

Fishing Charter FAQs

Call Gary Spivack

703.628.4424

Fuel surcharge: Due to the rapid changes in fuel prices, please be aware that there may be a fuel surcharge added on to your trip rate. We are sorry to have to do this, but the current situation demands it. Please call me with your questions.

How do I book a trip? It is always best to work out your party's logistics first, then call to book your date. Flexibility is also good-don't book your trip on the last day of your vacation, there are no re-booking possibilities if the weather turns bad. The farther out you plan your trip, the better your choice of dates. Our rates can vary and there may be specials on, so call us to discuss your plans. A \$100 deposit (fully refundable) is required to hold your date.

What's included in the charter fee? Our charters include the boat, fuel, ice, bait, tackle, fishing license, coolers, captain, mate and (hopefully) fish.

What forms of payment do you accept? We accept cash, cashier's checks or personal checks. You can use PayPal (PayPal.me/marops) to forward your deposit, but please be prepared to pay the balance due upon completion of the charter. We accept credit or debit cards with a small convenience fee (3%).

Should I tip? Tipping is always appropriate if your crew does a good job. Our trips are meant to be a pleasure for you. If you find something is lacking, please let us know and we will do whatever we can to remedy the situation, if possible. If you have a good time, show your appreciation to the crew (the amount is up to you), write us a quick review and recommend us to your friends.

How many people can you take? We are bound by 46 CFR Sub-Chapter "C" which governs the use and operation of uninspected passenger vessels 100 tons or less. We are only permitted to carry six (6) or fewer passengers. It doesn't matter if you're fishing or not and children count as a person. The USCG is strict on enforcement.

Are there any restrictions for children? A parent or guardian must be present and fully responsible for each child. If your child is bringing a friend, you must have the friend's parental permission in writing. We have life jackets on board for children. All federal and state life jacket regulations are enforced, so please make sure this is OK with your children. Please instruct your children to not open drawers or cabinets on board the boat. There are sharp knives, poisons and electrical switches that are not good for children's curiosity. In our experience, younger children tend to get bored on longer trips.

What should I bring? Please bring a hat, some sunscreen, a rain jacket and the food and beverages of your choice. If you take prescription medications, please be sure to bring a 24-hour supply in the original Rx container (things can happen). If you normally require over-the-counter medications (like Tums or Tylenol), please bring those.

What is your “catch and release” policy? We practice good conservation; if you plan to eat the fish and it is of appropriate size, it goes into the fish box. We have “mercy limits”; how many fish can you really eat? After a reasonable catch, we release any additional fish unharmed. Please don’t confuse a day on the water with a trip to the grocery store. We cannot ship your catch. We observe all state and federal regulations pertaining to season, size and bag limits. We encourage you to photograph your catch and let it live to fight another day. Please let us know your preferences. Ask about our conservation discount.

Do you clean my catch? Yes. We can clean your catch for you. Please let us know how you want your catch cleaned. We normally fillet each fish and store in a plastic bag with ice for easy transportation. Ask us about local restaurants that will cook your catch for you (or Google: “cook my catch”).

Where do we depart from? Currently, we are leaving from (and returning to) our home dock at 306 176th Ave. Circle, in Redington Shores.

Where should I park? Parking at the beach can be a challenge. We will advise you on parking the evening before your charter. Occasionally, we ask you to park in the Pinellas County, Park Blvd. Boat Ramp parking lot at 18651 Gulf Blvd., Indian Shores, just south of the Park Blvd. drawbridge. There is a minimal charge per day and the lot is patrolled by local police. We will pick you up and deliver you back to your vehicle.

What time do we leave? Departure time is up to you. We can leave as early or late as you like. Normal departure for AM trips is 7 AM (or at first light). Afternoon trips usually get underway at 1:00 PM.

What sort of food and drink should I bring? Please bring whatever you want to eat and drink. Space is limited onboard, so please pack your food in bags or collapsible coolers. Finding space for extra coolers can be a challenge. We suggest easy-to-eat items like sandwiches. On a rocking boat, food will slide around, so only take out what you’re going to eat. Try to do your prep work before you leave. The average person seldom drinks more than 3 to 4 12 oz. drinks in 4 hours (some beer drinkers and hot days may skew the average, remember beer dehydrates you and can bring on heat stroke). And please eat your food in the cockpit, spills are much easier to clean up there.

