



CAYO LARGO Cuba

As of April 1st, 2008 the incredible Cayo Largo (Long Key) fishery came under the management of Avalon Fishing Center. With this new undertaking we strive to achieve a paradise that fishermen can enjoy and share with their families and non-fisherman friends.

In Cayo Largo you can bonefish on white sand flats while your family enjoys the breathtaking beaches, enjoy a cocktail in the hotel pool, or participate in one of the numerous activities the resort offers.

Fish during the day and relax while watching an incredible sunset in style and comfort in one of the most beautiful pristine natural environments in the world. When you combine this stunning eco system with the personal touch and excellent service that Avalon is renowned for, our 15 years of experience in providing top notch fly fishing trips you are guaranteed a great experience.

One of the great benefits to this destination is that Cayo Largo also has a modern international airport where Canadian, European, and South American aircraft can now fly to directly. There are 3 weekly flights directly from Canada and Italy.





THE SOL CLUB Cayo Largo

The Sol Club Cayo Largo is a beautiful all-inclusive Resort located on the southern shore Cayo Largo del Sur. Cayo Largo is situated in the Canarreos Archipelago, on the southwestern coast of Cuba and belongs to "Municipio Especial Isla de la Juventud". It is 177 km from Havana City and has 27 km of cool fine-grain white sandy beaches.

The Resort is only 5 minutes from the International Airport. It offers a total of 296 comfortable rooms with a terrace or balcony overlooking the ocean, including 8 Junior Suites and 52 deluxe rooms. This is the perfect destination to bring along a non-fishing wife or girlfriend.

The hotel provides a broad array of services and attractions: a club House for daytime activities, three restaurants, Spanish classes, cocktail and cooking classes, party hall, karaoke night club, a dive school nearby, health Center with gym, sauna, massages at bargain prices, jacuzzi and steam bath, two tennis courts with artificial lighting, multi-purpose courts, bikes, ecological excursions, dancing classes, water sports center for non-motorized water sports, Cuban Club for cultural activities, and theater.



Avalon is one of the few companies in the world that can offer its guests the unique ability to fish in a completely exclusive marine park, free of commercial fishermen, nets or any skiffs or yachts from other companies. Think about the incredible possibilities of having all those nautical kilometers to yourself and being able to choose the species and the places you want to fish, without any fuel limitation during your fishing week. Guests can expect the following species when fishing with Avalon at Cayo Largo: Permit, Bonefish (large ones), Tarpon, Jack Crevalle, Barracudas, Mutton Snapper, Snooks, etc..

Based on our experience and great fishing results in this area, we continue to protect this fragile ecosystem. Together with our biologists and marine specialists, we have decided to designate Cayo Largo a fly fishing only destination.



For spin anglers, we can offer alternative destinations such as Jardines de la Reina or South Ana Maria, where you can spin fish using various techniques for challenging species as Cubera, Grouper and Bonito among others.

The beginning of the season in Cayo Largo (from November to February) is very good, with plenty of bonefish (especially big ones) on the flats and mangrove areas. Fishing for tarpon and other species can also be good. This is a really nice time to plan a trip to Cayo Largo, as the weather is much warmer in Cuba than in Europe or Northern America.



Peak fishing season is from March to June, when all species are present in the area. Tarpon, bonefish, permit and jacks will all be encountered during these months. The migratory tarpon, up to 80/100lbs (average 15/30lbs) are regularly spotted and shots at permit are very frequent. Our peak season is the best time to try the Grand Slam. Numerous Grand Slams are achieved each season as well as a few Super Grand Slams (Tarpon, Bonefish, Permit and Snook).



In the late part of the season, the weather gets hot but the fishing is still very productive, especially for tarpon and permit. Fishing for bonefish is also very good in the morning and in the evening. Our statistics indicate a very surprising summer phenomenon: that the same number of fish are caught during the hot months as in the peak season, but by half the number of rods. This illustrates how fabulously productive the summer months in Cayo Largo can be for our anglers.



FLY FISHING

Fly fishing in Cuba is far different from other destinations in the Caribbean. Only in recent years has this flats fishery been developed, and you are fishing waters that have not seen sport fishing for nearly fifty years. Cuba has given these pristine areas protection as Cuban National Marine Parks, where no commercial fishing is allowed other than for lobster. Flats fish like Tarpon, Permit, Bonefish, Snook, Mutton Snapper, Barracuda, and a variety of Jacks are found in incredible numbers and since the fishing pressure is so light in these areas the fish rarely encounter sport fishermen and are unusually easy to catch.

