



Everything You Need To Know About...

FISHING

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FISHING

Fishing: Balm for the Soul

Have you ever thought of taking up fishing as a sport or hobby? If not, it's time to think about it. Fishing is relaxing and it gets you out into the great outdoors where you feel as if you're one with nature. There's nothing as great as sitting on the bank of a creek under a willow tree and leaving the stress of the world behind. It's balm for the soul and in today's stressful world, it's a great way to let off a little steam. It's also a great hobby for those of all ages. Kids love to fish, so after you've been out a few times, take a kid along for a day of fishing fun.

If you've never tried fishing, you don't know what you're missing. Not only does it bring you closer to nature, there's the thrill of the catch. Imagine standing on the bank of a pond or stream, your rod bending under the weight of a good catch. This one's a fighter and you take your time, allowing the fish to tire itself out before reeling it into shore. When you finally land it, you realize you've just caught the biggest fish of your life. It's an awesome feeling and one you'll never know unless you give fishing a try.

Now that your interest is piqued, you may be thinking that you don't have a clue about how to fish. If that's the case, these tips will help. If you'd like to learn how to fish, there are a few things you can do:

- Research the sport of fishing. Go to the local library and check out how-to books and fishing magazines. There are many resources in the library that will educate you on the sport of fishing.
- Research online. There are hundreds of websites that give instructions on fishing gear, baits and where and when to fish and where to find the species you are aiming for.
- Ask a family member or friend who is an avid angler to take you along the next time they go fishing. For this you will need basic equipment. Do not buy a lot of expensive gear until you determine whether or not you enjoy fishing.
- If you wish to take professional fishing lessons, check with guide services and fishing stores in your area. They can often provide you with the names of professionals who will teach you how to fish.
- Check with your local Conservation or wildlife service. Often there is a fishing day where beginners gather to learn the basics of fishing.

Anytime is the best time to fish and you never know what you might catch. Certain species are more active near dawn and dusk when they feed. Others will bite any time of the day. Some species are more active at certain times of the year, but really you can fish all year round. If you live in a climate that has four seasons, you might consider taking up ice fishing at some point. Really the time of year you should fish all depends on the species you are after.

Fishing licenses are required in most locations. These can be purchased at fishing tackle stores, Conservation and Wildlife Services. Cost varies by location. Fishing licenses are not usually required for children. Check always the regulations. If you are planning to fish on private property, be sure to get permission from the owner. Entering someone's property to fish without permission is classed as trespassing. Be courteous and if permission is denied, move on.

If you follow the advice in this article, you will soon be enjoying fishing as a sport or hobby. If you enjoy the sport initially, you can hone your skills and move on to more advanced techniques.

Fishing Accessories

It's a cold day. Yes, fall has arrived. This is a great time for fishing, so you gather up your fishing equipment and head out. You walk through a forest where the trees are dressed in their fall colors of red, gold and orange. They look beautiful with the evergreen backdrop. Then, you come to the edge of a swiftly moving stream where there is a great fishing opportunity. You set down your tackle box and your rod and reel, slip off your new water proof jacket and slip a pair of hip waders on over your fisherman's vest. These are just a few of the many fishing accessories that are available. This article will go into more depth on fishing accessories.

Your rod and reel is the backbone of your fishing equipment. If you are a casual fisherman, fishing hobbyist or are buying equipment for children, go with the basic rod and reel. Tackle can range from simple to extremely complicated. Basic tackle includes hooks, sinkers, bobbers, fishing line and a pair of needle nosed pliers for removing your catch if it swallows the hook. You may also wish to buy a net. If you are choosing a net, choose a size that will easily hold the fish species that you are fishing for. You don't want a small net if you are fishing for salmon and don't want a huge net if you are fishing for rock bass. If you fish for a variety of fish species, you might want to consider buying both a small and a large net.

Electronic alarms allow you to know when you have a fish on your line. With these, your fishing line threads through a slot in the alarm head. If you get a bite, the alarm beeps and an LED display flashes. There are a wide variety of good electronic alarms on the market.

Clothing for fisherman can range from simple to elaborate. One necessity is a fishing hat and sunglasses that will shade your face from the sun. A good fishing vest with lots of pockets also comes in handy, especially if you plan to wade into a stream. Waders come in thigh or chest type and are great for getting out into the water to extend your casting length. You may need suspenders for these. In spring and fall, a good waterproof jacket and gloves are essential to keep you dry in foul weather. Rain suits are also available in one and two piece suits.

Other accessories are forceps, a scissor, a flashlight, wading shoes, a fishing belt, a gaff, which is used for big game fish, a tackle box or bag, pliers, pocket thermometers, angling pliers, and a good fishing knife and sharpener. These are all accessories that will aid you in your fishing experience. Be sure to take along a floatation vest or life jacket if you are fishing from a boat.

Before choosing expensive accessories or tackle, be sure it is right for the job and right for you. There are many factors to be taken into consideration, including the species of fish you are fishing for. If you are not sure what fishing accessories you will need, or if you have trouble choosing, ask a family member, a friend, or a staff member of the local bait and tackle shop to help you assemble the fishing accessories that you will need for the particular fish species you are fishing for.

Basic Fishing Tackle

If you've decided to take up fishing as a hobby or sport and get out into the fresh air and sunshine, you've made a good choice. Fishing can be very relaxing. It gets you away from the hustle, bustle and stress of daily life and makes you one with nature. Like all other hobbies, sports and activities, there are a few basic things that you will need.

Fishing tackle is equipment you use to get live or artificial bait into the water, dangling in front of the fish. It's not necessary to have a lot of tackle if you are just taking up the sport of fishing, but you do need basic and proper tackle. If you are a beginner, it's best to keep tackle to a minimum until you hone your skills. Then, and only then is the time to try more advanced tackle.

Rod and Reel

A rod and reel can be purchased at your local fishing store. It's best to buy a lightweight rod because they make it easier for you to tell when you have a bite. Spinner reels are best for beginners. Often, you can purchase a rod and reel as one unit. If you don't want to buy a rod and reel until you've tried the sport, borrow one from a family member or friend. An adult fishing rod should be approximately 6 feet long. A rod for a child will be between 4 and 5 feet long.

Fishing Line

Fishing line, also called filament, comes in a wide range of sizes or strengths, which are called pound-test. The larger the pound-test, the stronger the fishing line. For instance, eight pound-test is not as strong as ten pound-test. The trick here is to match your line's pound-test to your rod and reel, the bait you plan to use and the species of fish that you're hoping to catch. Small, lightweight rods that use spincasting or spinning reels will use a line that is up to six pound-test. If you have a large spinning reel, be sure to use a strong pound-test line. Bait casting reels use a heavier line that can run anywhere from six to thirty pound-test. However, eight to sixteen pound-test is the most popular size of fishing line. Keep in mind that if your line is too heavy, you won't get as many bites or strikes because the fish can see the line. If you're a beginner or if you're using line for kids' rods, eight pound-test is recommended.

Fishing Net

A fishing net isn't an absolute necessity but they do come in handy when you're landing a fish. They're also useful for keeping kids busy when they tire of fishing. They can catch frogs, minnows and tadpoles and discover a whole new world.

Bait

There are several different kinds of bait, both live and artificial. Night crawlers, also known as earthworms, are great for beginners. Instead of buying a dozen, take a flashlight out into the yard after dark when there's dew on the grass and pick your own, or dig them out of your compost heap. Place them in a plastic container that contains a bit of soil and store them in the refrigerator over night. Be sure to punch holes in the lid of the container and make sure the top is secure. Other types of baits include mealworms, kernel corn, grubs and bread balls.

Bobbers

Bobbers are floats that you attach to your fishing line to dangle the bait in front of the fish. They also give extra weight when casting. The bobber sits on the water surface and when it dips into the water, you know you have a bite. Small is better. Use a bobber that has just enough weight to keep your bait from dragging it under the water. The most sensitive bobbers are the pencil style. Round bobbers are less sensitive and therefore it's easier for you to tell if you have a bite using a pencil bobber. However, round bobbers are the easiest to cast. Slip bobbers can be adjusted quickly and easily to allow you to fish at different depths and they're easy to cast. They come in both pencil and round styles and are perfect for beginners and children.

Hooks

Fish hooks come in a wide variety of sizes and styles. If you are planning to use live bait, it's best to buy a variety pack that includes hooks in sizes that range from No. 6 to No. 10. If you are fishing for bullhead or catfish, you will need larger hooks. If you intent to catch and release, fish hook barbs can be flattened. This gives you more of a challenge and inflicts less pain and injury on the fish. Flattening barbs reduces the amount of fish that die because of wounds or because they swallowed the hook. A good rule of thumb to keep this from happening is to use hooks that are compatible with the size of the fish's mouth that you are hoping to catch. If the hook is too small, it is easily swallowed and if it's too large the fish won't take the bait.

Sinkers

Sinkers, or weights as they're sometimes called, come in a variety of sizes and are used to keep your line from floating on the water surface. Split shot sinkers range in size from minute to about the size of the end of a lead pencil, and are the smallest type of weights. Sinkers range from split shot to weights of a pound or more. The most popular and frequently used sinkers are split shot and they are the best weights for beginners and children. When you purchase sinkers be sure they are lead free in order to protect the environment and wildlife species.

Leaders

Fishing leaders are fine pieces of metal with an eye on one end and a small easy to use pin catch on the other. You open this pin to slip a hook or lure onto it. The fishing line is threaded through the eye and knotted. Leaders aren't necessary for beginners or children but are recommended for ease of changing hooks and lures. Leaders are also used when fishing for game fish such as northern pike, muskellunge and walleye. The metal leaders stop these toothy fish from biting through your line.

Swivels

Instead of attaching leaders, hooks and lures to the fishing line, many anglers use a small device called a snap swivel. There is an eye on one end and a pin clip on the other. The fishing

line is threaded through the eye and fastened securely with a fishing knot. The pin clip opens much the same as a safety pin and the hook, lure or leader is slipped onto it and the clip pin is closed. Snap swivels protect your line from tangling as your bait moves and spins through the water. Snap swivels allow you to change bait or to change leaders quickly without cutting and re-tying your fishing line.

Fishing Knife

A fishing knife comes in handy if you have to cut snagged or tangled line. They are also used for scaling and cleaning fish. If kids are fishing, give them nail clippers to cut their line.

Needle Nose Pliers

These assist in removing the hook when the fish swallows it.

First Aid Kit

Pack some bandages, peroxide and anti-bacterial ointment in your tackle box to treat cuts and scrapes.

