



## **Pre-Travel Information for Laxa in Kjos, Iceland**

### **Arrival at Keflavik International Airport**

On arrival you will enter the main reception area of Keflavik International Airport and continue downstairs to the Baggage Reclaim and Duty Free area. It is advisable to purchase any favorite beverages at this stage if you have not already purchased them en-route but beware to remain within the Icelandic personal allowance as advertised within the airport duty-free shop.

Having collected your bags and fishing equipment you will pass through the customs zone and be asked to display your veterinary letter confirming that your waders and fishing tackle have been sterilised thus protecting the pristine Icelandic rivers from any risk of infection from bacteria or disease from foreign rivers that may be present on waders or other equipment.

***Please be aware that you will not be allowed to pass through airport security with your waders and fishing tackle unless you have a veterinary letter confirming that your equipment has been sterilized or else agree to have your equipment sterilised at the airport which is both time consuming and expensive by comparison.***

### **Transfer to Laxa in Kjos**

Having passed through customs you will be met by either your transfer driver (if you have requested one to be arranged for you by Fly Fish Iceland), who will take you either to Reykjavik to overnight (approximately 40 minutes) or else directly to the lodge at Laxa in Kjos (approximately 1 hour 15 minutes.) There are many taxi drivers available at the airport but they will generally prove more expensive than pre-booking transfers when you book your fishing.

***Please remember that if booking your transfers between Keflavik International Airport and Laxa in Kjos with Fly Fish Iceland that you must supply your flight details in full as early as possible.***

### **Arrival at Laxa in Kjos Lodge**

Having driven west along the coastal road from Reykjavik to Borgarnes you will turn off the main road just before the famed undersea tunnel, driving 10 minutes bay-side to the main bridge over Laxa in Kjos. You will more often than not see shoals of salmon and sea-trout holding in the shallow pools under the bridge. Quarter of a mile upstream is the new Laxa in Kjos Lodge where you will be welcomed by the Lodge staff, shown your room and given a tour of the lodge and facilities.

### **Convenient Fly Fishing Wilderness**

In 2008, guests at Laxa in Kjos will fish two, four or six day trips. Two days allowing guests to combine with four days on another river, four days allowing guests to fish for a long weekend and six days to relax and get to know Kjos intimately.

Due to the ease of access from Europe, the UK and the east coast USA, Iceland is the most viable and convenient short-stay fishery of the world's great atlantic salmon fly fishing destinations.

Although set a genuine post-glacial valley wilderness, guests can be fishing Laxa in Kjos the same day they leave their home country, arriving home having fished the morning of their day of departure.

### **Beat rotation and your first fishing session**

The fishing day at Laxa in Kjos is split into two six hour or four three hour sessions, the morning session from 7 am – 1 pm and the afternoon session from 4 – 10 pm. New fishers always start their fishing trip in the afternoon

session as is Icelandic tradition, as also generally suits the international air schedules, and finish after the am session on the final day.

Having been welcomed to the Laxa in Kjos lodge and shown the facilities, fishers are invited to draw for the beats on which they will commence fishing that afternoon. The fishers then rotate through the beats changing beat either once or twice each session (i.e. fishing two or four beats per day.) Having drawn beats, rods are introduced to their guides and tackle and tactics discussion commences before heading out fishing for the afternoon session.

Prior to going out on the river, the Laxa in Kjos guides will also ask rods whether they would like coffee or tea or cold drinks whilst out fishing and will generally take a selection of biscuits or sandwiches (if guests prefer) to the river also.

### **The Laxa in Kjos River & Beats**

On Laxa in Kjos 10 rods fish in pairs on 5 beats over 25km of river and there is a 6th beat called "The Meadows" which is a free beat, available for any rods to fish at any time should rods wish. There is private road access to almost every pool and very little 'clambering' required to access a fishing position, making Kjos a river suited to all ages and mobilities.

**Beat 1:** A rocky fast-flowing beat with stunning waterfalls (Kvislafoss and Laxfoss) and pools headed with white-water and tailed by powerful draws. This is a great hitching beat with super-fresh salmon straight off the tide that can be seen clearly and targeted individually. A great test of guide and fisher teamwork to achieve best results.

