



Go fish!

Guide to beginners

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Go fish!

Guide to beginners

Fishing is a popular pastime and for good reason: It offers unforgettable experiences regardless of the time of year. Fishing is a way to relax but also an exhilarating and exciting experience regardless of your age or gender. Fishing is a great way to spend quality time with your friends or family, but many also enjoy fishing by themselves. For those looking for peace and solitude, fishing is a chance to be alone with their thoughts. With proper planning, fishing is a safe way to experience the thrill of the chase and a sense of achievement.

Unforgettable experiences and healthy living

Fishing offers many kinds of unforgettable experiences. Spending time outdoors is good for both physical and mental health. Unspoilt nature gives us energy, alleviates stress, promotes psychological well-being, recharges our batteries and improves our social interaction with others.

This guide has been prepared with the needs of both students and fitness, health and well-being and social services professionals in mind. However, the guide is also useful for anyone interested in taking up fishing. We hope that the tips contained in the guide encourage as many people as possible to get involved in a new outdoor activity!

We got the idea for the guide at a fishing event. Metsähallitus' projects Fishing in Kainuu 2012–2014 and

Air teamed up with the educational services of the Oulu Deaconess Institute to organise a fishing event for people with intellectual disabilities living in an Oulu-based assisted living unit. The venue was Lake Saarijärvi in Puolanka, and the event took place in August 2013. The event was a great success, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The event was organised as part of a new course aimed at students of practical nursing, which is designed to emphasise the opportunities presented by nature for promoting health and well-being. Practical nurses work with special groups such as children and young people, hospital patients, mental health patients and disabled individuals. The students can also apply the know-how and skills that they acquire about spending time in the great outdoors during their training in their subsequent work.

FISHING IN FINLAND

- ✓ More than 40% of Finns fish at least once a year.
- ✓ The most important species of fish caught by recreational fishermen are perch, pike and roach.

Easy introduction to fishing

More than 40% of Finns fish at least once a year. The goal is to also get new kinds of people interested in fishing. Knowledge and skills, but also access to high-quality fishing and recreational destinations, have an important role in promoting fishing.

Many people consider fishing too difficult and complex a hobby to start. This guide is aimed at explaining some of the complexities of the sport to those who have not tried fishing before. This will lower the threshold for taking up fishing even without any prior experience.

The guide contains basic information about fishing and comes with links to numerous sources of additional information that can prove invaluable when planning a fishing trip or event.





What to take into consideration when planning a fishing trip

Once you have decided to go on a fishing trip, you should start to plan the practical details. One of the most crucial questions is where to go.

In the case of **special groups**, the most important criteria for a good fishing location are safety and accessibility. Meals and access to toilets need to be thought about in advance. Facilities such as campfire sites, lean-to shelters and jetties are also important.

Checklist for planning a fishing trip:

- ✓ How do we get there?
- ✓ What is the terrain like?
- ✓ What are the toilet facilities like?
- ✓ Are there facilities such as campfire sites and lean-to shelters there?
- ✓ What are the opportunities for fishing?
- ✓ Will we need fishing permits (see instructions at the end of the guide)?

Most places are good for angling and ice fishing, but if you are looking for a better-equipped fishing destination, you should read up about recreational fishing destinations maintained by Metsähallitus (www.eraluvat.fi). A list of accessible destinations can also be found on the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=96>.

Stay safe by familiarising yourself with the terrain in advance

Before organising any larger fishing events, it is worth visiting the location with other organisers. This is also a good opportunity for agreeing on schedules and the details of the event as well as for getting a sense of any potential risks and problems. The most important objective of an on-site visit is to produce information for safety planning. This is especially important in destinations where

similar events have not been organised previously.

Equipment

The equipment needed for fishing is not much different from the usual gear required for excursions

or events involving camping. The only exception is the fishing gear itself. It is also useful to carry a knife and pliers for pulling out lures from between the teeth of big predatory fish. Pliers are also useful for detaching hooks from clothing.

