



belize

TRAVEL GUIDE



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TABLE OF
Contents



PG 03

ABOUT BELIZE

PG 07

VISITOR
INFORMATION

PG 12

GETTING TO
BELIZE

PG 22

CRUISE

PG 34

MAYA CITIES
MYSTIC CAVES

PG 48

ACTIVITIES TO
DO IN BELIZE

PG 58

DISTRICTS

PG 98

RETIREMENT,
BUSINESS &
PLEASURE

PG 05

WELCOME

PG 10

FLIGHTS

PG 14

CALENDAR OF
EVENTS

PG 28

BARRIER REEF

PG 42

PEOPLE FOOD
CULTURE

PG 57

TIPS FOR
ECO-TRAVELLING

PG 89

OVERNIGHT
ADVENTURES


PG 99

MAP OF BELIZE



Belize

"OUR JEWEL"



Belizeans affectionately refer to Belize as “Our Jewel” because we understand how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful country. Belize provides inland, island, and intrinsic voyages that are sure to captivate all senses. We have a diverse mix of marine, rainforest, archaeological, and cultural tourism offers, all linked together in a modest piece of real estate. We are approximately 8,867 sq. miles of wild, wondrous, and world-renowned sites. To experience Belize is to experience Mother Nature at her best.

BIG

The Belizean people are just as unique and diverse as our natural environment. The Creole, East- Indian, Mestizo, Maya, Mennonite, Garifuna, and other groups live peacefully together through our common identity as Belizeans. The flora and fauna in our rainforest, the corals and marine life in our reef, and the history and complexity of our landscape are matched by the diversity of our culture and people. We are a multi-ethnic people who prefer to describe our melting pot as “well-seasoned rice and beans”- our favourite local dish. We speak English among other languages but best of all we speak life, peace, and adventure. Belize is an environmental and multi-cultural phenomenon.

BOLD

It used to be that people were surprised to know that we exist. Now, the surprise is to meet someone who has never visited or who is not planning on visiting soon. Our little Jewel is quickly becoming a household name among travellers from across the world. Over the last few decades, Belize’s natural, marine, historical, and cultural heritage has attracted thousands worldwide. We build our tourism product on the ethos of preservation and

BEAUTIFUL

sustainable development and continue to work hard to keep our environment healthy. Belize is a must-see for nature enthusiasts, and it is a must-visit for travellers looking to experience culture, simplicity, and authentic experiences. Our history and our culture are an adventure package unlike any other.

Belize is “Our Jewel” - where all your big, bold, and beautiful experiences await.

A large cave interior with a river and a person on a rock. The cave walls are covered in numerous stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The water in the river is dark and reflects the surrounding rock. A person is standing on a large, flat rock in the foreground, looking towards the river. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the rock and the stalactites.

BE Activated WHEN Exploring



It is our fervent wish that everyone who visits Belize leaves here having had an immersive and fulfilling vacation experience. It is a small piece of real estate that offers big experiences. In 8,867 square miles, you can dive into the largest living barrier reef in the Northern Hemisphere, go deep below the water's surface at our Great Blue Hole, or explore any of our three marine atolls. Belize is an adventurer's paradise where you will be captivated by a great civilization at any of our ancient Maya archeological sites, your senses activated when exploring our expansive cave system, or your spirit heightened on an adventure in our dense rainforest. All of our ecosystems are like theme parks, except everything is real, authentic, and living. Our terrain includes beaches, rivers, bays, savannahs, and lagoons. Every outdoor activity and scenic view is bound to make you feel alive and great.



Belize's tourism product is unique, versatile, and resilient. Our mantra is always to conserve and protect our natural environment. When visiting our tourism destinations and meeting with the Belizean people, you will see how our ethnic, cultural, and environmental diversity are at the core of our strength and rarity as a tourism product. It is the combination and collective appreciation of the Creole, Garifuna, Maya, Mestizo, East-Indian, Mennonite, and other ethnic communities of Belize that make our tourism offer unlike any other.

Belizeans at home, as well as the Belizean Diaspora abroad, are invested in maintaining Belize's continued growth and development. Belize's unique cultural and natural resources help to ensure that your visit here provides an adventurous, relaxing, romantic, and historical vacation that is sure to add to your physical and mental wellness. Whatever your reason is for visiting, we would like to say "Welcome to Our Jewel". Put your feet up, your hair down, and Grab Life!

Hon. Anthony Mahler
Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations

GENERAL **Visitor** **Information**



Language & Population



The population of Belize is approximately 400,000. English is our formal language and is taught and used throughout the country. Kriol, an English-based language with strong African roots, is our first language. Other languages commonly spoken throughout Belize include Spanish, Maya, Garifuna, and Mandarin.

