room for reels and other carry-on approved tackle. Winston and Sage make quality products as well.

SPARE PARTS & LUBRICANT

Locate a very small fly box and stock up on any extra spare parts applicable for your reels. Today’s quality fly fishing reels are very sophisticated and have a few moving parts including springs, o- rings, drag knobs, pawls, etc that will wear out after significant usage. It is also a good idea to have an old toothbrush for cleaning and



some synthetic lubricant on hand as well.

MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

It is very important to rinse saltwater and sand from the inner workings of your reels, rods, pliers, fly boxes, etc following every day on the water. The lodge staff will handle this for you. A quick freshwater rinse will keep saltwater from corroding and damaging bearings and drag plates on your reels, and keep all of your equipment in good working order.

Once you arrive home from your trip, you should take apart your reels and soak them in soft soapy warm water. A light coat of synthetic oil on the surface of your reels is also a good idea before storing them. With fly rods, make sure to wipe them down with some Windex or 409. This will keep the glass finish looking sharp and prevent rust from forming in the guides and reel seat.

COMPLEMENTARY CLEANING @ THE FLY SHOP

Remember, you can bring or send your reels to the shop preceding any trip and we will rig and clean them up for you. It is always a good idea to check all of your knot connections and make sure that your backing is in good shape before heading on any fishing trip, and there is nothing as nice in this sport than a new fly line. Plus, it is a real heartbreaker to lose an entire fly line or break off a once in a lifetime fish because of a lousy rotten knot or weakened backing. Bring in your equipment and we will ensure your gear is in perfect working order. Buy a reel from us and we will throw in the backing for free.

TARPON

Holbox is a very diverse tarpon fishery. Most of the year, the majority of the tarpon fishing is in the backcountry lagoons and Mangrove mazes and lakes of the area. Juvenile "baby" tarpon in the 5- 25 pound range are the average size fish. During the summer months though, you could find yourself out in the deeper open water targeting the Giant models! A variety of baitfish patterns and standard tarpon patterns will work well. Baby tarpon flies should be tied on 1/0 - 2/0 hooks. Adults should be 2/0 to 4/0. It's important to have a nice cross section of the following recommendations as well as any of standard tarpon patterns you may already have. Flies are available for purchase for \$6/each in Holbox from your guide.

- Tarpon Toads. Tan, Orange, Black/purple, Black/red, Chartreuse
- Fishalicious. Red/white, Olive/black, Chartreuse/black
- Umpqua Baitfish. Mangrove orange, Mangrove brown, Chartreuse/white
- Sea Habit. Sardinia
- SeaDucers. Red/white, Red/yellow, Red/black, Tan grizzly
- Laid up Tarpon. Tan
- Crease Fly. Silver, Black

SALTWATER FLATS CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

CLIMATE AND GENERAL CLOTHING

The Yucatan Peninsula is almost always hot and humid regardless of the season or time of year. When packing, keep in mind that the lodge dress code is extremely casual. Clean and dry fishing clothing is always acceptable at the dinner table. Other than your fishing related clothing, a couple of tee-shirts, and a pair of casual shorts or pants, we recommend only one set of street clothes for travel days. Pack lightly!



The key to staying comfortable on the flats is to remain cool while protecting yourself from the sun. Lightweight clothing with plenty of ventilation is recommended. Odds are you will continually get wet all day long while running in the boat, or during a rain shower. You want your fishing clothing to shed water and dry quickly. Modern, synthetic clothes, in light colors are the best options. Dark colors get very hot, and cotton does not dry fast at all. Give us a shout if you want to discuss proper clothes for flats fishing.

LIGHTWEIGHT SHIRTS

Fishing shirts should be cool and dry quickly and should be easy to pack and maintenance-free. Howler Brothers, Patagonia and Simms make several different models and styles both in short and long sleeves. If you are bothered by the sun, we recommend the long sleeved versions, especially in late Spring and early Summer.

SHORTS

Fishing shorts should also be made of a synthetic quick dry material. We suggest shorts with pockets and belt loops for accommodating pliers. Patagonia and Simms make excellent models.

