

3 Popular Ways to Ice Fish in Southern Ontario

Whether you're new to ice fishing in Southern Ontario or are a seasoned veteran there's...as they used to say when it was more socially acceptable - "more than one way to skin a cat."

And, although there are many variations available, I see three main ways to enjoy a safe ice fishing adventure:

1. Simply grab your equipment and walk, run, ATV, or sled, out onto the ice.
2. Rent a nice warm ice hut on your favorite lake.
3. Rent a self-contained "ice bungalow"

Out in the Open

Just like the title implies, this form of ice fishing involves little more than warm clothes, tackle, and some way to make a hole in the ice – usually an ice auger. Hey, we're Canadian eh...it doesn't get better than this. This can be one of the most enjoyable ways to enjoy hard water angling, but it may not be the best to introduce someone not familiar with the rigors of the Canadian winter to the sport.

Pros	Cons
Inexpensive – often free or minimal usage fees.	No conveniences – like a toilet or stove.
No need to plan ahead.	Provide your own transportation – or walk.
Freedom to go wherever you want on the lake.	Need knowledge of the lake and ice conditions.

Rent an Ice Hut

Now we're getting a bit more civilized. How can you beat a garden shed with a couple of benches and holes in the floor, and a nice wood stove burning? This is likely what most of us think of when we think of ice fishing. There is no shortage of places to rent ice huts in Southern Ontario, and with most operators providing transportation to your hut and having bait readily available, often all you need to do is show up.

Pros	Cons
Sheltered from the elements – usually has a stove.	Between bait and hut rental you will likely spend \$50 to \$75 per person per day.
Transportation and bait are usually provided, or available.	Operators usually want you off the ice before sundown. Just when the bite is on.
Operators are familiar with the ice conditions and best places to fish.	You can't change locations if fishing is bad.
A great way for beginners to enjoy ice fishing.	Four man huts are often only big enough for two people.

The Ice Bungalow

This is a relatively new form of ice fishing adventure, but I wouldn't advise it as a honeymoon chalet for newlyweds – unless there is a divorce court across the road. The ice bungalow is a much larger “garden shed” that is equipped as a house keeping cottage. It has bunks, cooking facilities including pots, pans, plates, etc., toilet facilities, and often a barbeque. This is for the real diehard fisherman because you will be up close and personal with your companions for the time you are there.

Pros	Cons
Just move in and enjoy your stay.	Provide and carry all your own food, drinks, and luggage.
No need to travel between your accommodations and great fishing.	Some want to fish while others want to sleep. Little privacy!
If you bring your own auger it can be a great base to explore the lake for a few days.	It's a good idea to get references from friends regarding the condition and cleanliness of the huts. Toilet facilities are pretty basic.

No matter what type of ice fishing adventure you choose, get out and enjoy this traditional Southern Ontario winter activity. Who knows, the catch of a lifetime might be lurking just under the ice.

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