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A wonder of the world: Fishing Niagara Falls USA



Misty Wells' recent visit to the Niagara Region to film for her show, which airs on the Discovery Channel. The Niagara Episode premiered Aug. 4. Visit Waypoint TV for an on-demand rebroadcast. (Submitted photos) • Fresh caught walleye served at Casa Antica in Lewiston.

BY CAPT. FRANK CAMPBELL
Outdoor Promotions Director
Destination Niagara USA

Editor's Note: The following is a personal recount of award-winning producer Misty Wells' recent visit to the Niagara Region to film for her show, which airs on the Discovery Channel. The Niagara Episode premiered Sunday, Aug. 4.

I am here to tell you, you haven't fished until you have fished Niagara Falls River for the first time.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to film my TV show, "Let's Take it Outside," in Niagara Falls and, when they told me that we were going to fish the Niagara River, my excitement went through the roof. Before and after my trip to Niagara Falls, I hear the same response when I share my pictures and fishing story with everyone, "I didn't know you could fish the Niagara."

Excited to fish with local legend Capt. Frank Campbell, we met at the dock at 7 a.m. and I was ready for some fishing action. Frank

is a full-time guide with over 30 years of fishing experience on Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the Niagara River. In between fishing over 200 days a year, Frank finds time to also be the outdoor promotions director at Destination Niagara Falls USA. We started fishing around the mouth of Lake Ontario where the Niagara River and Lake meet, using spinning rods with maglip lures. The target for day No. 1 was smallmouth bass and brown trout. I had never caught either of those species, so I was ready.

Right off the bat, Frank started catching a lot of smallmouth bass, then he landed a large lake trout. I was starting to get worried because, so far, I had not caught anything. I was missing the bite. The fish in Florida are much more aggressive; the Niagara fish are much more polite – you really have to pay attention to the bite.

We continued to run up the river and drift back. Finally, I caught a few bass. I got a feel for



how to work the lures off the bottom. My first big catch was a lake trout, and it was huge – at least it was huge to me. Lake trout have a subtle bite and don't fight too much, so I did not expect the fish to be as big as it was.

As the day went on, we caught a lot of smallmouth bass and then Frank landed a nice-size brown trout; they are just beautiful. I was really hoping to land a brown trout like Frank. Finally, I got the bite and Frank knew exactly what was on the other end of the line before I did. I had finally landed a brown trout – and my first day of fishing the Niagara was complete.

Niagara Falls State Park is America's oldest state park and is known for its jaw-dropping scenic beauty. The fishing begins in Devil's Hole, a few miles below Niagara Falls. The river then flows eight miles downstream to where its mouth empties into Lake Ontario. The lower Niagara River is known for its Chinook salmon, steelhead and walleye and all those species were on my list.

We started Day No. 2 of fishing in Devil's Hole. I was desperate to catch some walleye and salmon. The water flow is much faster in the upper Niagara, so your drift fishing is quite different than the lower waters. Capt. Frank would drive us upriver, tell you to get ready, and then the quick drift downstream would begin. Fishing, we were using a similar set

up as the day before, spinning rods and silver and green maglip lures bouncing along the bottom.

In the Niagara, fish will congregate wherever the current has a break in it or where they can feed. My first catch in the upper stretches of the Niagara was a nice steelhead. The fishing was on fire again. We caught and released a lot of fish, but I was still hoping for my first walleye.

Par for the course, Frank caught a nice walleye before me, but finally my fishing dream came true, and I landed one as the "last fish of the day."

I can't believe I was able to complete my "Niagara Fishing Bucket List" in just two days: Lake trout, brown trout, smallmouth bass, salmon and walleye. That night, we dined on our fresh-caught walleye at Casa Antica, a family-run Italian restaurant in historic Lewiston.

Now, I have heard people say, "The Niagara River is one of the best, if not the best, fisheries in North America." The Niagara really is an amazing fishery because of the different species, the numbers and size fish year-round.

Fishing the Niagara River truly is fishing magic – and let's be honest the scenery's not bad either.

I hope you were able to tune in to "Let's Take it Outside" on Discovery Channel for the Niagara episode and "catch all the action." If you missed it, don't worry: You can also watch on-demand and free on Waypoint TV.

Misty Wells is an award-winning producer and host of "Let's Take it Outside," which airs on the Discovery Channel and on 12 networks to over 220 million viewers worldwide. An outdoor pro and outdoor travel writer, Wells is founder of A Reel Future, a nonprofit devoted to teaching the passion of fishing and conservation to foster children, reaching more than 3,800 children and counting. www.mistywells.com.

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