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## Fly Fishing in Cuba

01/08/2014



Fly fishing in Cuba is far different from other destinations in the Caribbean. Only in recent years has this flat-based fishery been developed, and you are fishing in waters that have not seen any sports fishing for nearly fifty years. Cuba has given these pristine areas protection as 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 sports fishermen and are unusually easy to catch.

Think about a place where you can fish in more than 100 miles of flats without seeing another fisherman; a place where the flat-based fishing is so good that you can catch seven species of fish in one day; a place where big bonefish run toward your fly 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, barracudas and sharks on the flats to wear you out!

Despite heavy commercial fishing pressure before the ban, Cuba's remote archipelagos have remained unspoiled – because they are often situated from 50-100 miles off the Cuban coast and are not easily visited, even by the Cuban lobster fishermen. With the tutelage of several famous guides and anglers, the Cubans have become excellent guides and good fly fishermen. Give them a fly rod and they'll double-haul a 100-foot cast, or show you just how to work a fly to make bonefish charge and inhale it. They spot fish as well as any of the Caribbean's best guides and direct your casts from the poling platform. These guides enjoy enthusiastic anglers and love to work long days, allowing you to fish as hard as you want: a remarkable contrast to many other destinations or lodges where you are often limited to six or eight hours on the water, including your running time.

In Avalon's destinations, there is never any limitation on gas used or distances run in the day. If you want to get out early and fish till dark, you can do it! But the fishing is normally so good and so intense that you'll be ready to quit in time to be back for cocktails. Although Spanish is the guides' native tongue, they have all taken classes in English and can communicate surprisingly well with their anglers. They are also in constant training to improve their language skills.

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