LONG PANTS

Sun protection, rather than warmth, is the primary function of long pants when fishing in the tropics. Biting sea lice can also be deterred by wearing pants while wading. Patagonia and Simms make great pants and shorts specifically designed for fishing. They will protect you from the sun, are wind resistant, and dry quickly. Some pants have removable pant legs that zip off to become shorts. Most styles of pants are also suitable for wearing at the lodge or on your travel days.

SUNGLOVES / FINGER GUARDS

Sungloves made by Mangrove, Patagonia, BUFF or Simms are great for protecting your hands from the sun. We also recommend finger guards for protecting your fingers if you are not keen to wearing gloves. Flexx-rap tape is our new favorite product to protect from line burns.

NOTES ON FOOTWEAR

You will not be wading, so comfortable boat shoes are what is important. You do not need flats boots. Crocs are a fantastic cheap comfortable shoe. Wear white cotton socks to keep the sun off of your feet. Kick the shoes off to fish barefoot on the casting deck, so you can feel your line if you are stepping on it.

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING & SHOES

Tee-shirts, shorts, and lightweight pants will round out your everyday attire. Flip-flops, sandals, or tennis shoes are ideal for wearing around the lodge or in town. Don't forget your swimsuit!

RAIN GEAR

A high quality, lightweight rain jacket is another essential piece of clothing while on the flats. Patagonia and Simms both make great lightweight jackets that will keep you dry during tropical rainstorms or while crossing choppy water on a lengthy boat run.

POLARIZED SUNGLASSES

This is your most important piece of equipment for flats fishing. Flats fishing is primarily sight-fishing. Without the ability to see the fish you are stalking, you put yourself at a great disadvantage. Copper and Brown lenses are the best choice for this type of fishing. Yellow lenses are great for mornings, late afternoons, and cloudy conditions. Always bring two pair of polarized sunglasses in case you lose or break a pair. Action Optics and Costa Del Mar make a variety of stylish frames to choose from. We can special order bifocal or trifocal



lenses for many of these frames with enough advanced notice. A lanyard or “croakie” is also invaluable in order to keep from dropping or losing your glasses.

LENS CLOTH

While fishing the flats, it seems like glasses are always getting wet when landing unruly fish or on boat runs. This can be quite frustrating if you are not prepared with a quality lens cleaning / drying cloth. Consider taking one of Action Optics’ Lens Cleaning Kits or something comparable to wipe salty film and sweat off of your glasses. Tip: Always grab some toilet paper, Kleenex, or a napkin and store it in a shirt pocket within an empty leader package to keep it dry. The freshwater in the cooler is always a good spot to rinse your lenses as well.

HAT

Bring two hats or caps for sun protection. If you are sensitive to the sun, make sure to bring a hat that covers your head as thoroughly as possible. Hats that have dark colors underneath the brim help to reduce glare from the water aiding in spotting fish.

SUN PROTECTION

The tropical sun is very intense even on cloudy days. Pack some sun block and lip balm with a minimum of 30SPF. There is a product on the market called Smart Shield that is a totally organic bug repellent / sunscreen and actually works well.

FACEMASKS

The new “Uniform” in the saltwater is to wear a BUFF facemask. These have become fashionable with serious anglers in the tropics as well as on the trout stream, and for good reason. It is a comfortable, lightweight, and breathable garment that functions similar to a bandana and will keep UV rays off of your head, neck, ears and nose. We carry several models and styles.

BOAT BAGS

A boat bag is important for carrying your tackle and gear with you on the boat each day. Running in the boats over open water oftentimes sprays saltwater mist into the boat, so you should have some type of waterproof or water resistant bag with you in the boat for storing cameras, lenses, tackle, flies, extra reels, spools, sunscreen, rain jackets, spare reel parts, bottled water, snacks, or anything else you don’t want to carry on you while fishing. Our favorite is to just use a waterproof backpack that also doubles as your carry-on. Easy to just throw on your back, so you can carry rods and anything else. Patagonia also makes a wonderful 99% waterproof bag called the Great Divider. It is also the exact dimensions of the under seat storage area on an airplane. We often use the Great Divider as our carry-on luggage. Simms also makes very comparable product in several sizes. Everything stays dry, salt free, and out of the humidity with either the boat bag or backpack option.

