



## A Fly Fishing Guide To

# Rocky Mountain National Park

## Guided Fly Fishing Trips 101

### What's Included in a Guided Fly Fishing Trip?

For a typical RMNP trip, 4- and 6-hour trips include beverages and snacks; 8-hour trips include lunch. The cost of flies vary from guide-to-guide and fly shop-to-fly shop. Some fly shops include all flies needed while others allow one fly per hour per angler as being included in the cost of the trip. Additional flies are charged at the regular shop rates. While some fly shops include rental gear as part of the cost, others don't. Rental gear, including waders, boots, rod and reel, is available for a nominal fee, usually \$25 in most shops. If you are renting gear, make sure you coordinate with the fly shop to pick it up in advance and ensure all gear fits, is comfortable, and is in good working order. Your trip time does not include travel time- a four hour trip means four hours on the water, so plan on travel to and from the fishing location as part of the outing. You'll need a Colorado fishing license which can usually be purchased from the fly shop or [online at the Colorado Division of Wildlife's website](#). Entrance into the National Park is \$20 per vehicle, per day - or \$10 per person for a guided trip. The guide is required to stop at the gate to announce his purpose. If you meet the guide in the Park, be prepared for the fee if you don't have a National Parks pass or a RMNP pass. More information about Parks passes [can be found here](#).

### A Typical Trip

If you are a less experienced fly fisher, your guide will start your trip with a casting lesson and practice. Once on the water, your guide will demonstrate fly line management and other essential techniques. One of a guide's goals is to enable you to take what you have learned and apply it to other waters you may fish. If you are a more experienced angler, be sure to discuss with your guide how you'd like to work together and what you'd like to accomplish. At the end of the day, you'll return to the shop, if necessary, to settle up any remaining fees and to recap the day. You will usually ride with your guide to the fishing destination. By special arrangement, a guide can also meet you at your cabin, hotel or other nearby location. Just call your guide or fly shop in advance to arrange. Last minute changes are more difficult to manage. (A guide gets up before the chickens to get ready for the day, check gear, make lunches and ensure the right flies are in the box!)

### What to Expect

Discuss with your guide what you want to accomplish (besides catching fish, of course!) during your trip. Just ask, and the guide will do his/her best to help meet your needs. In addition to instruction, your guide will typically rig your rod, check your leader, add tippet, tie on flies, and do all the little things to keep a fly on the water longer - all those things make your trip more enjoyable. Let your guide know if you'd rather handle these tasks yourself. While our streams, rivers and lakes hold plenty of fish, they don't always cooperate. Fishing is subject to lots of variables that aren't under the guide's control. If it's one of those days, take a look around at our beautiful Colorado scenery, take a deep breath of fresh mountain air, and take home some magnificent memories of your trip. Having a camera handy will ensure you don't miss taking a picture of the elk, deer, moose, eagles and other Park inhabitants that you have a high chance of seeing. Fly fishing is just part of the entire fun package a guide can provide. A guide is well versed on fishing in the Park, obviously, but is also quite knowledgeable about local history, Indian lore, animal habitat and habits, geology and a myriad of other topics to enrich your day of fishing.

### Your Guide's Expectations

A guide expects to deliver: 1) a safe trip, 2) a fun and educational trip and 3) putting the client in the best possible location (given the conditions) to catch fish, in that order. If you fool a trout into taking your fly even if it gets off,



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you've done your job - congratulations! Landing the fish is just good for pictures. Guides practice catch and release fishing with barbless hooks. It is their objective to handle fish gently and return them to the water as quickly as possible. They teach and practice ethical and courteous fishing methods. If you wish to keep a few fish (primarily brookies in the Park), please discuss that with the guide ahead of time. Guide services do not allow the consumption of alcohol or illegal substances during trips, not to mention it is illegal in the Park. If you smoke, please do so sparingly and responsibly - it only detracts from your mission at-hand, to fly fish in the Park.

### What to Bring

- Your Colorado **fishing license**
- **Polarized sunglasses** are absolutely essential for eye protection as well as for spotting fish
- **A billed ball cap.** Ear muffs, stocking cap or a cap with ear flaps is a good choice for cold weather.
- Basic clothing to suit the season, layered for temperature adjustment when practical
- **A lightweight, preferably waterproof, jacket** for summer or fall
- **A heavier, warmer waterproof jacket for early spring,** late fall, winter or higher altitudes
- **Lighter, preferably breathable, pants or shorts for warmer weather.** Waders can be difficult to put on over jeans, and jeans can be uncomfortably clammy under waders.
- **Breathable fleece pants or wicking long underwear** for wear under waders in cooler weather
- **Heavy socks** to wear under waders in any conditions
- **Gloves for cold weather,** preferably flip up mittens or half finger gloves
- **Personal care items** such as insect repellent, sunscreen, tissues, etc
- **Camera** to record your trip

### Safety

Safety is a primary concern. Let your guide know if you have any medical, dietary or other conditions that could impact a day on the water. All guides in Colorado are CPR and First Aid certified. The fishable altitude in the Park ranges from about 9,000 feet to over 12,000 feet. Weather conditions are highly variable and can change multiple times a day. It is your guide's call as to whether to end a trip early or change locations because of any safety concern related to weather or other conditions. Bottom line, your guide lives here, works here and is fishing 100+ days a year here. He/she knows when an unsafe situation presents itself.

### Tipping & Gratuities

Tipping your guide is traditional. A little known fact: Your guide provides everything for the trip out of his/her own pocket - the beverages, snacks, lunch (if provided), basic supplies, including flies, and fuel to get you there and back. Those costs can add up in a hurry. You can tip in cash, or it can added to your total trip charges on your credit card. 20% of the trip fee is typical - if you learned a lot, had a great time and caught fish where you otherwise might not have, consider treating your guide to a tip that would make him/her blush (a tip is often 50% or more of what a guide makes in a day's guiding, fyi) And most certainly, if your expectations have not been met, please let your guide and shop staff know about it right away. The guide and the shop will make it right by you.