

CIÉNAGA DE ZAPATA MATANZAS PROVINCE, CUBA



The Fly Shop

TRAVEL & TACKLE PLANNER

GPS Coordinates: 22° 7'22.98"N | 81°32'33.58"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 Travel Information

Arrival

Arrival into Havana is required before 12:00 PM on Saturday. Please take a cab from the airport to the Parque Central Hotel. The cost should be no more than \$40 USD for 2 anglers. Larger groups can use a van for the transfer, and should cost no more than \$80 USD per van. Transfers to the mothership depart from the hotel lobby at 2:00 PM, and take approximately 2.5 hours.

Please be sure to have your rain jacket and insect repellent with you for the transfer from Havana to the mothership.

Important - If you cannot arrange flights arriving prior to 12:00 PM on Saturday, it is recommended that you arrive in Havana on Friday or earlier, overnight, and enjoy the city.

Departure

There is an early wake-up call and breakfast on your last morning aboard MV Georgiana. The mothership will motor back to port and meet the bus for your transfer to the airport. Please reserve a flight that departs after 3:00 PM.

Cuban Traveler's Documents

You'll need a passport valid at least 6 months after your trip to Cuba. In addition, you will need five completed documents: 1.) Cuban Visa 2.) OFAC Travel Affidavit 3.) Humanitarian and Environmental Project Certificate 4.) D' Viajeros, completed online (generate QR Code) 5.) Completed Zapata online Liability Agreement.

1.) [Cuban Visa](#)

Your Cuban Visa must be purchased in advance. Print (2 copies).

Category: Humanitarian Projects

Airline Confirmation Number: On your plane ticket

Province: Havana

2.) [OFAC Travel Affidavit](#)

Please print, complete, sign, and carry with you while traveling (2 copies).

It serves as your affirmation of which license category you are selecting for legal travel to Cuba. Check box #10 – Humanitarian Projects. Though highly unlikely, you could be asked to present it to US customs upon your return.

3.) [Humanitarian and Environmental Project Certificate and Itinerary Template](#)

Please print, complete, sign, and carry with you while traveling (2 copies).

For the date range, enter the dates of your fishing trip.

This supports your reason for travel that you declare on your Travel Affidavit and can be presented to US Customs if asked for validation.

Important - Please read this to become familiar with the environmental project program in case you are asked any questions when returning to the States. <http://bluesanctuary.org>

4.) **D'Viajeros – Advance Traveler Information**

Follow the link to [D' Viajeros](#) **48 hours prior to your departure to Cuba** and complete the requested information.

After completing your form online, a QR Code will be generated and is required to present during your travel and upon entry into Cuba. Print two copies of the provided QR code to carry with you while traveling.

Tips for completing [D' Viajeros](#) online form

- Click the **A** icon, top, right corner of page to change the language “English”
- Only ovals marked with red are required to be completed
- Travel reason is: Tourism
- Province where you are going - Matanzas
- Place of accommodation – Home
- Municipality where you are going – Cienaga de Zapata
- Traveler address - Georgiana
- Unaccompanied baggage - any checked bags? (Yes) or (No)
- Nothing to import or claim? Any personal belongings or gifts are not necessary to declare.

5.) [Zapata online Liability Agreement](#)

Please complete this form online

Cuban medical insurance

The Cuban government requires all travelers to carry a minimum level of ‘Cuban qualified’ health insurance coverage while in Cuba. This coverage is included in your airline ticket fare if you are flying into Cuba on a commercial carrier through the U.S.

If you are flying to Cuba through any other country, Canada, Panama, Mexico, etc. you will need to purchase Cuban health insurance. Bring a record of this health insurance coverage with you for check-in and arrival into Cuba.

Contact Numbers

Fly Fishing the Run

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Mauro Ginevri - +53 52 86 2462

Pietro Ginevri - +53 52 70 0343

Zapata manager – Rolando Perez - +53 50 74 3119

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The Fly Shop®

800 669-3474 | 530 222-3555 | Email: travel@theflyshop.com

U.S. Embassy in Cuba

Calzada between L & M, Vedado

Havana, Cuba

Phone: +53 78 39 4100

For emergencies involving American citizens outside normal business hours, please call +53 7 839 4100 and dial 1 to select English and then 0 to speak to an operator.