Tackle Box

A tackle box is used for organizing and storing bobbers, hooks, line, lures, leaders and other small items you will need to have a successful fishing experience. Boxes that open from the top and have two trays are great for beginners, children and casual anglers. Tackle boxes often come with a small amount of tackle such as hooks, bobbers, sinkers and artificial worms.

Now that you have your rod, reel and tackle, you are ready to head out to the old fishing hole. Find a nice shady spot on the bank of a creek, pond or stream or on the side of a lake and relax while you wait for that nibble or strike.

All about Fishing Rods

Imagine standing on the bank of a swiftly moving stream in the shade of a gnarled willow, your fishing rod bent beneath the weight of an unusually large catch. The type of rod you choose is important for a moment like this. It can determine whether or not you land that fish.

A fishing rod is a rod of graphite, fiberglass, steel, wood or bamboo that is used for the purpose of catching fish. Fishing filament, also called fishing line, is threaded through the ferrules (eyes) along the flexible rod. One end winds around a reel, which is located at the base of the pole. The other end of the line has a barbed hook attached to it. This hook is where you place the bait. Your reel has a handle which you turn to reel in the line once a fish has taken the bait.

Fishing rods vary in size between 4 feet (for children) and 16 feet. The average rod is 6 feet in length. The longer the rod, the more force is put on the angler's arms. However, your fishing rod is the backbone of your fishing tackle and you need to choose a rod that is right for you. The length of the rod you choose depends on two things. The first is the species of fish that you wish to catch. The other thing you have to consider is the landscape of the fishing location and the type of water.

If the landscape around your fishing hole has a lot of trees and overhead branches, a short, flexible rod is best. Short strong rods are best for landing game fish. Flexible, thin rods that are 10 to 12 feet in length are best if wind conditions are moderate. Stronger and thicker rods should be used for large, aggressive fish such as northern pike, muskellunge, walleye and Arctic char. These fish would quickly snap a light and more flexible pole. Flexibility, which is the amount that the rod can be bent before breaking, can be determined by the diameter of the pole. Light rods are thin and flexible, while stronger rods are thicker and more rigid.

When you look at a fishing rod, you will see several metal rings that are spaced from the handle to the tip. These are ferrules. They guide your fishing line and help it to cast and retrieve smoothly. The tip ferrule directs your cast. Your rod probably also has a reel seat that helps secure the reel to your rod. The reel seat is placed near the handle grip.

Your rod is the most important tool that you will use while fishing and they come in a wide range of types, styles and lengths. Types of fishing rods include bamboo, fiberglass and graphite.

Bamboo rods can be as basic as an inexpensive pole with a line attached, to very expensive handcrafted rods that are used for fly fishing. Simple bamboo poles are great for kids. Expensive bamboo poles make great fly fishing rods. Bamboo rods run from \$5 to hundreds of dollars for handcrafted fly fishing rods. If you are not planning on taking up fly fishing, fiberglass and graphite rods are best.

Fiberglass rods are great for beginners and kids. They come in a variety of lengths and flexibility. They're reasonably priced and it's easy to find a fiberglass rod that will fit your needs. They stand up well and require very little or no maintenance. Experienced anglers prefer graphite rods because they are very lightweight and extremely strong. Graphite is the best of the basic rod types.

If you are just beginning your life as a fisherman, you might consider buying a prepackaged rod and reel, but these are not something you will use once you have a little experience under your belt. If you're not sure you will enjoy fishing, borrow a rod from a family member or friend, instead of investing money in tackle that you may not use for long. More experienced anglers should choose a rod and reel unit over the prepackaged ones.

If you wish to become a successful and skilled angler, you need to choose a fishing rod that compliments your style. Your rod is an extension of your arm and the backbone of your fishing tackle. Choosing a rod doesn't have to be complicated. Take into consideration where and how often you fish. If you're a beginner, buy a reasonably priced rod and reel and then purchase a more expensive one when you've honed your skills.

Do you plan to freshwater or saltwater fish? Freshwater fishing is done in lakes, ponds, rivers and streams that are found in the interior of the country. Saltwater fishing is done in oceans and on the coast. Be sure to choose a rod that is compatible with its job. Though some rods can be used outside of their intended application, it's best to choose a rod that is the right one for the job. This ensures a successful fishing experience.

If you have trouble finding a rod that fits your arms and is as comfortable as a pair of old sneakers, ask a family member or friend who has angling experience to go along to help. Or seek the assistance of the staff at your local fishing store. They'll be glad to give you a few pointers that will help you choose the fishing rod that is right for you.

The Spin on Fishing Reels

There's nothing like standing on the bank of a stream or river, the sun sparkling on the water and feeling the thrill of a big catch. You play the fish until it tires, carefully bringing it in using your reel. Your choice of reel is important when you're an active fisherman.

A fishing reel is a piece of fishing equipment that is devised for sports and hobby fishermen to cast and retrieve fishing line. It is a spool and axle that mounts on a fishing rod. There are also reels that have been specifically designed to mount on boats. There are three basic types of fishing reels: bait casting, fly casting and spin casting.

Bait Casting Reels

Bait casting reels are extremely complicated. The line is pulled off the rod by the weight of the lures being used. It is thrust forward by the motion of casting. These reels usually provide a device that lays the line evenly across the rotating cylinder that acts as the core of the reel. If the cast is not smooth, it will cause problems when the line is reeled in. The line can become tangled, which is frustrating to the user. Great lengths of time can be spent untangling the line when using bait casting reels. These reels are not for beginners or children.

Fly Fishing Reels

There are two specific things you need to be aware of when choosing a fly fishing reel. One is to ensure that it has a drag that is extremely responsive. The second thing is to buy a fly fishing reel that can stand the tension and strain put on it should you have a significantly large catch. Fly casting reels are more expensive than other types of fishing reels. When purchasing a fly fishing reel, look it over with an eagle eye and ascertain that there are no plastic parts. It isn't unusual for plastic to fail when you have a large fish on your line. All metal reels are much more reliable and are worth the extra price that you will pay.

Spinning Reels

There are two types of spinning reels - closed faced and open faced.

The closed faced reel is inexpensive and easy to use. It is the best type of reel for those who are learning to fish. Closed faced reels are almost trouble free, yet are capable of bringing in your catch, whatever it may be. Closed faced spinning reels have a push button release when casting and have an opening in the top for the line to come out when cast. This type of reel is mounted on your fishing rod. Spinning reels are used by fishermen who are hobbyist, casual sportsmen, beginners and children. If you buy a prepackaged rod and reel, this is usually the type of reel that's included.

Open faced spinning rods are more difficult to use and comes in a variety of sizes. Ultra light models are great for catching pan fish. Larger models will be needed for game fishing or ocean

fishing. Line capacity on an open faced reel is greater and is serviceable when fishing for salmon and trout. They have a smooth drag, which makes them an excellent choice for the longer run game fish.

A closed faced fishing reel is perfect for beginners and children, as mentioned above. As your fishing skills are honed, you may wish to upgrade to an open faced reel and then move on to more advanced reels. Keep in mind that you don't want to choose a reel with plastic parts that can fail if you catch a good sized fish. A good rule of thumb is the lighter the line, the smaller the reel. Be sure the reel you purchase is compatible with the type of fishing line you plan to use. If you're choosing only one reel, a medium speed is best. If you plan on buying at least two reels, choose both a high and low speed. There is a difference in reels for right and left-handed people. Be sure you purchase a reel that is compatible with your dexterity. Left handed reels turn counter clock wise while a right handed reel turns clock wise.

If you have trouble choosing a reel, ask a family member or friend who is an avid angler to lend you a hand, or ask the staff at your local fishing store. Anyone who has experience in fishing will be more than glad to help in any way they can.

The Art of Lures

Fishing is both science and art these days. Advances in materials science has improved rods, reels, lures and all the other gear used. Experience in fish behavior and environments makes the difference between just a relaxing day on the water or pleasure combined with a big haul.

Even with all that knowledge, there is still an art to fishing. One key area of the art is in the creation and use of lures.

That lures look like art is obvious to anyone who visits a sporting goods store. Arrayed beneath the glass counter are dozens of colorful designs. But this art has a purpose informed by long experience and ample science.

Here are just a few examples of that beautiful combination.

Jigs

Jigs come in a variety of styles, but all have weighted metal heads and a feathered tail. That tail can be made of real bird feathers or animal hair. Synthetic materials used range from soft plastic to rubber. Jigs have wide application, since they're useful for catching just about any kind of freshwater species.

Plugs

Plugs are made of buoyant material so they can float on the surface or at a selected depth just below the waterline. The former are called 'topwater' or 'floating' plugs, the latter are 'diving' plugs. Wood, plastic or even synthetic rubber are used.

Poppers

Poppers and flies are useful for going after panfish, trout, bass... anything that feeds off insects on the surface of the water. They're designed to be cast so they splash into the water, attracting those surface feeders.

Spinners

Among the cleverest type of lure are spinners. Fish have varying visual acuity - some see well, others perceive only vague shapes. But they all respond to motion, especially motion that mimics prey. Spinners take advantage of that by using blades that rotate around a central shaft.

To add to the lure's attractive ability some have skirts made of animal hair or some synthetic material such as vinyl or rubber. Others may have just a simple tail made of soft plastic or hair.

Kona Heads

Kona heads, or sliced lures, are long cylinders that look somewhat like miniature squids. They produce surface breaks and a bubble trail that attracts the fish. They come in all colors and varying sizes, but they all make great trollers. Dragging along behind a boat at a few knots you're sure to be followed.

Jet Heads

Made of metal, Jet heads are heavier than average. Their long, colorful, string-like tails also produce bubble trails. That makes them very effective at attracting a variety of fish. They're designed to be trolled at higher speeds, up to 15 knots, than Kona heads.

Cup-Faced

Cup-faced lures look like little fish heads. Designed to troll between seven to ten knots, the head scoops up surface water, making them really handy for windy conditions.

There are hundreds of artistic variations within even these categories. Miniature sculpture, but with a practical purpose, these small works of art supplement the greater art: the angler's skill.

Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Hooks

The humble hook. For such a relatively simple device, it has a lot of components and comes in a wide variety of styles.

Regardless of type, every hook has a few basic attributes. The end has an eye, through which you can thread your line. The shank is the section from the eye to the curve. After the curve, there's a sharp point. Many styles have a barb near the point - a secondary, smaller hook to prevent the fish from escaping once snared.

The shape and size of the hook is often as important as the individual parts.

