



cubanfishingcenters

Cayo Largo / FISHING CHECK LIST

CUBA

CAYO LARGO CHECKLIST

This checklist includes everything a person might need for a week in the Cayo Largo. This was compiled with help from several anglers with years of experience in fishing Cayo Largo.

We feel confident that if you have everything on this list you won't forget anything important. Bear in mind that each person on the trip may not require all items on this list, but many may need them or will want them along. For example, not all members of the party need to carry reel lube, as long as somebody on the trip has some along.

It is important that you arrive with everything you will need for your trip as there is only a very limited selection of flies, leaders etc. at the CL. If you notice something that is missing from our checklist, please e-mail us and we'll add this to future editions.

TACKLE

One Bonefish rod, a 9-foot rod for #8 or 9 weight line, we suggest Cortland Precision XC 4 PC 9 feet 8 W/Fighting butt. An 8-weight rod is perfect as many of the bones are in the 3-6 lb. class and there is a lot of wind to contend with. On this rod you will want a good bonefish reel with enough capacity for the line and 200 yards of 20 lb backing. You need only a floating line, we advise the new Cortland Precision Tropic Plus Bonefish 90ft WF8F. Be sure to bring a back up floating line for bonefish. There is some coral on the Ocean side flats, and many flats have small mangrove roots and shoots that the bonefish run through and around and this can shred a fly line.

Bring **one back up rod for bonefish** in case of breakage.

Two - 9' #10 Rods, we suggest – since there are so many species of fish in Cayo Largo, it helps to bring two 10 weight rods. Then you can set one up specifically for permit, and have another set up for baby tarpon or Barracuda. Have individual reels for both these rods. You will want WF-10-F lines for both rods, but it is a good idea to bring one slow sinking line also. Attach your lines to backing with loop-to-loop connections making it easy to change lines out on the flats. Your 10 weight reels should have capacity for the line plus 150-200 yd. of 30 lb. backing. Our favorite reels are the Cortland Turbine Reel LA-789, or the Precision XC Large Arbor # 3 which has good backing capacity and a strong, smooth drag.

One - 9 foot #11 or 12 line rod for big tarpon, especially in the months of May through July when larger tarpon are present. Our favorite rods are the Loomis CrossCurrent GLX in 9 foot #11 and the Sage Xi2 in the 9 foot #11. For a less expensive rod the Redington CPS or the Temple Fork TiCr-X are good choices.



For reels, **pick a good tarpon reel** with enough capacity for a 12 line and 150-200 yards of 30 lb. backing. A strong, smooth drag is necessary. We recommend the Cortland Embassy 60 or the Precision XC Large Arbor # 4.

For tarpon lines on your 11/12 line rod, you will want both a floating line and an intermediate or slow sink. All should have loop-to-loop connections to your backing; fair choices are the Cortland Precision Tropic Plus Tarpon Ghost – Tip 90ft WF11F and WF11I. Less experienced casters will often do better with a floating line. There are only a few deeper channels where the slow sink line will work better.

6 - Bonefish leaders -12 foot 1X or 14 lb.

2 - Spools of bonefish tippet, 1X and 01X Fluorocarbon. Most of the time the bonefish are not at all leader shy so it is an advantage to use heavier tippet. Also, in Cayo Largo it is always possible to see and hook really big bones in the 9-12 lb. class. The heavier tippets will allow you to land many more fish and handle them more easily when releasing them.

6 - Permit Leaders 9-12 foot, 16-20 lb. fluorocarbon tippets.

1 - Spool 02X (20 lb.) Fluorocarbon tippet for permit

6-10 - Quick Change Tarpon leaders. OUR GUIDES ALWAYS RECOMMEND TO MAKE YOUR LEADERS WITH A 60 LB FLUOROCARBON SHOCK TIPPET AND THEN A SECTION OF 80 LB FLUOROCARBON TIPPET, WHERE YOU WILL TIE THE FLY.

Some anglers prefer to use 3 feet of shock tippet so that you can use each leader for several fish or re-tie on several different flies.

Note: You can use a 40lb - 60 lb. shock tippet for the baby tarpon that are under 40 lb. but for the larger fish, go up to 80 lb or they may cut or abrade through the 60 lb, sometimes, a 100lb fluorocarbon tippet will be useful too, so we recommend to bring some meters on this too.

