

The **Huntin' Fool**

A Guide to Western Big Game Hunting



Featuring
Member Stories
Hunting Opportunities

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Choosing the Perfect Fishing Trip

By Alaska Premier Charters -Evelyn Helminen

EDITOR'S REMARKS

Most big game hunters also enjoy fishing in Alaska. Most of you know that not all fishing trips/charters are created equal. The purpose of this article is to let you know some of the questions you should be asking when booking your next fishing trip. Alaska Premier Charters was gracious enough to accept our invitation to write this informative article for us. We trust them and have had some incredible fishing trips with them in Sitka, Alaska.

—Jason Carter

The place to go for World Class Fishing for salmon and halibut is Sitka, Alaska, due to its unique location jutting out into the Pacific Ocean. Of all the King salmon and halibut sport caught in southeast Alaska, 40% of them are landed near the outer coast of Sitka. The land's geography makes great feeding grounds for fish migrating down the outer coastline. They bump into the Cape and stay there, feeding all summer long. Sitka is also the hot bed for Silver salmon, "barn-door" halibut, lingcod, and various rockfish.

Just as in choosing a good, reputable hunting guide, finding the perfect fishing charter requires careful research and planning. The following guide, created in conjunction with Alaska Premier Charters, Inc. will give you helpful pointers for booking your next fishing trip.







































LOCATION & FISH SPECIES

When planning a fishing trip take into consideration that different fish species are more available at certain times of the season. Also find out what fish species your charter will target each day; some target all species every day and others only go after one per day.

Typically, with Alaska Premier Charters, Inc. located in Sitka, Alaska, you will target both salmon and halibut daily. You can expect to catch other fish as well, such as lingcod and a variety of rockfish. The following chart shows the type of species we typically catch and when they are most available.

Sitka Sportfishing Seasons

The size of the fish indicates abundance in Sitka waters.

SPECIES	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT
King Salmon					
Silver Salmon					
Chum Salmon					
Pink Salmon					
Halibut					
Lingcod					
Rockfishes					
Sharks					

STYLE OF FISHING

Do you want to participate in exhilarating hands-on sportfishing? If you want the satisfaction of hooking, setting



the line, playing the fish, and pulling it in, you want to make sure your charter uses a suitable style of fishing. "Mooching for King Salmon" and "Soaking for Halibut" are key phrases you want to listen for. If you want to be able to set your own hook, do not go with a guide that trolls with downriggers.

Alaska Premier Charters, Inc. takes special pride in being both skilled King salmon "Moochers" and excellent at soaking for, and pulling in, great halibut. These fishing styles are very hands-on and easy to learn. You will get great personal satisfaction from fishing this way.

LENGTH OF FISHING TRIP

There are multiple reasons why one day of fishing might be better than the next day, so you should plan for at least 3 full days of fishing. This gives you better odds for things like good weather, catching fish runs, and beating motion sickness. An "off" day is okay, because you can make up for it the other days.

You want a package with full days to fish, not half days, because there is generally not enough time to get to and from good fishing grounds and still leave ample time for



fishing in a half day trip. When your package says, "3 days / 4 nights," that should mean you arrive the afternoon before you start fishing, fish 3 full days, and leave the day after your last day of fishing.

At Alaska Premier Charters, Inc. we always fish full days. Our most common package is the 3 day / 4 night option. Longer fishing vacations are also possible. Contact us for custom packages.

FISHING LICENSE

The best fishing lodges will include your non-resident fishing license and king salmon stamp in the package price and take care of purchasing it for you, to save you the hassle and ensure you are a legal angler.

Our packages include your fishing license and king salmon stamp. When you book a trip, we will ask you for the information required to process your license and have it ready for you upon your arrival.

TRAVEL AND LODGING CONSIDERATIONS

Double-check the location of your charter. Be aware that some are in remote locations and require additional transportation to reach them. You may have to take a smaller private plane or boat from the main airport, which could mean longer travel time, more expense and stricter baggage requirements.

Find out if your fishing package includes lodging. Ask if you're staying near the harbor your boat leaves from, and if not, how you will get there. Ask if you will be in a dorm-style setting or have a private bathroom. See if your lodging place comes recommended by anyone you trust.

Sitka is a direct flight from Seattle, Washington via Alaska Airlines and/or Delta Airlines - we are situated a short 10 minute drive from the airport. Our fishing packages include lodging at our Wild Strawberry Lodge, to which we will provide transportation. The lodge is located right at the harbor where we dock our boats.

Inside the Wild Strawberry Lodge everything runs smoothly with 20 support staff members, including a gourmet dinner chef, breakfast and cookie crew, friendly client coordinators and drivers, competent office personnel, and trained housekeepers, all of whom will do whatever it takes to make sure you have the best fishing vacation ever! The lodge can accommodate 42 - 45 guests at one time. There are nine private rooms in the main lodge, each with their own bathroom. There are also two separate self-contained lodging facilities and five Suites for larger groups who want

their own space. We have Wi/Fi and guest computers with internet access, massage chairs, cable TV, and free laundry facilities. Garth Carter and others at *The Huntin' Fool* have fished and stayed with us on several occasions and can vouch for the Wild Strawberry Lodge.