**Beat 2:** Primarily made up of the intimate Bugda tributary, beat 2 also has a section of the main river which fills with salmon and large

sea-trout as the season progresses. Bugda is a treat to fish, with stunning small pools holding surprisingly large fish (the largest of the spawning stock tend to run the tributary.) You can be dropped by your guide and fish down the tributary, pool to pool, witnessing fish moving to your fly often at the end of your rod tip!

**Beat 3:** Beat three begins above the free beat ("The Meadows") in leisurely cut bank pools that hold huge numbers of fish during the mid and late season. Further up the beat is a small, accessible canyon stretch with deep pools cut around rock structures where fish can be spied from cliff edges and a strategy for catching them devised. The top of beat three returns to stunning meadow scenery and cut bank pools with deep holes and interesting lies.

**Beat 4:** The Kjos canyon. Beginning just below the formation of the main canyon, beat 4 has some of the most exciting and best holding pools on the river. Always well oxygenated with many rapid sections including the legendary Pokafoss waterfall this proves the favourite and most exhilarating beat for many fishers. Beat 4 also boasts the clear and very deep Upper and Lower Mirror Pools and 'The Provider' – a pool where hooking the salmon is the easy part..landing the salmon is another issue altogether!

**Beat 5:** The uppermost section of water fished on Laxa in Kjos before the protected zone leading to Thorufoss waterfall (an impassable waterfall of 30m), beat 5 has some of the most attractive pools on the entire river. Olympic, Blue and Neck are just some of the immaculate hitching pools that lead up to Kamshylur and eventually to the top pool Skuggi ('Shadow' Pool.) Early season fish often run straight up to beat five and reside in the main pools, joined by salmon throughout the season as the runs build.

**Beat 6:** “The Meadows” or the ‘Free Beat’ is a section of river below beat three that is characterised by stunning, languid cut-bank holding pools, that run one into the other. Despite excellent salmon catches, this section of the river is known for holding the vast majority of Kjos’ famed sea-trout run that take dry flies and nymphs particularly well with a light breeze in the middle of the day and run between 3 and 12lbs, averaging 3-5lbs. These are some of the strongest sea-trout anywhere and test the tippet and fish fighting skills to the max. Creep along the edge of the bank with your guide, keeping your head low and you will see shoals of these brutes, interspersed with salmon, lying on the fallen clumps of bank deep under the surface. “The Meadows” can prove a *very* productive way to spend a hour or two during the day whilst resting your beat and can also prove to be excellent in high water conditions.

### **Recommended Tackle when fishing Laxa in Kjos**

#### ***Rods...***

On Laxa in Kjos the most effective rods are 9 to 9½ ft single-handed fly rods with an AFTM line rating of 6 - 8. Some fishers like to fish Laxa in Kjos with rods as low as a fast-action 4 or 5 weight, particularly on the smaller Bugda tributary, but 7 or 8 weight is more the norm. There is often a wind and so regardless of your preference a 7 or 8 weight rod is a good back-up and crucial if needing to revert to a sink-tip line and larger flies in the event of a flood. Many fishers are also bringing 12 or 13 ft lightweight double-handed rods for AFTM 7 - 8 lines. These are often proving very useful in the ‘Meadows’ section of Laxa in Kjos where a slightly longer (yet still delicate) cast is sometimes required. However, the vast majority of fishing on Laxa in Kjos employs short to medium length casts with small flies in very clear water and the larger, heavier double-handed rods can often prove more of a hindrance than

a help.

#### ***Reels...***

You will need a reasonably good quality fly reel (well enough engineered to protect quite light test leader/tippet) that will hold the right line for your rod and at least 100 metres of 20-30 lb test backing.

#### ***Lines...***

On the Laxa in Kjos, nearly all effective fly fishing is done with a floating line. Be sure you have a high floating weight-forward line and it is advisable to take line dressing to ensure the line remains very buoyant, particularly at the tip. Generally speaking the water tends to be higher early season dropping away as the season progresses but it is wise to pack a sink-tip in case of flood. Your reel should also have at least 100 metres of micron or dacron backing.

