

Salmon Fishing on the Miramichi

Fly fishing is an angling method in which an artificial "fly" is used to catch fish. It requires casting techniques, which obviously she says she does not possess. **Farzana Contractor** came away, disappointed but thrilled with the experience

There wasn't much that I knew about the river I was going salmon fishing in, except that it was great for salmon fishing. But this is what I learnt about it, subsequently, through Wikipedia, the bible for online researchers.

"The Miramichi River meander length measures approximately 250 km and comprises two important branches, the Southwest Miramichi River and the Northwest Miramichi River, each having their respective tributaries. Nearly every

bend in the river, from Push and Be Damned Rapids to the Turnip Patch has a distinctive name, reflecting the importance of the river to fishermen, canoeists, and lumbermen. Tides reach upriver in the Miramichi system to Sunny Corner on the Northwest Miramichi and to Quarryville on the Southwest Miramichi – a distance of approximately 70 km inland from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The two branches combine at Newcastle where the river becomes navigable to ocean-going vessels."

Wow, sounds impressive but frankly it doesn't matter. What does is that it was singularly the most unique experience of this trip of mine, one that will forever stay in my memory. Fly fishing, that's what we, a motley group of six did, when we went out on the fishing excursion in two long boats, on a cold, cold, afternoon in the Fall of 2012 on the Miramichi in Doaktown.

Our boats were anchored barely 200 metres from where we were staying at Salmon (what else!) Lodge, but yet – and I did not understand why – we got into these huge SUVs, all padded up in layers and layers of warm clothing, woolen caps and gloves in place and drove down the short distance to the canoes. Three in each, with the motor chugging gently we were on our way. Mid-stream, we slowed, then stopped, threw in the line and waited. Me trying to understand the nuances of fishing.

It was cold, but we were well-clad and fairly comfortable. The wait however was getting to bother me. Patience is not one among my many (ahem) virtues. So my host-cum-fishing mentor decided to push upstream. With the wind on our face, as well as the warmth from the blazing sun, we zipped to another location, with no luck.



The sun dazzling the river, creating diamond-like nuggets flashing by



Deceptively serene, the Miramichi



Photographs: Farzana Contractor

The SUVs, the canoes, Miramichi and the salmons in there!

Salmon Lodge, positioned just perfectly





Good wine, good food, good hosts

So we turned around and raced downstream, going way past the Salmon Lodge, bumping once on a sandy bottom and then lurching, bringing my heart to a halt. But then what fun is an adventure of such nature if there is no adrenaline rush?

Another spot and trying some more and failing, with the sun disappearing from the sky now and then, playing hide and seek, it was decided we should go back to the Lodge and drink some good wine.

So we turned around and started back. The sun in a jiffy seemed to have disappeared completely now. That is when I learnt what wind chill factor, combined with no sunshine can mean. Brrrr... Was it cold, or was it freezing cold. Could I still

be alive, I was numb and frozen for sure. It felt like eternity, but we did make it back before I passed out and it was only then that I understood why the SUVs had to be there, waiting for us to get in and get warm. Walking to the Lodge would have killed me, for sure!

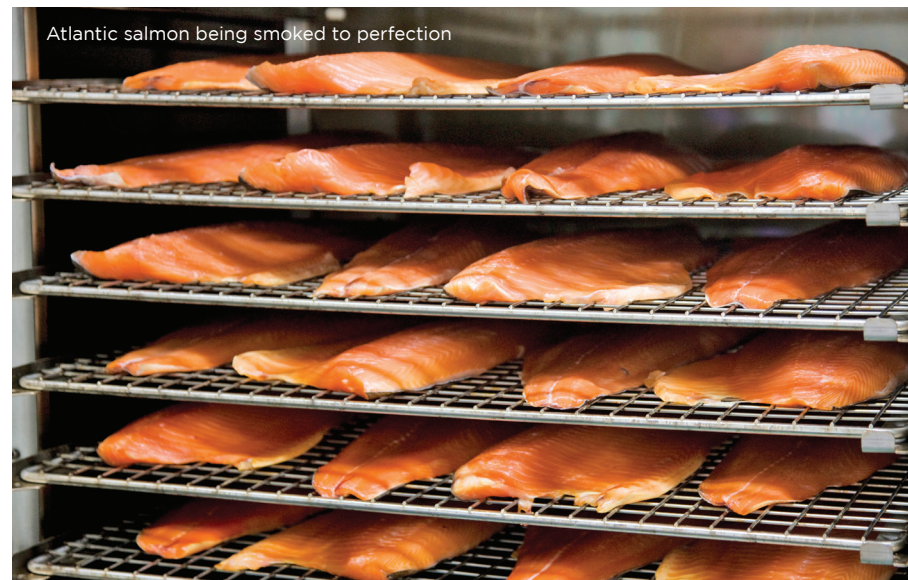
But nothing like a good glass of wine and paired with the most divine smoked salmon, it would bring a *mummy* back to life. Honest, *Miramichi Smokehouse* really does smoke salmons to perfection. I can only hope we, in India, will get to eat some of it here soon. They are looking for importers and distributors from here. Any takers? Send an email to: norm@miramichismokedsalmon.com



View from my verandah, a fox!



Mayor of Doaktown, Bev Gaston, also shops at Miramichi Smokehouse



Atlantic salmon being smoked to perfection

Smoking a salmon is a highly specialised task. Typically, it is a fillet that has been cured with salt and hot or cold-smoked. To give it the the 'oakey-smokey' taste, oak shavings are put into the oven.



Norm Betts shows off his branded and packed smoked salmon



The drive to Salmon Lodge from *Miramichi Smokehouse* in Doaktown takes just 10 minutes. It's wilderness all around...