

Sea Urchin Itinerary

And advice pages

First I would like to thank you for choosing Sea Urchin charters I do hope you find these few pages helpful

The evening before your trip:

You will need to call me after 6.30pm and no later than 8pm on 07855439380 to check that we are still sailing, the weather forecasts often change and the last one I work to comes in around 6.30pm please don't just assume we will be sailing because it looked ok on last night TV forecast always call me to confirm,
If we have to cancel your trip please try not to give me a hard time I understand you have been looking forward to your trip for weeks but please remember this is my living I do not cancel trips for no good reason.

During our conversation we can discuss what the day's plans are such as start time (Usually 7am) unless agreed differently beforehand, what tactics have been working also what bait and how much to buy from the tackle shop before we depart I do keep a selection of tackle rigs shads pirks hooks hokias lead clips etc so if you do run short during the day you can re stock on board

(Unless your booking is all-inclusive or you already have your bait of course)
On the subject of bait frozen squid is very popular here in Whitby and anglers often ask how many boxes they need for the day it dose depend on the day if the water is clear we don't need much bait as a rule, but when coloured or early in the season bait is best, as a guide though 3 boxes each is a good start if you are chopping the squid up, some anglers bring 10 boxes each and fish whole squid on the hook, you can always take it back home and re freeze it as long as it has not started to turn pink (or going off)

Whitby angling supplies together with both cafés Arbuts café (next to Whitby angling) and the Singing kettle café opposite the Yorkshire bank and down the yard all open from 6am,

Note the tackle shop on the east side of town (next to the boats) will not be open at 6am anymore so give some thought to bait and leads there will be a que this year I imagine

If this is your first experience fishing, or fishing at sea, or even on a boat, don't worry you are in safe hands with me and the crew

We will do our best to make your day a pleasurable one with all the help and advice you need during your day at sea

First lets get you ship shape and in the right gear, regular anglers would usually don a two piece thermal fishing suit and thermal wellies topped with a warm hat

The two piece suit gives the option to remove the coat during the warmer days at sea,

If you are the out door type then you will probably have something suitable around the house like your walking/gardening clothes they will do fine with plenty of layers underneath a waterproof coat and leggings although it may well be sunny and calm in the harbour once we get out to sea it can and often is a different story

On your feet wellington boots are best but walking boots will suffice remember the deck although treated with non slip paints will still get very wet and slippy and (Occasionally awash)

You will be given a brief safety induction by me or the crewman before we leave the harbour on ware the life jackets are stowed and the location of the boats life raft please don't be alarmed this is just common practice and common sense

As we get underway and once everything else is under control if you fancy a hot drink just ask me or the crewman as soon as the boiler is up to steam we will oblige, you may have to wait until we make a full brew as the boiler is not constantly burning you understand, also if you have a pie or pasty you would like warming for later now is the time to mention it we can warm it on top of the boiler during the morning then finish it off with a ping in the microwave when hunger strikes

As we steam out we will set you all up and explain the basics, (if you are a novice) Please be very careful of swinging leads and hooks whilst we are underway place your lead on the deck or in a bucket, The first stop is usually around an hour from getting on board depending on my plan Sometimes in summer we may make a quick mackerel stop near the Whitby bell buoy the fish we catch here are mostly used for bait and we usually make another mackerel stop later or at the end of the day if all are in agreement, **Tip.** its always wise to squirrel a few away late afternoon in case we don't see anymore as can often happen

Seating is available but standing up for a while is a good way to find your sea legs as once we stop you will be expected to stand and fish at the same time this takes practice but with luck you will have mastered it in no time at all

On the journey out you will no doubt see regular anglers filling buckets full of water and placing all there blocks of frozen bait in to thaw out, then leaving it there all day, alas the best part of the bait has run into the bucket,

Tip. just break one box apart leave the rest solid for now, squid is full of iodine and sending it down part frozen or non soaked is best the scent will still be in your bait unlike those that have been leeching there scent into a bucket full of water for an hour or so and keep changing your bait regularly once its been dragged up and down a few times its just washed out.

Ready to start fishing?

