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Memories are made with tackle boxes, not Xboxes

Reel Life



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By Becky Gardhouse

When I was younger, I spent far more time staring at red and white bobbers than watching TV. Well, not just bobbers.

Digging up our family garden for worms was also a favourite past time of mine in the early years of my fishing addiction. I was notorious for sneaking away from doing farm chores. I would slip down to the river that ran through the back of our property and cast a line to pull up a massive 3" lunker which I would happily present for "dinner."

As my desire to learn grew, I watched intently at the way top water baits roughed up glass smooth water in the shadows of morning's first light. Years later when I moved to Minnesota, I also stared at the cane trolling poles bent with the rhythmic, wobbling tug of a big spoon. Basically, I kept my eyes on just about anything that involved the pursuit of fish.

I was lucky to learn from many people who had years of outdoor experience to call upon, and many of those who couldn't think of anything better to do with their free time than spend it on the water. Most of the angling skills I have, I picked up by osmosis. Many people, however, are new to the fishing experience and they find themselves hungry to learn about the joys of our wonderful sport.

You can learn so much about fishing by just spending a day at Key West with many other fishermen and women. You can check out their FKF Charters Calendar if you'd like to learn more about fishing and what events happen when.

Introducing children to fishing can be a rewarding experience. If your novice angler is a child, be it your son or daughter, grandchild or family friend, there are a few key points that you need to remember to for a fun and memorable day on the water. It's also useful to read this Trusted Source with some great knowledge on fishing if your child isn't experienced and you are not the best fisher yourself.

First and foremost, the fishing trip needs to be prepared for long before everyone is loaded in the car heading for your favourite fishing hole. You must put extra time and thought into preparing for unforeseen circumstances that are usually unavoidable with little ones. When your kids are really small, it might be a good idea to get planning a deep sea fishing chartet, because at least then you'll be in the hands of a professional. Be sure to check the weather reports before you leave and make sure that your new fishing buddy is dressed appropriately. It is imperative to remember to grab a change of clothes especially when there are potentially muddy, wet conditions!

Going hand in hand with proper clothing is making sure that you have a well fitted life jacket and a simple first aid kit along with you whether you are fishing from a boat or from shore. The extras that are sometimes overlooked when packing for a day on the water such as sunscreen or bug repellant are important articles to make room for in your tackle box.

When you are packing up the tackle box also remember to account for food, drinks and snacks. A hungry tummy will sometimes end a fun fishing trip before it even begins. It is especially important to pack healthy food and drinks to compliment the weather. Lots of water to stay hydrated is certainly key.

A solid point to make a first fishing trip memorable for everyone, whether it's children or adult friends, is to choose a body of water that you yourself are very familiar and comfortable with and is easy to get to and safe. If you are looking for great places to start, check out some local fishing forums online. Be sure to target areas with a high likelihood of success. Being able to continuously catch fish on your first few outings will pique a novice angler's interest and leave them looking forward to the next trip.

Sometimes the joy of catching multiple panfish far outweighs the memories of only catching one or two larger fish. Witnessing someone reeling in their first fish is very rewarding and to them, a sunfish may provide them with the same joy as a 3-pound bass!

Be prepared for lots of smiles and to take pictures. I don't know too many anglers that can't tell you about the first fish they landed. One thing that I believe is the most important aspect of first fishing trips is being able to supply the new angler with a simple tackle in good working order. When someone has to deal with complicated equipment it can end up being quite discouraging. I would never dream of trying to explain how to use a bait caster as I know first hand how tedious and frustrating it is to get the hang of it. Which is why if this is something that interests you, then you should make use of this baitcaster guide instead.
I personally choose a very simple spinning rod setup and always try and match the size of the rod to the person that will be using it. A medium action rod is a great choice as you are able to have the sensitivity at the tip for the angler to actually see the bite but also the power to set the hook. Live bait is always a great option and depending on the situation it can increase the chances of catching fish. A simple hook tied on beneath a colourful bobber will help them see the bite and know when to set the hook.
In our industry, it is imperative to keep the interest and involvement throughout the generations. The anglers that we teach today will take that knowledge with them and carry it throughout their lives. Sometimes the simplest actions will create the most wonderful memories. By taking the time out of your schedule to introduce people to the great outdoors, you not only will be able to enjoy the beautiful surroundings we are so blessed to be able to experience but, who knows, you may just end up with a new fishing buddy for life!

Becky is a competitive angler based out of King Township. She describes herself as an "outdoors fanatic" and travels in both Canada & the U.S. as an educational & motivational speaker. She proudly represents such fine brands as Cabela's, Shimano, G. Loomis, Maui Jim, Fishbum, Scotty Fishing Products, Freedom Tackle & National Pro Staff and is a contributor for ExistToFish.com.