



cubanfishingcenters

**Isla de la Juventud / FISHING CHECK LIST**

CUBA

## ISLE OF THE YOUTH CHECKLIST

This checklist includes everything a person might need for a week in the Isle of Youth, and was put together by several anglers with years of experience in both the Jardines de la Reina and the Isla de la Juventad (The Isle of Youth)

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 at this time we do not offer any tackle or flies for sale on the Isle of Youth. 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 #7,8 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 advice the new Cortland Precision Tropic Plus Bonefish 90ft WF8F. Be sure to bring a back up floating line for bonefish. There is not much coral except on the Ocean side flats, but many flats have small mangrove roots 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** – since there are so many species of fish here, 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.** In the channels close to Gerona there are many tarpon in the 50-100 lb. class, and a big rod will help you land these fish more quickly than a 10 weight. 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.

Free tarpon lines on your big rod, you will want **four different lines**. A floating line, like the Precision Tropic Plus Tarpon Ghost – Tip 90ft WF11F, an intermediate (slow sink), the same model of the Cortland floating line is also available on Intermediate, and then a fast sinking head like the RIO DC-400 for the big channels which are up to 15 feet deep with strong tidal currents. All should have loop-to-loop connections to your backing. Less experienced casters will often do better with a floating line but the Slow Sinking line is perhaps the best all around line to use in the deeper channels. Out on the shallower flats, a floating line is a much better choice. In addition, is recommendable to bring a 400 grains sinking line, very useful when looking for big tarpons on deep channels.

6 - Bonefish leaders -12 foot OX or 15 lb.

1 - Spool of OX Fluorocarbon tippet for bones.

1 - Spool of heavier 01X Fluorocarbon tippet for bones. The bonefish are not at all leader shy so it is an advantage to use very heavy tippet allowing you to land many more fish and handle them more easily when releasing them.

4 - 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 20 lb. fly line backing

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

Bring two to three dozen bonefish flies in various patterns for a week of fishing. You need mostly medium weight flies to fish in water depths of 1-2 feet. You'll also need at least a half dozen flies that are very light with no bead chain eyes, to fish on shallow turtle grass flats for tailing fish. Bring a few heavy lead-eye flies for fishing bones in mud where the water can be 3-4 feet deep. Some of the best patterns are the Tan Shrimp, Borski Bonefish Slider, the Kwans and of course the Crazy Charlie style flies. Sizes should be mostly 6's with some 4/s. You'll find that the bonefish are usually not very selective since the fishing pressure is so light. Most flies should be darker patterns – tan and brown but you also need some very light or white patterns for white sand flats.

### Permit flies

Bring 6-12 flies for permit; YOUR FIRST CHOICE ON THIS SELECTION MUST BE AVALON PERMIT FLY, smaller permit crabs are also ideal for big bonefish. Some of the most effective crab patterns here are the Enrico Puglisi Palometa crabs in Tan and Beige (1/0 and 2) and the Anderson McCrab in size 2.

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

For larger tarpon in the big channels close to Gerona, the Enrico Puglisi Black and Purple Peanutbutter in size 3/0 is unbeatable. Often this water is slightly discolored with visibility that is only 4-6 feet. Larger, darker patterns are deadly. Brown or Brown and Orange Enricos have also been very good, again in 3/0. You'll want some of these same patterns in 2/0 for smaller tarpon out on the flats. Feather Keys style patterns are very good on the flats for baby tarpon in size 2/0. The best patterns are the Orange/Yellow/Grizzly, Brown Cockroach, Black Death and a White/Grizzly Cockroach Deceiver. If you are tying your own, tie all these tarpon flies on the Gamakatsu SC-15 hooks, in either 2/0 or 3/0.

### Snook flies

Some of the 2/0 tarpon flies above will also double as good flies for snook but the best are the Enrico Puglisi patterns like the Mullet streamer, mangrove baitfish, baby mutton snapper, all in 2/0. For big snook in slightly discolored water you'll find at times near the channels, a 3/0 Black and Purple tarpon fly is hard to beat. For really big snook, between 30 and 40 inches, a 3/0 size fly is a better choice. Have a few heavy lead eye flies like Clouser/Deceivers in both white and yellow/olive. Sizes for these should be 1/0 or 2/0.



## Flies for Other Species

In the IDJ there is terrific fishing for a variety of other flats fish like Mutton Snappers, Jack Crevalle, Barracuda and small sharks. Here are the flies you'll need.

### Muttons -

tarpon flies and snook flies in size 2/0 and 3/0 will work well. Best colors seem to be Brown/Orange, Mullet (green/black gray back and white underside) and Tan/brown on top and white underside)

### Jack Crevalle -

larger tarpon flies are best, but any big crab pattern will work great too. You often are fishing for other fish and don't have time to switch, but if you can put on a brown or black/purple Enrico in 3/0. The key is to cast close to these fast moving fish and strip the fly as fast as you can.

### Cudas -

the best patterns are tied with mylar flashabou tubing, with a green thread head to look like a needlefish. These should be 2/0 and tied 8 inches long with a stinger hook.



## 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 - 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 or flashlight
- 1 - Simms backsaver 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 light as laundry can be done )

- 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
- 1 - Breathable Full zip pants
- 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. 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. When you exchange money in Cuba, be sure to get plenty of \$1's, 3's and 5's in CUC's that will be very useful for tips, taxis and for drinks in both Havana and in Gerona.

REMEMBER TO BRING \$ 25 CUC ON YOUR DEPARTURE DAY, THIS IS A TAX YOU MUST PAY AT THE AIRPORT (AT THE AIRPORT BEFORE BOARDING YOUR FLIGHT)

#### **HOTEL RANCHO:**

GRATUITIES FOR THE GUIDES ARE 150 CUC PER ANGLER FOR THE WEEK GIVEN DIRECT TO THE GUIDE, IN CASH.

IN CASE OF FISHING SINGLE SKIFF, TIP MUST BE OF 300 CUC FOR THE GUIDE.

PLEASE BRING 100/120 CUC FOR THE WEEK TO THE STAFF OF FISHING CAMP ( GIVEN TO ROLANDO, GUIDE'S MANAGER AVALON ISLA DE LA JUVENTUD)

#### **PEROLA:**

GRATUITIES FOR THE GUIDES ARE 150 CUC PER ANGLER FOR THE WEEK GIVEN DIRECT TO THE GUIDE, IN CASH.

IN CASE OF FISHING SINGLE SKIFF, TIP MUST BE OF 300 CUC FOR THE GUIDE.

PLEASE BRING 100/120 CUC FOR THE WEEK TO THE STAFF OF THE YACHT ( GIVEN TO MANUEL THE CAPTAIN)

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.

### Airline tickets, Flight and trip itinerary

**Your Cuban Visa**, please check in your country ways to obtain it.



- 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. All they have in Gerona is Rum and wine
- 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!