The size of the gap between the point and the shank plays an important role in catching fish. Too small and the hook won't grab the fish firmly - the fish doesn't get it far enough in to prevent pulling away.

The throat - the distance between the center of the bend and the midpoint of the gap - plays a similar part in how effectively the fish is hooked.

Beyond these basic attributes, there are dozens of variations in styles of hook. The points can be ultra-sharp or more blunt. Thin points penetrate more readily, but thicker points will hold better.

As with any design element, it's always a balancing act, influenced by the style of fishing intended. Saltwater fly fishing, for example, makes use of a narrower hook to penetrate more easily the tough hides of game fish. Fly fishers often use a reversed or kirbed point in tandem with large flies. The sharp angle makes for a really effective barb.

Just as barbs come in different styles, so does the element at the opposite end - the eye. Looped eyes make for easy threading and line release. Just make your knot and slip it through the narrow gap between the shank and the end. Swiveled eyes are used for large game fish to help keep the lines from getting twisted.

Circle hooks are one of the newer fads, though the design has been around for several years. The shank is curved, making something of a long bend with no straight shaft. The curve is designed to slide along the inside of the mouth to the corner of the jaw. That helps prevent gut hooking, leaving lots of fight in the fish after it's hooked.

It also means there's no need to set the hook to lodge it firmly into the fish. You just reel back gently and you're on your way to a fun catch. Circle hooks make for relatively easy and harmless catch-and-release when that's your style.

Hooks are made from different materials, but stainless steel is usually your best bet for saltwater. Forged hooks are the norm for bait fishing. Avoid tinned hooks, since they corrode rapidly.

In general, there's little advantage to attempting to modify an existing hook - by bending, filing or otherwise. It's too easy to break one or stab your thumb. In a pinch, do what you must. But it's better to be prepared and have a number of different styles in your tackle box.

Fishing Bait Basics

Imagine heading out for a few relaxing hours of fishing. With rod and reel and tackle box in hand, you descend a hill and come to the edge of a swiftly moving stream. The sun reflects off the crystal clear water as you set down your tackle box and rig your bait. You cast into a tranquil pool or eddy and your bobber floats on the water surface. Suddenly, it disappears. Your reflexes automatically set the hook. The fish has taken the bait.

Bait is something, either live or artificial that attracts fish. When the fish 'takes the bait', you set the hook and skillfully bring the fish to shore.

Live Bait

There are many live types of bait that can be used to catch fish. These include earthworms, also known as dew worms and night crawlers. Insects that can be used include grasshoppers, flies, insect larvae and crickets. Other live baits are minnows, chub, shad, crayfish and frogs. Live bait can be purchased at fishing bait and tackle stores, at some variety stores in popular fishing areas, on a dewy lawn after dark (use a flashlight to find dew worms), compost piles, around piers and boat launches as well as around campsites.

Prepared Bait

Prepared bait is bait that has been previously prepared. These include kernel corn, bread balls, cheese balls, stink baits, salmon eggs, cereal balls, baked potato pieces, chicken entrails and hotdogs.

Artificial Bait

Artificial bait is bait that is manmade. These include plastic worms and insects, flies, lures, small jigs, streamer flies, spoons, streamers and spinners.

Fish and Bait

There are certain types of bait that work better for specific fish species. A few suggestions of bait to use for fish species are:

Bluegill

maggots, grubs, worms, crickets, grasshoppers, small flies, ice spoons or jigs.

Bowfin

worms, minnows, crayfish, frogs, spinners, spoons and streamers.

Bullhead

leaf worms, night crawlers, insects, insect larvae, crayfish and stink bait.

Carp

dough balls, angle worms, peeled crayfish tails, corn, cheese balls and cereal or baked potato pieces.

Catfish

night crawlers and prepared baits such as bread balls, hotdogs and chicken entrails.

Crappie

minnows, worms, insect larvae, insects, small flies, small jigs and small spinners.

Gar

minnows, suckers and frogs.

Perch

minnows, worms, crayfish, insect larvae, insects, small flies, ice spoons and small jigs.

Pickereel

minnows, chub, crayfish, worms, spinners, spoons and streamer flies.

Rock Bass

minnows, crayfish, insects, insect larvae and worms.

Striped Bass

shad, worms, shad, spinners and streamers.

Sunfish

maggots, grubs, leaf worms, insects, small flies, ice spoons and small jigs.

Trout

salmon eggs and lures.

There are several different types of minnows and some are better than others for specific fish species. A few specific fish that can be caught with different types of minnows are:

Chub

northern pike and bass.

Golden Shiner

northern pike and bass.

Fathead Minnow

bass, crappie, panfish and walleye.

Bluntnose Minnow

bass, crappie and walleye.

Bait is placed on the end of your fishing line. If you wish to change bait with ease, use a fishing knot to attach a swivel and/or leader, which you should carry in your tackle box. A hook or lure is attached to the swivel/leader with a pin-like clip. If you are using lures, you attach the lure, cast and work or troll it.

If you are using live bait, you attach it to the hook. When hooking worms, you can either start the hook near the head and thread it about three quarters of the way through the center of the body and exit near the tail, or hook it twice, about a half inch from the head and again about a half inch from the tail. Hook maggots through the blunt end very lightly to ensure it remains lively. If using slugs, use a large hook, about a size 2, and nick it through the body.

Prepared bait is also used on a hook. To bait a hook with cheese, bury the point of the hook inside the cheese. Sweet corn is slide through the end of the kernel. Bread can be mixed with a bit of water and made into balls. When using bread balls as bait, bury the point inside the ball.

What Not to Use as Bait

Salmon and trout should never be used as bait, as these fish can promote the spread of whirling disease, which is a type of parasite. If you don't know which bait to use for specific fish, or how the bait should be attached to the hook, ask a family member or a friend who is an experienced angler to help you determine which is best to attract the fish species you are hoping to catch. The staff at the local bait and tackle shop will also be happy to suggest certain kinds of bait.

How to Hook Bait

Hooking artificial bait is simple and straightforward. They don't wiggle and they're not slippery. Though your hands may be, but that's easily solved. They come in sizes that make it easy to position them to best advantage. Live bait are less easy to use, but often much more effective.

Bait for attracting freshwater fish run the gamut. Worms, leeches, minnows, crayfish, crickets, grasshoppers... the list is long. Saltwater fish have their own favorites, including sea worms, small eels, miniature crabs, shrimp, squid and a variety of small fish species.

But these are most effective when used fresh - when they're the most difficult to hook. They wiggle, they're slippery and they smell. But, hey, fishing is nothing if not messy. That's part of the lure.

Worms make good bait for just about any freshwater or saltwater fish species. Digging these up out of your garden is a distant third choice, though, if you want the best. Gardens don't usually have enough and by the time you get them to the lake they're often less useful. Transporting them is a pain. Make it easy on yourself and get them as close to the lake as possible, preferably at the bait shop.

Hook the worm at multiple points along the body from head to tail, to keep them on long enough to do the job. Thread them around as you do so, to hide the hook as much as possible.

Minnows make great bait, provided they're kept fresh in a bucket of cool water. Keep the number down so they don't get crowded together. Minnows need to swim around.

Hook them through the back bone or behind the head. Some anglers find it easier to hook them through both lips, but they're prone to pull off the hook that way. Hooking through the tail makes it harder for them to thrash, decreasing their attractive character to your target.

Highly skilled anglers are fond of crickets and grasshoppers. They're only useful when fresh, and then they are damned difficult to hook. But if you have nimble hands and can master the technique they're great attractors.

Leeches make excellent bait, though they can be harder to find in bait shops. Take care to avoid getting them attached to your hands and arms. Hooking them through the sucker in the tail is the preferred method.

Great for perch, rockfish, sea trout and others clams are easy to use and very effective. Removing them from the shell is pretty easy with a knife or nimble fingers.

Used for saltwater fishing, shrimp are near perfect. Great attractors and ultra-easy to hook. They don't slide around and they're a size that makes them easy to manipulate by young and old anglers alike. Peel off the shell, then hook through the tail. Just don't be tempted to eat them yourself!

Every angler has his or her favorite bait and hooking methods. Some like to spend more time fishing and less time fussing and go for the ones that are effective but easy to snag and cover the hook well. Others may prefer more of a challenge before dropping their line. To each his own, so long as you catch something!

Fish Bait Recipes to Make at Home

Curing Salmon Eggs

If you are fishing for large game fish, cured salmon eggs are the perfect bait. Largemouth bass, pickerel, muskellunge, salmon, lake trout and other large fish species love them. Here's how to cure salmon eggs to use as bait. When you remove the eggs from the salmon you are cleaning, keep the egg sacs, also known as skeins intact. Cover a large, flat, moveable surface with 1/4 inch of borax. Cut the egg sacs (skeins) across the membrane in sections of 3 to 4 inches. Lay the egg sac (skein) sections 1 inch apart on top of the borax. Sprinkle more borax over the top to create a light coating. Be sure all egg sacs are covered. Move the large moveable surface that the eggs are on into a sheltered area that has good air circulation all around. The eggs must not be in direct sunlight and must not get wet, so be sure they are protected from precipitation. Allow the sacs to dry for two to three days, being sure to turn them every 12 hours. Pick the egg sacs out of the borax and shake any excess off them. Place them in plastic bags or storage containers. The egg sacs are ready to use when they are completely dry and feel leathery, but flexible. If eggs are properly cured, they can be saved in the plastic bags or containers to be used on your next fishing trip.

Cheese Bait

Cheese bait can be used to catch bream, catfish, chub, and carp. In fact carp especially love cheese bait. So if you're looking to catch any of these species or a huge carp that's been lurking around your fishing hole, here's how to make your own cheese bait. Use 10 ounces (284 grams) of pie pastry and roll it flat on a cutting board or counter top. Smear the pastry with mature cheddar flavor. Add 6 ounces (170 grams) of grated mature cheddar cheese and 4 ounces (115 grams) of crumbled Danish blue cheese. Make sure it's crumbled to fine grains. Fold the pastry over the cheese so it is completely covered and roll again. Continue this process until the pie pastry and the cheese are mixed thoroughly and the cheese is absorbed by the pastry. Form the paste into a large ball and knead by hand. Add ten drops of the mature cheddar flavoring to a freezer bag and place the cheese paste ball into the bag. Place in the freezer. When it is thawed, this bait has a very appealing consistency and texture, and a very powerful cheesy smell. Roll the thawed paste into cheese balls and place into a container for your next

fishing trip. When you place a cheese ball onto your hook, set the hook's point into the center, cast and wait patiently for the fish to bite. Optionally you may add a few drops of red food coloring to the paste if you wish, but it isn't necessary.

