

# THE POINTS GUY

## Forget farm to table, your Florida summer adventure should be catch-and-cook. Here's how and where to do it

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Summer is prime time for bountiful seafood in Florida's waters and recreational saltwater fishing brings millions of visitors to the state each year. Florida Fish and Wildlife reported more than 1.5 million recreational saltwater fishing licenses were sold in 2019, and with the increase in interest among travelers for outdoor activities that allow for social distancing in the COVID-19 pandemic's wake, fishing is more of a draw than ever.

This summer, consider chartering a boat and heading out into the deep blue for a day in the sunshine and fresh air. After you've dropped hook, line and sinker and reeled in that succulent seafood, head to a local restaurant where they'll do all the dirty work. All you have to do is order some sides, a frosty beverage and tuck into taste your hard day's work.



## Fish tails: Red snapper on the Paradise Coast

Snook would usually be on the menu for recreational fishing this summer, but 2022's snook season has been relegated to catch-and-release only. Instead, red snapper season is in full swing, starting at the beginning of the month, with plenty of charters to take you out and restaurants to clean and cook those beauties.

Pure Florida, which runs out of Naples, is the top choice for a charter, running a series of trips for snapper for the three-month season. They also offer private boats for small groups. Once you catch your fish, they'll keep them on ice in a cooler for the trip back to the mainland, where you can take your bounty to the Tin City area of Naples, where restaurants like Riverwalk and Pinchers will broil, fry or blacken the fish. If you're going out on your own boat, you'll just need a recreational fishing license from Florida Fish & Wildlife, which is available at most bait and tackle shops.



## Spiny season: Lobstering in the Florida Keys

Florida's spiny lobsters are different from the ones you'll find in New England. They're clawless, with pearly white meat only found in the tail. They're also super feisty, so confidence is key. Recreational divers can tackle these crustaceans during the mini lobster season, which is always the last Wednesday and Thursday in July. This year, it's the 27th and 28th of the month.

There is a limit to how many lobsters you can pluck from the ocean floor – six per person in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park, and 12 per person for the rest of Florida. The lobster's length between head and first tail joint must also measure longer than three inches. Your boat captain and crew should be able to tell you which lobsters are big enough to keep.

You'll also need a recreational Florida saltwater fishing license and a lobster permit to harvest unless you go out with a charter like Saltwater Seafari, located on Big Pine Key. Bring your catch to a seafood shack like Conch Republic Seafood Company or The Lobster Shack, both located on Key West, and they'll clean and cook your haul.

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[Marriott Bonvoy](#) members should consider a few nights at Playa Largo Resort & Spa, Autograph Collection, on [15 acres of beachfront Key Largo](#). Currently, member rates for mini season start at \$636 per night for a Bay Front Suite. Another option for [World of Hyatt](#) members is the Hyatt Centric Key West Resort & Spa, a Category 7 hotel, where mini-season rates start at \$599 for a King guest room with partial ocean view.