

The Baggage We Leave Behind

Tips and tricks on preparing for a fly-in fishing adventure



Both the pilots and crew of bush planes in the north will appreciate guests limiting the amount and weight of their baggage.

by John Cleveland

Planning a fly-in fishing adventure can be almost as much fun as the trip itself, heightening anticipation and giving you confidence that you are prepared. I was so excited about my first fishing adventure to Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories, I probably packed and unpacked my duffle bag at least four to five times two weeks prior to departure.

As it turned out, I brought way too much unnecessary gear. Just the thought of planning a fishing adventure—hundreds, or even thousands of miles away in the remote wilderness of the far north—can be both exhilarating and daunting at the same time. With proper planning, a checklist and an open mind, you will have the trip of a lifetime and a rewarding adventure.

Make your list, check it twice

One of the key elements to a successful trip is to make a list of things that are important or that you wish to experience during your adventure. Here are a few things to consider that will guarantee you and your group have a great time and create lifelong memories on your journey to the wilderness of northern Canada.

First, you need to decide on a budget for your adventure. The factors that will influence this will be things such as what kind of amenities or comfort level you and your travel mates would like to have while on your trip. Do you wish a fully guided experience with all the bells and whistles, or the more modest amenities and lesser expenses of an unguided outpost experience? How far north would you like to travel? What kind of fish you want to catch? Are you looking for a very focused trophy fishing experience, only, or just a good time catching lots of nice fish? Maybe you want a few trophies while enjoying the camaraderie of good friends and the beautiful scenery of a relaxed wilderness setting. That would be my choice for a first trip to the North Country.

Once these factors are settled, they will help guide your initial inquiries as to



Typical first class seats on a De Havilland Otter float plane.

what kind of lodge or camp you will likely be most comfortable in. Fully guided adventures are what I would recommend for a first timer, unless there is someone in your group that has experience with outpost camp fishing. What you are paying for on a fully guided trip is, in essence, a trained mentor to help you be successful catching fish, while being safe and comfortable in a wilderness environment.

Go to the folks that know

In addition to doing online research for lodges and outfitters that offer the type of experience you are seeking, consider attending an outdoor travel and sport show such as the All-Canada Show. It is here you will have the advantage of actually meeting the people that will be running the operation. Through a face-to-face conversation, decide who you are comfortable planning your trip with. After you have narrowed your search down to a particular lodge, I would always recommend checking several references from former guests of the lodge to ensure their experiences at the camp match up with what it is you will be looking for on your adventure.



A soft lure pack with plastic folders inside is convenient for transporting your lures and terminal tackle.

REMOTENESS WITHOUT FLYING

GHOST RIVER

LODGES

Est. 1967

Best in Service
Northwestern Ontario


REMOTE
15
LAKES



ghostriv@tbaytel.net
ghostriverlodges.com
1-888-446-7874



PIPESTONE
Lodge



Celebrating Our
25th
Season

Very secluded fishing for:
WALLEYE,
NORTHERN,
MUSKIE,
LAKE TROUT,
SMALLMOUTH
& LARGEMOUTH
on Pipestone
Clearwater Chains

6 Portage Lakes
with Boats & Motors
for Your Use at No Charge

OPEN FOR ICE-OUT
LAKE TROUT & NORTHERN PIKE

EMO, ONTARIO, CANADA
just 45 miles across the border from
International Falls, Minn.

Your Hosts:
Arthur & Jennifer
Perchaliuk

For More Info & Brochure, call or email
Winter: (760) 772-5227 Summer: (807) 788-5226
perchaliuk@aol.com

WWW.PIPESTONELODGE.COM



Large fish are only one of the reasons to travel to a wilderness lodge.

We at Dardevle spoons would be happy to give you recommendations for some of the many lodges and outfitters we have used over the years. On our website, we have a page dedicated to many of the lodges we have fished and stories about the adventures experienced while fishing at those lodges. Please feel free to give us a call at our factory or stop by our booth at one of the sport shows we are attending.

Checklist

I have found, over the years, that a detailed checklist is helpful to guarantee I have exactly what I need for a fly-in adventure without under, or over packing. Most lodges and outfitters will supply you with a list of recommended gear and clothing. It’s best to start with their list and then customize it to fit your personal needs, tastes and preferred comfort level.

Clothing

All fly-in lodges have weight restrictions for guest baggage. With a little planning and consolidation, you should have no trouble meeting those requirements. As a general rule, clothing made of synthetic fabrics is lighter and dry faster than natural fibers such as cotton. They are good items to invest in for your trip. These lighter materials will help you meet the weight requirements when packing your gear for the trip. Plan on dressing in layers with the underlayers being moisture-wicking fabrics. I recommend Fleece garments for mid-layer because they are light, warm, and dry quickly when wet, making them ideal. Layering will enable you to adjust to variations in temperature, keeping you comfortable throughout the day while on the water. Another good idea is to plan out what you will wear while fishing and traveling and keep those outfits separate. There is no need to change your fishing clothes every day. Wool socks are my preference when on an outdoor adventure trip. They will wick moisture from your skin and keep your feet warm even when damp.

