

Six Key Questions to Ensure a Successful Fishing Trip

by Lloyd Fridenburg ©2008

You have decided what body of water you want to fish. You have narrowed your choice of accommodations to a few, but don't get so enthralled with a specific lodge that you ignore some of the more obvious questions. Don't assume that the lodge owner has told you everything. Remember the basic consumer rule "BUYER BEWARE".

1) WHAT'S INCLUDED? If they don't mention obvious things such as towels and bedding, ask specifically if they're included. Be sure to calculate the overall cost per person. Things such as the number of people in a cottage, the number of bedrooms, the number of people in one boat, the size of the motor, etc. can all have a dramatic affect on the per person cost.

2) WHAT ARE CHECK-IN AND CHECKOUT TIMES? No point in arriving at 10:00 in the morning if you can't get into your cottage or get your boat until 2:00 in the afternoon.

3) DO THEY SELL BAIT? You don't want to drive miles off the beaten track only to find out that you passed the closest bait shop a half-hour ago.

4) WHAT SIZE OF BOAT AND MOTOR IS PROVIDED? Lodge operators often provide 9.9 hp motors with their boats and the boats are generally about 16 ft. Except for relatively small bodies of water a 9.9 motor is not large enough to allow 2 grown men to cover any significant amount of water. A 20-hp motor is more practical.

5) HOW OLD IS THE BOAT AND THE MOTOR? The age of the boat may not be as important as the age of the motor but it will give you an indication of the kind of shape it might be in. Motors should be cycled on a regular basis. Ask how old the motor is and what kind of maintenance procedures they follow. Ask for the newest motor.

5) WHO PAYS FOR DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT OR PROPERTY? Does the lodge owner have adequate insurance on his equipment and property and who is liable to pay the deductible for damages? What is the amount of the deductible that may be payable by you or your party? Accidents can happen.

6) EDUCATE YOURSELF

You can't beat first hand knowledge of the area you'll be fishing, but if you're like me and like to constantly visit new areas a bit of pre-planning can save hours of wasted fishing time. As soon as you've decided where you want to go buy topographic maps or charts of the area. Charts are a better choice for fishing because they show underwater structure and water depth. However they are generally only available for commonly used navigable waterways.

Look for prime fishing locations on the map or chart and then confirm your thoughts with the lodge owner and ask their advice on the best time of year to plan your trip so that it coincides with the best fishing potential. You may be pleasantly surprised to find out that the best fishing often occurs in the off season when rates are usually significantly lower than during the prime summer months. Ask their opinion on the best type of tackle and bait to use for various species. All of this pre-planning will result in more productive time on the water.

For more great information about fishing in Southern Ontario visit **Southern Ontario Outdoors**.