Checklist:

- ✓ Safety plan studied by all organisers
- ✓ **First-aid kit** (essential!)
- ✓ **Needle-nose pliers**, ideally with a cutting blade, for cutting fishing hooks
- ✓ **Food**
- ✓ **Tape measure for measuring fish**
- ✓ **Life jackets** if there is to be boating or fishing off a jetty
- ✓ **Ice picks** (in the winter)
- ✓ **Knife** for making feather sticks and gutting fish
- ✓ **Rubber boots** depending on the weather and the destination
- ✓ **Waterproof clothing** just in case
- ✓ **Warm clothing**
- ✓ **Sunglasses** for shielding eyes against the sun and also for protection otherwise
- ✓ **Hand net** for lifting fish out of the water (when using lures), not essential

Do you need a professional fishing instructor on site?

The need for a professional fishing instructor depends mostly on the customers but also on the organisers. Many tricks that are essential for fishing can be new to inexperienced fishermen and a professional's advice can be invaluable. One example is unhooking fish, which should ideally be done under supervision by someone with experience, although this is not essential.

Information about fishing instructors is available from local fishing clubs and associations. Contact details for local branches can be found on the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi>.

One of the most important considerations when organising **events aimed at special groups** is ensuring that all instructors are familiar with the target group. Any instructors who are brought in also need to be aware of any problems and risks associated with the group in question. These should be discussed well in advance of the event.





Different fishing techniques and gear

There are almost as many techniques for fishing as there are species of fish. Below you will find a brief description of each of the most common techniques, which are the easiest for inexperienced fishermen to try. Angling and ice fishing are especially well suited for special groups and children whose motor skills may not be up to the more complex techniques.

As the saying goes, *“fishing is fun however you do it”*.

Angling is the easiest technique to learn. This is why beginners should always try angling first. It is the most thrilling of all active fishing techniques and has the potential of hauling in more species of fish than any other form of rod fishing. Watching the float bob up and down on the surface of the water is fun and exciting, as well as surprisingly relaxing.

Most anglers use a telescopic (collapsible) carbon-fibre rod between two and six metres long, with a line of the same length, a float, a weight and a hook with bait. Instead of a carbon-fibre pole, any wooden stick between 1.5 and three metres can be used.

TOP TIP:

Although catching fish is great, even the most enthusiastic fishermen sometimes fail to catch anything. This is why the emphasis should be on learning the techniques, having fun and enjoying the great outdoors. This ensures that the excursion itself is a new experience for the participants, without taking away the possibility of catching something at any time!

Gear:

Fishing gear can be bought in most shops, department stores and even service stations. You can also ask local fishing clubs about gear.

- ✓ 2–4-metre fishing pole
 - Price: 3–10 euros
- ✓ Pole rig including a line, a weight, a hook and a float
 - Price: 1–3 euros
- ✓ Baits, such as earthworms, maggots or plastic fake maggots
 - Earthworms can be dug up from the ground, but permission from the landowner is needed.
 - Shops sell baits for around 5–10 euros for a box of 50.

Choosing your spot

One of the best things about angling is that you do not need to go far to find a suitable spot. Often you can find places close to your home.

A good spot is one where there is food and shelter for fish. Examples include edges of reed beds as well as groups of underwater rocks, edges of shallows and straits. You can tell a good fishing spot from the fact that it stands out from its surroundings. You can also try fishing off a jetty, as there are often shoals of perch and other species of fish hiding under jetties. Remember to wear a life jacket if you are fishing off a jetty.

You can study maps and local government websites to try to locate the best fishing spots, in addition to which you can use online map services such as

www.excursionmap.fi or
<http://kansalaisen.karttapaikka.fi>.

Permits:

The right for angling is governed by the freedom to roam and you do not generally need a permit, but there are a few restrictions: Angling is prohibited near rapids in rivers rich with salmon or whitefish and in places where there are signs prohibiting fishing. In many of the recreational fishing destinations maintained by Metsähallitus, angling requires a permit or is prohibited.