Trip Information

Money in Cuba

US dollars are currently accepted in Cuba. Please bring a selection of small denomination bills, as change for larger bills is not always available.

Gratuities

Guides: \$500 US is the suggested tip per angler, per trip. Please present your gratuity to the fishing director at the end of your trip.

Staff: \$200 US is the suggested tip per angler, per trip. Please present your tip to the operations manager the end of your trip.

Ground transportation drivers: \$5 to \$10 US at the end of each ground transfer.

Drinks

Included in the package for every guest are a total of 36 beverages per week, which includes bottled water, beer, or soda (average 8 per day). Also included is one cocktail per day per person and one bottle of red wine and one bottle of white wine per day per group, plus one bottle of Cuban rum per group per day. There is more of everything available on-board and the hostess will keep a tab for everyone. For all beverages beyond these included in the package, you will acquire a tab, payable at the end of your trip.

Laundry

Laundry services are not included in the trip package, but it is available as an option. If you'd like to have some clothes washed, please let the hostess know, and give her a tip for the service.

Communications

Havana - If you are staying at a hotel in Havana, they should have Wi-Fi. Cell service is available. Be sure to contact your provider about service in Cuba.

Aboard the mothership - The mothership uses a VHF radio for communications with the mainland. Cell service is minimal at best.

Electricity

110V electricity is available on board the mothership. If coming from the US, no adapters are necessary.

Cigars

Cigars are not available on the yacht. You can purchase them in Havana, prior to transferring to the mothership.

Weekly schedule

Sunday

- 6:00 AM breakfast on board MV Georgiana, motor to Zapata, start fishing upon arrival at Las Salinas.
- Monday – Friday - Fishing schedules are based on the tides and the single/double skiff rotation.
- Nights are spent aboard the mothership MV Georgiana

Daily Fishing Schedule

7:00 - Coffee is available in the kitchen for early risers.

7:30 - Breakfast is an assortment of fresh fruit, pastries, meats and cheeses. Your steward will take orders for made-to-order eggs.

8:30 - Your guide will be waiting for you after breakfast. He will determine the destination for the day based upon the conditions and what species you are targeting.

Lunch – You'll have two choices. Return to the mothership for a delicious lunch out of the sun, or an excellent pre-packed boat lunch. Your steward will visit with you in the evenings to discuss your preferences for the following day's lunch, and which beverages you want packed in your cooler.

4:00 or 5:30 - If you return to the mothership for lunch and a nap, your fishing day will end later than if you stay out on the water all day. Your guide will be flexible, but it is important to return safely to the mothership before sunset. Upon return to the mothership, you will be met with a cool refreshing face towel and a cocktail. Your rods, reels and lines will be rinsed with fresh water and stored safely on the rod racks, ready for the next day's action.

5:00 - 7:00 - Enjoy a shower, and join your friends on deck for cocktails and appetizers.

7:30 - A wonderful dinner of regional cuisine will be served on the dining deck, including a feast of fresh fruit, local seafood, rice, beans, and salad followed by a scrumptious dessert. Following dinner, you are welcome to relax on deck with after-dinner drinks, cigars and fishing stories.

Saturday – departure day

There is an early wake-up call and breakfast on your last morning aboard MV Georgiana. The mothership will motor back to port and meet the bus for your transfer to the airport. Please reserve a flight that departs after 3pm.

Tackle & Equipment

Zapata fishing program

Each week, a maximum of eight anglers will share exclusive use of the live-aboard vessel, MV “Georgiana”. This 30-meter, well-appointed custom yacht - more of a mobile lodge - will be anchored on the east side of the Canarreos Archipelago, allowing for easy access to a broad variety of distinctly different fishing areas.

During their 6 days of fishing, anglers will fish West Las Salinas, locally known as San Lazaro, and the massive fishing grounds in and around the Gulf of Canarreos. Both inner flats support very healthy populations of bonefish in the 3-5 pound range. The outer flats, with their proximity to deeper water channels and cuts, are the permit and tarpon fishing grounds. This is also a great place to target oceanic barracuda and hard-fighting jacks.