#### ***Leaders & Tippet Material...***

For Laxa in Kjos the most common tippet strength is 10 - 12 lbs, dropping to 8 lbs and sometimes even 6 lbs in low water conditions or when targeting the generally large but wily sea-trout. Typically salmon are not leader-shy but when considering the extreme clarity of Laxa in Kjos a 10 – 12 ft leader is ideal, sometimes, in very calm conditions, this will need to be extended to 12 – 15ft. If using a sink-tip line 6 - 8 ft is the norm. Fishers should take spare spools of tippet material that you can tie on as frequent fly changes will shorten leader length rapidly (often when you are targeting an individual fish it will rise to two or three patterns of fly before finally taking.)

#### ***Flies...***

The lodge at Laxa in Kjos has an excellent selection of flies tied on silver and black hooks and therefore we recommend buying the majority of what you use when there. Although

flies are expensive in Iceland, this will save buying flies that are unsuited to the fishing conditions whilst you are fishing Laxa in Kjos.

Lightly dressed flies on silver treble hooks or lightweight black double hooks are most favoured at Kjos; particular favourites include Hairy Mary, Stoat's Tail, Blue Charm, Arndilly Fancy and local patterns such as the Nora and Frances in 10s, 12s, 14s and some 16s. Also highly effective are ¼ - ½ inch micro-tubes tied with short, dark wings and silver or bare plastic bodies used either 'hitched' or fished sub-surface with a size 14 or 16 treble. The most common sizes of fly are 10s, 12s and 14s, though in low water conditions 16s and even 18s are increasingly effective. Other very useful patterns in fast water or late in the evening are the Collie Dog and Sunray Shadow (tied to a max length of approximately 4 ½ inches, rather than the Norwegian style 7-8 inches!) High water may see a change to larger patterns tied on much larger hooks but this is unusual and can be catered for on an as and when needed basis by purchasing from the lodge fly selection. Very large flies and tube flies fished in normal water conditions tend to quickly 'spook the pool'.

### ***Waders...***

Although deep wading is rare, it is preferable to fish Laxa in Kjos wearing chest-high waders, allowing you to not only cross the river at a given safe point but also sit down on the damp bank and fish through periods of rain without getting wet and cold. Be sure to test your waders before you go to make sure they are watertight. Nothing is more frustrating than fighting seam leaks through a week in cold water. We recommend gore-tex/breathable waders for comfort and ease of movement. Guests should ask when booking if they require the use of loan waders when fishing at Laxa in Kjos.

Although most 'wading' on Laxa in Kjos is actually paddling over either smooth gravel or very manageable boulders, would do recommend a good collapsible wading staff. This will give you extra confidence and help on the infrequent difficult wades. We also recommend you consider a flotation vest or jacket. Many fishers are more comfortable not wading at all, please make this clear to your guide and he will make adjustments for you.

### **Catch & Release**

Fishing on Laxa in Kjos is not mandatory catch & release only. Rods are trusted to exercise a sensible approach to retaining fish and not to retain more than one fish per day regardless. The hope is that all larger and hen (female) fish will be returned by fishers and only grilse (one sea-winter salmon generally not larger than 5-6lbs) and smaller male fish ever be retained. If this policy can be observed there is not reason why fishers cannot also enjoy the privilege of wild atlantic salmon on their table. If not a more heavy handed approach with mandatory catch & release will need to be imposed in future years, the future policy rests in the hands of fishers.

Iceland is seeing a huge effort being put into researching and preserving the fish stocks in these beautiful and sensitive rivers by leaseholders, farmers and fishermen alike. Lax ehf (the Icelandic partners of Fly Fish Iceland and leaseholders of many of Iceland's prime rivers) work throughout the year with the Fisheries Institute and other regulatory and research bodies to assess fish stocks and spawning success rates constantly striving to improve the welfare of the Icelandic salmon population and provide information about the Icelandic success story for the benefit of Atlantic salmon systems in other countries.