Technique:

1. String the worm onto the hook so that the tip of the hook is exposed. This makes it more likely that fish will get caught on the hook.
2. Adjust the distance between the float and the hook. The longer the distance, the deeper the hook will sink in the water. If the hook and the bait are all the way at the bottom, the float will lie on its side on the surface. If this happens, you should shorten the distance between the float and the hook.
3. Cast the bait into the water by swinging the rod gently.
4. Now begins the exciting part: Keep watching the float. If you see it disappearing under the surface briefly, there is a fish nibbling on the bait. Wait until the whole float goes under or begins to move about on the surface. Once this happens, lift up the rod tip in one smooth motion!

One-to-one guidance:

- ✓ In the case of certain groups (such as people with intellectual disabilities and children), it is often best that an instructor strings the bait onto the hook.
- ✓ In many cases, the instructor should also be the one unhooking the fish.

Safety risks:

- ✓ Hooks can get caught on skin or clothing. It is a good idea to carry pliers that can be used to cut hooks.
- ✓ Carbon-fibre fishing poles can conduct electricity! Make sure to pick a spot where there are no power lines nearby. Electricity can “jump” from a power line even if the fishing pole is not actually touching the power line. For more information, visit the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75643>.
- ✓ Never fish in a thunderstorm!

Do you need a professional instructor?

- ✓ There is no need to have a professional instructor, but experienced fishermen often have know-how that can be very useful. You can ask your local fishing clubs and associations about professional instructors.

Most common species of fish caught by angling:

- ✓ Perch, fish of the carp family



For more information about angling,

visit the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75632>.

Ice fishing is one of the most popular forms of fishing alongside angling, and many think it is the best pastime available in the winter. This is not hard to believe when you see the broad smiles on the faces of fishermen enjoying the warmth of the spring sun on their cheeks, waiting for the fish to take their bait.

The idea behind ice fishing is simple: Make a hole in the ice, drop your bait in, and enjoy. Some fishermen are so passionate about ice fishing that they even do it in the summer. This involves fishing from a boat or off a jetty. There is even a Finnish Championship for the jetty-based variety!



Gear:

- ✓ Ice fishing rod
 - Price: 2.5–10 euros
- ✓ Auger (4–6 inches)
 - Price: 60–120 euros
- ✓ Baits (such as maggots)
 - Price: 1–2 euros per box of dozens of maggots

Accessories

- ✓ A seat such as a stool or a chair (not essential on short trips)
- ✓ Ice picks, one set for each fisherman
 - Price: 6–10 euros
 - Choose a hard-wearing variety
 - Make sure that your ice picks cannot swing freely
 - It is also important to be able to untie your ice picks quickly in an emergency.
- ✓ Skimmer for removing the slush left from making the hole
 - Price: 3–10 euros

Choosing your spot

Good spots for ice fishing can be found in reedy bays, edges of deeps and shallows. In the summer, jetties often bring success. If the weather is nice, you can also try fishing from a boat. Good places for ice fishing can be found using online map services such as www.excursionmap.fi.

Permits

The right for ice fishing is governed by the freedom to roam and you do not usually need a permit, but there are a few restrictions: Ice fishing is prohibited near rapids in rivers rich with salmon or whitefish and in places where there are signs prohibiting fishing. In many of the recreational fishing destinations maintained by Metsähallitus, ice fishing requires a permit. For more information, see “fishing permits”.

Technique:

1. Find a good spot where the water is not too deep (< 10 m). Make a hole in the ice and clear away any slush.
2. Bait your hook (if using bait).
3. Lower the hook into the water, close to the bottom.
4. Keep jerking on the rod so that the bait moves about in the water.
5. You should be able to feel a faint tug on the rod when you have a fish on. Once this happens, lift up the rod tip quickly.
6. Pull on the line to bring the fish up and out of the hole.

One-to-one guidance:

- ✓ Depending on the customers, one-to-one guidance may be needed for making the hole in the ice.
- ✓ It is often best that an instructor strings the bait (such as a worm) onto the hook.
- ✓ If the water is several metres deep, assistance may also be needed for lowering the hook to place it close to the bottom as well as for lifting fish out of the hole.
- ✓ The unhooking of fish should be supervised..

