

# Rainbow Trout

Many anglers enjoy the challenge of fishing for rainbow trout. Fifty years ago, Texas anglers had to travel out of state to find this colorful fish. Today, thanks to an active stocking program, trout provide a winter fishery for Texans of all ages.

Rainbow trout are not native to Texas. Evidence suggests that West Texas streams once supported indigenous populations of cutthroat trout, but they haven't been found in modern times. McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park has a self-sustaining population of rainbow trout, but fishing is not allowed there.

In 1966, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) began stocking rainbow trout in the tailrace areas of the Guadalupe River below Canyon Dam. This was the beginning of one of the state's most popular programs. Trout don't do well in water warmer than 70°F. Few places in the state offer year-round habitat, but there are many areas where trout can thrive during the cool winter months. By 1984 the program had expanded to include several state park lakes. These stockings were a tremendous success, increasing park visitation and providing angling opportunity

at a time when warm water species are less active. Trout numbers increased from 10,000 in 1966 to more than 260,000 in 2004. Today, TPWD stocks catchable-sized trout in approximately 100 locations each year. Stockings take place from December through March. Most fish are harvested before warmer weather arrives and water temperatures increase.

Trout stocked in Texas are purchased from commercial hatcheries. These trout usually do not move far from the stocking site, and provide tremendous fishing success for two to three weeks after stocking. After that time, the remaining fish become crafty and better adapted to the waters, thus providing a real challenge for anglers.

In the Guadalupe River below Canyon Dam, the water tends to stay cool. Trout in this river have been known to survive the summer and grow to impressive sizes. This is still the best spot for trout anglers who seek a true river fishing experience.

In addition to providing a unique winter fishery in public water, trout are utilized to create accessible fishing opportunities for physically challenged and young anglers who may never have had a fishing experience due to limited access at traditional sites. Trout are stocked in accessible areas such as city swimming pools, and anglers with disabilities are invited to experience the thrill of catching a trout. This program is a cooperative effort involving city administration, local merchants, corporate sponsors and TPWD.

## Fishing Techniques

Trout fishing can be as simple or as sophisticated as you want it to be. Methods range from a cane pole baited with cheese to a fly rod with hand-tied flies. Ultralight spinning tackle using 4- to 6-pound test-line and 1/32 to 1/8 ounce spinners are very effective. Dry or wet flies, spinners, small spoons, and bucktail or feather jigs are productive. Many methods will catch trout, but baits such as whole kernel corn, cheese and salmon eggs on a long-shanked hook (#8 or smaller) are quite effective for the hatchery-reared fish.

## Regulations

Trout anglers are required to have a valid fishing license with a freshwater stamp endorsement, except for those persons exempt from sport fishing license requirements. Licenses and stamps are not required if fishing within the boundaries of a Texas State Park. The statewide daily bag limit is five trout, with no minimum length.

Special regulations are in effect on sections of the Guadalupe River. For details, see the current regulations at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual).

## Further Information

For more information on trout fishing in Texas, including a schedule of stockings, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744; telephone (800) 792-1112. Stocking schedules are usually available by the middle of November. The schedule is also available at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/troutstocking/](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/troutstocking/).

## Riverbank Rainbow

5 trout

3-4 lemons or limes, sliced

Barbeque sauce:

2 tablespoon ketchup

2 tablespoon A-1 sauce

3 tablespoon chili sauce

3 tablespoon Tabasco sauce

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1/4 cup lemon juice

1/4 stick melted butter

Clean and rinse trout in cold water. Brush trout with sauce and allow to marinate for 20 minutes. Make shallow foil pan, arrange lemon slices on bottom and lay trout on top. Meanwhile, prepare grill or smoker and allow to burn down to red coals (about 350°). Put fish on rack away from heat. Close hood and cook about 60 minutes, or until flaky. (Time will vary depending upon how close fish are to coals.)



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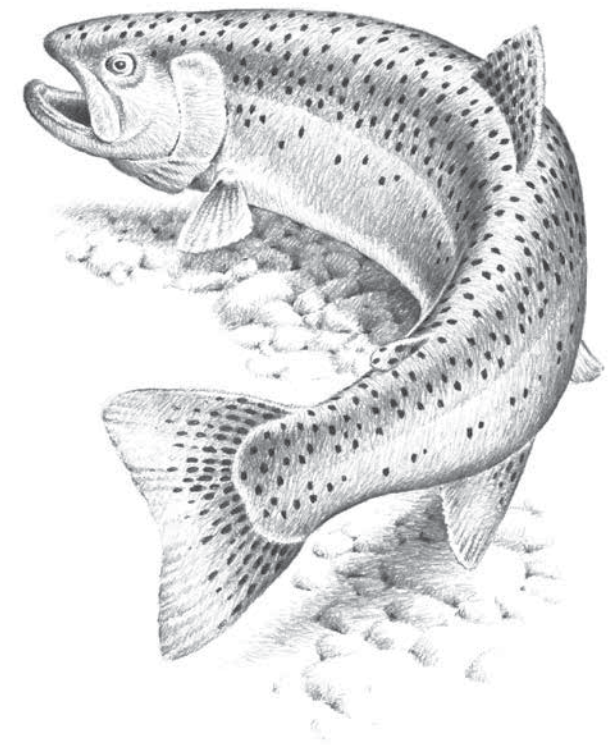
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# Rainbow Trout in Texas



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