### **Fishing Methods**

First of all, the Icelandic fishing day is made up of two long sessions of six hours each. Be patient, fish wisely and carefully and think positively!

***When fishing try to...***

- Make every cast count, good extension of the leader is crucial with often only a short section of the swing covering the likely taking zone. It is important to allow the fly to swim/swing from the minute it hits the water until you pick it up for the next cast, moving with thoughtful precision through holding water, trying different flies and different retrieves give you the greatest chance of success.
- Communicate with your guide. Take advantage of his knowledge by asking questions and demonstrating that you are willing to do exactly what he suggests – techniques used in Iceland may often seem bizarre to the traveling angler but then prove productive and a real pleasure to learn. Remember - the guides do know their river and will put you over fish.
- Fish slowly and methodically through holding water. Although the water is very clear, often a fish will only take properly if the fly presents in a very particular way.
- Always start with a short cast, lengthening each one gradually; then move downstream as you can - one foot or two feet or a yard, every cast. At Kjos there are pools where you need to stay in the same place to ensure that the fish do not see you.
- Ask your guide what the strategy is for each pool before starting to fish.
- Make sure you vary the fly speed – Icelandic salmon often like a short (7-10 inch) strip retrieve through the arc of swing. Very small flies probably favour

swinging across the pool slowly but larger patterns can fish better quickly.

- Think about the angle at which you cast and the amount of mend, upstream or down, that you put into your presentation.
- Employ different casting angles and imparting different motions to your fly on retrieve. Do ask your guide to teach you the riffled hitch technique. It works so often on the Kjos and sometimes can excite salmon into taking when other conventional wet-fly methods are not productive.
- On most beats you will have an opportunity for effective bank casting. When casting from the bank, check your fly periodically, particularly if you are in the habit of hitting things on your back cast (rocks, mounds of volcanic earth, etc), because fly hooks break when this happens.
- Avoid alarming the fish. With such clear water it is best to exercise caution whilst wading or approaching the bank. Move slowly and carefully into a casting position and be aware of the position of the sun and where shadows will be cast.

***When fishing try not to...***

- Get discouraged when you think you are on a beat that is not productive. This is when fishers get tired and cast 'lazily', and that is just when the action can happen.
- Strike when salmon take like you might strike when a trout takes. The moment a salmon takes is a critical time, and for an inexperienced salmon angler this is the primary fish-losing mistake, particularly in the gin clear Kjos water where you can see it all happening right in front of you.

- Lift your rod before you *feel* the fish. Often you will see disturbance in the water before the salmon has the fly in its mouth, if you strike at this stage you will not hook the salmon and stand a good chance of spooking him as well. When you do feel the fish, lift the rod in a firm, deliberate manner to hook the fish. Do not strike sharply (or try to re-set the hook multiple times as you might a Tarpon!)
- Cast the main line over a salmon and never slash the water on presentation. Even if a salmon closer to you will not take a fly, if you scare him he will likely scare others around him. This is where patience, teamwork and deliberation with you guide to apply the best approach can really pay off.

#### ***If you 'move' a fish...***

- This is one you should work on as it has shown a propensity to move to the fly. Keep your eye on your fly, and if the salmon rolls after it, or even if you see a silvery flash near your fly, mark the distance of this cast, allow your fly to finish swinging, strip in your line and wait a couple of minutes before you cast to him again.
- Keep the position of the fish carefully in mind and cast once or twice more to him. If he does not take, rest him again and change flies, working with your guide on alternating sizes and colours. Sometimes, on a sunny, still day, you can 'move' the fish like this half a dozen times before he eventually takes. Sometimes he will never take, but chances are if you work him patiently you can entice him. Once he has shown himself to your fly, he is often the best candidate in the pool at that time to be taken, so work him accordingly.

#### ***When you've hooked a fish...***

- Learn to fight a salmon aggressively. Most fishermen play a salmon too timidly; this causes people to lose more fish than when putting the heat on them. Remember, however, to 'bow' to a salmon when he jumps.
- Learn to anticipate jumps as line is running out and surfacing at the same time. Be prepared and drop your rod forward and down when the fish jumps, rather than keeping tight line tension on him at that moment which can lead to breakage of the tippet.