Fishing Boats

You and your family are heading out early in the morning for a day of fishing in your brand new fishing boat. You hit that highway that leads to the lake, excited voices echoing throughout your SUV. Your wife and kids are just as delighted with the new boat as you are and are discussing the whopper they hope to catch. You arrive at the lake, launch the runabout that contains the entire family's fishing gear and in no time at all, you are skimming across the water, every family member safely encased in a lifejacket. You just know that this is going to be a great family outing and everyone loves the new fishing boat.

A fishing boat can be anything between a canoe where you dangle basic bait over the side in a river or stream to a powerful cabin cruiser or yacht. Basically, all you need to get out onto the water is a vessel that is seaworthy. There are a large variety of fishing boats available on today's market. You can buy them at boat shows, fishing shows or dealerships. Let's look at some different types of fishing boats.

Freshwater Fishing Boats

If you enjoy fishing in freshwater rivers, lakes and streams, leave the big, powerful boats for someone else. Choose a fiberglass or aluminum boat that is lightweight and easy to transport. A bowrider, runabout, walleye boat or a boat with a small or dual console will meet all of your freshwater fishing needs. These boats are perfect for family outings.

Bass Boats

Bass boats ride low in the water and are usually very colorful and extremely fast. They can be aluminum or fiberglass and most often they are equipped with platforms in both the bow and stern for easy casting. If you've always dreamed of owning the perfect bass boat, be sure to buy one that has a trolling motor mounted on the bow. These boats are mainly used for sport fishing and tournament fishing.

Offshore Saltwater Boats

If you enjoy heading out on the open sea for a day of saltwater fishing that includes huge fish and heavy tackle, you will need a heavy boat that is dependable and can be relied on in all situations and weather. Anything less than a cuddy cabin or center console that's equipped with either twin or single outboard motors will not fit the bill. The high end of an offshore saltwater boat is a bluewater or convertible that comes complete with luxury quarters and elaborate salons. These boats should be equipped with inboard diesel engines that have maximum power.

Inshore Saltwater Boats

If you're planning to fish for tarpin, bonefish, trout and snook or redfish on tropical flats, a light boat will take you a long way. This type of boat should always be less than a 25-footer and powered by a single outboard motor. The best type of vessel for inshore saltwater fishing is a

basic bay boat or flat boat. Both types of boats offer a spacious deck for casting and float well in shallow water.

Float Tubes

Float tubes are devices that allow fly anglers who don't own a boat easy access to get out onto the water. They are excellent for fishing ponds, lakes and mountain streams. Essentially a float tube is a floatation device that is equipped with a seat. The angler sits in the seat while wearing fins and kicks his way around while partially submerged. Fly fishing from float tubes can be difficult, especially for those who are using them for the first time. It definitely takes time to hone your fly casting skills from a float tube.

There are two basic types of float tubes - traditional and pontoon. Traditional float tubes are usually round and have an opening in the front or middle. Basically, these are an inner tube with built-in features for fly fishing. These float tubes can take a lot of time to maneuver because they are round in shape and cause a lot of water resistance.

The newer pontoon float tubes are much easier to use. These are equipped with two pontoons, or air chambers, one on each side of the fisherman. Pontoon float tubes have less water resistance and offer far less drag than traditional ones because the pontoons are V-shaped and move through the water almost effortlessly.

If you are thinking of purchasing a fishing boat, shop around, talk to anglers who own their own boats and do your research to help you decide which type of boat you'd like to have. If you still can't make a choice, talk to a boat fishing guide or the owner of a fishing charter service. They will be glad to give you tips on how to choose the perfect boat for you.

Freshwater Fishing Basics

Fresh water fishing is fishing in lakes, rivers and streams that have minute quantities of dissolved salts. Freshwater sources are precipitation or melting ice and snow. There are hundreds of fresh water fish species, but the most popular are bass, catfish, pickerel, pike, sunfish, trout, salmon, muskellunge, sturgeon and walleye.

Basic freshwater fishing equipment includes a fishing rod and reel, fishing line between 4 and 10 pound-test, a variety of sinkers, a variety of hooks (sizes 6 to 10), floats, bait and in most locations, a fishing permit or license. There are a wide variety of both live and artificial baits that work well for fresh water fishing.

Live bait works well for fresh water fishing. Freshwater fish feed on a variety of prey, including earthworms, insects, insect larvae, frogs, minnows, chub, shad, crayfish and small fish species such as smelt. Freshwater fishing bait such as earthworms, crayfish, frogs, minnows, chubs and shads can be caught in its natural habitat. Look around piers and in shallow water. Freshwater bait can also be purchased from your local bait and tackle shop.

Artificial bait is manmade bait that attracts fish to bite or strike. It includes plastic worms, insects, flies, small jigs, lures, spoons, streamers, flies, spinners and more. Artificial bait can be

purchased at fishing tackle and bait shops or online. Some anglers prefer to buy the supplies for these types of baits and make their own.

There are a wide variety of prepared baits that you can use for freshwater fishing. These include kernel corn, bread balls, cheese balls, egg bags, liver, cereal balls, chicken entrails. Here is just a short list of some freshwater fish and the bait that attracts them.

Bass

earthworms, insects, insect larvae, frogs, minnows, crayfish, spoons, Mepps, spinners, artificial worms, jigs, streamers and spinners.

Catfish

earthworms, liver, chicken entrails, hotdogs, frogs, tadpoles, crayfish and most lures. At times you can even catch them on shiny hooks that have no bait.

Pickereel

earthworms, insects, insect larvae, frogs, minnows, crayfish, spoons and Mepps, spinners, artificial worms, jigs, spinners and streamers.

Pike

earthworms, frogs, minnows, shad, all types of small fish species, crayfish, chub, spinners, spoons and egg sacs.

Sunfish

earthworms, bread balls, kernel corn, insects and insect larvae, as well as small, shiny lures.

Trout

earthworms, flies, insects, insect larvae, kernel corn, egg sacs, crayfish and minnows.

Salmon

flies, spinners, spoons, egg sacs, shrimp and large plugs.

Muskellunge

small fish species, frogs, Mepps, spinners, jigs, minnows, plastic trailers and rapalas.

Sturgeon

frogs, freshwater clams, lamprey, eels, smelt, salmon eggs, shad, shrimp, egg sacs, yarn flies, brilliantly colored and silver lures.

Walleye

shad, frogs, real or artificial minnows, worms, maggots, spinners, spoons, jigs, plugs and small fish species.

If you wish to learn more about freshwater fishing, ask an experienced angler to give you some tips. This can be a family member, a friend, a fishing guide or instructor or a staff member of your local bait and tackle shop.

Fly Fishing Basics

You pile your fly fishing gear into the van and head out to a swiftly moving stream that you know of. You park the vehicle and head across a pasture. You're glad the owner is a friend of yours, as you have blanket permission to fish on his land. You walk down a steep incline to the crystal clear stream, slip on your thigh waders, fill your fishing vest with various types of flies and wade into the stream.

When you are in position, the tip of your rod should be in the four o'clock position with 20 feet (6 meters) of line extended beyond your rod's tip. Trap the line between the rod handle and your index finger. To begin the back cast, bend your elbow, raise your forearm and move the rod tip from four o'clock to eleven thirty and lift the line from the water. Pause for a moment at this point to allow the line to extend behind you before casting the rod forward. Allow the rod to follow through as the line extends to its full length in front of you. Then continue to work the line in this manner. Suddenly, as you work your rod and line, a fish strikes. The fight is on and you successfully land the fish. You've just learned the art of fly casting.

Fly fishing is an ancient method of angling. It was primarily developed to catch trout and salmon. Today, it is still used to fish these species, but is also used to catch bass, carp, pike and a wide range of saltwater fish. The difference between casting and fly fishing is that in casting you use the weight of your bait, sinker and bobber to propel your cast. In fly fishing, the weight of the line propels your line forward and puts your fly into position. The fly cannot do this, as it is essentially weightless. The goal in fly fishing is to present the fly gently and to always be in control of it.

When you fly fish, you need special fishing equipment that includes a fly rod and reel, a special fly fishing line and artificial or live flies. These are tied onto your hook with feathers, fur, thread or other materials in colors and sizes that represent natural prey. The key to successful fly fishing is balance. The rod, reel and line, as well as the tippet all have to match in order to have a positive fly fishing experience.

Rod, Reels and Lines

Fly fishing rods are lightweight and long. The line provides the casting weight and is heavy. It can be of differing density, depending on whether you want the fly to sink or float. Line is matched to your rod by weight. Look near the fly rod butt to find out what line weight must be used. Graphite rods are best because they can produce any action that you wish to use. If you are a beginner, buy a basic and moderately priced rod, or borrow one from a family member or friend.

Flies and Leaders

Flies weigh very little. The fly is usually attached to the line by a leader that is two to three meters in length (6 to 9 feet). The leader often tapers to a fine end. This is called a tippet. Tippet size range from 8X, which is the smallest, to 0X, which is the largest. Tippets are set in units of .001 inches. To match the tippet to the fly, you must subtract from eleven and multiply by .001.

For example to find the diameter of a 4X tippet, you would subtract four from eleven. That equals seven. Now, multiply by .001. This size would be .007. What if you have a # 18 fly? How

would you calculate tippet size? You would put eighteen over four and calculate. The answer would be 4.5. Since there is no 4.5 X tippet, you would move to the next largest size, which would be 5.

Types of Fly Fishing

There are two types of fly fishing - dry and wet. Wet flies are fished beneath the water surface and are divided into several types, including live wet flies, lures and nymphs. Dry flies float on the water surface and are coated with a substance called, 'floatant' to make this possible.

If you are interested in fly fishing and can't decide which equipment you need to have a positive fishing experience, ask an experienced angler for help. This can be a family member, friend, someone from the local angler's club or a staff member of the local fly fishing shop. Fly fishing is not as hard to learn as it appears to be. Have fun and enjoy that big catch.

Lake Fishing

Spring is here. You head out early in the morning, your fishing gear packed into the back of your SUV. You're looking forward to a day on the lakeshore and are hoping to catch a pickerel or perch. When you arrive, you pack your gear to the rocky shore and decide, for the fun of it, to use a nightcrawler for bait. You slide it onto your hook and cast. The bait sinks below the surface. Bang! A fish strikes. It is a good sized catch and a fighter. You can see it flipping and thrashing in the cool water, trying to free itself of the hook. You play the fish until it tires, bring it into shore and scoop it into your net. Much to your surprise, you've landed a northern pike.