Safety risks:

- ✓ Before your departure, find out whether the ice in your chosen location is thick enough. Information about ice thickness is available from local active fishermen and fishing associations.
- ✓ For safety reasons, it is best to stay away from places where there are currents, as ice can be treacherously thin in these kinds of locations.
- ✓ Make sure that each fisherman has his own set of ice picks and knows how to use them.
- ✓ Remember that fishing hooks are sharp.
- ✓ Ice can be slippery, which is why it is a good idea to wear studded shoes.
- ✓ For safety tips, visit

<http://www.luontoon.fi/RetkeilynABC/turvallisuus/vaarojenennaltaehkaisy/heikotjaat/Sivut/Default.aspx> for information about thin ice and <http://www.luontoon.fi/retkeilynabc/turvallisuus/hatatilanteet/jaihin-putoaminen/Sivut/Default.aspx> for information about what to do if you fall in.

Do you need a professional instructor?

- ✓ There is no need to have a professional instructor, but experienced fishermen and local fishing associations often have know-how that can be very useful on an ice fishing trip or when planning one. You can ask your local fishing clubs and associations about professional instructors.

Most common species of fish caught by ice fishing:

- ✓ Perch, burbot, fish of the carp family, whitefish

For more information about ice fishing,:

visit the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75649>.



Lure fishing

Lure fishing is a form of fishing involving the use of lures or tackles and a reel. It is an extremely effective technique for most Finnish predatory fish species, as they are unable to resist a tackle glimmering in the water. The basic idea of lure fishing is very simple: All you do is cast your lure and reel it back in as temptingly as possible. The technique may not sound complicated, but you do need

a little practice. Casting a lure is nevertheless something that anyone can learn, and lure fishing is sure to win you over for good when you catch your first fish..

The effectiveness of lure fishing is based on the motion of the tackle, which imitates the swimming motion of a small fish and makes big predatory fish go wild!

Gear:

- ✓ Fishing pole
 - Price: 20–70 euros
- ✓ Reel
- ✓ There are two different kinds of reels available:
 - Closed-face reels are the simplest and easiest to use. They are the best choice for beginners.
 - Open-face reels are recommended for those who are already familiar with the technique.
- ✓ Fishing line
 - There are two types of line available, depending on the intended purpose: monofilament and braided. Monofilament lines are more commonly used when fishing near rapids, while braided lines work better when jigging for species like perch.
 - In many cases, it is better to use a braided line, because the flexibility of a monofilament line can cause the lure to snap back towards the fisherman in situations where the lure has got tangled in vegetation.

Lure fishing gear is sold in most fishing shops and department stores as sets that include a pole, a reel, line and, in some cases, lures. Sets cost **20–60 euros**. You can also ask your local fishing associations and clubs about lure fishing sets.

Choosing your spot

Choosing your spot
Lure fishing is allowed in the sea, in lakes and ponds as well as near rapids but it always requires a permit.

Permits:

Lure fishing always requires a permit.

- ✓ All fishermen aged between 18 and 64 need to pay a fishing management fee, in addition to which you need one of the following (depending on the fishing destination):
 - ✓ Payment of a provincial lure fishing fee to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
 - ✓ Nationwide lure fishing permit from Metsähallitus
 - ✓ Permission from the landowner

For more information, see “fishing permits”!.

Technique:

Cast your lure in the water and reel it back in as temptingly as possible.

One-to-one guidance::

- ✓ Casting can be challenging at first, which is why guidance is needed at least with complete beginners.

- ✓ The unhooking of fish should be supervised.

Safety risks:

- ✓ Hooks can get caught on skin or clothing. It is a good idea to carry pliers that can be used to cut hooks if this happens.
- ✓ Carbon-fibre fishing poles can conduct electricity! Make sure to pick a spot where there are no power lines nearby. Electricity can “jump” from a power line even if the fishing pole is not actually touching the power line.
- ✓ Never fish in a thunderstorm!

TOP TIP:

Predatory fish love the edges of reed beds. Cast your lure right on the edge of the reed bed and prepare for the counter-attack! Be careful not to get your lure tangled in the vegetation.

TOP TIP:

Did your lure get caught at the bottom? It is often possible to free a caught lure by pulling at it from the opposite or different direction from where you were casting.



Do you need a professional instructor?