Think about a place where you can fish more than 100 miles of flats without seeing another fisherman, a place where the flats fishing is so good, you can catch seven species of fish in one day, a place where big bonefish run toward your fly even when it hits the water too hard, rather than streaking off the flat in the other direction, a place where you have a legitimate chance for a Grand Slam every day of the year, a place where big permit are as plentiful as they were in the Florida Keys 30 years ago, a place where you can wade miles of white-sand flats in your bare feet for big bonefish, a place where you'll find enough big tarpon, jacks, cudas, and sharks on the flats to wear you out!

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TARPON

“BRUTAL” IS THE RIGHT WORD TO DESCRIBE FLY FISHING FOR TARPON.

The King of Silver has an insatiable appetite, and gets very violent. Tarpon take with power, and show stamina and acrobatic qualities that make tarpon a formidable adversary on a fly rod. Fishing Tarpon or Sabalo, as it is known in Cuba, can be divided into three categories: Baby Tarpon (those that they weigh up to 30 Lbs), Medium Tarpon (those that weigh 30 Lbs up to 80 Lb) and Monster Tarpon (those of more than 80 Lb and sometimes can surpass the incredible mark of 200 Lbs). Obviously, the last category is hunted hard, but unfortunately these behemoths are much less common.

When nearing a school of Tarpon, holding an 11 or 12 wt. rod, legs shake and a matchless sensation of adrenalin invades the body, as you anticipate a battle with one of these marine monsters. Sighting and casting accurately play a major role as the angler must reach the school of Tarpon that swim slowly in a circle within meters of the boat. At all times it is important to control one's nervousness and to never feel intimidated by the presence of these extraordinary beasts. The beginning of the road to success is to strip strike the fish precisely and firmly. the violent reaction of the Tarpon when it feels the fly in its mouth is going to send him skyward. so you have to bow to the king to keep that line slack and then hold your rod low and keep him under control - easier said than done.



PERMIT FABULOUS ADVERSARY.

To guarantee success when fly fishing for permit is something that we simply cannot do. This wonderful fish is the ultimate flats challenge and many fly fishermen have been taken to school by this wary fish. To cast to, hook, and land a permit on a fly is a true angling milestone and one that most fly fishermen who have fished the salt will eventually aspire to. It is a gift that with patience, agility, modesty, and great humility, a lucky few will be rewarded.

Fly fishing for Permit is extremely challenging and the odds are often stacked against the intrepid angler who looks to target this fabulous adversary. Wind, sun and the erratic nature of this fish all conspire against fly fishermen in their quest to tail one of these majestic fish. We can think of no other fish that is so difficult to predict, to understand, and worse still, to deceive. What a challenge!

The best locations in Cuba to consistently find permit are in Cayo Largo and Jardines de la Reina. Both of these locations are 60-80 miles offshore, along Cuba's southern coast. The optimal times to fish for permit in Cuba are between March and July, as well as in the month of November, when the tides are high.



Cayo Largo and JDR are both outstanding locations for producing Grand Slams and Super Slams, in large part because the permit fishing is consistently so good. Each of these fisheries regularly produce 25 pound + permit for our anglers and we don't know of too many other places that boast the number of weekly Slams that Cayo Largo and JDR do. Further west, Isla de la Juventud is fast becoming known as a Mecca for huge permit taken on a fly and we would not be surprised to see a record come from this location in the near future.



Anglers in these locations will periodically find permit tailing on the flats in 1 to 2 feet of water. A far more common way to find permit is to go looking for sting rays feeding in 2 to 3 feet of water. Permit are intelligent, opportunistic feeders. They will follow behind sting rays, using the rays to flush out crabs and shrimp



which the permit will then eat before the ray has a chance to get its meal. Cayo Largo is the best location in the world for finding big permit on the backs of rays and the guides are experts at reading the water and tides in order to find this unique phenomenon. Fifteen to 25 pound permit are commonly found feeding on the backs or rays at Cayo Largo, so if you are dreaming of landing a big permit, Cayo Largo is the destination of choice.



Cuba's south coast permit can also be found swimming with large schools of bonefish. This scenario presents its own set of challenges because bonefish will often take the fly before the permit has a chance to eat it, unless the fly is cast to just the right location. This kind of precise angling will get your heart pounding and put all your fly fishing skills to the test.



BONEFISH

AMAZING COMBATIVE FISH.

The Bonefish prefers areas of shallow water along the coast. It can be located in depths between centimeters and 2 meters. Normally, it is possible to see them swim in schools of fish with numbers between 4 and 20. This grand specimen has a solitary life. They are fish that reproduce throughout the year in open waters. Nevertheless they return quickly to the coast. They are fish that have a great tolerance to waters with little oxygen since they have a biofunctional characteristic that allows them to do so.

