



Guided Fishing DownUnder Barra & King Threadfin Charter Information

2023 & 2024 Charters

G'day Fishing Fanatics!

Please forward this information on to all those fishing with you so they know what to expect! Please read the information below, even if you have been on charters with me previously as there have been some changes required to ensure the financial stability of the business and my longevity in the industry!

Thanks for considering a charter with Guided Fishing DownUnder. I started guiding on the Fitzroy River in March 2019 after growing up and fishing the area for 40 years. Prior to taking up guiding I worked as an aquatic resource scientist. The move to guided fishing helps me to further explore and understand this amazing ecosystem while also sharing the joy of fishing with likeminded individuals! This information pack is provided to inform your decision when considering booking a charter and to help you better understand what to expect from a charter with Guided Fishing Downunder. My preference has always been that of fully transparency about all aspects of my charters. I want expectations to match reality as close as possible.

Pricing

Season	Number of people	2023	2024
Peak	1	\$850	\$920
	2	\$1,000	\$1,080
	3	\$1,100	\$1,190
Shoulder	1	\$825	\$890
	2	\$900	\$970
	3	\$1,050	\$1,140

- Peak – barra & king threadfin season – February, March, April, May, September, October. A minimum 2-day booking is required to secure charters in the peak season.
- Shoulder – king threadfin season – no barra targeted/caught– June, July, August (sometimes barra in August but shoulder season rates offered), November, December, January (barra closed season QLD)
- Inflation in 2022 was 7.8% according to ABS and charter fees for 2024 will increase by this percentage.
- No split groups – its either you or you and your mates/family. One invoice per trip.

Booking Fee

A non-refundable \$30 booking fee is required to secure your charter. This fee will be deducted off the total charter cost, which is payable a few days before your trip. This fee covers the administrative time required for each booking and if you cancel will not be refunded for any reason except when the trip is cancelled by the guide due to extreme weather or other exceptional circumstances.

Inclusions

- Experienced local proven guide committed to your fishing success.
- Courtesy transfers from accommodation to and from the boat ramp.
- Transport in an AMSA registered 5.56m commercial plate alloy vessel with 130hp Yamaha outboard, minn kota electric motor and humminbird sounders.
- Lunch, snacks, drinks & water.
- Fishing equipment (lost lures to be replaced at \$25 a lure).

Questions?

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What to Bring

- SunSmart clothing & hat.
- Sunnies (quality polaroids preferable).
- Quality rain jacket.
- A warm coat for that can be removed as the day heats up. Not required Nov-Feb.
- Your own food only if you have special dietary requirements.
- Beer if you want a few.

What happens in a typical day?

- You get picked up from accommodation or we meet at the ramp/fuel station.
- You complete a safety brief and sign waiver form (first time visitors).
- We travel to the boat ramp and launch.
- We travel to fishing area - up to 40km of boat travel at times!
- I collect livebait with your assistance (if livebait fishing).
- I drive to various locations and sound around to find fish. Sometimes fish are found at the first spot, but often we may have to spend an hour or more finding a good patch of quality fish.
- You hopefully catch a few fish!
- We continue to move spots when the fishing gets quiet or if the fish don't play the game.
- You fish several other locations until the time is up!
- I fillet the fish if you have selected this option.
- We travel back to the ramp, load the boat and travel home.

Time and duration of your charter

- Courtesy pick-up is offered from accommodation in Rockhampton or we can meet at a local petrol station or a nominated boat ramp, depending on your particular circumstances. I generally depart from Nerimbera ramp or Port Alma Ramp. Nerimbera Ramp is 15 minutes from Rockhampton CBD and Port Alma ramp is 50 minutes from Rockhampton CBD.
- The fishing charter will generally kick off sometime between 5-7AM and this will be confirmed via text or phone call just before your trip.
- Charter duration for a full day charter is 8 hours from pick-up to drop off in Rockhampton. Please note that the drive to Port Alma ramp from Rockhampton takes nearly 2 hours each day out of your fishing day. I can offer an extended day option of 10-11 hours at an additional cost. Please let me you are interested in an extended day to make the most of your time on the water.

Catch rate – what to expect on a good, bad or average day – size and numbers.

The Fitzroy is the second largest seaward draining catchment in Australia and as such is an extensive system with hundreds of kilometres of waterways. It is also a big fish system thanks to its size and the fact that it has been a gill net free zone since 2016. However, there is also lots of water between these fish!! The humminbird sounder technology used to locate fish also means that fish targeted are going to be on the larger end of the spectrum. A great deal of time in your day is likely to be spent locating small to large patches of these bigger fish. It is not uncommon to spend most of the day searching for your trophy fish and only a couple of hours fishing for them! I encourage you to relax, enjoy the scenery and ask questions about this part of the hunting as it all helps tip the odds of getting a good fish in your favour.