- ✓ Depending on the customers, a professional instructor may be needed.
- ✓ You can ask experienced fishermen and local fishing clubs about professional instructors.

Most common species of fish caught by lure fishing::

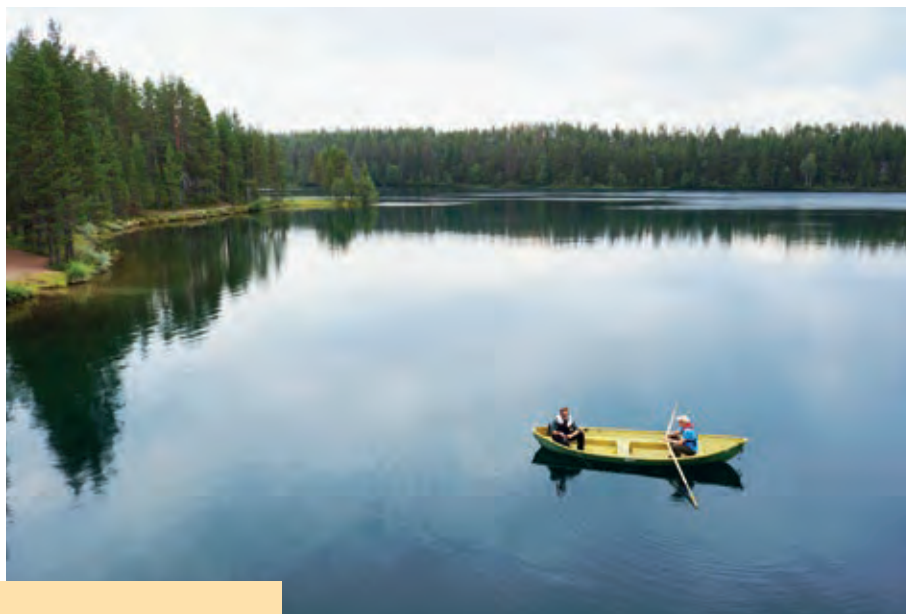
- ✓ Pike, perch, pike-perch, grayling, brown trout, rainbow trout

For more information about lure fishing,

visit the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at:
<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75634>.

Other fishing techniques

- ✓ Row trolling involves trailing lures behind a moving rowing boat. The technique is most commonly used in lakes and ponds. The most common species of fish caught by row trolling are perch, pike and pike-perch. Row trolling requires payment of the fishing management fee (for fishermen aged between 18 and 64) as well as a lure fishing permit or permission from the landowner.



For more information, visit

<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75660>.

- ✓ **Fly fishing** is based on the use of artificial flies that resemble insects and small fish. The technique is most commonly used near rapids, and the target species are usually fish of the salmon family. Fly fishing is a very challenging technique that requires a lot of practice. Fly fishing requires payment of the fishing management fee (for fishermen aged between 18 and 64) as well as a lure fishing permit or permission from the landowner.



For more information, visit

<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75651>.

Species and minimum sizes of fish

Being able to recognise different species of fish is not only essential but also brings an added element of fun into the sport. It is a good idea to start learning about how to recognise different species well before your fishing trip. **Being able to recognise different species of fish is also important because minimum sizes (cm) have been set for some species, and any fish that are shorter than the minimum size need to be released.** These kinds of species include **brown trout, grayling and pike-perch.** Remember to look up minimum sizes of fish before you begin fishing! Minimum sizes applicable to recreational fishing destinations maintained by Metsähallitus are published online at www.eraluvat.fi.



For more information about minimum sizes, visit:

http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus/kalastuskieltoalueet/alamitat_rauhoitusajat.html.

For more information about recognising different species of fish, visit the website of the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=76654>,

the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=76654>

or a website dedicated to teaching children about fishing at <http://kalastus.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/kalastakaikenikaa/flash.html>.

What fishing permits are required for different forms of fishing?

Angling and ice fishing are governed by the freedom to roam and **require no permits.** Exceptions to this rule are fishing near rapids in rivers rich with salmon and whitefish and in places where fishing is prohibited by laws or regulations.