Packing your bags

Wheeled duffle bags are a great innovation, but they weigh six to ten pounds. That counts against your weight limits with the airlines and, more importantly, the bush pilots loading small planes. For safety reasons, weight limits on small planes are very critical. Generally, pilots can’t cut you any slack if your baggage is over the limit. You may be asked to leave some of your gear behind! I pack smaller items of clothing, such as t-shirts, underwear and base layers, in zip-loc bags and squeeze the air out of the bag to eliminate bulk while packing. This is a handy way to keep these items organized. I recommend a duffle without wheels if weight is a serious factor with the camp you are visiting. I use a 14x22x16-inch canvas duffle bag, a waterproof daypack as a carry-on bag and my 33-foot carry-on rod case on fly-in trips. The daypack doubles as a boat bag for keeping cameras etc... dry while on the water. With this



By consolidating your gear and using a checklist you can get your baggage weight to about 50 pounds total.

setup, I can outfit myself for a one- to two-week wilderness fishing adventure and weigh in at 50 pounds, all tackle included.

Fishing tackle

You should consult with your outfitter for their recommendations on rods, reels and lures to bring with you. The outfitter will ensure you have the right tools for the job. A good assortment of Dardevle spoons and other types of baits will ensure your success. I recommend bringing a backup rod and reel. It’s not uncommon for a rod to break under the stress of constant use on a weeklong trip. I have experienced both rod and reel failures on trips. In each case, I had a backup to keep me in the game. I would also recommend bringing an extra spool of line. Leave your one-piece rods at home. The airlines will charge you extra for the oversized baggage (length), and they are inconvenient to transport while



A Canadian baggage agent sorting through broken rods. Large rod tubes are difficult to transport and often get broken in transport.

navigating through an airport. They are also vulnerable to being broken while in transit. All of my fly rods, baitcasting, and spinning rods are either three or four-piece and fit in a case that is 33 inches long that travels as carry-on luggage in the cabin with me. Temple Fork Outfitters and St. Croix both offer high-quality, American-made, multi-piece travel rods that I have personally used and highly recommend. If you are using two-piece rods, I would recommend the use of a quality rod tube, such as a Plano airline telescope rod case, to transport your rods in the cargo bay. These tubes can handle a lot of abuse by baggage handlers.

The baggage we leave behind
Ultimately, it’s not the stuff we pack for a trip to the North Country that makes an adventure successful. More importantly, it’s the baggage we leave behind. The stress generated by the temptation to quantify and measure every experience as if I were at work. Enjoying the company of your friends and simply immersing yourself in the serenity that Mother Nature provides for us has many rewards: adventure, discovery, and recovery from the stress of our urban lifestyles. Keep in mind that large trophy fish are a gift, not a given. Not that you shouldn’t hope for, and anticipate catching, some really big fish. Just appreciate every fish as a trophy when caught in a pristine wilderness environment. My advice is to plan well, relax and let Mother Nature’s wisdom and wonder bring the intangibles of life into focus and your dreams to life in the wilderness of northern Canada.

MWO

John Cleveland is the Marketing Director for Dardevle spoons, and a freelance outdoor writer for several outdoor adventure publications.

7 Days of Fishing: CABIN - BOAT - MOTOR Only \$575 per person!

Fish for Northern Pike, Walleye, Smallmouth Bass, Crappie, and Huge Musky!

email: fish@cedarlakecamp.com
winter phone: 608-448-3762
summer phone: 807-529-6211

www.cedarlakecamp.com

Bear Hunts Available!

Check out our July & August "FAMILY SPECIAL!" Children only \$175 per week!

7 DAY TRIPS

Drive to Famous Eagle Lake or take a Motor Coach Trip

FOR INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS CALL:
1-800-369-FISH (3474) • Fax: (807)-755-2016
E-mail: templebayfishing@gmail.com • Website: www.templebay.com

Affordable Canada Fishing Trips by Charter Bus or Drive Yourself

Photo by Daniel Keith

TRIP DATES & AREA PICKUPS			
CHICAGO AREA DEPARTURE 4:10 PM Super 8 Elk Grove Village, IL 2951 Touhy Avenue Parking Available For a Fee	NORTHERN IL SOUTHERN WI PICKUP 4:45 PM Wisconsin Tourist Center I-94 - Exit 347 No Parking Available	MILWAUKEE, WI PICKUP 5:15 PM Park and Ride I-94 - Exit College Ave; East Side of I-94, Next to the Bus Shelter No Parking Available	MADISON, WI PICKUP 6:30 PM Shell Station I-90/94 - Exit 132, Go North No Parking Available

6 DAYS OF FISHING

CHARTERS LEAVING YOUR AREA ALL SEASON LONG

May 25 – June 1 ☼	Aug. 3 – Aug. 10
June 1 – June 8	Aug. 10 – Aug. 17
June 8 – June 15	Aug. 24 – Aug. 31 ☼
June 15 – June 22	Aug. 31 – Sept. 7 ☼

☼ Includes 1 FREE Guide Day with Any Package

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES

• Transportation	• New 40HP Motor	• 3 Excellent Meals a Day	• Sports Bar & Lounge
• 6 Days Fishing	• All Gas	• All Air-Conditioned Accommodations	• Maid Service
• 5 Nights Lodging	• Dock Service	• Prime Location on Lake	• Fish Processing / Dry Ice
• 18 Ft. Boat	• Minnows (2 doz/person/day)	• Satellite Sports Events	