LUGGAGE

We recommend roller style, soft-sided duffle bags for nearly all our travels. Ideally you have a bag that adheres to airline size restrictions but it still large enough to fit a couple of rod tubes, tackle, boots and other gear. If you have a particularly large bag, we advise you to communicate with your commercial carrier as well as the TSA regarding any baggage weight restrictions that might be applicable.

The Fly Shop carries many excellent sets of luggage by Patagonia, Simms, Sage and Fishpond. These bags are the ideal size, bulletproof, and are equipped with efficient roller systems. Some models also have separate compartments for storing wet boots and/or waders or even rod tubes. Don’t forget to mark your luggage with appropriate personal identification bag tags.



PLIERS & BELT

Although your guide should be equipped with pliers, we recommend a quality pair of corrosion resistant pliers as an essential tool when fishing the saltwater...especially for big game. Pliers by Van Staal, Abel, Hatch or Ross aid in hook removal, cutting heavy monofilament, and tying big game knots. All pliers should be kept in a sheath and have a check-chord to avoid dropping them overboard. Don't forget to bring a synthetic belt to be worn in order to accommodate your pliers' sheath.

TOOLS & GADGETS

Items like nippers, hemostats, and hook hones are necessities in every fishing pack. The tools can be kept on a retractor or on a lanyard. A Leatherman multi-tool is also a nice extra to have in the boat bag.

INSECT REPELLENT

Mosquitoes and other biting flies may be a problem anywhere in the tropics- especially if the wind dies down. If you are particularly bothered by bugs, we recommend bringing a product with a large DEET component. There is also a new product on the market called Smart Shield that is a totally organic bug repellent / sunscreen and actually works well. Wearing lightweight wading pants and long-sleeved shirts will also discourage biting insects and sea-lice.

TRASH BAGS & ZIPLOCS

Always thrown in a couple of small trash bags in your bag for packing wet and sandy clothing and other items for the trip home in order to keep mildew from spreading through your clothing. Having some Ziploc baggies on hand are also a good idea for keeping camera equipment or papers dry in your boat bag.

FIRST AID KIT & TOILETRIES

A simple first aid kit with Band-Aids, alcohol wipes, Imodium, and Dramamine for motion sickness is always a good thing to have on hand. Bring shampoo and soap just in case they do not have it on hand. Definitely be prepared with other personal items like razors, de-odorant, shaving cream or toothpaste, they will not be provided. Make sure to bring your own.

FLASHLIGHT OR HEADLAMP

A headlamp can be an invaluable item to have when making the trek to the bathroom in the middle of the night or walking home from dinner downtown in the dark. Our favorite is the Petzl brand headlamp. Headlamps are great for reading at night while your roommate is sleeping, and free up your hands to get organized in the dark.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Water Bottle, Camera, Phone Charger, Batteries, Knife or Leatherman Tool

FLY FISHING TECHNIQUES

As a general rule of thumb, all fish in different locations around the world respond differently to varying techniques. Furthermore, the fishing conditions on any given day may require a different presentation. Don't be surprised if every guide you fish with instructs a different cast or stripping length and speed. Odds are you will learn something new!

The one saltwater technique that is undisputed though when it comes to effectively hooking and landing fish, is to STRIP SET when the fish takes your fly. Lifting the rod tip to set will result in exactly 0% hooked fish. You must keep the rod tip down, pointed at the fish and strip the line hard, driving the hook into the fish's mouth



on a tight, static line. Lifting and allowing the rod to bend during this process will dampen the force of the set, resulting in lost fish every time. STRIP SET! DO NOT LIFT!