Now to start and a couple of pointers we all get into tangles at some stage don't worry if you do from the off just try remember this, **Tip.** wait until me or the crew give the word

to drop, were not control freaks you understand it's just best to wait until I bring the boat to a stop exactly on the mark, and as your lead drops into the depths and with the pad of your thumb keep a light touch on the spinning spool so as not to let it over run the speed of the falling lead,

The trick is to get your gear down to the bottom as quickly as possible and without a tangle with practice and by the end of the day your lead will be screaming down without any fuss at all,

At first you may find it hard to feel the lead on the bottom remember you will have at least 160ft of stretchy nylon line between you and the sea bed but after a while you will get the feel of it and slowly start to understand the difference between a bite and what is the bottom,

Another little **Tip** is once on the bottom the boat will obviously drift away from our start position, leave the reel in open spool position and using your thumb as a brake allow a as needed line to slip off the spool now and then as we drift thus keeping you on the bottom longer,

when a fish is on simply throw the spool lock lever over you can now release your thumb and wind in, don't be afraid to let the line slack when bait fishing you only need to keep a tight line once the fish is hooked.

When retrieving your gear from the depths keep your eye on the reel and try spread the line evenly across the whole of the spool as it fill back up,

Easily done by moving your thumb of your spare hand from side to side as you wind in, this will also aid in a very fast drop on the next drift

Once you have a fish on the only thing you need do is wind in as smoothly possible without letting the line go slack at any point until your fish is in the net, **Tip** don't be tempted to rest the rod on top of the handrail no matter how tired your arms are, keep the rod in the 10 to 12 position and up off the rail if the fish dives your arms will give a bit the hand rail will not, by placing the rod on the handrail you are in effect shortening the rod by 50%, no need to wind like a mad man, or pump the rod up and down this will only help in dropping the fish off the hook nice and easy is the best way

Me or the crew will assist you when the fish is near the surface we can usually tell if you need a net by the bend in the fishing rod, just shout up and leave it to us we will either lift it in or net/gaff if in for you,

If it's a busy day and there are lots of fish being caught at the same time and your fish is only a few pounds in weight you can safely lift it over the handrail yourself,

This is how:

Once the fish is at the surface check and make sure its well hooked place your rod down against the handrail and let go of it, you now have both hands free lean over and grab hold of the line above the fish being very careful of any hooks then simply lift the fish into the boat this is the simplest and safest way with small fish you may well observe so

called seasoned anglers swinging large fish in on a bent and loaded rod this is most dangerous if the fish drops off half way in the lead hooks and all are catapulted back into the boat at great speed and into somebody's face

Once your fish is safe on board this is the best time to take a photo of it in all its natural beauty,

Also if your fish is of any real size it will be weighed and recorded then entered into the FREE fish of the month competition which runs from 1st April to 31st Dec you could end up with a free trip and crew T-shirt,

we will then allocate you a numbered fish box and you can keep the rest of your catch there as the day progresses (please leave fish boxes in the rack it frees up the deck space and allows us to get around quickly to sort out the inevitable tangles)

Now at some point you will get stuck on the bottom and when you do don't worry at first beginners sometimes assume they have a huge fish on and that's easy to understand here's why,

Let's assume your line has suddenly gone tight it could be a big fish yes? understandable and now because the boat is drifting away from your anchored hook your rod bends over and the line gets tighter as the boat drifts on it only gets worse until you are hanging on for dear life screaming it's a fish it's massive but alas it is not a fish only the bottom! All you can do now is hold very tight and point the rod tip toward the snag to save breaking the rod in half and shout for help

This is a totally natural first reaction but with a little experience you will find a fish will pull or nod its head with definite separate tugs the bottom won't and the trick is to recognise the difference immediately and before the boat starts to drift the quicker you decide it's a snag the easier it is to deal with, if your reel is left in the locked spool position the scenario describe previously is the only outcome

This is where the advantage of using your thumb as a brake on the spool as apposed to locking it off really helps,

Let's assume you think a fish is on, if it's a fish it will nod as soon as your line tightens if it doesn't you are stuck,

Quickly and smoothly release your thumb pressure from the spool, put your rod down against the handrail grab hold of the loose line and wrap it around one of my breaking out sticks **not your hand** then hold on until either the hook breaks free or the line snaps neither one is a major problem losing an expensive rod and reel over the side or pulling the skin off your hand is so be careful

We will show everyone how to do this safely during the day at some point, some will pick it up easy and some alas never will, don't worry we are here to help whatever it's a learning curve and everybody had to learn at some point remember a good angler is always learning me included

After the last drop of the day we will make our way back to port we will start to de rig the hire rods and have a clean round and we don't mind gutting and cleaning your fish for you,

