



Let's go sea fishing

Take to the water and discover how easy it is to catch the fish that thrive in our coastal waters. It's the perfect day out for all the family...

FEATURE SARAH FARLEY
STYLING NICOLINE OLSEN
PHOTOGRAPHS
CHRISTIAN PETERSEN



THERE CAN BE NO BETTER TIME to experience the UK's 3,200km of coastline than by taking a family trip on a fishing boat. Before you decide where, talk to the people who know the area best – friendly locals in tackle shops and fishermen themselves – and find out about regional ways and traditions. Chef Rick Stein traces his love of the sea back to childhood holidays in Cornwall. 'I was brought up eating lots of Cornish fish. My parents had a holiday house just outside Padstow and I used to spend most of the summer there. Plus, my father had a share in a lobster boat, so we had plenty of fish, and it sort of stuck. When I opened the restaurant in 1975 it seemed like the obvious thing to do...'

Where to go for the best family fishing trips

The best way to start is an organised boat trip.

■ Jason Owen of North Wales Fishing in Pwllheli recommends his own **North Wales coast**. 'There's amazing scenery, clean beaches and outstanding views. And the fishing isn't bad! Mackerel, black bream, tope, bass, pollack, wrasse and thornback rays can be caught in Cardigan Bay at different times of the year.'

■ According to Adam Wright, Skipper of Norfolk Fishing Trips & Charter, 'Aboard our catamaran you can explore the **north Norfolk coast**, watch seals, porpoises and migrating birds. As for the fishing, novices and pros are welcome. Enjoy reeling in the tope, mackerel and bass, and tuck into lunch prepared in the galley. We can even barbecue your catch – fish doesn't get much fresher!'

■ 'The **Sussex coast** is one of our most diverse,' says Craig Ide of Sussex Sea Fishing. 'In the spring and summer there is a vast range of fish to catch, including mackerel and bass. Fishing from Brighton Marina is great fun and easy to get to for a family fishing trip. Along the coast in March you can expect to catch dab, flounder and plaice.'

North Wales Fishing, 01286 882611, northwalesfishingcharter.com. Norfolk Fishing Trips and Charter, 01485 512474 (bookings only), norfolkfishingtrips.co.uk (information). Sussex Sea Fishing, sussexseafishing.co.uk.



FISH YOU'LL FIND IN UK WATERS

Angling expert Mike Thrussell says that family boat fishing is best from April to October when boats expect to catch bass, flatfish such as dab and plaice, pollack, smoothhound and tope (a small member of the shark family). '**Mackerel** are the ideal target if you have younger children,' says Mike, 'as mackerel trips tend to be for only about two hours. Mackerel are found in big shoals and are easy to catch, which makes them the perfect family target. Mackerel are also caught freely from jetties, piers and breakwaters using feathers (see p110) from May to October in most areas, along with garfish. **Bass** move inshore in March and stay until Christmas, especially along the English Channel and Welsh coast. By September **whiting** come inshore followed in October by cod. Throughout the year you can catch small wrasse, blenny, goby, pouting and poor cod, plus flatfish such as dab and flounder by dropping bait down the side of piers, jetties and breakwaters.' ➤





BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FISHING

Rods & lines There are hundreds of different types of rod and line to choose from, so ask for advice in your local tackle shop or on the boat. 'Charter boats will have tackle for hire,' says Mike Thrussell, 'and will always provide simple tuition to make sure that the trip is successful.'

Hooks, baits & feathers Ask at the local tackle shop about bait and hooks, which they will be able to supply. Tied, dyed chicken feathers are used for mackerel, while to catch other fish, mackerel-shaped and coloured plastic lures can be used. 'Mackerel cut into small strips is a good all-round bait in the summer,' says Mike. 'For flatfish and the winter species, lugworm or ragworm are available from most good tackle shops and will catch you more fish.'

How to gut a fish To gut and clean a round fish (such as mackerel), begin by holding the fish firmly on its side. Using a small, sharp chef's knife or a pair of scissors, make a shallow slit in the underside, cutting from the tail to the head end. Pull out the guts then cut off the gills, taking care as the gills can be sharp. Discard the guts and gills. Rinse the cavity under cold fresh water (under a tap is best) to remove any remaining blood and guts. Pat dry with kitchen paper.

COOK FRESHLY CAUGHT FISH THE CORNISH WAY

Tasty recipes from *Cornish Fishing and Seafood* by Carol Trewin with photographs by Adam Woolfitt (£14.95, Alison Hodge).



Heart-warming fish chowder

SERVES 4	500ml chicken stock	small dice
60g shallots, finely sliced	200g leeks, cut into very fine strips	150g smoked haddock, cut into small dice
50g butter	200g carrots, cut into very fine strips	150g monkfish, cut into small dice
Pinch saffron	200g potatoes, cut into	Chives, to garnish

- 1 In a large saucepan, sweat the sliced shallots in butter and add the saffron.
- 2 Add fish stock and chicken stock and simmer gently for 15 minutes.
- 3 Add leeks, carrots and potatoes and cook for a further 8 to 10 minutes.
- 4 Add the diced haddock and monkfish and cook for 2 or 3 minutes.
- 5 Serve piping hot in bowls garnished with a sprinkling of chives.

Recipe by Gerry Boriosi, Lecturer, Cornwall College, Cambourne, Cornwall.

Granny Farmer's pan-fried mackerel with milk gravy

2 slices bacon, 1 mackerel (gutted), plain flour, milk, butter or olive oil (optional)

- 1 Begin by dry-frying the bacon in a frying pan. When the fat has run but before the bacon browns, add the mackerel to cook in the bacon fat.
- 2 When the mackerel is just ready, remove fish and bacon from the pan and keep warm.
- 3 Gradually add enough plain flour to the remaining fat in the frying pan to make a roux, then add enough milk to make a light milk gravy, stirring constantly.

- You might need to add a little butter or olive oil if there is not enough fat in the pan.
- 4 If you do not have the benefit of a smoky barbecue, cheat by using smoky bacon!
 - 5 Pour the milk gravy over the mackerel and serve immediately.
 - 6 Serve with lemon, a selection of salad leaves and granary bread.

Recipe by Toby Ashworth, Managing Director, The Nare Hotel, Roseland, Cornwall.

NEXT MONTH Fun projects for Easter

