

STARTING TENCH FISHING

A Beginners Guide



So, you want to catch some tench, hopefully over the next few pages you'll pick up some tips to help you on your way....

Tench are often voted Britain's favourite coarse fish and its easy to see why. There's something just that bit different about them what with their beautiful green flanks and beady red eyes, they fight hard for their size too. A true sporting species.

Venue Selection

The obvious place to start is to look at likely venues. Slow moving rivers, canals, farm ponds, old estate lakes through to huge gravel pits will all have a stock of tench. In fact, the only water they do not particularly take to is fast moving rivers. Canals always seem to be a haven as my local Royal Military Canal proves, I must have caught hundreds from there over the years. For the big fish hunter gravel pits always produce the better specimens.

Just about every day ticket or club water will have tench, a quick look at a club or day ticket fishery website will point you to the right water. Many Fisheries have dedicated Tench and Crucian waters, like the Marsh Farm complex at Godalming which is a fine example of a mixed venue containing few carp. (Godalming AS permit and day tickets available). Some famous estate lakes, like Blenheim Palace have a great reputation for traditional style tench fishing too.



Top: Blenheim palace, in Oxfordshire. A classic estate lake which has a great reputation for tench fishing using traditional methods.

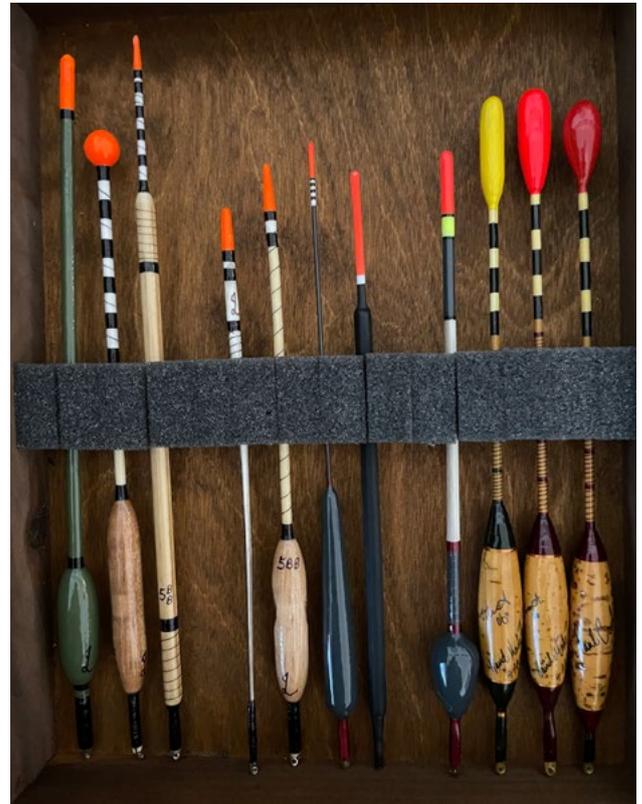
Above: With their smooth green flanks and beady red eyes, it's not hard to see why us anglers love fishing for them.

Equipment

Equipment needed can be as basic or complicated as you want to make it. This guide concentrates on “running line” methods but of course pole tackle is another method to consider. The classic tench angling approach is using a float rod and a classic pattern like a quill or it’s modern equivalent, the waggler. A standard match rod is fine for canals and open water venues that are not too weedy. On gravel pits (many are very weedy) a longer 14 foot rod with more power is handy. These are the “power”, “plus” or carp versions of standard “match” float gear. There is an excellent guide to float fishing in this feature set too. Targeting the “marginal shelf” in pits is a good place to find feeding tench with the float.

Float Fishing

When fishing a float, the use of a plummet is essential, as your hook bait wants to be touching or laying on the bottom. The most versatile float to go for would be an unweighted straight peacock waggler. With this float you have options of bulk shotting around the float or with a heavy shot near the hook to fish a lift method style. Line breaking stains need to be around 6lb for general float fishing, there is no need to fish overly fine. Always use a hook length that is weaker than your main line. Hook size depends on bait, say a 16 for double maggot 14 for single piece of corn or a 12 for double corn, hookable pellets, worms and bigger baits. (Please see our Float Fishing feature for more detail on this highly effective approach.)



Above: Float fishing remains one of the best ways to target the species and is a great way to begin fishing for them on the correct venue.

Below: A very tenchy looking swim. A float positioned beside that set of Lily pads or off the reeds would be the perfect spot to ambush Tinca Tinca.



Feeder Fishing

Feeder rods come in many shapes and sizes, just about any carp type feeder rod is suitable for tench. Tench can fight hard so a rod with a bit of strength is required, many carp feeder rods have a lovely through action. Keep away from powerful rods designed for punching feeders great distances. You will be looking at 1.25lb to 1.75lb test curve depending on how far and what maximum weight feeder you intend to use. 12 foot length is common and you will likely pair this with a 5000 size reel.

The most effective type of feeder when feeder fishing is the inline maggot feeder. Red maggots are a tencher's favourite. Terminal tackle would be 8lb mainline. The size of feeder depends on the casting distance required, 30/35g is a good starting point.

