

How To Choose The Fishing Trip Destination That's Right For You

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Try doing a web search on the words "fishing lodge" and you will come up with hundreds of thousands of matches. Visit any major sports show and you'll find dozens of outfitters, each offering promises of the trip of a lifetime. How on earth do you narrow it down and find the fishing destination that's just right for you?

Identify Your Priorities for you fishing trip...

The first step in selecting a destination is to sit down with everyone else going on the trip and discuss what it is that you want out of the experience. It's not enough to decide you want great fishing, because that can mean very different things from one person to the next.

One person in your party might be delighted to catch 20 fish per day, while another might expect 20 fish an hour. This is the time to be perfectly clear and up-front, because the more honestly you communicate your wishes, the better the chances you will have a great trip.

Some important things to decide right from the beginning include:

What species of fish do you want to catch?

This sounds like a no-brainer, but it definitely needs to be discussed. If one member of your party really wants to catch lake trout and the resort you pick has lousy fishing for them, that person will be very disappointed. If the place you pick has fishing for multiple species, you should decide how much time and effort you want to apply to each. What matters most, and what matters least? Do you want to catch walleye, northern pike, bass, char?

Do you want lots of action? Or trophy fish?

Does great fishing mean catching a fish on every cast? Or would you go all day for one bite, provided that fish was a giant? Of course we would all like fast action with trophy fish, but it's important to keep your expectations realistic. So between the two, which is most important? And what honestly constitutes a big fish for you? Would a 20-pound salmon make you smile? Or would it have to be a 50?

How are the fish caught?

Can you sight-fish? Or is it primarily deep trolling? Imagine how disappointing it would be to spend all winter watching people on TV fishing shows hammer big pike on topwaters, then find on your trip of a lifetime the only way to catch them is by deep trolling in 60 feet of water?

What is your realistic budget?

Let's face it; money is a deciding factor for all of us. You need to be honest about what you're prepared to spend, and also how you want to spend it. If you have \$1,000 to blow on a trip, do you want a week at Lodge A, or three days at Lodge B which might offer more upscale accommodations or a better shot at a trophy fish?

Once you have decided exactly what kinds of fish you want to catch and how you want to catch them, you need to discuss the accommodations.

In order to get the kind of fishing your group wants, are you willing to rough it in a tent camp where you have to prepare your own food, or is a certain amount of creature comfort also a priority?

How important is a hot shower at the end of the day, or having someone else deal with the cooking and cleaning up? Can you live without a flush toilet? Would you rather bring your own boat?

Again, it's important to be honest and realistic right up front.

Once you've established clear priorities for the fishing and the accommodations and set a rough budget, it's time to start looking at what different lodges have to offer.

The species of fish you want to catch, the amount of time you want to be away and the amount of cash you have to spend should help focus your search to a general geographic area, while the priorities your group collectively identified should allow you to narrow your search within that geographic area fairly quickly. It's everyone's fishing trip ... so plan it well.

Now, it's a matter of contacting fishing lodge operators within that region, and seeing what they have to offer.

Call The Government

State or provincial tourism departments are the best way to find fishing lodges within specific areas. If you've decided your group wants to go to Alaska to fish for salmon and steelhead, then start with a call to the Alaska department of tourism. They can send you all sorts of information on outfitters, general fishing information, plus stuff on license requirements, fishing regulations and such.

Selecting the right fishing trip destination is probably the single most important aspect of planning your fishing trip. Well, choosing the right fishing buddies is pretty important, also.

Dave Cushion is the author of the comprehensive manual "The Ultimate Fishing Trip Guidebook!" For more tips on planning your dream fishing trip, or to just learn how the experts catch more fish, go to <http://www.fishing-trip-advisor.com> and check out our other articles.