

Circle 8 Outfitters

Choteau Montana



Fly Fishing Equipment List

Montana Fishing Licenses:

Licenses are available to non-residents either on-line or over the counter when you arrive in Montana.

Prices are subject to change per the Montana Fish and Game Department up to April 2026. Detailed fishing information on seasons and pricing can be found at

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/license/availableLicenses.html>

- One day non-resident fishing license: \$24
 - Includes conservation license
- Five consecutive day non-resident fishing license: \$66
 - Includes conservation license
- Seasonal non-resident fishing license: \$110
 - Includes conservation license

Fly Fishing tackle:

Rods

We recommend a 5 weight/9 foot rod with a 6wt forward floating line with several leaders (4x – 5x). 4 wt rods are nice dry fly rods and really nice on smaller streams, but probably shouldn't be your primary rod. If you have two rods that you like to bring please bring them both.

Reels

A reel with a decent disk drag is nice. The reel basically just holds your line most of the time so you don't need the highest cost reel. If cost is an issue put more into the rod than the reel. Redington and Temple Fork make some nice lower priced reels in the \$150-\$250 range that are great for saving some money. Other great reels are made by Ross, Galvan, Lampson, Loop and Orvis.

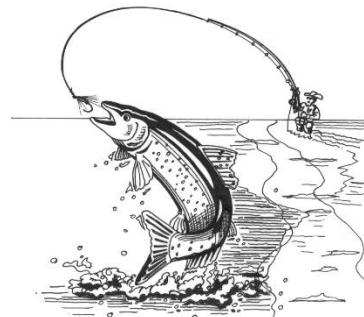


Waders

Wading shoes are helpful for wading in and crossing the rivers. We recommend ankle high wading boots, and something with good traction on the soles. The most common feedback we hear is that waders with traction on wet, slippery rocks and ankle support really help with make your day much more enjoyable. Many people show up with a pair of sun pants or shorts teamed with some neoprene booties or thick socks under wading boots which works. We do not recommend hip length slip on wading boots or similar. They are too hot and not necessary.

Lures

The wilderness fish are not sophisticated, but you'll want a variety of western/mountain trout patterns from the list below, depending on your fishing preferences (dry, wet). The most productive flies by far are high-riding floating stimulant flies – Wulffs, Coachmen, Hoppers, etc. These fish love lots of color and will work the top of the water all day long.



Early Summer – Late June to late July

Dries: size 16-18 parachute adams, size 14 elk hair caddis with olive body, size 12 red and yellows Humpies, size 6 rouge salmon, size 8 golden stones, size 12 yellow sallies, royal pmx size 10, purple haze size 14, pale mountain dunn (pmd) dries and emergers sizes 16 and 14, purple Chernoblys size 10-6

Nymphs: san juan worms in red, wire worms in red and wine, 16 silver and gold lightning bugs, 14 and 16 red and copper copper johns, 16 and 18 pheasant tails, cdc baetis emergers, 16 prince nymphs, caddis pupae emergers, 14 and 16 hares ear, 8 and 6 black and brown girdle bugs, 8 and 6 black and olive wooley buggers, 6 zonkers, 6 sculpin patterns, clouser crayfish 8-6

Late Summer - August to mid September

Dries: foam Joe's hoppers 10-6, size 10-12 sofa pillow stone, flying ants (or terrestrial ants) 18-14, caddis and bull head caddis 12, beetles, purple Chernobyl ants 10-6, chubby chernobyls size 10-8, 12-10 royal pmx, stimulators 12, adams 18-16, purple haze 18-14, pale mountain dunn (pmd) size 14-16, size 14-12 gray and royal wulffs, size 14-12 royal coachmen, size 14-12 mosquito patterns

Nymphs: 14 and 16 red and copper copper johns, 16 and 18 pheasant tails, cdc baetis emergers, gold and silver lightning bugs 18-16, 18-20 micro mayfly, 16 prince nymphs, caddis pupae emergers, 14 and 16 hares ear, 8 and 6 black and brown girdle bugs, 8 and 6 black and olive wooley buggers, 6 zonkers, 6 sculpin patterns, clouser crayfish 8-6

For those wishing to spin fish, we recommend ultra-light rods and reels set up with a 6 lb test line. Recommended lures include small 1/8 oz to 1/4 oz spinning lures would include:



- Mepps (red & white, silver, gold)
- Panther martins in a variety of color patterns

Leaders

Standard nylon leaders are fine (you don't need fluorocarbon for the leader). For nymph fishing and dry fly fishing we mostly use 7.5 foot 3x and 4x leaders. When fishing smaller streams and creeks 9 and 12 foot 5 and 6x leaders are most commonly used.

Tippet

The most commonly used tippet is 2-5x nylon tippet for dries and 2-5x fluorocarbon for nymphs. When fishing spring creeks we also occasionally drop down to 6x.

Additional Fishing Related Equipment:

We also recommend the following ancillary equipment for your fishing trip.

- Mosquito repellent, sun screen
- Sunglasses
- Baseball or similar hat
- Light waders or light shoes with soles that have traction (like indoor/outdoor carpet, etc) for rocky stream beds and slippery rocks
- Shorts with lots of pockets
- Fishing vest
- Clippers
- Dry fly floatant



There will be cooler days from time to time on the rivers, so refer to the wilderness camping gear download for appropriate cooler weather gear.

Water sizes:

The water sizes vary quite a bit depending on the season and the specific fishing trip. If the trip is shorter duration of one or two sites, then typically we'll be on the North Fork or South Fork of the Sun River where either runs 500-700cfs on average. There are many smaller streams feeding the Sun River that are chock full of trout and run around 50-75cfs.

We also fish the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Flathead. The upper Middle Fork is a particularly remote river that runs close to 800cfs in the summer. Additional Middle Fork tributaries will be 70-100cfs.

Water temperatures are ideal for cutthroat and rainbow trout, so it will be chilly wading in the mornings.