The Bonefish must be never be fought with extreme force, since this could break the line. The fisherman must control the fight and tire but not exhaust the fish. so he can be released unharmed.

OTHER SPECIES



Jack Crevalle and Horse Eye

Jacks are wonderful game fish, and are very abundant in the JDR. It is common to see a school of big jacks patrolling the flats, eating everything in sight. Many of these fish are in the fifteen to twenty pound class with some right up to the thirty pound mark. They look somewhat like the permit, being in the same family, but Jacks are one of the most aggressive feeders on the flats and very easy to catch in relation to permit. As a bonus, the Horse Eye jacks make wonderful sashimi back on the boat before dinner.



Cudas and Sharks

Big Cudas are plentiful around all the bonefish flats. Most will be three to four feet long, and will give any fly angler a terrific fight. Their aggressive take is exciting and few fish can swim faster or jump farther than a big barracuda. They are easy to catch on the many good needle-fish patterns, using a wire leader.



Snook

A snook has the power to punch to the nearest piling with a wide, swooping tail, plus a double set of razor-sharp gill rakers. An angler has to fight tooth and nail to keep one of these fighters from cutting itself free, one way or the other. So we power up with heavy monofilament leaders, high-speed reels, braided lines and rods so thick you could remove the tips and play pool with them. And they still eat our lunch.

In the winter, snook flood the backwaters and offshore reefs, seeking creature comforts while continuing their terror tactics on just about any fish or crustacean that will fit within their maw. When a severe cold front pushes the freezing mark, they become lethargic zombies--yellow-and-white submarines listing on their sides. On the warmer days, snook move from the deep water to the nearby flats. Many times, it's the tiny bay anchovy that suffers their ravenous wrath a hundredfold. As spring approaches, their thoughts turn to food, then love, like an awakening bear fresh from winter slumber. They stake out the channels and cuts through the flats, popping pinfish and sand perch. The fish feed voraciously, building up their fat supplies for the summer, when they'll mass in huge schools at inlets, passes and along the beach for a warm-water „Love Connection.“



Mutton Snappers

Mutton Snappers are everywhere in the JDR, and plenty are found and caught on the flats - a real rarity. This is perhaps the best (and only) place in the world where you can expect to catch mutton snappers on the flats. They are high powered fish that will pull with dogged determination, especially when the safety of the mangrove roots is within sight. Mutton snappers are extremely wary when out on the flats, but if you can get the right cast in there without spooking them, they are suckers for taking a fly. Most muttons caught on a fly run between three and eight pounds, but fish up to fifteen pounds are a distinct possibility.



Other Fish

Anglers that want to try trolling off the reef with plugs, bait, and even flies encounter many other species of fish. Various snappers including the huge Cubera Snapper are present as well as groupers, jacks, kingfish, albacore, wahoo, and bonito and big cudas. One group of visiting anglers caught twenty five different species of fish off the reef-in one day!



AVALON PERMIT FLY

The Avalon Fly is the result of scientific and technical research, which lasted for years. After getting several poor results in the past and despite the best flies used by Permit fishing experts, we realized that the instinctive reaction of the permit was first, to run scared when detecting the presence of something not familiar.

It is known that permit are very clever fish. For this reason, improving the presentation and the position of the fly in the water resulted in more strikes

This fly has been tested both in the sea and in a swimming pool, comparing it to other patterns that were potentially attractive to permit. Viewing it underwater, we realized that some flies were falling face down as they sank, while others began to spin after the first cast and as the fly was being stripped.

So after trying fly after fly, we developed one with the following characteristics:



- A fly that when it enters the water, it sinks with the hook up.
- The fly now sits straight up keeping its balance and swims naturally, without turning or exposing the hook.
- It SINKS faster than other patterns and it stays linear when stripping the line, simulating a shrimp.



The Avalon Permit Fly imitates a giant shrimp with its size of 9 cm in total, tied on a #2 hook, using materials such as: rabbit, orange arctic fox tail, with pearl embroidery thread, rubber bands of red and black and crystal flash that imitates the antennae. The colors of marabou and rabbit may vary from the bottom, depending on the environment in which you are fishing.



The eyes are 3 or 4 mm. long, which allows the blending of materials such as marabou, rabbit and fox tail with the water. It solves the problem of navigability by placing 4 silver Cyclops eyes. 2.8 mm made of nickel, that acts like the keel of a ship.

The cyclop eyes give a sound effect similar to vibrations in the water, making this fly simply irresistible!



The results have been stunning. In a few short months, our clients have caught more than 350 permit excluding Grand Slams. The reaction of the permit, when the fly has been successfully presented, is to attack and take it without hesitation.

This is undoubtedly one of the most effective patterns to fly fish for Permit in Caribbean waters!!