WORD ABOUT FIGHTING, HANDLING AND RELEASING FISH:

Forget everything you know about trout fishing when fighting big game in the saltwater! You want to apply substantial pressure on the fish at all times in accordance with your tippet strength. You must fight the fish with the strongest part of the rod. In order to do this, you should maintain the smallest angle possible with your rod tip in relation to the fish. In other words, never raise your rod tip high in the air. You want to nearly have your rod pointed at the fish with your pressure pulling or lifting in the opposite direction the fish is swimming. This will give you the most leverage and ensure the hook remains in place. When you have the fish close at hand, never raise your rod tip and try to pull a heavy fish towards you in order to land him! This will certainly result in breaking your rod. Instead, allow for enough slack in your line and leader (with minimal bend in the rod), reach for the leader, and pull the fish to hand manually.

BARBLESS HOOKS AND TAKING PHOTOS

Use barbless hooks, as they do less damage to the structure of the fish's mouth and allow for an easier time unhooking and releasing fish. In a perfect world, you never "play" fish... rather you should land and release the fish as quickly as possible. You greatly increase the likelihood of survival the quicker you land, handle, and release the fish unharmed. Lactic acid build up is what eventually tires fish enough to land them. Depending on how much work was involved in the fight, it may take up to a full 24 hours before the effects of this incredible stress are relieved. During this recovery period, fish are susceptible to disease and most often are eaten by predators such as sharks and barracuda. Some conservative estimates indicate that as much as 25-35% of all bonefish caught by fly fishermen die as a result of improper fish handling. Also, if you notice a shark in the area while fighting a fish, your guide will most likely request you break the fish off your line so he can escape.

Pinch the barbs down with heavy duty pliers. Properly pinching the barbs on your flies for ALL species helps to ensure you are able to release fish quickly and unharmed. It is also a good idea to sharpen your hook after every few fish. The tough, rubbery mouths of many saltwater species will dull a hook very quickly.

Ideally, unless the fish is a real trophy, you unhook the fish without ever touching his body. Heavily handling fish results in the loss of the fish's slime which protects him from disease. When handling, taking photos, and releasing fish, try to keep him in the water as much as possible. You have made the fish run a marathon, so don't make him hold his breath! Always wet your hands before touching a fish, especially if you are wearing sun gloves. Keep the fish wet until the photographer is ready, pick him up with good support under his belly, snap a few shots, and get him back in for a drink. When releasing the fish, you always want to ensure he has good equilibrium and is able to swim away efficiently under his own power. To do this, you should hold the fish by his tail, rock the fish back and forth running water through the gills until some strength is regained. The last thing to do before letting loose is to take a quick look around making sure there are no barracudas or sharks.

LEARNING TO TIE PROPER KNOTS

You should not be intimidated by all of the sophisticated knots used when saltwater fishing. Know that your guide will handle tying all of your knots for you. However, you can easily learn all of the knots used in tarpon and saltwater angling in general in a few minutes of watching YouTube videos. Learning to tie your own knots is a fun and simple skill that will make you a more self-sufficient angler.

TARPON

Tarpon can present themselves in a variety of different scenarios...each requiring a unique style of



presentation. Whether cruising quickly, moving slowly, rolling, or simply stationary (“laid up”), the angler must be prepared to make a different cast and retrieve almost every time. Furthermore, the location of the fish at the time of the encounter will dictate a lot about how you decide to fish to him. Tarpon in water that is shallow, deeper, clear, murky, in the mangroves, on the flats, in a school, solitary, etc will dictate a differing protocol. Listen to your guide’s instructions with each encounter.

In a nutshell, tarpon can appear a bit lazy when they are relaxed and not actively feeding. For that reason, slow to medium speed strips with constant speed are usually the norm. You want to present the fly approximately 5-7 feet in front of the fish and allow it to sink to his level. Tarpon almost always prefer to feed on prey that is at eye level or slightly higher in the water column. Whether you are fishing to juvenile “baby” tarpon in the backcountry or to adults over one hundred pounds, try to let the fish eat the fly and turn away deliberately before setting the hook. If you allow your fly to sink on a slow retrieve, just make sure that you don’t allow any slack to build in your line. You always want to have a tight line for when it is time to set the hook.