#### ***In general, when fishing Icelandic rivers...***

- Use bright small flies on bright days and darker/duller coloured flies during reduced light levels. The lower the water temperature, the larger the fly and the warmer the water, the smaller the fly. Likewise, the more quiet flowing the water is, the smaller the fly and the faster the water, the larger the fly.
- Smaller flies are more effective later in the season or in holding pools where salmon may have been for some time.
- Try smaller, darker dressings on a fish that is coming but refuses to take the fly.
- More sparsely dressed patterns, including the hair wings, are more effective than the traditional fully dressed patterns of days gone by.
- Salmon should be rested more often in low water and bright weather.
- Accurate casting and precise manipulation of the fly are twice as important as fly pattern in most salmon fishing.

#### **Recommended Clothing & Outerwear**

- Chest waders (preferably gore-tex/breathable for comfort and mobility)

- Waterproof wading or fishing jacket or wading vest with hood
- “Fleece” type windproof jacket
- Waterproof hood or hat
- Peaked cap or hat to assist vision into the water
- Fishing shirts - ideally cotton or brushed cotton/wool
- Warm sweater or fleeces
- Warm, comfortable wading socks
- Thermal/microfiber long underwear
- Warm fishing trousers
- Light fishing gloves (open mitt is excellent for improved line control)
- Light windbreaker jacket
- Life Vest, Pack or inflation belt
- Wading staff (ideally folding)
- ***Polaroid glasses (one spare pair is ideal) with amber or light brown lenses.***
- Comfortable, casual clothing for travel and for wearing at the lodge
- Suitable transformer for electric shaver or other appliance (Iceland has 220 240 volt, 50 cycle current)

### **New Fisherman’s Lodge finished in 2007**

Laxa in Kjos was finally treated to a new fisherman’s lodge that was completed just prior to the 2006 season (with the huge rainfall of the 2006 spring some finishing touches were yet to be finalised until after the 2006 season although, with the rave reviews of the 2006 season fishers, you would not have known it to be the case!) Now fully complete, the Kjos Lodge, overlooking Klingenberg Pool, gazing down-river to the legendary Laxfoss, is recognised as one of the finest fishing lodges in Iceland. It is a spacious, attractive, wooden lodge with a central gathering area conducive to regaling fishing stories and relaxing in style as would befit a holiday. Each fisher has their own spacious, quiet and well-appointed en-suite bedroom with a river view and a second bed should they choose to rod-share as is often

common in Iceland. The Kjos Lodge also boasts a large wader/drying room and the convenience of being able to provide rods, reels and other loan equipment if need be.

### **Meals at Laxa in Kjos Lodge**

Breakfast is served between 6 am and 9 am with a selection of Icelandic traditional foods and classic full cooked breakfast options available with a variety of coffees, teas, juices and cold drinks. Although the am fishing session begins at 7 am, many guests agree a later fishing time with their guide to enjoy a more relaxing schedule – with the lodge right on the river bank it is easy to organise a flexible schedule.

The am fishing session ends at 1pm and lunch is served 1.30 – 2.30 pm as a ‘buffet’ with several hot and cold dishes.

Fishers generally relax after lunch heading out for the afternoon fishing session at around 4 pm and returning at around 10 pm for pre-dinner drinks and a seated, served multi-course dinner at 10.30 – 10.45 pm.

Meals are served in the dining area other than when guests enjoy a lunchtime barbeque on the large deck overlooking the river. After meals guests are able to relax in the congenial surroundings of the lounge area, furnished with large leather chairs and sofas. The kitchen is run by one of Reykjavik’s award winning chef teams ensuring a quality and variety of fare that is the envy of many of Iceland’s better restaurants.

The chefs at Laxa in Kjos are used to catering for individual requirements within the course of a normal week. Although generally meals are selected by the chef’s to suit the availability of the freshest, best quality ingredients. Guests should indicate on the Fishing Questionnaire (supplied when booking with Fly Fish Iceland) if they have certain food allergies or health requirements.