If you are looking a Tarpon record, bimini leaders must be used, this starts with a 60lb section, then a 20lb fluorocarbon tippet, finally an 80lb

1 - 200 yd. spool of extra 30 lb. fly line backing

1 - tarpon fly stretcher or Zip lock bags for your tarpon flies on leaders



FLIES

Bonefish Flies

These are the most abundant and popular of the flat species. The average weight is about 6 pounds but bigger specimens are caught, especially in the winter months. Fishing is either from the skiff or by wading. Bring two to three dozen bonefish flies in various patterns for a week of fishing. You need a mix of very light flies and medium weight flies (with bead chain eyes) to fish in water depths from six inches to two feet. You'll also need at least a half dozen flies with heavy lead eyes for fishing bones in muds where the water can be 3-4 feet deep. Some of the best patterns are the Tan and Pearl Shrimp, Borski Bonefish Slider, the Kwans, and of course the Crazy Charlie style flies. Pearl Gotcha patterns are also very good. Sizes should be mostly #4's with a few #2's. The bonefish can be selective, so be sure to experiment with various patterns.

Permit flies

Quite abundant indeed in Cayo Largo where they are up to their reputation of being the most frustrating fish of the flats. Lots of skills and patience are required but a fair number of " grand slams " have been achieved by anglers. Bring 6-12 flies for permit; mostly crab patterns in sizes 1/0 down to #4. The smaller permit crabs are also ideal for big bonefish. Some of the most effective crab patterns here are Avalon permit fly and Will's Skittal. Mantis Shrimp patterns are also quite good, especially when you encounter schools of "floaters". These should be tied in size 2-4, and light colors mostly white, light tan and olive.

Tarpon flies

Large number of tarpon are resident year round in Cayo Largo tidal channels and flats with migrating fish showing up in April until August. Their average weight is from 15 to 30 pounds, but fish up to 120 pounds maybe encountered and, indeed, some large fish have been caught over the past seasons. They are in the area all year long but tarpons over 50lbs are more usually found from March to August. Keys style patterns in size 2/0 are very good on the flats for tarpon in the 15-50 lb. class. The best patterns are the Orange/Yellow/Grizzly, Brown Cockroach, Black Death and a White/Grizzly Cockroach Deceiver. Some of the new Enrico Puglisi patterns have proven to be deadly too, especially the Black and Purple "Peanutbutter" in both 2/0 and 3/0. Other good Enrico patterns are his White/Yellow, and the Backcountry brown as well as the brown and orange. If you are tying your own, tie all these tarpon flies on the Gamakatsu SC-15 hooks, in either 2/0 or 3/0.



MISC. GEAR

- 2 - Morrell Saltwater foam fly boxes – 4.5" and 6". (They float)
- 2 - Scientific Anglers waterproof saltwater fly boxes
- 1 - Pair - Mangrove Sun gloves (M, L or XL)
- 1 - Clippers and retractor
- 1 - Tiemco Heavy Duty Ceramic Hook Hone (easy to use)
- 1 - Fine tooth hook file
- 1 - Abel or Ross saltwater fishing pliers
- 1 - 6" Vise Grip Pliers- perfect for holding your tarpon flies while you tie your Homer Rhode knots or sharpen them.
- 1 - Large 6-8 inch forceps for releasing bonefish
- 1 - Reel lube, drag lubricants
- 1 - Insect repellent – spray or lotion
- 1 - Large tube Waterproof Sunscreen 50 SPF
- 1 - LED Head Lamp
- 1 - Simms back saver belt – good support for a long day on the flats
- 2 - Pr. Polarized Sunglasses – high quality Tan or brown lenses
- 1 - Pr. Side shields for your sunglasses
- 1 - Repair kit for glasses – screws, small screwdriver etc.
- 1 - Spray bottle lens cleaning solution, lens tissues
- 1 - Pr. Less expensive Polarized sunglasses for your guide!
- 1 - Fly Line cleaner and line pad cleaner box
- 1 - Fanny Pack for wade fishing
- 1 - Rod/Reel repair kit with extra tip top guides, snake guides, ferrule cement, rod winding thread, bobbin, small screwdrivers
- Misc. magazines or books to read on the trip
- Playing cards, Crib board etc.