Most barra caught on charters range from 70cm to 120cm. Most king threadfin caught on charters are from 90cm to 145cm. My focus is on getting clients these bigger fish. Some of you will have fished remote top

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end barra lodges, where large numbers of small to medium sized fish are the focus and cricket scores are sometimes accomplished. This will not be the case in a charter with Guided Fishing DownUnder, based on our fishery and my style of guiding. What can you expect? Around 6-10 king and barra in the 75-120cm range will come over the side in an exceptional day, around 3-5 king and barra in the 75-120cm range in an average to good day and 1-2 barra and king in the 75-120cm range in a harder day.

These results are using a mix of livebait and lures. Those wanting to lure fish may experience similar numbers when the conditions are right, but lure fishing will often result in less numbers of fish. The quality of the fish is not reduced when lure fishing. Read more about lure fishing below.

Generally, the numbers of fish caught do not increase with more people in the boat, so divide the numbers of fish above by the number of people fishing in your group to get an indication of the likely catch per person per day! Based on previous results, there is a 95% success rate with at least one decent barra or king being caught for the day, so around 1 in 20 days will be a donut day.

Another way to get an idea of what to expect is to look through the Guided Fishing DownUnder Facebook or Instagram page to see the type of captures being posted for each day. You will note some days are better than others and that most of the fish are of high quality and this is what you should expect in terms of size and quantity of fish caught on your charter if you book.

If this meets your expectations – then get in contact! If not, then please do not book!

Fishing Styles

Livebaiting

The best results often come from livebait fishing or a mix of livies and lures, particularly for those who don't fish regularly with lures. However, it takes time to collect livebait for you with a cast net at the start of the day and sometimes this is not easy! All the gear is provided for livebaiting along with the guidance on the best technique to use for hooking and landing your fish. Please let me know if you would like to focus on livebaiting when booking.

Mix of livebaiting and luring

This is probably the most effective way to get good results for proficient treble tossers that don't mind using livies as well. Note both details for livebaiting above and lure fishing below. Lost lures attract a \$25 fee per lost lure. Please bring cash to settle this at the end of each day. Please let me know you would like to focus on a mix of livebaiting and luring when booking.

Lure fishing

Lure fishing is a great way to catch barra and king and can be particularly effective. There is nothing better than getting that bite on a lure. However, as discussed earlier, the Fitzroy is a big fish system rather than a river that delivers larger numbers of fish. Those who are experienced lure casters with the tenacity and fitness to cast all day for one or two opportunities will fare well. Those who can't cast long distances with reasonable accuracy and who lose interest quickly will not enjoy lure fishing in the Fitzroy. Lack of attention at the right moment may result in missing the all-important 'tick' of a lure being inhaled by a quality barra or king, resulting in the lure being spat out again before you get a chance to strike. Almost all the lure fishing done in the Fitzroy is based on longer searching casts, with larger presentations to attract that trophy sized fish. Due to the type of system the Fitzroy is, with expansive waterways, large mudflats and deep ledges paired with large tides, we generally don't do much short high precision lure casting into

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mangroves with short rods and baitcasters. Long spin and baitcast outfits, paired with quality 30lb braid capable of casting larger lures are recommended and provided for clients to use. Good quality lures fitted with strong barra hooks are also provided. The last thing you want is to lose that one good fish to a bent treble after casting all day. You are welcome to bring your own luring outfits and lures if you make sure of the following:

- Let me know how many outfits are being brought and the type, so these can be complemented.
- Select hardbody, paddletail and soft vibe lure presentations primarily in the 100-200mm range and swap out the hooks to quality decoy or bkk trebles if they don't come with them out of the packet. Better still, leave the lures up to me and pay a \$25 fee per lure if you lose them, other than your favourite half a dozen go-to barra and king lures! I carry hundreds of lures on the vessel, each selected and carried for a particular proven application in the Fitzroy.
- Use at least 30lb braid, making sure it is new or in very good condition and that it is full or almost fully spooled.
- Go for a longer 6.6ft+ baitcaster or 7ft+ spin rods designed to be able to cast 100-200mm lures with matching mid to high end reels capable of running 150-250m of 30lb braid and light enough to be used all day. Don't worry if you don't have an outfit like this – I provide them as part of the service.

