

## **Pre-Travel Information for Grimsá, 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/or Duty Free area. It is advisable to purchase any favorite beverages at this stage if you have not already done so 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 Grimsa**

Having passed through customs you will be met by 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 Grimsa (approximately 1 hour 40 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 Grimsa with Fly Fish Iceland that you must supply your flight details in full as early as possible.***

### **Arrival at Grimsa Lodge**

Having driven west along the coastal road from Reykjavik to Borgarnes and through the Hvalfjörður Tunnel, you will turn off the main road just before the Borgarnes bridge. At the Grimsa Lodge 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 2009, guests at Grimsa will fish three, four or six day trips. Two days allowing guests to combine with days on another river, four days allowing guests to fish for a long weekend and six days to relax and get to know Grimsa well.

Due to the ease of access from Europe, the UK and 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 in a genuine post-glacial valley wilderness, guests can be fishing Grimsa 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 Grimsa is split into two six hour or four three hour sessions depending on conditions, 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 in-

ternational air schedules, and finish after the am session on the final day. Having been welcomed to the Grimsa 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 a tackle and tactics discussion commences before heading out fishing for the afternoon session. Prior to going out on the river, the Grimsa 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.

### **Grimsa River & Beats**

On Grimsa 8 rods fish in pairs on 4 beats over 30km of river and there is often a free beat available for any rods to fish at any time should they wish. There is private road access to almost every pool and very little 'clambering' required to access a fishing position, making Grimsa a river suited to all ages and mobilities.

**Beat 1:** A rocky fast-flowing beat with stunning waterfalls (Horrible pool 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 in many cases. A great test of guide and fisher teamwork to achieve best results.

**Beat 2:** This beat begins just above the road bridge and comprises of some fast rocky pools as well as some gentle bends and runs above. This beat features the famous Strengir run of pools and the often overlooked Laekjarfoss. Strengir can offer some of the most exciting hitching and the fast flow makes the fight ever

more appealing.

**Beat 3:** There are mainly meadow pools on beat 3 but all are very productive with good holding water created where slow lake sections speed up into tight draws or bends.

**Beat 4:** The upper most beat on the river begins where the Tungva tributary flows in at pool 600. This pool is very productive and usually many fish rest here till the water is high enough in the Tungva to move up. These pools are mainly cut bank and each offers a very different taking point and strategy.

**Free Beat:** This is usually the very top of the river above pool 600 and below pool 80. These pools are worth a try especially the top of the river where people rarely venture and a short walk will have you fishing a beautiful foss and the deep pool below. Well worth a look if you have the time.

### **Recommended Tackle when fishing Grimsa**

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

At Grimsa the most effective rods are 9 to 9 1/2 ft single-handed fly rods with an AFTM line rating of 6 - 8. Some fishers like to fish Grimsa with rods as low as a fast-action 4 or 5 weight 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 backup 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. However, the vast majority of fishing on Grimsa 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...***

At Grimsa, 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 Grimsa 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 clarity of Grimsa 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 Grimsa 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. Lightly

dressed flies on silver treble hooks or lightweight black double hooks are most favoured at Grimsa; 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 1/4 - 1/2 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 1/2 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 Grimsa 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 Grimsa. Although most 'wading' on Grimsa 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 Grimsa 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. All larger and hen (female) fish over 70 cm must 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 Grimsa 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 at Grimsa 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 Grimsa 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 reset 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)

### **Meals at Grimsa 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 and rest the pools on their allotted beat – 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 4pm 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. After meals guests are able to relax in the congenial surroundings of the lounge area, furnished with large leather chairs and sofas.

The kitchen and lodge are run by one of the most respected managers in Iceland and his chef is very experienced ensuring a quality and variety of fare that is the envy of many of Iceland's better restaurants. The chef at Grimsa is used to catering for individual requirements within the course of a normal week. Although generally meals are selected by the chef 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 Grimsa has wireless broadband should guests have their own computers with wireless capability. In almost all the beats there is good mobile telephone reception for all major roaming services.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not 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 excellent level of service....we are confident that you will receive an exemplary service.

### **When Departing Grimsa**

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 pm either to Keflavik International Airport for the late flight or Reykjavik to overnight or to another destination.

***Please remember that if booking your transfers between Keflavik International Airport and Grimsa with Fly Fish Iceland that you must supply your flight details in full as early as possible to ascertain your best time of departure from the lodge..***

### **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 Grimsa on:

(+354) 437 0083

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 Grimsa.*

All content © Fly Fish Iceland Ltd 2008.

---