Geography

Belize's total land area is 8,867 sq. miles, 175 miles in length and 69 miles in width. We are located in Central America, bordered to the north by Mexico and by Guatemala to the south and west. Our coastline meets the Caribbean Sea to the east. Belize has the lowest population density in Central America with 17.64 persons per square kilometer. Belize is a part of the Mesoamerican biodiversity hotspot with varied ecosystems such as coastal and marine (including some mangrove swamps), freshwater wetlands, pine-ridge/savanna, and broadleaf forest. Our major geographical features include the Belize Barrier Reef, the Maya Mountains, and the largest cave system in Central America.

Climate

Our climate is subtropical with an average daily temperature of 85°F. For most of the year, the weather is considered hot and humid. Belize has two seasons (Wet and dry). The Dry season

extends from December to May, while the Wet season follows through from June to November.

Time Zone

Belize is on GMT-6, or US Central Standard Time throughout the year. There are no daylight saving time changes.

Government

Belize achieved its independence on September 21, 1981. Since 1862, we have been known as British Honduras and then Belize since 1973. We were a British crown colony until our independence. As cited in our constitution, Belize is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. The government is divided into three branches: executive, legislative, and judiciary. The Prime Minister leads the executive branch.

Currency

The official currency of Belize is the Belize dollar. The US\$1 is equivalent to BZ\$2 at a fixed rate. U.S. currency and credit cards (mainly Visa, American Express, and MasterCard) are readily accepted throughout the country. US dollars are accepted throughout the country and can be exchanged at local banks. ATMs are located in the main cities and towns and most accept foreign credit cards.

Entry & Exit Requirements



Visitors to Belize must possess a passport valid for a period of 30 days, and a return ticket. Cruise ship passengers are exempted and do not require an entry visa or passport. Visitors may be given a stay of up to one month, after which an extension can be applied for at the Belize Immigration Department. CARICOM nationals are granted an automatic six month visa.

Entry visas are not required for citizens of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and its territories, the European Union, most Caribbean and Central American countries, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. For a complete and current listing of countries that enjoy visa-free travel to Belize, visit www.mfa.gov.bz.

For visitors driving or boating into Belize, a temporary importation permit for their vehicle/vessel must be secured at the point of entry. Permits are valid for 30 days.

Work Where You Vacation is the perfect way to spend six months living in, working from, and falling in love with Belize! A Long Stay Permit is valid for 6 months after the date issued. To apply, visit: www.immigration.gov.bz/permits/long-stay-permit/

Traveling with Children?



Children, under 18 years of age and who are traveling alone, must have a valid passport and a letter (documentation) proving that they have parental consent to travel. In instances where only one parent is traveling with the child/children, a notarized letter of authority and consent for travel from the other parent is necessary. If the parent accompanying the child/children has full legal custody, he/she must present proper documentation. All relevant documents must be presented in print (hard copy) as digital copies may not be accepted.

Traveling with Pets?



Pets must have a veterinary certificate issued by a registered veterinarian from their country of origin. An import permit from the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) is also needed. Kindly call +011-501-822-0197, or visit BAHA's website: www.baha.org.bz.

Electrical System



Belize's electrical system is the same as in North America: 110 volts AC power is provided throughout the country. Our electrical grid is supplied utilizing hydroelectricity, biomass, petroleum, and solar energy sources. It is made more secure by a 115-kV interconnection with Mexico.

Internet & Wi-Fi Access



Belize's two major internet service providers are Belize Telemedia Limited (BTL) and Speednet Communications Limited (SMART). Internet access is readily available throughout the country with most businesses and residents having their own Wi-Fi networks.

Healthcare



Healthcare is provided through both public and private systems. The Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH), located in Belize City, is Belize's largest public hospital. Other public hospitals can be found in each major district. Smaller clinics, with nurse practitioners, are established in villages and other rural areas. Most major private hospitals and clinics are located in Belize City. Dentistry and pharmaceutical services are available in major cities, towns, and villages

Water



The Belize Water Services (BWS) manages and maintains our water sources. Tap water is treated in its cities and towns and can be expected to be free of any major contaminants. Tap water and the ice served in beverages are generally safe to consume. Purified bottled water is sold throughout the country.

Clothing



Clothing choice should depend on the activity. Generally, light, casual clothing made of natural fabrics is recommended. Consult with your travel agent for appropriate attire for adventure and sea activities.

Emergency Numbers



Police Emergency: 911

Fire or Medical: 90

Fees & Taxes



Hotel room tax - 9%

Sales tax on goods & services- 12.5%

Airport Departure Fee - US\$55.50

Overland Border Exit Fee - US\$20.00

FLIGHTS



With daily flights from many cities across North and Central America, travel to Belize is easier than you would imagine. All International flights arrive at the Philip Goldson International Airport.

