



**Frontier**  
FLY FISHING

## Costa Rica Tackle Check List

If there is one thing we've learnt from fly-fishing in the salt, it's simply this: buy the best gear you can afford and you won't be sorry again. The saltwater environment is totally different to the freshwater one and will take its toll on your gear and put it under tremendous pressure.

Costa Rica offers a unique fly-fishing challenge! These are the largest fish we have ever tangled with in our fly-fishing careers. Nothing prepared us for the sheer size and numbers of the fish we encountered. A typical day saw us hooking anything between 20 to 30 tarpon with many of these fish over 180lbs. The largest we boated was 198cm long and had a girth of 140cm. That would put this particular fish at 247lbs. Fish of this size will put your tackle to the extreme test. Ultimately, with super-strong rods, powerful reels, backing that tests 100lbs and tippets of 120lbs and heavier, you, the angler, will potentially become the weak link in the system!

### • Rods

The minimum requirement for tarpon is a 12-weight outfit. However, given the enormous size of the tarpon at this destination we seriously recommend that all anglers consider a 14-weight or heavier rod as their primary rod with a 12-weight rod as a back-up. We recommend Sage's SALT HD rods as our rod of choice with the HORIZON TRS as an affordable reserve rod.

### • Reels

Choose reels to match your rods. Your reels should have a powerful and dependable disc drag system that will not fail under pressure. Do not take inferior Eastern reels to this venue - they will fail you sooner than later and can mean the difference between landing or losing the fish of your dreams. Given the enormous size of the tarpon you will tangle with at this destination your reel, along with your rod, becomes an integral part of your fish-fighting arsenal. The reel's drag, along with the butt power of the rod, will be used to subdue the fish within a reasonable time period. We recommend Abel's SDS sealed drag reels or Abel's Super Series reels as the reel of choice for tarpon, with the Galvan Rush or Torque, or the Ross Evo R Salt reels as more affordable options. Your reel should hold at least 250 to 300 yards of 100 lb braided backing.

### • Lines

- The primary line you will be using for tarpon in Costa Rica will be a fast sinking line designed to get through the off-colour surface water and into the clean saltwater below. The best lines for this work are Scientific Anglers' Sonar Titan Big Water Taper Max lines in either 500- or 600 grain versions. These lines have 100lb cores so the line will never fail you.
- The other line we recommend that anglers take along is an intermediate line. There are great opportunities to hook both tarpon and jack crevalle on the top with surface poppers and an intermediate line with a strong head will deliver surface poppers better than a floating line.

### • Leaders and Tippets

- Tarpon require extremely strong terminal tackle with good abrasion resistance and the huge tarpon of Costa Rica will test your terminal tackle to the limit. We strongly recommend that anglers DO NOT take fluorocarbon shock tippet which is usually quite soft – the tarpon's rough jaw will wear through soft tippet material during a prolonged fight. We recommend anglers take hard mono testing at least 120lb minimum. There is no need for IGFA class leaders here unless your intention is to break an IGFA record. We fish level shock tippet as a leader.

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## **Backing**

During our first trip to this destination in Costa Rica we lost several fly-lines when our 30lb backing snapped at the reel. We've learnt our lesson now! We spool our reels up with 100lb Power Pro braid for backing so that there is no weak link in the chain! With your backing, fly-line and tippet material all testing out at a minimum of 100lbs you can radically reduce the time it will take to boat a very large tarpon.

### ▪ **Clothing**

It is essential that you wear the best tropical clothing available. We have experienced temperatures in the mid-30 degree Celsius range in Costa Rica, with associated high humidity and UV factors.

#### ▪ **Technical Quick Drying Shirts**

Long-sleeve, highly UV resistant shirts are essential to protect you from the sun. They need to be lightweight and quick drying. We prefer the Simms Guide shirt or the Simms Solarflex shirt.

#### ▪ **Technical Quick Drying Long Pants**

We prefer Simms quick drying, long pants. These will provide complete coverage and protection for your legs from the sun.

#### ▪ **Foot Wear**

You will spend the entire day fishing from a boat so no footwear is required. You might prefer to fish in some sort of footwear but we prefer to fish barefoot so that if we stand on the line on the boat's deck we are aware of it.

#### ▪ **Bufs**

We like buf's for two reasons: they add colour to photographs and more importantly, keep the sun off your neck and face. Simms make some of the most progressive sun protection on the market, including their Sunhoods™ and Sun Gaiters™.

#### ▪ **Sungloves**

Sungloves are an essential part of the fly-angler's tackle requirements. The best gloves are those made by Simms which are a combination sunglove/fish-fighting glove. They will protect your hands from the sun as well as providing protection from painful line burns when a huge tarpon grabs your fly and rips the line across your fingers.

#### ▪ **Hats and Caps**

A good cap or wide-brimmed hat is essential on the flats. We like the Simms Solar Sombrero as a wide-brimmed hat as it's lightweight. All the Simms caps have been designed with all the necessary technical requirements, including sweat bands and dark undersides to the bills.

#### ▪ **Polarised Sunglasses**

Polarised sunglasses are a must as they will cut the surface glare off the water, relieving your eyes from the sun's damaging rays. They will not only protect your eyes from the sun but also keep any errant fly-patterns from your eyes. Maui Jim polarized sunglasses are without peer in the marketplace – there are no better sunglasses available.



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## ▪ Boat Bag

Fishing from a Panga boat means you do not need a vest or pack. We recommend that a boat bag be used for all your tackle and other items. It is easier to transport your kit to and from the marina each day and to stow everything on the boat using a boat bag. Although waterproof dry sacks are good for keeping items dry, they are not ideal on the Panga boats where your gear needs to be organised and easily at hand. There are many different bags on the market, but we prefer the Simms and Fishpond products as they are all designed to keep water out and your essentials easily accessible.

## ▪ Flies

Flies are a personal thing, but prior to the trip, anglers will be briefed on what flies to buy or tie. The shop also supplies a Costa Rica fly-pack which will cater for anglers who do not tie their own flies. Subsurface tarpon flies for these huge fish will be large patterns designed to move water with a lot of flash incorporated in their tying. We also recommend surface poppers like NYAPs and the Flys Inc Surface Popper.

## ▪ Other items you will need

- Saltwater resistant pliers
- Snips
- Sunscreen
- SPF30 lip balm
- Spare fly-lines
- Spare rods
- Lightweight rain jacket
- Camera
- Camera battery charger
- Aloksak (waterproof plastic bag) or similar bag to keep your camera dry
- Spare camera batteries
- Passport
- Airline ticket
- Toiletries
- Cash or traveller's cheques
- Casual clothing
- Insect repellent
- Stripee Finger Guard

# Check/Packing List



Rods	12-wt (Minimum requirement) plus spare rod	
Reels	12-wt reel with a minimum of 250 to 300 yards of 100lb braided backing	
Lines	500- and 600 grain fast sinking lines as well as intermediate lines	
<b>Boat Bag Contents</b>		
Leaders and Tippet	120lb (minimum) hard mono shock leader material	
Fly Boxes	Tarpon box	
Accessories	Pliers	
	Nippers	
Other	Sun Gloves	
	Rain Jacket	
	Technical fishing clothing	
	Camera	
	Sunblock	
	Lip Balm	
	Finger Guards	
	Tape Measure	
	Hat/Cap	
	Buff/Sun Gaiter	
<b>Other Items Required</b>		
	Casual Clothing	
	Toiletries	
	Passport	
	Travel Insurance	
	International Air Tickets	
	Cash or Traveller's Cheques. The preferred currency is US Dollars, and they are widely accepted.	