Please note: Although you do not normally need a permit for angling or ice fishing, organised fishing events or competitions do require permission from the landowner. With regard to organised events and competitions, Section 8 of the Fishing act stipulates that “the permission of the owner of the fishing rights shall be obtained for fishing, ice fishing and lure fishing competitions as well as for other similar arranged occasions”.

For more information about places where fishing is prohibited, visit http://map.genimap.com/MMM/Kalastuskieltoalue/images_servlet/info.htm.

The **fishing management fee** is a parafiscal charge imposed by the State. It is payable by all fishermen aged between 18 and 64 who engage in forms of fishing other than ice fishing or angling. The fee must be paid even if you fish on your own land. For more information about the fishing management fee, visit http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus/kalastuksenhoitomaksu.html.

Fishing management fees can also be paid over the telephone. For instructions, visit <http://www.eraluvat.fi/kalastus/yleiskalastusoikeudet/kalastuksenhoitomaksu.html>.

Lure fishing

The fishing management fee is payable by all fishermen aged between 18 and 64 who engage in lure fishing. In addition to the payment of the fishing management fee, lure fishing requires a lure fishing permit. This can be either in the form of a provincial lure fishing fee or permission from the landowner.

✓ The **provincial lure fishing fee** covers the use of one rod, one reel and one lure at a time. It also covers trolling but with only one rod per fisherman. Individuals aged under 18 or over 65 do not have to pay provincial lure fishing fees.

For more information about provincial lure fishing fees, visit http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus/viehekalastusmaksu.html.

✓ **Landowners** can usually issue permits for lure fishing even in areas not covered by provincial lure fishing fees, such as rapids in rivers rich with salmon and whitefish.

✓ **Metsähallitus issues lure fishing permits that cover fly fishing and lure fishing in waters controlled**



by the State across the country, with the exception of Inari, Enontekiö and Utsjoki. Lure fishing permits also do not cover the recreational fishing destinations maintained by Metsähallitus, joint fishing authorities, leased waters with full fishing rights or special water areas.

The advantage in acquiring a lure fishing permit from Metsähallitus is that one permit covers an entire household and several rods can be used at the same time when trolling. The permit also covers numerous rivers rich with whitefish and salmon, which are not covered by the provincial lure fishing fee. Metsähallitus' lure fishing permits are ideal for fishermen who want to fish in different areas and who also want to fish for salmon and whitefish in fast-flowing rivers. The permit also covers gigging.

For information about the areas covered by Metsähallitus' lure fishing permits, visit www.excursionmap.fi.

For information about Metsähallitus' lure fishing permits, visit <http://www.eraluvat.fi/kalastus/vapakalastus/viehelupa.html>.

Remember that there are areas where lure fishing is prohibited. For more information about these kinds of areas, visit the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at www.mmm.fi/kalastus or contact the fisheries services of your local Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment.

For a map of the areas where fishing is prohibited, visit http://map.genimap.com/MMM/Kalastuskieltoalue/images_servlet/info.htm.

Frequently asked questions about fishing permits:

I want to try angling and ice fishing. What permits do I need?

No permits are needed for angling and ice fishing, but angling and ice fishing are prohibited near rapids in rivers rich with salmon and whitefish. There are some areas where angling and ice fishing do require a permit or where fishing is prohibited, including

- ✓ waters rich with salmon and whitefish and
- ✓ areas where angling and ice fishing are prohibited.

For a map of the areas where fishing is prohibited, visit the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at http://map.genimap.com/MMM/Kalastuskieltoalue/images_servlet/info.htm.



What permits do I need if I want to use a reel and fish by casting or trolling in areas other than rapids in rivers rich with salmon and whitefish? Does my age matter?

- ✓ If you are aged under 18 or over 65, you do not need any permits.
- ✓ If you are aged between 18 and 64, you will need to pay a fishing management fee to the State, in addition to which you will need one of the following:
 - Payment of a provincial lure fishing fee
 - A lure fishing permit from Metsähallitus (for waters controlled by the State)
 - Permission from the landowner

I want to fish in fast-flowing rivers rich with salmon and whitefish using a lure. What permits do I need?