ATLANTA - 3 hrs, 11 mins

BALTIMORE - 4 hrs, 15 mins

CALGARY - 6 hrs, 20 mins

CANCUN - 1 hr, 45 mins

CHARLOTTE - 3 hrs, 24 mins

CHICAGO - 4 hrs, 15 mins

DALLAS - 2 hrs, 50 mins

DENVER - 5 hrs, 30 mins

GUATEMALA CITY - 1 hr, 15 mins

HOUSTON - 2 hrs, 20 mins

LOS ANGELES - 5 hrs

MIAMI - 2 hrs, 5 mins

MINNEAPOLIS - 4 hrs, 20 mins

NEWARK - 6 hrs, 25 mins

NEW YORK - 4 hrs, 45 mins

PANAMA CITY - 2 hrs, 20 mins

ROATAN - 55 minutes

SAN FRANCISCO - 5 hrs, 30 mins

SAN SALVADOR - 1 hr

SEATTLE - 7 hrs

TORONTO - 4 hrs, 46 mins



Getting TO Belize

Travel to Belize from the United States, Canada, Central America, or Mexico is quick and convenient. There are 12 airlines with 21 direct flights or routes to Belize. The average time it takes to get to Belize from most major US cities is about 2-5 hours.

Here are some things you will need to know about getting here by air, land, or sea. We advise that you kindly visit www.travelbelize.org for more details and updates about all entry requirements, including the option to purchase Belize Travel Insurance.

BY AIR

All international and commercial flights into Belize arrive at the Philip. S. W. Goldson International Airport (PGIA), located 10 miles north of Belize City. Any private aircraft must be cleared through the Belize Airport Authority and Civil Aviation Department at the PGIA.

BY LAND

Land entry into Belize can happen through Mexico (northern border) or Guatemala (western border). There are regular bus runs from and to bordering Chetumal City in

Mexico and runs from and to bordering Flores in Guatemala.

BY SEA

Any non-commercial sea vessels seeking entry into Belize must follow specific protocols. Entry is possible at any of the following locations: Belize City, San Pedro, Placencia, or Punta Gorda. There are fees and documentation required to enter. Captains can submit their vessel, immigration, and customs information electronically prior to arrival via Sailclear, an online official pre-arrival notification system available for operators of yachts and other pleasure crafts. Kindly visit www.sailclear.com for more details.

Cruise ship passengers are exempted from certain entry requirements. Disembarkation is usually at the Fort Street Tourism Village in Belize City or Harvest Caye, south of Belize. Procedures to disembark and arrangements for scheduled inland tours are advised on board.

Kindly visit (www.belizeportauthority.bz) for more information or E-mail at (www.vto@portauthority.bz) for help.

Getting AROUND Belize

Tropic Air and Maya Island Air are the two main national airlines. They fly at scheduled times to major islands and towns. Our local carriers also fly to specific locations in Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico. Private air charters are available. Most direct flights within the country take between 15 minutes to one hour long. Kindly visit (www.mayaislandair.com) or (www.tropicair.com) for more information.

BY LAND

Belize has a well-planned highway and road system that connects all mainland towns, villages, and major tourist attractions. All major highways are paved and visitors can rent a vehicle at the airport or major tourist destinations, join an organized tour, charter a taxi, or use the public transportation system (bus). Buses travel between and through towns and villages at scheduled times

throughout the day. Our legal speed limit is 55 mph. Most major towns are less than an hour apart by vehicle and the country can be traveled from Corozal to Toledo in less than a day with short adventure stops included.

BY SEA

Traveling from Belize City to the major island destinations is best and most economically done via water taxi. The major water shuttle providers are San Pedro Belize Express and Caribbean Sprinter. They provide daily and hourly runs to popular island destinations such as Caye Caulker and San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. There are also routes from San Pedro to Corozal Town and Chetumal City in Mexico. Some licensed tour operators offer private charters and tours to various parts of the country, other offshore islands, and outer marine atolls.



Calendar OF Events

Every year there are activities that take place across the country. These annual events are just some of the ways that Belizeans choose to share and celebrate their interests, talents, and culture. For a more updated list of events with dates, visit www.travelbelize.org.

JANUARY

KREM NEW YEAR'S CYCLING CLASSIC: This annual race started in 1992 and is one of Belize's most anticipated cycling events of the year for elite and junior riders. Happening on January 1st, this event is a fun New Year's Day tradition. The race starts in the Corozal District and finishes in Belize City.

HORSE RACING IN BURREL BOOM: In this tranquil river-side community located within the Belize District, the annual New Year's Day racing starts early. The horses line up at the entrance of a dirt track while spectators cheer on their favorite riders. Other festivities take place with traditional food and drinks on sale.