Helicopter rigs are often used with feeders. Many rigs use a hair to carry the bait on the hook but you can (and many do) just hook maggots and corn straight onto the bend.

Rigs

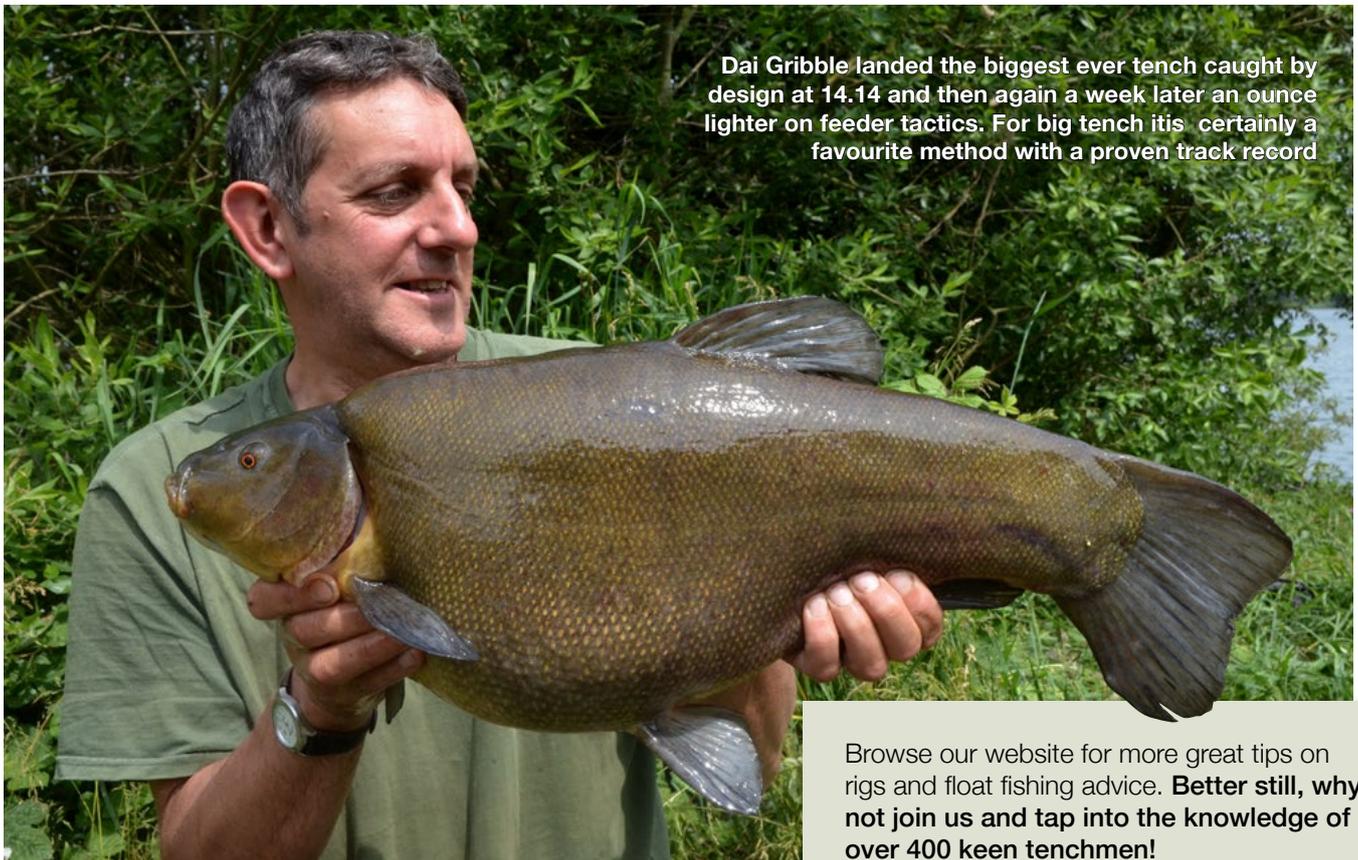
Take a look at our rig guide here for more ideas. There is no need to get too complicated and don't forget that float fishing might be a good method on the day too. Location is probably more important than ultimate rig selection! Especially when fishing pits which is where most tench fishing is done these days.

As with all fishing make sure you carry a ready assembled landing net and use an unhooking mat at all times. Have a container of water handy to wet the mat and fish too.



Above: A typical feeder set-up in action. Baitrunner reels loaded with suitably strong line, rods with a test curve powerful enough to control those hard fighting tench and alarms to detect any enquiries.

Below: Camouflaged feeders deliver bait on the spot entice those fish to feed and help them find our hookbaits.



Dai Gribble landed the biggest ever tench caught by design at 14.14 and then again a week later an ounce lighter on feeder tactics. For big tench it's certainly a favourite method with a proven track record

Browse our website for more great tips on rigs and float fishing advice. **Better still, why not join us and tap into the knowledge of over 400 keen tenchmen!**