When the fish eats and turns on your fly, you ideally have a tight line and are able to deliver a series of short and extremely hard strip sets or jabs to ensure the hook penetrates the tarpon’s extremely hard mouth. In the first few seconds of the battle take every moment available to continue setting the hook with both your strip sets as well as with the rod in a sideways motion.

Once he realizes he is hooked, he will almost immediately jump repeatedly. Although this is perhaps the most impressive spectacle in all of fishing, it is also when nearly all tarpon will throw the hook or break off! When the fish jumps you need to point your rod tip and lean towards the fish in order to create as much slack in the line as possible. “Bowing” to the fish removes tension and leverage from the line and the fly. Tarpon have extremely violent head shakes that will almost always result in a thrown hook if you have any pressure on the line. As soon as he reenters the water you should have tension back on the line fighting the fish immediately.

YOU & YOUR GUIDE ARE A TEAM

Check 1, 2, and 3: Let the guide check your equipment, knots, leaders, tippet material, flies, rod and reel, etc.

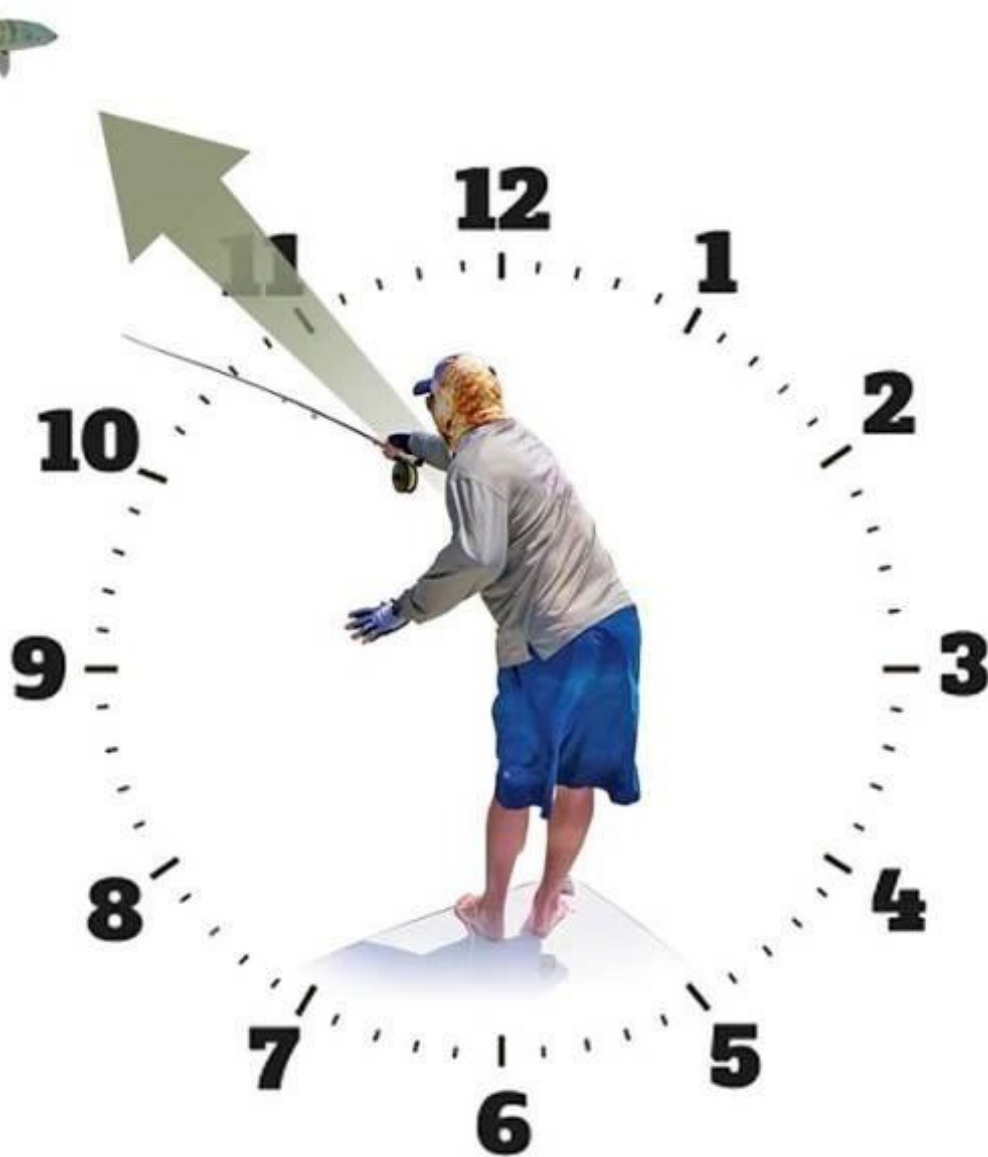
1.) On the flats, your guide will often times spot fish before you do. When this happens, your guide will refer the numbers on a clock to give you the fish’s general direction. For example, the bow (front) on the boat would represent 12:00 O’clock. Exactly perpendicular to the boat off of your right shoulder (starboard) would be 3:00 O’clock; perpendicular to the boat off your left shoulder (port) would be 9:00 O’clock, etc. In addition to the direction, the guide will also refer to a distance measured in feet. For example: “Okay, two fish coming at 1:00 O’clock --- 50 feet”.