Lost lures attract a \$25 fee per lure. Please bring enough cash or to settle this fee at the end of each day. In all but the most extreme cases you will only lose 1-2 lures maximum a day. I carry an extendable 5m lure retrieving pole that retrieves most lures not lost to fish, sent deep into the mangroves by overenthusiastic casts or thrown too far over shallow rockbars. Please let me know when booking that you are a capable and persistent angler/group of anglers who want to lure fish all day.

Keeping and filleting fish

First you must catch a fish!! While every effort is made to help you in this respect – it's called fishing and not catching for a reason. Catch and release fishing is supported!! This charter experience is not about filling your freezer with heaps of fish. Please look at 'reef' style meat gathering fishing trips if you want to catch and keep heaps of fish.

However, keeping a fish or two each day for a feed is supported. The number of fish you can keep is dependent on the size of the fish as only a certain amount of room and ice is available on the vessel. For example, there is enough room for 1-3 good sized king/barra. This is a daily limit and subject to all other QLD rules and regulations. Barra over a metre will not be kept.

You are welcome to take the fish whole and process it at home – just make sure the esky you bring is big enough to carry the fish! If you are not a proficient filleter, then the filleting can be done for you at an additional cost of \$25 per fish. Please note that Queensland regulations for 'fin fish other than coral reef', like king threadfin and barramundi, requires that the skin is left on the fish until it is brought to shore and that skinned fish can't be returned to the boat. Your whole fillet with skin, pin bones and scales attached will be placed in a large zip-lock bag and kept cool until you get dropped off. You will need to debone, skin/scale and portion the fish up yourself after this, so please bring your own equipment to do these tasks. If you don't know how to skin, debone and care for fish to keep it safe to eat, then please focus on catch and release fishing. Please let me know if you are interested in me filleting the fish and bring enough cash to pay for this at the end of the day should the service be required.

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What is the availability like for charters?

Due to increasing popularity, it currently takes 12-18 months advance notice to secure a charter during peak 'barra' season and 3-6 months advance notice to secure a charter during shoulder season. There is an EOI list for the peak season charters. Sometimes cancellations arise and are offered to those on the EOI list, except for last minute cancellations, which are offered on Facebook and usually snapped up within a few hours. Based on this, it's usually only those on the EOI list or my charter regulars who will end up securing a barra charter. A minimum two day booking is required to secure a peak season charter. Each year there are only 90 or so days available with good tides during peak 'barra' season and around 55 or so days available with good tides during shoulder season, when king threadfin are the primary target species. Shoulder season is also when I focus on my holidays. On top of this, around 5-10 days with suitable tides each year will be impacted by extreme rainfall or storms events.

Even though demand is higher than available days, I generally won't run charters for any day that has an unfavourable tide that would impact the success rates for clients. Most of my clients want to be able to target both barra and king threadfin. While king threadfin are a year-round prospect, unfortunately due to outdated government policies, barramundi are not able to be intentionally targeted in Queensland for 3 months during one of their more active times. This barramundi closed season takes November, December and January off the table for those wanting barra. The winter months of June, July and the beginning of August some years can be too cold for barra as they are shut down. Please let me know if you are interested in going on the EOI list for 2024 or 2025 peak season.

Premium Packages – 2024.

A small number of premium packages will be offered from 2024. These include some of the best tides for the year based on my experience to date guiding on the Fitzroy. The premium tides will be reserved for these packages until the packages are sold. Please call for pricing for 2025.

Captains Pick Packages. **SOLD OUT!**

- \$4,860 for three days fishing for one or two people.
- Premium big barra and king tides based on accumulated knowledge of past successes.
- Four packages offered – one in February, March, April and October.
- An Aussie made Guided Fishing DownUnder shirt for each person.
- At least one metre+ king or barra for the trip or you only pay \$3,240, which is the normal day rate for peak season for two people for 3 days fishing.

Ultimate Fitzroy Fishing + Hero Video Package

- Only one package offered each year - best tides for big barra and king threadfin each year.
- \$13,100 for days of fishing for one or two people.
- Premium big barra and king tides based on accumulated knowledge of past successes.
- Dedicated videographer from Mad Dog Productions on board for at least 2 days of your trip to capture the action along with a professional 5-minute video showcasing your trip.
- An Aussie made Guided Fishing DownUnder shirt for each person.

Need More Information?

Thanks for your interest. If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to get in contact.

Cheers

Nathan Johnston, Guided Fishing DownUnder

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