Lake fishing is any type of fishing that is done on a lake. It can be shore fishing from a pier or marina or from a rocky shoreline. It can also be boat fishing, trolling or fly fishing. There are a wide variety of fish species found in lakes around the world. Lake species include bass, trout, catfish, perch, pickerel, northern pike, muskellunge, sturgeon, walleye and salmon.

If you plan to fish from a boat, you will need to own one, rent one, or go lake fishing with someone who has one. To fish from a boat, you will need a rod, reel, tackle, trolling equipment and a lake or fish map. If you are a beginner, use a basic lake fishing kit. This includes a six to eight foot graphite or fiberglass rod with a basic closed or open faced reel. Fishing line should be 8 to 15 pound-test, depending on the fish species you are targeting and the depth. Fishing near the surface requires 8 pound-test, while fishing the middle or bottom requires 15 pound test. The larger the fish species, the higher pound-test line you will need.

You will also need a variety of different sized hooks, ranging from medium to large. Split shot sinkers are best. If you are planning on fishing the bottom, larger weights will be necessary. Remember, when buying sinkers, be sure they are lead free in order to protect the environment. Floats can vary from cork to plastic to foam. Torpedo floats work great as well. Floats of various sizes can be used, but remember, smaller is always better. You don't want the fish to see your float.

A variety of bait, both live and artificial is used for different species of lake fish.

Trout

Live bait for trout includes worms, insects, insect larvae and crayfish. Artificial bait includes streamers, spoons, spinners and dry and wet flies.

Bass

Live bait includes worms, shad, insects, insect larvae, frogs, crayfish and minnows. Artificial bait includes spinners, streamers, Mepps, spoons, jigs, crankbaits and clousers.

Walleye

Live bait includes nightcrawlers, crayfish, minnows, chubs and leaches. Artificial trolling bait that is best is jointed minnows and spinner rigs.

Salmon

Live bait includes worms, prawns, crustaceans, insects and insect larvae. Artificial bait includes lures, flies, plugs, streamers and spinners. Prepared bait such as egg sacs and scents also work well.

Catfish

Catfish in a lake are usually channel cat. They are attracted to cut bait, worms, crayfish or peeled crayfish tails, mollusks, minnows, cheeseballs, breadballs, shrimp, chicken entrails and liver.

Pickereel

Pickereel feed on aquatic insects and invertebrates. Use nightcrawlers, minnows, crayfish, insects and frogs. Artificial bait includes worms, spinners, spoons, streamers and Mepps.

Perch

Perch feed on minnows, insects, insect larvae, crayfish, snails, nightcrawlers, grubs and maggots. Artificial bait includes worms, lures, spinners, streamers and jigs. Use small lures when fishing for perch, as they have small mouths.

Northern Pike

Pike are predators. They will take nightcrawlers, minnows and smelt. Pike, especially females heavy with eggs, prefer dead bait because it provides an easy meal. Artificial bait includes wobbling spoons, spinners, split minnows and red and white spoons. If you are removing a hook from a northern pike, use needle nose pliers to avoid injury.

Muskellunge

Live bait for Musky includes live fish bait that is 10 to 12 inches. Suckers work well, as do leeches, frogs, insects and sunfish. Artificial bait includes spoons, bucktails and large plugs. Muskies are fighters and will strip reels, break rods, mutilate bait and bend hooks.

Sturgeon

Sturgeon like fresh bait and are bottom feeders. They are attracted to clams, eel, crayfish, smelt, salmon eggs, shad, nightcrawlers and fish heads.

Lake Trolling

Trolling is the use of either large or artificial bait pulled through the water behind a moving boat. It is used on lakes, especially for trout and walleye. The boat can be powered by a motor or oars. The bait can be trolled at any depth and is intended to resemble live fish. Trolled plugs, spoons and flies can be fished deep by adding weights or using leadcore line. Live bait is fished below a sliding float when trolling.

If you wish to take up lake fishing and have concerns over equipment or bait that you should use, ask an experienced lake angler to give you some tips, or invite them to come along on a lake fishing trip. Any experienced lake angler will be able to help you with equipment, bait, casting and trolling issues. This could be a family member, friend, neighbor or a staff member at a bait and tackle shop that specializes in lake fishing.

Saltwater Fishing Basics

Saltwater fishing is fishing in water that has high quantities of salt, such as oceans, gulfs and seas. Saltwater flows inland in coastal areas, so saltwater fishing is possible near the mouth of rivers and streams in coastal areas. Saltwater doesn't come from precipitation nor does it come from melting ice and snow. There are hundreds of saltwater fish species, including sea catfish, cod, mackerel, barracuda, tarpon, eels, swordfish, dolphinfish, snapper, mullet, flatfish, turtle, tuna, sharks, garth, bass, flounder and pollack.

Saltwater Fishing Equipment

Rods

A fly fishing basic rod for saltwater fishing should be 8½ to 9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 meters) in length. These cost between \$100 and \$500. Any rod under \$100 will not be adequate. If you are a beginner it will be wise to choose a rod in the \$100 range. Once you hone your skills, you can buy a more expensive rod if you wish. Another option for beginners is to borrow a rod from someone you know.

Reels

It is a good idea to buy a reel that is resistant to saltwater corrosion. These reels are made from such materials as fiber/resin, stainless steel, titanium and plated steel with components of bronze or brass. This type of reel will run between \$100 and \$500. To learn which type of reel is best for your area, ask an experienced saltwater angler who has used his reel for more than two years, as this is the point in time when corrosion problems begin to appear.

Saltwater Line

If you plan on fishing in flat and shallow estuary situations, a floating fly line will work. These are the best lines for beginners. If you plan to fish your fly beneath the water surface, you will be better off with a clear, intermediate fly line. If you'd like a greater advantage, try one of the newer clear, sink tip lines when you're wading. These lines do not tangle around your feet like other fly lines.

Leaders

Keep it simple. There are a few basic rules related to leaders. Use longer leaders for shy fish. For toothy fish and those with sharp fins use tough, thick leaders. When using a floating line and a fly that is weighted, use a long leader in deep water. If you're using a sinking line in deep water, use a short leader.

Saltwater Flies

Saltwater fly selection can be simple. You have a variety of choices. You can buy flies at bait and tackle shops, on the Internet, or learn to tie your own. If you're a beginner, purchase Crazy Charlies, Surf Candies and Clouser. Keep them light and small until you hone your casting skills. A good way to choose flies is to buy those that are endorsed or tied by experts in the locale where you are fishing.

Casting

Casting shouldn't be a problem for saltwater fishing if you have experience in fly casting for trout. If not, keep it light. If you have the ability to cast weighted nymphs, then casting weighted Clousers won't present a problem. Remember not to 'overline'. Overlining is when you use a line that is over the recommended weight for your rod. Look near the rod butt for the recommended line weight for your rod. If you have no experience in fly casting you should consider fly casting lessons that are taught by an expert.

Hooking and Landing

When a fish strikes, set the hook with the line hand. Do not lift your rod high into the air. Do not fight your catch with continuous pull. Alter your pull, from the left, from below, from the right. Try to upset the fish's swimming pattern by rolling it. This will make for a much easier landing.

Keep your rod tip low and do not 'high stick' when landing a fish. If you high stick, you are likely to break the tip of your rod. That can be a costly mistake. Always add a pincher (pliers) and gloves to your fishing gear to ensure a safe landing of fish that have abrasive skin or large, sharp teeth. A good way to protect yourself, other anglers and the fish, as well as minimize damage to flies is to pinch the barbs down on all of your hooks.

Bait

There is a large variety of live and artificial bait for saltwater fishing. Natural and live baits work well for a wide range of saltwater fish. Almost all saltwater species will take shrimp, so it is a good over-all bait to use. Baitfish of all kinds is also good bait, as all saltwater fish eat smaller fish species. Always use bait that is part of your targeted fish's diet. Other live baits include crayfish, crabs, oysters, lugworms, sand-eels, crustaceans of all types, razor fish, herring and a wide range of natural baits that include pieces of larger fish species.

Keep it simple. Never overweight. Use just enough for the job. Match the size of your hook to the size of your bait, equipment and the fish you are targeting. Putting small bait on a large hook looks unnatural and fish will not take it. The lighter the line, the lighter the hook. Follow this rule of thumb to match bait and tackle.

If you need help choosing saltwater fishing equipment, bait or need help learning to cast, ask an experienced saltwater angler or guide to help. Another option is to ask for tips at the

saltwater bait and tackle shop where you purchase your bait. The staff is always glad to help out when they can.

Deep Sea Fishing

You and your buddy toss some rain gear and a few pieces of equipment into the car and head out onto the highway to the coast for a deep sea fishing excursion. You're really excited and are looking forward to it. Deep sea fishing is done far out in the ocean. There are many deep sea fishing grounds in the world's oceans. Deep sea fishing excursions are best done by charter.

You can deep sea fish for a wide range of fish species, including cod, wolf fish, haddock, halibut, Pollock, cusk, tuna, shark, sailfish, swordfish, rockfish, marlin, dorado and wahoo. For deep sea fishing you will need very heavy equipment, including rods and reels. Reels must be able to hold up to 300 yards of line. Line should be between 12 and 30 pound-test, depending on the targeted species. Inexperienced deep sea fishing anglers should always use 30 pound-test line. Skilled anglers will find that using a 12 pound-test line presents more of a challenge. Be sure your rod, reel and line balance in size. Hook size should run between 3.0 and 6.0. Leaders should be between 10 and 15 feet long and be tied to a double line. All leaders used for deep sea fishing should be between 30 and 50 pound-test.

Live ballyhoo is a good all round bait for sailfishing. Bigger deep sea fishing baits include speedos, blue runners and googlyes, cut bait, dead bait rigs and lures, however live bait is best. The best rule of thumb for bait is to present the fish with natural prey. This is the smaller fish that the targeted species feeds upon. Sandperch, threadfin, herring, pilchards, hermit crabs, lugworms, mackerel, mussels, shrimp, squid, sandeel and mullets are all good bait for deep sea fishing. Grouper, kingfish, snapper, tuna and wahoo will all take these baits.

Never handle your bait after applying sunscreen without washing your hands with non-scented soap and water. In fact, the less you handle deep sea fishing bait, the better it is. Do not use bait that has scales missing or if there are red spots around the nose. Deep sea fishing baits are easily found around fish cleaning tables, markers, bridges and docks. If you can't find bait, watch the seabirds. They fly in tight circles and dive in spots where bait is plentiful. If pelicans dive and immediately bring up their heads, they've found herring or pilchards. Seabirds can tell you where bait can be found.