CLOTHING TO BRING

(pack as lightly as possible)

- 6 - Fishing Shirts – quick drying style. At least 2 Long sleeve.
- 6-8 Cotton T-shirts if you use these.
- 6-8 Pr. Boxers or tighty whiteys.
- 2-4 Pr. Light Weight, quick dry wading pants
- 2-4 Pr. Shorts, quick dry wading style with brief.
- 8 - Pr. Socks.
- 2 - Pr. Thin wet wading socks for your flats wading shoes.
- 2 - Flats Hats or caps.
- 1 - Breathable Light Weight Rain Jacket with hood.
- 2 - Belts for your shorts or pants. I should be waterproof.
- 1 - Boat Shoes with siped soles for wear in the flats skiffs.
- 1 - Flats Wading shoes.
- 1 - Pr. Sandals, flip-flops if you like these for wear at hotel.



ESSENTIALS

Stuff you for sure don't want to forget

Your Passport – check to make sure this is current. Make two copies and put in your wallet and hand carry.

Do not forget to bring your TSA CERTIFIED LOCKS

Money – The best bet is to bring Euros or Canadian Dollars for exchange into Cuban CUC upon arrival in Cuba. When you exchange money, be sure to get plenty of \$1's, 3's and 5's in CUC's that will be very useful for tips, taxi's and for drinks in both Havana and on the road. Remember you will need cash for gratuities and guide tips and also to pay your bar and beverage tab at the end of the week. No credit cards are accepted.

All the guides are excellent fishermen and are very skilled at finding all species. They are born and raised on these waters and know the ocean and the flats like the backs of their hands. Nevertheless, many times, and because they are so passionate about their work, they tend to be very direct which some may misinterpret as being aggressive, but we ask you to comprehend their adrenaline and excitement of the moment, and not to take this attitude as derogatory or negative but as expressive and excitable. We assure you that we are continually training to polish customer relations on the water and though it takes time we believe that with your cooperation and opinions on this matter we will progress quickly. We ask that you inform the head of staff in your Avalon destination, in the case you are in disagreement with a guide's method or treatment. They will take the proper measures. We thank you very much for understanding and cooperation.

Tips for Cayo Largo:

Gratuities for the guides are 150 CUC for the week given direct to the guide (this is per angler; if single fishing must be double), and 100/120 CUC for the week to the staff of fishing camp (given to Mauro, manager of Avalon Cayo Largo)

Airline tickets, Flight and trip itinerary

Your Cuban Visa, which will be provided on entry.

Contact lenses, lens solutions, wetting solution



Eyeglasses, reading glasses

Prescription medicines that you need to take.

Aspirin, Motrin

A kit with Antibiotics, Imodium AD etc. for emergencies.

First aid kit- including bandages, waterproof adhesive tape

Anti-itch cream for insect bites

Zap A Gap Super Glue for bad cuts, repairs

Moisturizer Cream like Intensive Care for your hands

Chap Stick SPF 30 for your lips.

Booze – bring in whatever else you like.

Torch or lighter for Cigars, cigar cutter – BUT NOT in your carry-on

Cigarettes, chew or other tobacco products. Cigars you get in Cuba!

Zip lock bags – 6-8 gallon size for cigars or camera gear

Leather Cigar carriers or small humidor bag or case

Small Digital camera – including charger and cords. Be sure to bring a USB cord to download photos to your computer or iPod.

SLR or Digital SLR camera & lenses

Extra memory cards for your cameras.

Pelican Waterproof cases for your cameras. Remember your charger, extra flash cards etc.

Laptop Computer, charger in a soft case

1-2 GB Flash Memory USB drive for transferring photos from one computer to another

6-10 CDR's to burn for friends at the end of trip.

iPod or CD player, headphones

Batteries for above gear or chargers

Video camera, and mini DV tapes etc., charger

Palm or Blackberry

2 - Plug in wall conversion plugs to go from a std. 2 or 3 prong 110v. to 220v. in many of the hotels in Cuba.

Cell phone - Remember your cell phone won't work outside the US.

DO NOT BRING A GPS or SATELLITE PHONE. These will be confiscated by the Cubans if they find one on you. You can get it back when you leave the country though.

1 - small LCD Flashlight

Shaving kit with all your normal items.

1 big bar of your favorite American soap for showers.

Small pocket knife – and remember to NOT put this in your carry-on!.

Fingernail clippers – and NOT the kind with a blade nail file!

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR BOOKING

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