

# ROXTONS

## An Himalayan fishing adventure, April 2015

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**Sometimes, just sometimes, this job is exactly what everyone thinks it probably is. Adventurous, full of fishing and very spoiling.**

Having just returned from a mahseer fishing trip in the foothills of the Himalayas it does feel a bit weird to have described it as a “work trip”. My wife and children have been referring to it as the “Indian holiday” for some time and it turns out they were right.

Six of us set out to fish with Misty Dhillon, who is the mahseer guru par excellence. For years these fish have only been caught on paste and large spoons but Misty has spent pretty much his whole life working out how to catch them on a fly and he has succeeded.

Beautiful fish tend to live in beautiful locations and mahseer are no different. Fishing a river that acts as the border between Nepal and India, with the Himalayas in the background is quite simply a very special experience and one that will live with me for a long time. However, a warning. India is awesome but it is also vast. Getting around takes time and this is not a trip for those who like to minimise travelling time and maximise fishing time. The travel and the scenery is hugely part of the whole adventure.

We took a five hour train ride out of Delhi to begin with which was fascinating as we went through the industrialised northern parts of Delhi and then into the open countryside. Then a quick drive to the stunning Te Aora hotel which at 8,500 feet is noticeably cooler and you begin to understand why the Raj had two capitals – one in the lowland for winter and one in the highlands for the summer. After breakfast overlooking the snow capped Himalayas we then had a further five hour drive followed by a two hour float trip into camp. All of this before we had put our rods up!

The camp was a welcome sight and whilst hugely comfortable “glamping” is probably the best way to describe it. However, a hot shower followed by one of the delicious suppers that were to be a feature of the trip and we were all ready for action the following day.



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The fishing is straightforward but counter-intuitive. It was pretty hot whilst we were there (around 30°C) but we were fishing very deep (think 15ft of T-17) with big and bushy flies, very similar to the set up you would use in the colder climes of Tierra Del Fuego.

Four and a half rods (one had to leave halfway through the week) caught 18 fish up to 16lbs. Misty was very disappointed with the fishing and his records show that 10 fish per rod per week would be more usual.



There were all sorts of sights from cremations on the opposite bank, local villagers washing in the river, farmers washing their water buffalo etc. It is a place where you have to be relaxed about what is happening as it is very, very remote and the local people have no conception of fly fishing or why you would catch something and not eat it. You could not go there if fishing was the sole reason to be there – more, it is about using fishing as an excuse to go to an amazing place and see some extraordinary sights.

I had lots of preconceptions before going and almost all turned out to be wrong. I was worried about the food, the train journey, the begging and the sheer overwhelming volume of people that I assumed would accost us.

The food was outstanding, the train journey was fascinating and very comfortable, I was not approached once by anyone asking for money and Delhi was actually a very calm place. The people (everywhere) are beyond nice and really make the experience a great one as opposed to merely very good.

Misty makes everything look easy and he can tailor-make any trip one could ever think of. If I went again, I would spend a day or two in Delhi and take in the Taj Mahal and perhaps Jaipur, spend four to five days fishing before going on and having three days in the Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve – this really would be the best of India with fishing being the hook to hang it on.

“If I went again”... I might not get away with it a second time and be able to call it work but I am definitely going back.