The gear you will need will depend partially on where you are deep sea fishing. No matter where your deep sea fishing excursion is, be sure to take rain gear to protect you in inclement weather. When booking your deep sea fishing excursion, be sure to ask the charter company what you should bring along. Most of them provide a list so that you will bring everything you need.

Use caution when chartering a deep sea fishing excursion. Be sure the company is in good standing and that they have the proper permits and insurance. They should have been licensed at least two years and willingly provide references. If they hesitate, continue your search for a charter that is right for you. Charter companies should provide safety equipment and be fully bondable. Don't hesitate to ask for proof of licensing, insurance and bonds. If you have trouble

choosing a charter company, ask someone who has previous experience for a recommendation. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or a member of your angling club.

Sport Fishing

You and your buddies pack all of your fishing gear into your boat, hitch it to the back of your pickup truck. Along the way there's a lot of joshing and wisecracks. You're all excited and having a bit of fun before you reach your destination. This is going to be a great trip. You're off to take part in a weekend of sport fishing.

Sport fishing is recreational fishing in which anglers spend a day or a weekend competing for a trophy or prize that is based on the weight of fish that are caught within a certain time frame. Sport fishing competitions take place in locations world wide and cover a large range of fish species. It can be based on either still or fly fishing, shore fishing or boat fishing. Scores are given to anglers, either individuals (shore fishing) or teams (boat fishing) for each fish that is caught within the specified time frame, depending on species and weight. These are divided by the line weight (pound-test). If an angler catches a large fish on a light line his score is greater than an angler who catches a fish of the same weight and size on a heavier line. When anglers participate in a competition where they land, tag and release their catch, they receive a 'flat score' for each fish caught. The 'flat score' is then divided by line weight (pound-test).

There are several forms of sport fishing. They include bass fishing, shore fishing, fly fishing, big game fishing, rock fishing, troll fishing, ice fishing and lure fishing tournaments. Methods of sport fishing vary greatly, depending on the targeted species, the area where the tournament is taking place and the strategy of anglers. Methods can range from simple fishing contests for families to specialized tournaments. Bass and fly fishing competitions are common among experienced anglers, but more elaborate sports fishing methods include fishing for tuna, shark, marlin and other deep sea species. Sports fishing species include bass, pickerel, muskellunge, salmon, tuna species, walleye, northern pike, marlin, swordfish, sailfish, trevally, coral trout, freshwater trout, wahoo, fingermark bream and shark.

The equipment necessary to compete in a sports fishing tournament depends largely on the fish species that is targeted. However, most sports fishing competitions mandate that you use a rod, reel and tackle instead of using fishing nets, fish finders and other aids. Some tournaments do allow electronic equipment. Be sure to check the tournament rules carefully.

Fishing line used in tournaments and competitions is often lighter than the force that the fish applies to it. This presents more of a challenge. Because of this, special reels must be used that have very high tech drag mechanisms, which allow the line to be let out when a fish runs with it and still keep the correct tension on the line. When the fish isn't running, the angler can take the opportunity to reel in some of the excess line. If the fish tires before breaking the line, it can be landed. This is not an easy feat. Getting a heavy, wet, slippery and writhing fish into a boat is a challenge in itself. However, if the tournament is catch, tag and release, it is not necessary to take the fish into the boat.

Different methods are used to fight hooked fish in sports fishing. The first is with the use of a 'game chair', which is placed in the stern of the boat. The fisherman sits in the game chair and places the butt of his rod in a gimbaled mount. This requires a very long rod and the rod butt must be bent to an angle to fit properly into the mount. Fighting fish from a game chair is not an easy task and can only be accomplished by a highly skilled sport fishing angler. The stand-up method of fighting fish has the seat mount replaced by a harness. This method of landing a large fish takes a lot of muscle, strength, endurance and body mass.

The cost of sport fishing is high. You need, in most cases, a boat, rod, reel, lures, line and electronic fishing equipment. All of this and the skyrocketing price of gasoline make sport fishing very expensive. Sport fishing basics, such as rods, reels and tackle can cost as much as \$25,000 US. Many anglers who take up sports fishing as a hobby use charter services where the boat and all of the fishing equipment and tackle are included in one large price.

Sport fishing bait can be as simple as nightcrawlers, lures, spinners, streamers, spoons, crustaceans, prepared bait, wet and dry flies, shrimp and oysters, or range to more complicated baits such as live fish species and live bait systems. Sport fishing baits depend largely on the targeted species and the area in which the tournament is taking place. Frozen baits such as mackerel, sardines, herring, squid and octopus can be purchased as can manufactured baits.

If you are interested in taking up sport fishing as a hobby, seek the advice of a sports fishing expert. Many chartered sport fishing expeditions include all of the necessary equipment and tackle as well as a certified guide.

Night Fishing

You and your buddies from work load your fishing gear into the car and hit the highway that leads to the lake. None of you have ever been night fishing before, but the company you work for has chartered a boat for a night fishing excursion. You get to the lake, board the boat and find that there are a couple of guides on board that are experts in night fishing. You are excited and hope to land a couple of the big ones that you've been told come in to shore to feed at night. Maybe you will take up the hobby of night fishing.

Night fishing is fishing at night, usually, but not always when the moon is full. Night fishing is quite often done from a boat, but can also be done from shore or in rivers and streams. In some areas, you can use artificial light to lure the big fish. However, the use of artificial light for night fishing is prohibited in some areas, so be sure to check the rules and regulations for the area where you are planning to night fish.

Night fishing is more of a thrill for the angler. Imagine hooking and landing a large fish in almost total darkness. Anglers love the thrill of a night catch and the challenge that it presents. The best time of the year to night fish is from mid-April to October. The summer months are the prime time for night fishing excursions.

If you've never been night fishing, there are a few preparations you will need to take care of before the night fishing excursion. Be sure the running lights on your boat are working well.

Running lights are mandated by law in most areas. Check the fuses and bulbs and be sure that there is no acid corrosion on your battery terminals. Check your boat's engine and be sure it's running smoothly. It must be in top running condition before going on a night fishing excursion. It's not good to be lost on the lake during daytime, but it's even worse if you are stranded in the middle of a lake at night. Pack two flashlights that have new batteries inserted and take along extra batteries as well. This will ensure you are not left in the dark if your flashlight or batteries fail.

Be sure there is a pair of needle nose pliers in your tackle box. Because at night you can't always see your line and the fish may swallow the hook or it may become deeply embedded in its mouth. Needle nose pliers make removing the hook a much easier task. Pack a couple of cans of insect repellent with your gear. This will give you protection against mosquitoes and other hungry insects. If you take extra repellent, you will have lots to share with other anglers who forgot theirs and are slowly being eaten alive.

Make a mental note of where to find everything in your boat. At night, it's next to impossible to find pliers or tackle if you don't have some idea of the area where it's located. Pre-tie flies, leaders and terminal rigs. If you tie too many, you can always use them on your next night fishing excursion. If you don't tie enough, you'll be hard pressed to tie them in the dark. It's best if you head out onto the lake before dark. It's difficult to anchor properly on a reef or ledge if it is pitch black.

There are several advantages to fishing at night. Night fishing affords solitude and tranquility, as most anglers go to the lake during daytime when it is overcrowded. Fishing at night gives you a chance to fish in peace and leave the stress of the world behind. During daytime when it is hot, large fish tend to avoid shallow water. At night, they move into the shallows to feed. Night fishing often produces a larger catch because of this.

If you are night fishing, anchor your boat over reefs and ledges, or pull your boat within casting distance of the shallows. Big bass and trout lurk in weedy areas and wait for prey to pass by. Lights of nearby docks or street lights attract microscopic marine animals into these areas. Larger fish will follow these animals into shore to feed upon them. Cast near retaining walls, docks and brush areas to catch fish that are feeding. They tend to hide in shadowed areas while waiting for prey. Another good spot to night fish is the entrance to a bay or harbor. Fish move into these areas from deeper water in the night hours in order to feed.

There are several fish species that can be fished at night. In the spring, smelt fishing is a popular sport. Other species include bass, trout, catfish, walleye, king mackerel, snapper, shark and bullhead. Because the fish that feed at night are sensitive to both sound and smell, there are a wide range of baits that can be used. Nightcrawlers, crustaceans and chum lines all work well, as do minnows, shiners, cut bait, prepared bait, egg sacs and bug hatches. Artificial bait includes spinners, streamers, and wet and dry flies.

If you would like to try night fishing and need assistance choosing equipment, tackle or bait, ask an experienced night angler to help you. This might be a family member, friend, neighbor or a guide on a chartered boat.

Ice Fishing, The Cold Alternative

A seasoned angler knows all about reels and rods, casting, fish behavior and the best places to go to relax or haul in a monster. Interestingly, many of those have never even attempted one of the more enjoyable variations on the ancient art: Ice Fishing.

Yet, ice fishing has many attractions that can't be equaled by the ordinary sort. There are fewer anglers nearby. There are fewer insects around. And some people just aren't crazy about hot weather, preferring the crisp, healthy air of winter. Even if you enjoy warmer weather too, it's great to be able to fish more seasons in the year. Winter fishing produces 25% of the annual catch in Wisconsin.

But ice fishing has its own unique requirements. Different gear is needed, added safety precautions to consider, clothing add-ons and a few new techniques to learn.

Ice doesn't freeze to a uniform thickness on lakes. The speed, temperature and source of water currents from rivers that feed some lakes can cause variations. Snow cover on the surface can affect the stability of ice. Air currents can cause erosion of the surface. All those factors, and many more, can lead to cracks and ultimately a disaster.

Though it's surprising that anyone should even have to be warned, never park a camper or other vehicle on the ice. More than once the stress has been enough to open a hole in what looked like several inches of rock hard frozen water.

Use an ice auger or spud - an ice chisel on a pole - to make your hole and it can do double-duty to test the ice as you walk out. Be sure to secure it to your hand with a strap, though. If it slips out of your hand, you won't be able to recover it.

Keep the hole to no more than 12 inches (30.5 cm), to keep the ice near where you stand or sit as solid and stable as possible. That also helps prevent you falling all the way through in an accident.

There are several other useful items you'll want to bring, as well. A bucket with minnows makes for a great live bait container. You'll want a small-mesh net in order to pull a minnow out of the bucket, in order to keep your hands out of chilly water.