A portion of the fishing grounds of Zapata are comprised of water that is extremely shallow - conventional flats fishing skiffs with two anglers and one guide draw too much water and limit access. To mitigate this, the outfitter utilizes four custom “single-angler” skiffs – skinny-water boats designed for one angler and one guide. Each day, four fishermen will be assigned to the single boats, while the other four anglers fish from more traditional flats skiffs, two anglers and one guide. The single angler flats skiffs are perfect for navigating and fishing bonefish and permit in the shallow back country while the larger are more suitable for tarpon fishing and traveling to distant flats.

Each morning, guests will step from the yacht directly onto the skiffs and be fishing a short time later. With the use of the MV “Georgiana” and its ability to be moored right in the heart of the exclusive fishing area, long run times to the fishing grounds are virtually eliminated. The central zone of Zapata features long expanses of large, white, shallow flats with great populations of bonefish. These flats are also frequented by permit, and it’s not uncommon to encounter baby tarpon and the occasional snook, making grand slams a possibility.

Fly Fishing Only

Ciénaga de Zapata is a fly fishing only zone, regulated by the Cuban Government. Spinning rods, lures, jigs, or any similar tackle that is not fly fishing related is strictly forbidden by Marine Park laws.

Fishing tackle

Ciénaga de Zapata is very remote, and there is very little infrastructure in Cuba for fly fishing equipment, gear, flies, etc. You need to bring everything that you will need for this trip, and packing a couple extra rods is a good idea.

Rods, reels, and lines

You should bring several different rods/reels for this trip, as Zapata is home to a variety of species including bonefish, permit, tarpon, snook, jack crevalle, barracuda, snapper, and more.

For bonefish, a 9 foot 8 wt. is the most popular, although a 7 can be lots of fun, especially while wading. You also need to bring a couple of heavier 9 foot rods, 9 and / or 10 weights. Since there are so many species of fish in Zapata, it helps to have either two 9 weight rods, or one 9 and one 10. If your trip is during the late spring or summer, an additional 11 or 12 wt. is a good choice for larger migratory tarpon. Scott, Winston, Sage, and Orvis produce excellent rods for these applications.

You need reels for each of these rods, rigged up and ready to fish depending on what species you are encountering. Your reels should be designed for saltwater use, with a sealed drag system, and loaded with 200+ yards of backing. Hatch, Abel, Hardy and Galvin each offer quality saltwater fly reels.

You need a floating saltwater weight forward line for each rod. In addition to your floater, a full intermediate sinking line has been found exceptional when fishing the deeper flats for tarpon. There are also times when large tarpon can be found cruising deep channels along the edges of the flats. A 300-500 grain sinking line is very effective in these deeper channels and bays.

Leaders and tippet

For bonefish, we recommend 10 – 12' tapered nylon leaders in 12 – 20 lb. test. An additional 2' of fluorocarbon tippet is an excellent choice. Bring spools of tippet material in 12, 16, and 20 lb. fluorocarbon. Bring one leader for each day of fishing and a few extras.

For permit, we recommend 10 – 12' tapered fluorocarbon leaders in 16 – 20 lb. test. You should bring one leader for each day of fishing and a couple extras. Bring spools of tippet material in 16 and 20 lb. fluorocarbon.

For tarpon and other species, bring spools of 40, 60, and 80 lb. nylon and fluorocarbon. The guides will help you build the appropriate leaders for the situation.

Bonefish flies

Bring two to three dozen bonefish flies of various patterns in size 4 and 6, including a few 2's and 8's. You need a mix of very light flies and medium weight flies with bead chain eyes to fish in water depths from six inches to two feet. You also need a few flies with lead eyes for fishing bones in

deeper water. Your selection should include patterns in dark tan, brown, cream, and white. The flies listed below are excellent bonefish choices.

- McVay Gotcha
- Mini Puff
- Bonefish Junk
- Beck's Sili Legs
- Squimp
- Puglisi B.C. Spawning Shrimp
- Kwan
- Mevhieves Flats Fly
- Spawning Mantis Shrimp
- Shane's Bone Kohlector

Permit flies

Bring at least a dozen flies for permit. The smaller crabs and shrimp patterns can also work well for big bonefish. Some of the effective crab and shrimp patterns at Zapata are listed below.