2.) Still on the casting platform, strip out some fly line and throw a short cast as the guide watches. Next, throw a medium cast. Lastly, throw a long cast. Ask the guide how far you just cast. Make sure you are both on the same page in judging distance. Make sure his 50ft is not your 30ft. You and the guide now know each other’s styles and abilities.

4.) If your guide spots a fish and you do not see it, DO NOT 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, keep going STOP!” this is where you should concentrate your vision and again DO NOT cast until you see the fish.

6.) 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 done NOT 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. Each species of fish has subtle variations of the strip set maximize your hook up rate with each eat. Your guide will help adjust your sets on the water, but come prepared to use this technique.





CHECK LIST

| | |
|--|---|
| | Hat with bill and neck protection (a dark underside on hat bill is best.) |
| | Polarized sunglasses (amber or brown) - take an extra pair! Lens Cleaner |
| | Bandana (always a handy item for neck protection, lens cleaner, rag etc.) |
| | Long sleeve shirts (light colors, light weight |
| | Short sleeve shirts |
| | 2 Buff Face Mask (great for sun protection of face, neck, ears, nose, etc.) |
| | Long pants for wading (light colored, light weight cotton) |
| | Shorts (much of the time you'll wear these) |
| | Sandals or camp shoes |
| | Deck/Boat shoes (no laces, non-skid) Crocs are excellent! |
| | Prescription glasses |
| | Raingear (very light weight and packable) |
| | Sunscreen (at least SPF 30+, waterproof, PABA-free, UVA, UVB) |
| | Tools: Nippers, good pliers and hook sharpener. |
| | Lip balm with sunscreen (highest SPF you can get) |
| | Insect repellent with DEET |
| | Camera, extra batteries, charger and memory cards |
| | Waterproof bag |
| | Small headlamp (LED) |
| | Zip-Lock Bags (to carry camera, other gear) |
| | Garbage bags or waterproof bags for laundry, wading boots |
| | Smart Phone and/or tablet and chargers |
| | Sun gloves, Striper fingers, Flexx Rap Tape |
| | Passport and travel documents |
| | 2 Copies of passport (**packed separately**) |
| | Airline tickets and itinerary |
| | Cash (small bills for tips, bar tab, gift shopping, etc.), credit card |
| | Notebook and pen |
| | Emergency telephone numbers |
| | Liquor (if you wish special brands) |
| | Toiletries, including shampoo, hand lotion, bandages & adhesive tape |
| | Ibuprofen, other over-the-counter medications like antacids |
| | Prescription medications (packed in your carry-on bag) |
| | Swimsuit |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