You'll undoubtedly want something to sit on while you wait for them to grab your line. A gaff hook to haul those hefty prizes out of the water will come in handy, too. A hook disgorger makes life easier, to help you get the hook out of the fish's mouth without removing your gloves.

Be sure to wear lots of layers, with wool in the outer layers. Wool is a great insulator and it retains that ability even when wet.

Most of all, use your head at all times. If you use the proper gear and follow common sense safety guidelines, ice fishing is safe, easy and fun. But winding up in the water is everyone's worst fishing story. Better to tell about the sea monster you caught while catching up on a good novel.

Ice Fishing, Tips and Techniques

Ice fishing is one of the few sports that offers the relaxation of angling, the mental challenge of chess and the adventure of the great outdoors in winter.

Though the surface may be - you hope - solidly frozen, the water below continues to teem with walleye, perch, trout or whatever else is native to the area. Getting them takes different tools and techniques from the standard angling rulebook. But those are easily learned.

The first rule from that book is to be sure you are on solid ice. Four inches of solid ice, in mid-season, is about the best you can get. Late-season ice can be deceptively weak. Air currents, underwater currents, fish schools, repeated melting and re-freezing and several other factors can weaken the ice invisibly. Early ice may not yet be fully solid.

Always test the area you plan to drill into. Look for clear ice with few air bubbles. Test frequently with a spud and/or small rocks. Keep your eyes open and never abandon common sense. You rarely get second chances on the ice.

You'll need an ice-cutting tool: a spud - a long, heavy chisel - or an auger for thicker ice. Power augers are available and can save you lots of time and effort. A five-gallon bucket to carry gear is helpful and doubles as a seat while you're fishing.

Thin and supple fishing line works best for ice fishing. Your standard summer spool won't do. Berkley sells Cold Weather Trilene that works well. For small trout or panfish you'll need one to four pound-test. When fishing for walleye or bass a heavier line is needed, six to ten pound.

Dawn and dusk are prime feeding periods for fish in winter, so pick the time that suits your interest and schedule. Crappies and walleyes are most active at those times, but you can still expect to have to exercise patience to get a bite. If you don't get anything after a half-hour, you will do best to cut another hole elsewhere and try again.

Variations in pole movement will help test whether you are at a dry hole, or whether you're just not using the right technique. Fish are cold-blooded creatures and less active in the winter. You may feel only a slight tug that could be a random underwater current. To increase the sensitivity use a short, thin, flexible rod.

Try being still for a while, then gentle, random jerks. Change lures occasionally. Ice fishing requires the mind of a chess master. Outwit your opponent.

Waxworms are a popular bait for trout, panfish, bass and other critters likely to be found under the lake's frozen surface. They serve well for bluegill and yellow perch, in particular.

Ice fishing is popular in many parts of the globe from Utah and Alaska to Finland and Norway. Try to go with an experienced ice fisherman on your first adventure. At minimum, do your homework before venturing out. But don't miss out on cold-weather angling. It's a winter adventure.

Trout Fishing Basics

Imagine standing on the bank of a clear, cool stream casting into a pool just outside of the swiftly moving current. Before you realize it, you have a strike. You quickly set the hook and the fight is on. You can see the fish flip and thrash in the water, trying to escape the bite of the hook that's embedded in its mouth. It's a good sized fish. As you land it you realize you've caught a beautiful trout.

Trout is the name that's shared by several fish species. Trout are members of the salmon family. There are several species of trout, including brown, brook, rainbow, cutthroat and steelhead. There are also some species of sea trout. These species feed on insects, insect larvae, crustaceans and smaller fish. Trout are native to Asia, Europe and North America. During the 19th century, they were introduced to Australia and New Zealand by enthusiastic anglers.

Trout can be found in easily recognizable narrow areas in cool lakes, rivers and streams where fast, rapidly moving water meets slow, and where deep water meets shallow. They can also be found where rocks and rock shelves offer tranquil relief from the current. Rainbow trout feed in faster water that runs approximately six feet per second. Other species of trout feed in slower waters where water runs approximately one foot per second.

If you are fishing a stream where brook, brown cutthroat and rainbow are all found, you will find rainbow at the head of the pool and the other species in the middle and at the tail of the pool. They also like to hang around large objects that slow the current, such as rocks or rock shelves.

Trout like to rest where fast water meets slow and adjacent to the main current. Find the main current by watching bubbles and debris that moves through the pool or run. Look to the head of the pool and find where the faster water spills into it. Trace its path through the pool to find the places where trout lurk, waiting for prey. When a tree falls into the water at a right angle to the current and the trunk is still rooted in the bank, anglers call it a sweeper. The best places to fish are just outside of the branches, in front of the crotch where the sweeper meets the bank.

There are a wide variety of both live and artificial baits that will get you a good sized trout. Cured salmon eggs, earthworms, marshmallows, insects, insect larvae, kernel corn, egg sacs, crayfish, artificial and live minnows, spinners, spoons, Mepps and wet and dry flies are all great when fishing for trout.

If you are still-fishing for trout, you will need a graphite or fiberglass rod that is between 6 and 7 feet in length and a basic reel. Use 8 to 10 pound-test line, a swivel, a leader and live or artificial bait as mentioned above. If you are fly fishing for trout, you will need a 9 foot graphite or fiberglass fly rod to allow you to cover the widest range. Add 75 feet of line to your reel if you plan to catch trout that is over 4 pounds. You will also need thigh or chest waders, a fisherman's vest with lots of pockets for flies, a knife and a fishing basket for your catch. Both wet and dry flies can be used to fish for trout.

If you need advice on trout fishing or help to choose your trout fishing equipment, ask a family member, a friend or a staff member of the local bait and tackle store. Experienced anglers can give you tips that will make your trout fishing experience a positive one.

Salmon Fishing Basics

You pack up your fly fishing gear and head out for a day of solitude at your favorite cold water fishing spot. You arrive, pack your gear to the bank, slip on your thigh waders, add a selection of flies to your fishing vest and walk into the stream. You cast and work your fly rod and line, enjoying the sights and sounds of nature. Suddenly, a fish strikes. You fight it for all you are worth until it tires. You land it and see you've caught a medium sized salmon.

Salmon is a name that's shared by several freshwater and saltwater fish species. They are all members of the Salmonidae family. Salmon are born in rivers, lakes and streams from which they migrate to the sea. When it is time, they return to their place of birth to spawn. Salmon migrate to both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and are a species that are fished by anglers all over the world.

There are several salmon species found in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Atlantic salmon is the main salmon species that all other salmon have been named after. Lakes in eastern North America are home to land-locked salmon. These fish never migrate to the sea, even if they have access. They prefer to remain in freshwater for their entire life cycle. They are known as non-migratory salmon species.

Another member of the Atlantic salmon family is the Brown Trout. Though most people refer to it as a trout, it is technically a salmon and is very closely related to the Atlantic salmon family. Essentially, brown trout is a closer relative of the Atlantic salmon than the Pacific salmon is.

The salmon species known as red salmon is Sockeye salmon. Sockeye salmon are fished off the shores of California, in the eastern Pacific, the western Pacific off the shores of Japan's Hokkaido Island and in the Anadyr River of Siberia. In the Canadian Arctic, Sockeye salmon are fished in Bathurst Inlet. Pink salmon, also known as Humpback salmon, can be fished in California, Korea, Canada's Mackenzie River and in the Lena River of Siberia.

Chinook salmon is also known as Spring salmon, Tule, Blackmouth salmon and King salmon. Chinook can be fished as far south as California and as far north as the Bering Strait. In North America, Chinook covers the entire Pacific coast. Chinook salmon can also be fished in Russia, Alaska and Canada's Yukon Territory.

There are a variety of baits that will help you land different species of salmon. Freshwater bait consists of flies, lures, prawns, crustaceans, plugs and worms. In saltwater use flies, streamers, lures, crustaceans and egg sacs.

If you are fly fishing for salmon in freshwater, you will need a 12 to 16 foot (3.7 to 4.9 meter) graphite or fiberglass rod, as well as a fly reel and a fly line. For bait fishing or spinning, use a

10 foot (3 meter) spinning rod and a baitcaster reel with 15 to 20 (6.8 to 9.1 kilogram) pound-test line.

If you are fishing for Chinook or Coho salmon, you will need a boat or trolling rod that has a star-drag baitcaster reel equipped with 20 to 45 (9.1 to 20.4 kilogram) pound-test line. Chinook and Coho are the largest and most sought after Pacific salmon species.

The most fished freshwater salmon is the Atlantic salmon. Most anglers fly fish for these species, but they can also be caught on spoons, plugs and natural baits. Pacific salmon are usually fished by trolling just offshore and in estuaries. They can also be caught with fly fishing equipment and spinning (landlocked varieties) when they move up rivers and streams to spawn.

If you need assistance with salmon fishing techniques or choosing salmon fishing equipment, seek out an experienced salmon fishing angler. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a salmon fishing guide or a staff member of any bait and tackle shop that specializes in salmon fishing equipment.

Bass Fishing Basics

You set off early in the morning for a day of bass fishing. As you reach the bank of your favorite fishing spot, your eyes rest on a tranquil pool a few feet from shore where reeds bend in the early morning breeze. As the sun rises, you cast your line into the reeds. Is this the day that you are going to catch the granddaddy of all bass?

Bass is the name shared by a wide range of fish species that are game fish. The sunfish family includes bluegills, spotted bass, pumpkinseed fish, largemouth, small mouth and rock bass. These bass are known as warm water or black bass. The striped bass, white bass and white perch are temperate bass. Bass are popular with both casual and tournament anglers.

The trick to successful bass fishing is to know where to find them. Bass can be found in lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. They tend to lurk in areas where bait fish are plentiful.

Lakes

Natural lake bass fishing can range from mediocre to very successful. In southern areas, shallow lakes are the natural habitat of whopping largemouth. They glide through reedy and weedy areas close to shore. Northern natural lakes often contain a wide variety of landscape formations, such as holes, humps, rocky bluffs, natural reefs, islands and reedy or weedy areas. Bass hang out here, but are not as plentiful in these lakes because the water doesn't contain the algae and plankton that they like to feed on.

Rivers

Rivers are great places to fish for bass. Oxygen levels in rivers tend to be the same from the surface to the river bed. Water temperatures in rivers tend to be more moderate and isn't as cold in winter or as warm in summer as water in lakes. Bass can be found just outside of the current's direct flow and on the downstream side of fallen trees, logs, stumps and weed beds. If there are boulders or logs in the direct current flow, that's where you will find largemouth bass

lurking. It's very easy for them to feed in areas like this, as the current carries the food along. Bass tend to lurk around river bends and any floating cover they might find. Bottom and surface fishing will make your fishing excursion a great success.