### **Alcoholic Beverages**

Soft drinks, most mixers (soda, tonic, etc) and beer are available at the lodge as well as a good selection of French and other wine. Alcoholic beverages including liquor, spirits and wines are generally expensive in Iceland. Therefore, it is recommended that you purchase a supply in the Duty Free en route to Iceland or upon arrival in the Duty Free store next to the baggage reclaim area (Keflavik International Airport.)

### **Laundry**

A laundry service is available at a small charge

### **Internet & Telephone**

The lodge at Laxa in Kjos has wireless broadband should guests have their own computers with wireless capability. In all but the most remote areas of beat 5 (top beat) there is good mobile telephone reception for all major roaming services.

### **Smoking**

As of 2007 smoking will not be permitted within the lodge other than in designated smoking areas or on the lodge deck overlooking the river where seating and communal areas are well provided.

### **Gratuities & Currency**

Charges for alcoholic beverages, tackle or services can be paid by credit or debit card at the lodge (other than American Express) or paid in cash in local currency. If guests choose to give gratuities to either the house staff or guides this can be done in cash in either local currency, British pounds or US dollars. For a four day fishing trip it is normal for each fisherman to tip approximately GB£40/US\$75 to the house staff and perhaps GB£80/US\$150 to the guide. Please remember that tips, at least in Iceland, are **discretionary** – please do not feel obliged to tip unless you feel you have received an ex-

cellent level of service....we are confident that you will receive an exemplary service.

### **When Departing Laxa in Kjos**

The final morning's fishing session will cease one hour early at 12 pm. Guests will return to the lodge, pack and settle dues and any gratuities you wish to leave for house staff and guides. After an early lunch (usually around 12.30 pm) guest will then depart at approximately 1 - 1.30 pm either to Keflavik International Airport, Reykjavik to overnight or to another destination.

***Please remember that if booking your transfers between Keflavik International Airport and Laxa in Kjos with Fly Fish Iceland that you must supply your flight details in full as early as possible.***

### **Airline Contact Details**

(for booking flights from the UK)

**Iceland Express:** 0870 240 5600

[www.icelandexpress.co.uk](http://www.icelandexpress.co.uk)

Daily and twice daily flights between London Stanstead and Keflavik

**Iceland Air:** 0845 758 1111

[www.icelandair.co.uk](http://www.icelandair.co.uk)

Daily and twice daily flights between Keflavik and London Heathrow, Glasgow, Paris, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Frankfurt and Hamburg. Iceland Air also flies between Keflavik and several North American cities including New York, Baltimore, Boston, Minneapolis and Orlando.

### **Emergency Numbers**

If you experience problems during travel please feel free to telephone either Fly Fish Iceland Ltd on:

+44 (0) 1367 850429



or, if already in Iceland, the Lodge at Laxa in Kjos on:

(+354) 566 6004

In case of emergency, the number to dial for Icelandic emergency services is:

Police & Ambulance: (+354) 112

### **Insurance**

Fly Fish Iceland recommends that guests take out travel insurance and trip cancellation insurance (should guests be unable to travel due to personal circumstances.) Please see Fly Fish Iceland Ltd's Booking Terms & Conditions for further insurance recommendations and advice.

### **Existing Medical Conditions**

It is a condition of booking that fishers indicate on the supplied Fishing Questionnaire any existing medical conditions that may affect their ability to undertake the activities and travel of holidays booked with Fly Fish Iceland. Fly Fish Iceland reserves the right not to accept bookings from those who it deems may not be physically suited to certain locations, activities and travel requirements. In which case Fly Fish Iceland will attempt to offer a suitable alternative if appropriate. Fly Fish Iceland is under no obligation to give explanations for not accepting bookings and having accepted a booking cannot be held responsible for any disclosed or undisclosed pre-existing condition related incidents.

***Thank you. We wish you safe travels, a fantastic visit to Iceland and tight lines at Laxa in Kjos.***

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