- ✓ You need permission from the landowner.
- ✓ If you are aged between 18 and 64, you will also need to pay a fishing management fee to the State.

For more information about fishing permits, visit

the website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at <http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=75644>,

the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at

http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus/mita_lupia_tarvitsen.html,

the Ministry's online guide for fishing at

http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus/kalastajan_abc.html

or the website of the Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations at

<http://www.ahven.net/index.php?os=1&subos=1&lan=fi>.

Information about fishing permits is also available on Metsähallitus' www.eräluvut.fi website.

Processing fish



BE CAREFUL:

Never insert your fingers or hand in a pike's mouth! Always use pliers or other tools to release a lure from a pike!



Fish is very good for you, and nutritionists say that you should eat fish at least twice a week. Fish is at its best freshly caught and eaten by a campfire, which is another great experience to combine with fishing itself. Fish that you intend to eat **should be processed as follows:**

1. **Stunning**

To stun a fish, give it one firm blow between the eyes with a hard instrument (such as a rock or a piece of wood). It is best to only detach the lure after the fish has been stunned.

2. **Bleeding**

After the fish has been stunned, all the blood needs to be let out. To do this, cut the carotid artery under the fish's gills with a knife.

3. **Gutting**

To open the fish's abdominal cavity, draw a knife from the gills to the anus near the tail, then pull out the entrails.

4. **Chilling**

If you are not cooking the fish straight away, store it in a cool place, such as a cool box with a couple of ice packs.

How to hold a fish?

The best way to hold a fish is from its "cheeks". Watch out for the spiky dorsal fin on perch! The easiest way to handle a large perch is to hold its lower jaw with your thumb while supporting its stomach with your other hand.

You can find more information about processing and cooking fish in a range of online guides published by the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing at

<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/?lang=fi&svk=10825>.

The Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations also publishes video tutorials on gutting fish online at <http://www.ahven.net/kalastusvideot>.

Tips:

Large fish can scare especially young children by their thrashing. It is therefore important to kill the fish quickly but calmly. The best way to stun a large fish such as a pike (1–4 kg) is to grab its cheeks with one hand and use your other hand to hit it.

Trouble lighting a campfire?

Take a length of wood and shave it to produce a cluster of thin curls protruding from the wood. This is called a feather stick, and it makes lighting a campfire a lot easier. It is also useful to keep a good supply of small sticks to hand and only add larger pieces of wood once the fire has got going.

More information

More information about fishing, permits and different techniques:

www.eräluvat.fi

http://www.mmm.fi/fi/index/etusivu/kalastus_riista_porot/vapaa_ajankalastus.html

<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/>

Metsähallitus, Recreation Services

Metsähallitus' Recreation Services are responsible for overseeing hunting and fishing on land controlled by the State and for ensuring that hunters and fishermen have the required permits and abide by the relevant laws on the State's land. The Recreation Services team works under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Metsähallitus gives fishermen access to thousands of lakes and rivers across the country, where the experience of spending time in the great outdoors is just as important as hauling in a catch.

For more information about different types of fishing permits, prices and recreational fishing destinations, visit Metsähallitus' website at www.eräluvat.fi.

Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations

The Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations is an advisory organisation that strives to develop the fisheries industry and promote the opportunities of different kinds of fishermen and consumers to gain access to Finnish fish and experiences relating to fishing.

<http://www.ahven.net>

Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing

The Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing promotes sustainable recreational fishing that benefits the natural renewal of fish stocks in a versatile way.

The website of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing contains information about fishing as well as contact details for local and regional fishing associations and clubs that offer advice and guidance for organising fishing events.

<http://www.vapaa-ajankalastaja.fi/>

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for Finland's policy for the sustainable use of renewable natural resources. The Ministry acts as part of the Government in legislative work and contributes to decision-making in the European Union.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's mandate covers agriculture, horticulture, rural development, forestry, veterinary medicine, the supervision of food of animal origin and fisheries. The Ministry is also responsible for game and reindeer husbandry, the use of water resources and land surveying.

<http://www.mmm.fi>

Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute

The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute produces scientific information and analyses on Finland's fish and game stocks.

<http://www.rktl.fi/>