Streams

Most anglers do not fish for bass in streams and this can be a huge mistake. Smallmouth bass tend to lurk in the cooler water of streams, especially below fast moving rapids, in holes, on the bottom and along steep banks and bluffs. Areas that are undercut by erosion are the perfect place to find bass because they provide good hiding spots, as are areas around large rocks and fallen logs. Bass never stay in direct current flow, so cast into tranquil pools, eddies and in reedy and weedy areas and where objects break the flow of the current. Places where bait fish congregate draw bass to the area. Below a dam is an excellent place to fish for bass on an extremely hot summer day or on a mild day in the fall.

Ponds

If you want to catch some big bass, don't count out ponds. Bass tend to stay near shore around fallen logs, rocks and in deep pools. Reeds and weeds are a natural habitat for bass. If a pond draws a large amount of anglers during the day try your luck at night. You might be surprised at the results.

There are many factors involved when fishing for bass. They tend to move with the season and water conditions. Factors include water temperature, time of year, water level, weather conditions, food availability, and amount of sunlight.

Still fishing using night crawlers, minnows, insects, insect larvae and other baits mentioned will bring good results. Spinning or bait-casting with artificial lures, trolling with live bait, or fly fishing are all very successful methods when fishing for bass. If you are using lures, you need a 5½ to 7 foot rod that will compliment live bait or spin and bait casting. Your line should be between six and ten pound-test. If you are fly-fishing for bass, you will need a 7 to 9 foot fly rod with a fast taper, fitted with a single action reel that carries a floating # 7 to # 9 line with a 6 to 8 pound leader. If you plan on fishing for bass in reeds or weeds, always use a weedless hook.

If you have problems finding bass or are stumped over the tackle or technique you should use, seek out an experienced angler. This could be a family member, a friend or the staff of your local fishing shop.

Great Spots to Take a Fishing Vacation

The waters of the world are full of fish and there are thousands of spots to take a fishing vacation. So, when you pack up and head out for a fishing vacation, it is your own personal preference of where you choose to go. However, there are some great fishing spots that are highly recommended for their unique fishing opportunities.

Long Island, New York

At Long Island's tip, you will find Montauk Point. The world's top naturalists have studied the area and concluded that this is the place where the majority of the world's fish are found. The point is a glacial cliff. Fish species found at Montauk Point include tuna, marlin, cod, mackerel, striped bass, white shark and a variety of others. Montauk Point is the location of the oldest lighthouse in New York State. Cast your bait from the rocks below the lighthouse for the area's best fishing opportunities. You won't be disappointed. Spring and fall fishing is best along the Point, but many species of fish can also be caught in the summer months.

Wyoming, USA

If you are looking to catch trophy trout in the US, a vacation to Yellowstone National Park is a must. Slough Creek is full of trophy trout, as are other streams within the Park's boundaries, and they are all stocked regularly. Streams and rivers outside of the Park also offer great fishing opportunities, as do the waters of nearby Idaho and Montana. Wyoming is home to 62 native species, including Arctic grayling, burbot, channel catfish, shiners, chub, several trout species, suckers, goldeneye, mountain whitefish, shovelnose sturgeon, and a wide variety of smaller fish.

Hampshire, England

Believe it or not, there are great fly fishing opportunities for vacationing anglers just a few miles outside of London. In the chalk streams of the area, you will catch trout and Atlantic salmon. The Itchen and Test rivers offer unique fishing opportunities. The areas around these rivers are on private land and a fee is required, but all are very reasonably priced. The Itchen area is where the first artificial nymphs were invented and this area of Hampshire will fulfill all of your fishing vacation dreams. There are many trout fisheries and trout fishing clubs in Hampshire.

Manitoba, Canada

Don't overlook Manitoba, Canada, as a fishing vacation destination. Known as the 'Land of Lakes', there are hundreds of trophy fishing opportunities for both still and fly fishing anglers. Though northern pike can also be caught in the US and other countries, Manitoba has whoppers that will put up a terrific fight. Northern pike strike hard and fast on the American lure known as the 'Daredevil'. Flies can also be used with much success. Other species that can be fished in the Land of Lakes include rainbow, brook and brown trout, channel catfish and perch and pickerel. The best time to take a fishing vacation to Manitoba would be spring or fall, but many fish can also be caught during the summer months.

The Florida Keys

The Florida Keys offer a wide range of fishing opportunities for sea anglers and they flock to the area year round. Ernest Hemingway fished at Key West and it still offers the same opportunities today that it did then. The waters surrounding the Marquesas Islands offer tarpin, and bonefish. Other species caught in this area include blue marlin, black grouper, King mackerel, sailfish, yellowfin, barracuda, shark snapper and wahoo.

Missouri, USA

If you want the optimum outdoor experience, plan a fishing vacation in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. Here you can fish for bass beneath the towering limestone bluffs that are part of Missouri's rivers. Missouri is home to over two hundred fish species, including several bass species, channel catfish, blue and flathead catfish, sunfish, bluegills, bullheads, muskellunge,

walleye, shiners, lamprey, shad, pickerel, perch, trout, gar, sturgeon and more. This State has more fish species than any other in the entire USA.

Tips for a Fishing Vacation

Instead of packing all of your fishing gear to haul around the world, use a guide service that provides all necessary equipment in the price of their service. When booking a guide service, ask about years of experience, licensing, insurance and if they are bonded. Ask for references from people who have used their services. Be sure to check these references carefully. If a guide service hesitates when asked for services, run the other way as fast as you can.

Ask the guide service to provide necessary fishing licenses, permits and information on exporting your catch if you wish to do so. If this is the case, check with your Customs Office to see if you are allowed to import your fish from other countries. Ask the guide service the best time of year to book a fishing expedition for success in catching your targeted fish species.

Check with the local Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau or the equivalent in the area where you will be vacationing to find out more about the guide service that you are planning to hire. Some areas mandate that you hire a licensed guide to fish. Check regulations of the area where you will be taking your fishing vacation.

If you have trouble choosing a destination for your fishing vacation, ask someone you know where they have enjoyed the ultimate fishing experience. Research your local library and Internet to find the perfect fishing vacation for you.

Fishing in Alaska

You're overwhelmed with excitement. Your dream has always been to take a fishing trip to Alaska and it's finally been realized. You've hired the services of a guide and he leads you deep into the wilderness to a gurgling mountain stream that runs off of a glacier. The water is crystal clear and freezing cold. You set down your gear, bait your hook, cast and quietly converse with the guide. Suddenly, something hits your bait hard. You set the hook and the fight is on. You're glad that the guide is along. He coached you in the type of line and weights to use. You finally land your catch and the guide weighs it on the portable scales that he carries in his backpack. You've landed the biggest fish of your life, a 35 pound King salmon.

King salmon, also known as Chinook, are common in Alaska, and they often weigh up to 50 pounds. Giant halibut are also found in Alaska's waters, as are northern pike, graylings, Pollock, shiner perch, sole, rockfish, sturgeon, steelhead, shad, herring, lake chub, Alaskan blackfish, smelt, trout, Arctic char, Arctic cod, walleye, Arctic flounder, crabs and shrimp.

There are hundreds of places to fish in Alaska. The southeast region of Alaska, also known as the panhandle, has a wide range of places in which to fish, depending on the species you are targeting. There are hundreds of mountain streams that run off of glaciers. There are deep fjords in abundance. Winters are not as cold here as in other parts of Alaska, because this area is warmed by the ocean. Summers are cool and very moist and this is the time when halibut

move into the waters near the shore. Salmon migrate to this region by the hundreds to spawn and there are a variety of trout species to be fished.

South Central Alaska is the area of Alaska that has the highest population and there are great fishing opportunities available. From Bristol Bay to the Copper River, there are watersheds and coastal waters that have an abundance of fish. Anglers can fish the coastal waters for halibut and ocean fish species. Watersheds are abundant in species as burbot, Dolly Varden, grayling, pike, trout and whitefish.

A popular Alaskan fishing destination is the area known as the Lower Cook Inlet. Here you will catch Dolly Varden, salmon species, and trout in the rivers and streams. Halibut and salmon can be fished off the coast. If you enjoy digging for clams, dig the area's beaches for a good feed.

The fishing is great in the western and Arctic regions of Alaska, as well as in the interior. These are the areas where the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers drain. Here you will catch burbot, char, graylings, pike, trout, sheefish and more, for fish are in great abundance.

You will need a variety of fishing gear if you're planning a fishing trip to Alaska. Gear should include freshwater fishing rods, saltwater fishing rods, bait casting rod and twice as much tackle as you believe you'll need. Take flies, weights, lures, a variety of fishing line, a net, nylon cord, at least one water bottle or canteen, a fillet knife, nail clippers, needle nose pliers, waders, wading boots, a flashlight and extra batteries, maps, a couple of tire patch kits, a compass, a first aid kit and flares and survival rations if you plan to camp in wilderness areas.

You will need to bring along a fishing vest, warm clothes, including socks, a jacket, a winter coat, fleece clothes, rain gear, sunglasses, a fishing hat and gloves, hiking boots, bug repellent, a couple of lighters and matches, sunscreen, a floatation device, a backpack, Tylenol, any personal medications you will need, a cell or satellite phone, pepper spray for bear protection, a fishing license, a small amount of cash, traveler's checks, a credit card, anti bacterial hand cleaner, a camera and lots of film, or a digital camera.

Live bait for Alaskan fishing includes nightcrawlers, crustaceans, prawns, live bait systems, cut bait, shrimp, oysters, live fish species, crayfish, lugworms, razor fish and herring. Frozen baits consist of mackerel, herring, squid, sardines and octopus. Artificial bait includes lures, wet and dry flies, spinners, streamers, spoons and Mepps. Egg sacs work great for attracting fish species. The best rule of thumb is to use the natural bait that the targeted fish species prey upon. Also keep in mind that you need to match bait to the hook size and equipment that you are using.

If you need advice on Alaskan fishing, seek out an angler who is experienced. If you don't know, or can't find such an angler, seek out an experienced Alaskan fishing guide. These can be found easily online. Beware of hiring a guide that you have never met. Email the guide service and ask how long they've been in business, if they are licensed, if they carry insurance and if they are members of the Better Business Bureau, or something equivalent. Ask them for the names and phone numbers of references. If you hire a good guide, the price you pay for these services will be well rewarded. You will land a beauty and have the memories forever.