Mac our crewman is a master with fish preparation and if asked or if time allows he may even offer to fillet a few fish for you ready for the pan,
This he dose off his own back and forms no part of his duties with me so please a big thank you for Mac and if you wish to do so you can show your appreciation by leaving him the price of a beer or three in his tip box
I know he would never ask it's not his way

If you can remember all that on the day you are a better person than me we don't expect beginners to know it all so do not worry it's a fun day out
Below are a few items for you consider,

You're Check List

Any medications you are taking
Sea sickness tablets..... taken well before read the box
Your lunch and drinks
Mobile phone and charger.... we have 240v on board
Strong fish bags
Change for the car park
Plastic bottles frozen in your lunch box also keeps your catch cool on the way home
Waterproofs
Camera
Reading glasses
Rest of payment for charter..... no cheques on the day sorry
Sunglasses
Sun cream
Gloves
Old Towels.....great for wiping your hands on tie them to your belt or handrail
Wet wipes
Spare socks
Emergency contact numbers.....keep in your wallet
Plasters or tape.....I have a good first aid box but always handy to have a few
Strong bucketgreat for caring your gear about in also handy for bait
Bait knife and scissors.....I can re sharpen your knife for you if yours is blunt

You must also inform me if you have any serious health issues before you book such as fits or seizures or any heart problems this is for your safety not mine please don't take any risks we could be hours away from medical help during the day

The next page is on boat etiquette which I hope you find of use

Boat etiquette

If this is your first time on a charter boat there is no need to worry about anything just because you are sharing the boat with regular anglers it need not be a negative indeed it is a major plus you will have all the help and experience you need from both crew and fellow anglers as long as you follow what are basic common sense curtses.

When you arrive it can seem a bit like a chimpanzees tea party with bodies jostling for who knows what position, tackle coming aboard right left and centre boxes and bait you name it anglers bring it, and you could be forgiven for thinking what have I let myself in for, but after 10mins or so people settle in a place they are comfortable with, you may well witness people fighting to get along the back because last time they came the person there caught lots more fish than anyone else? Try explaining to a grown man that the fish don't actually know which side of the boat anyone is on he was probably just a good angler or lucky

The one thing I would say about your position it is good manners to keep your place once found as well as being courteous its safer for everyone on board can you imagine 12 people moving around every two minuets all day long?
It would be like that chimpanzee party thing all over again

Also dashing from side to side is simply not on

Admittedly it is more comfortable to fish with your line drifting away from the boat as apposed to under it but stay put and you will have your turn

I once witnessed a chap dashing side to side I asked him to stop moving its not fair to the rest stay put please, he continued anyway and after the third drift he looked confused and I just watched and chuckled to myself during the next drift I asked him what was wrong he said I don't understand no matter which side of the boat I stand my line keeps going under the boat and its awkward to fish that way, well stay in your place like everyone else and STOP running side to side! You will get one drift away from the boat followed by one under the boat drift if you stay in your place, his selfishness had mysteriously stopped his brain from working he did not realise that I turned the boat around every drift to share it out

Ok so you have your place but please don't misunderstand me you can move around if want to just be courteous to others and don't keep running and standing next to someone who has just caught a fish, (Some do believe me)

A little pet hate I have noticed between anglers is people borrowing another person's knife without asking then putting it down some ware else
It's a bit like borrowing next doors lawnmower while he has just nipped in to answer the phone then on his return after searching high and low he comes back to find it on your lawn!
So please just ask first then put it back, better still bring one

Another no is hogging the wheelhouse door or sitting on the step me or Mac need to be in and out all day so please just a little thought, also if you want to have a chat with me while I am at the wheel fine I enjoy talking
But please don't use it as an excuse to keep out of the rain or cold all day while everyone else is getting a soaking, you will be in the way and not very popular so don't think you can hibernate in there just because you feel seasick which by the way is the worst place to be for making people feel sea easick anyway

Just a little thought or do you mind, goes a long way to us all having a good day at sea

On the subject of smoking I have no problem with it on my boat while out on deck the same goes for a few beers not a problem however you always get one don't you,

Bring a few beers no problem but remember it's a fishing trip not a boozing trip

It's all just common sense really and the majority of anglers are more than helpful and willing to show you the ropes

So now at least when you arrive you have a basic understanding of what to expect which will give you a head start over those who couldn't be bothered to read my little beginners guide hopefully you will be straight into catching fish

While others are trying to cut soggy scentless squid with somebody else's knife they have borrowed without asking