Is your boat ADA-compliant? We want everyone to have fun. All participants are expected to be in good physical condition. There are steps and stairs to negotiate and the boat does rock, so balance is an issue. Our boat is not ADA-compliant and is not safe for people with mobility issues.

What should I leave home? No weapons are permitted on board, even if you have a permit. No drugs, unless prescribed by a physician (bring the Rx original container). Our boat is under federal jurisdiction, so state laws do not apply. Glass containers or bottles are also best left on shore. Service animals are welcome but no pets, please.

What time do we return? We try to arrive back at the dock as close to the scheduled time as possible. You can choose to extend your trip; additional fees (\$150/hour) apply. Unforeseen circumstances can arise (weather, mechanical problems, sea sickness) that could change our plans.

You should notify a responsible person on shore of our “float plan” and ask them to call authorities if they do not hear from you in a reasonable time.

What is your cancellation policy? Please call us to cancel your trip as soon as you know you cannot go. You can call to re-schedule your trip to an alternative (open) date any time prior to departure. Weather or mechanical cancellations (mutual decision between the captain and the client) offer a full deposit refund.

What about alcoholic beverages? If you want to bring beer or wine on board, that is at your option. We expect our guests to consume alcohol in a responsible and respectful manner and obey the law at all times. Remember alcoholic beverages dehydrate you and can bring on heat stroke. Not drinking responsibly can result in promptly returning to the dock. We do not permit liquor or mixed drinks on board for safety reasons.

Is smoking permitted on board? If you must, but please smoke in open areas only (like the cockpit). Cigarette, cigar, pipe or e-cig—it’s all the same to us, as long as it is done outside. And no littering!

Can I bring a cooler? It is best to transport your food in soft coolers or bags. There really isn’t room for hard coolers on board in addition to the normal ship’s compliment. We have a lunch/drink cooler with ice on board for your use.

What sort of footwear is acceptable? On board a boat offshore, good footing is an important ingredient in keeping your balance. We suggest boat shoes, but sneakers will do. Some prefer sandals, even flip-flops are OK. What is not OK are dark-soled shoes that can mark our decks; no “lug” soles, no studded soles (like “driving” shoes), no heels or platforms, no work boots, hiking boots or cowboy boots, etc.

What if I feel sea-sick? If you get motion sickness, you may want to use over-the-counter remedies. Be sure to take the medication according to package directions. If you feel queasy on board, avoid enclosed areas (like the cabin) and do not lay down. If you feel sick, please ask for an emesis bag or vomit overboard, not in the cabin, sink or toilet. Speak to one of the crew as soon as you feel ill; we will try to help you as best we can. The only sure cure is returning to the dock. We all get sea-sick, it’s just a matter of when.

What about bad weather? Weather is always a variable. We will attempt to get a good forecast prior to your trip and discuss it with you. If it looks like bad weather, we can discuss re-scheduling or cancelling your trip. Generally, winds over 17 knots will cause a “small craft exercise caution” warning by the US Coast Guard and will cause waves to build to an uncomfortable size. Thunderstorms are another hazard we try to avoid. Being out on a boat in rough weather can be an unpleasant experience.

What happens if we are out fishing and a storm comes up? With thunder and lightning present, we will head for shore for safety reasons. Being in open water during a thunderstorm is an unpredictable experience and can be more than just uncomfortable. Depending on the circumstances, we can adjust the charter fee based on the time out.

Can I bring my own tackle? Certainly. If you have a favorite rod/reel, by all means, bring it along. We ask that you use appropriate tackle for the species and type of fishing we expect to do. All of the tackle we have on board is user-friendly and if you are not familiar with the tackle, please ask one of us to show you how to use a particular piece of equipment.

Why do I need to sign a liability waiver? Going fishing offshore on a boat can be dangerous and we want to make sure you understand the risks involved. We make every effort to ensure your safety while on board, but things can happen. In the end, our insurance requires it.

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