

Bloomfield Lodge

BEAUTIFULLY REMOTE

Fishing at Bloomfield Lodge By Martin Salter

North Queensland is where you can experience some of the greatest sport-fishing in the world. At Bloomfield Lodge itself there are a range of fishing options available. With the incoming tide there are a number of land-based spots in addition to the jetty. Bait and basic tackle are available free of charge to guests however I would recommend taking along a light 6kgs soft plastics outfit and a few lures. The Berkley's Gulp Jerkshads in 5 and 7 inch sizes caught me plenty of fish with light colours proving most successful. There is a choice of two types of guided boat fishing - either a full or half day offshore charter with top guide Shayne aboard the Bloomfield Explorer catamaran trolling or bottom fishing along the edge of the Barrier Reef or an inshore trip on the customized vessel 'The Paradise Kingfisher' at the very reasonable rate of \$75 Aus an hour. Costs can be shared and again all tackle and bait is provided.



Getting up before breakfast for a quick trip out with one of the Lodge guides and fellow guests produced some nice fingermarks and modest jacks from the river. Later on in the year there are good barra to be caught here and even a run of small tarpon which would be great fun on the fly. From the jetty on the right tide all manner of species can be caught including rays, barracuda, grunter and golden trevally. The day out on the ocean trolling and bottom fishing the reefs will be one I will always remember with screaming reels aplenty as big 10 kilo plus Spanish mackerel hit the lures, schools of bonito and tuna busting up on the surface and huge unstoppable cod and trout making mincemeat of our tackle on the sharp coral where they live. Some beautiful red fish were landed and the chef had more than he needed to prepare the famous Thursday night Bloomfield barbie.



It was though somehow fitting that the fish gods saved the best for the last day. The wind had dropped making it possible to take Keith's small boat to a reef only a mile or so offshore, charmingly named 'Robbie's Knob'. While Gary and Viv hauled in some brightly coloured orange nannygai on bottom baits I stuck to fishing fast moving rubber lures just below the surface. After a little while the water exploded as a queenfish smashed into my lure and tail-walked over the ocean in an angry shower of silver and blue. I carefully played this most exciting of tropical sports fishes to the boat only to see the hook fall out at the last minute. Disappointed but not disheartened I pressed on and a short while later a huge queenie followed my offering right up to the boat before turning away at the last moment. This was the one I wanted and, third time lucky, it was soon to be as the water surged and the rod bucked as another silver bullet leapt skywards. The big fella stayed on and, after a battle royal on light tackle a very happy Pommie fisherman hoisted aboard a 7 kilo specimen queenfish for a few quick photos and big smile. Throughout our week long stay we scarcely saw another angler. The reefs themselves see very little pressure as they are simply too far away from either Port Douglas or Cooktown meaning that Bloomfield Lodge guests will almost always be fishing in splendid isolation.



When I wasn't fishing I would join my wife Natalie by the pool or on one of the excursions and without exception everything we did was sheer pleasure from start to finish. The honesty bar was open all hours, the food was fresh and beautifully prepared and the hosts charming and helpful. Even the crocodiles were happily basking in the sun on our boat trips up river and the bird life was a joy to behold. When things got just too lazy by the sleepy pool, we would work up an appetite for dinner with a stroll to one of the rocky headlands or along the forest tracks. There is a timeless beauty about this place that would appeal to anyone, angler and non-angler alike, who loves nature. And trust me, if you are lucky enough as a fisherman to persuade your loved one to make the trip to the Coral Sea you will probably get to hear those rarest of words, 'can we go back one day to that wonderful place where you caught that big fish' ...and you will if you possibly can.