- Contraband Crab (Olive) #4 (guide's favorite! – bring lots of these)
- Casa Blanca Raghead Crab, tan, olive, #4
- Strong Arm Merkin, tan, white, #2
- Avalon #2, both bead chain and lead eyes
- Flexo Crab, tan, olive, #6
- Fleeing Crab, tan, #4
- Squimp, #2
- Puglisi's Spawning Shrimp, tan, translucent, #4

Tarpon flies

Your selection of tarpon flies should include neutral, dark, and bright colors. Bring a couple dozen or more, so you can be sure to have a variety of colors and patterns to choose from.

- Cockroach, 1/0
- Black Death, 3/0
- Everglades' special, 1/0
- Bigeye Tarpon, orange/grizzly; sand devil; yellow, 3/0
- Tarpon Toad, red/black, chartreuse/orange, peach, chartreuse, 1/0
- Tarpon Rabbit Toad, purple/black, chartreuse, 1/0
- Puglisi Peanut Butter, black/purple, chartreuse, 2/0

Flies for other species

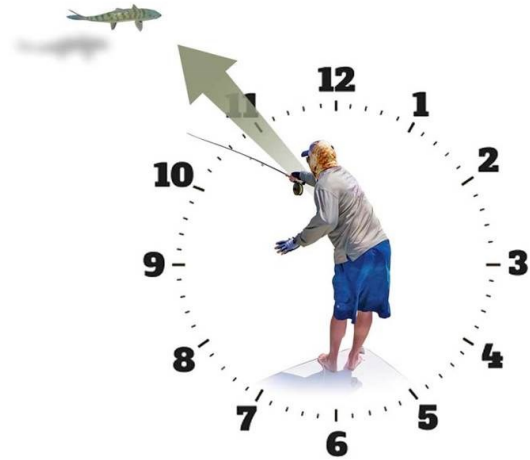
For barracuda fishing, you'll need a spool of 40 lb. test knotable wire, or a pre-made wire leader.

- Tandem Cuda Fly, 2/0
- Pearly Popper, green, 2/0
- EZ Mack 4/0
- Sea Habit Bucktail, anchovy, 2/0
- Salty Mullet, grey, tan, 2/0
- Crease Fly, silver, olive, 1/0

YOU & YOUR GUIDE ARE A TEAM

Please take the initiative and get to know your guide. Establish a rapport with him. Let them know what species you want to fish, how you want to fish and your abilities and fishing experience. **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 to 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.

ZAPATA TRIP PLANNING CHECKLIST

- ___ Hat with bill and neck protection
- ___ Polarized sunglasses (2 pair)
- ___ Buff® neck gaiter
- ___ Long sleeve fishing shirts
- ___ Evening wear shirts
- ___ Raingear (lightweight for thunder showers or wet boat rides)
- ___ Wading pants
- ___ Sun gloves
- ___ Shorts & swimsuit
- ___ Wading socks (we recommend the Simms neoprene socks)
- ___ Wading boots or booties
- ___ Sandals or flip flops
- ___ Belt
- ___ Water bottle (Must Have)
- ___ 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 and garbage bags
- ___ Small flashlight or headlamp (LED)
- ___ Roll of Flexx-Rap or finger guards
- ___ Toiletries
- ___ Camera, battery charger, storage cards
- ___ Smartphone or tablet & charger
- ___ Multi-Plug Adapters
- ___ Small binoculars
- ___ Waterproof wading pack
- ___ Boat bag
- ___ Airline tickets & Itinerary
- ___ Notebook & pen
- ___ Passport
- ___ 2 printed Copies of passport (packed separately in Zip-Lok baggies)
- ___ 2 printed Copies of all Entry Requirement Documents
- ___ Book
- ___ Cash & credit cards
- ___ Emergency contact numbers
- ___ Prescription glasses
- ___ Pre-trip information
- ___ Ibuprofen & Prescription drugs
- ___ Electrolyte powder, Gatorade, Liquid IV, EmergenC