MEALS

Some charters include meals in their package prices and others don't. Find out before you go whether you'll have to pay extra for (or provide your own) breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

At Alaska Premier Charters, all meals are included except dinner on your arrival night. (We will give you restaurant recommendations and provide transportation for your arrival night dinner.) Other than that, our kitchen is humming all day long, between breakfast making, dessert and cookie baking, and gourmet dinner preparations. The snack area is always stocked with complimentary fresh homemade cookies, fruits, and beverages, which are available to guests all day long.

A full hot breakfast will be prepared for you each morning to gear you up for a great day. For lunch, we will prepare fresh deli sandwiches for you on the boat with a variety of meats, cheeses and vegetables, home-baked cookies, snacks, and hot or cold beverages.

Your dinner each night is a variety of flavorful seafood and non-seafood main entrees, prepared by our in-house chef. The following is a typical dinner menu: Appetizer - Beef chili with cornbread; Dinner - Ranch salad, Ginger fried halibut with Thai chili sauce, Cedar plank salmon with tomatoes and garlic, grilled skirt steak with bacon-mushroom steak sauce, roasted veggies, rosemary potatoes, steamed broccoli, and fresh homemade bread; Dessert - Key Lime Pie. You can always have seconds at no additional cost!

PROCESSING

The best tasting fish is that which is bled and gutted as soon as possible after catching it, then flash-frozen to preserve the quality of the meat. As fishing is the main reason for your vacation, you want to make sure you know how your fish will be taken care of. Some places don't offer processing services, and others make you pay extra to process your fish. Still others put a limit on free processing and charge you per pound if you go over the limit.

We have a fish processing room right on site, where we clean, fillet, vacuum-pack in meal-size packages, flash-



freeze, and box all your fish for you as part of your fishing package. The most common way to bring your fish home is as checked luggage on your flight home. The frozen boxed fish will last up to 24 hours, which should be enough time for you to get it into your home freezer. We will bring it to the airport for you and help you check it in.

FISHING GEAR

If you don't want to bring extra baggage with you on your trip, book a fishing charter that supplies all relevant fishing gear, foul-weather clothing, and rubber boots. Not only can these items be heavy and bulky to pack, but they can be expensive to buy if you don't already own the proper equipment.

When you fish with us, we will provide you with raingear: bib bottoms, hooded tops, and rubber boots to protect you from ocean spray, rain, fish slime, blood, and guts. We also have all the proper fishing rods, reels, gear, and bait you will need to catch a bounty of fish.

CREW SIZE & EXPERIENCE

For a quality fishing trip, consider how many years of experience the company has and how knowledgeable the boat crew is. How long have they been running charters? How well do they know the local area and fishing grounds?

Also think about the level of personalized service you will receive. Is there just one captain onboard trying to help everyone out at once? Or is there also a deckhand onboard to assist in baiting hooks and gaffing and filleting fish?

Alaska Premier Charters has been in business for 26 years. Theresa, the owner, has been on the water for most of her life, starting as a deckhand in her teenage years and working her way up to captain. She has personally trained numerous captains and deckhands, showing them how to provide top notch service and get on the fish.

Each of our seven vessels has a captain and deckhand and can carry 6 clients. This allows for more personalized service from the crew and prevents overcrowding. Our captains are all U.S.C.G. certified and have 87 years of combined local captaining experience. They will make sure you're safely taken care of, teach you the proper way to fish with our gear, and give you guidance and assistance to get your fish in the boat. They are also full of fun and have great

personalities.

NON-FISHERS

Maybe your wife or a friend doesn't like to hunt or fish but really wants to take a vacation with you. See if you can bring them along! Some fishing lodges let you come with a non-fishing guest, sometimes at a reduced rate, while others are strictly for their fishing clients.

We welcome "Non-Fishing Guests" lodging with a "Fishing Guest" at a special rate per person, per day, for their non-fishing services. This includes meals and local transportation. Sitka is a small town of 8,500 people but has many conveniences of larger areas. There are a number of fun things to do and see, including historical museums, a chocolate factory, shopping, hiking, float plane rides, a raptor center, and more, along with spectacular scenery and incredible bear viewing. (If you want to take a day off from fishing and join them in taking in the sights, that is also an option.)

FISHING WITH ALASKA PREMIER CHARTERS

Let us provide you with a complete Alaskan saltwater fishing and lodging vacation. It will be completely hassle-free and all you have to do is enjoy yourself. You will be glad you came! For 3 full days of fishing and 4 nights of lodging, the cost is \$2,850 per person plus taxes. Also, at certain times of the season, we offer a "Buddy Special" with 5-20% discounts off the regular package rates. Call us for more details.

Sitka, with its strategic location on the outer coast of Southeast Alaska, is the best place to come sportfishing. With 26 years in business, we are ready to show you our Genuine Alaskan Hospitality and the best fishing trip of your life! The name Alaska PREMIER Charters is not taken lightly; Theresa has the experience, know-how, and staff to ensure your lodging and fishing experience in Sitka will create everlasting memories.

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