FEBRUARY

SAN PEDRO CARNIVAL: On the three days preceding Ash Wednesday, this carnival celebrates the beginning of the Easter season. This event dates back to the 19th century and includes parades, costumes, and masquerade balls. This carnival is a fun folklore festivity that is full of glamour, humor, and fun.

PLACENCIA SIDEWALK ART FESTIVAL: Many artists from around the country gather in Placencia Village to showcase and sell their creations at this Festival. Handmade items include jewelry, carvings, sculptures, clothing, and pictures. Booths sell local foodstuffs while music adds to the vibrant atmosphere.

ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY CYCLING CLASSIC: In the season of all things love, observe the passion and endurance of Elite, U23, Masters, Junior, and Female cyclists racing from San Ignacio, Cayo District to Belize City. Cyclists can be seen battling through tropical temperatures and fierce competitors along the 86-90-mile route.



BELIKIN LA RUTA MAYA BELIZE RIVER CHALLENGE: This arduous, four-day cross-country canoe race is fun for amateur and professional racers! Participants start their journey in San Ignacio and travel east along the Macal and old Belize rivers for 179 miles, testing the paddlers' teamwork and coordination before ending in Belize City.

MARCH

CROSS-COUNTRY CYCLING CLASSIC: This annual cycling event, which first took place in 1928, attracts international competitors and spectators. For approximately 142 miles, Belizean cyclists test their grit against foreign riders on Holy Saturday. This race starts early morning in Belize City, heads west to San Ignacio, and returns to Belize City.

BURRELL BOOM CASTLETON DERBY: Burrell Boom's racing tracks in the Belize District, come alive again for this annual Easter Monday event. Local jockeys and Belizean-bred horses excite the crowd as the dust rises and settles in the air for the various classes held over different distances. Traditional food and drinks are available for spectators.

MARCH

BARON BLISS HARBOUR REGATTA: This annual regatta is a sailing competition that gives young sailors a chance to show off their skills and have fun. This almost century-old event takes place at the Seashore Promenade in Belize City and is a testament to a small group of people working together to keep the tradition of sailing alive.

SAN JOSE SUCCOTZ FIESTA: This annual village fair is held in honor of the patron saint, Saint Joseph. Highlights at this event include a combination of cultural marimba music and traditional cuisines people have come to know and love. It offers a rare chance to celebrate the deep traditions of this small Maya village in the Cayo District.

APRIL

SEMANA SANTA IN BENQUE: For the days leading up to Easter Sunday, the streets of the western border town, Benque Viejo del Carmen, are altered with “Alfombras de Acerin”, Spanish for sawdust carpets. These vibrantly colourful and creative “carpets” of brightly colored sawdust act as a guide for the re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross.

SARTENEJA EASTER REGATTA: This annual Easter Sunday event takes place in the beautiful village of Sarteneja in the Corozal District. Activities include a fishing competition, a sailing regatta with a 20ft, 22ft, and 24ft keel sailboat, a greasy pole contest, and much more. This sailing soiree is about fun, food, and family.

BELIZE INTERNATIONAL PARANDA FOLKART & MUSIC FESTIVAL: This event highlights the Garifuna musical genre from Belize and other Central American countries, called the paranda. The festival showcases the Garifuna’s musical compositions, lyrics, and instruments, carrying through the night with food, drinks, and cultural celebrations.

MAY

CROOKED TREE CASHEW FESTIVAL: Held in Crooked Tree Village, this festival celebrates the cashew harvest season with Kriole “brukdown” music and everything that can be conceivably made from the cashew crop. Visitors flock to this event to enjoy fresh produce, cashew wine, local desserts, and Caribbean-style dishes.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND TRADE SHOW: This annual trade show is held at the national showgrounds in the capital, Belmopan City. Agricultural produce and livestock are the highlights of the event. Other handicraft art and woodwork displays can normally be found. The two-day activity is filled with food, music, entertainment, and awards.

THE CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL OF BELIZE: This two-day festival in Punta Gorda Town highlights cocoa farming and chocolate manufacturing in Belize. Local foods, wines, and musical competitions are popular at the fest. Traditional Maya dances, cultural musical performances, and a host of local chocolate products can be enjoyed.



CAYE CAULKER, PLACENCIA, AND SAN PEDRO LOBSTER FESTIVALS: In celebration of the opening of the lobster season in June, these three destinations host their own lobster festivals. Visitors can enjoy a variety of tasty lobster dishes and marine-inspired cuisines at every fest. The fests are also meant to inform visitors about fishing regulations and to support the local economy.

JUNE

HOPKINS MANGO FESTIVAL: Mangos grow seasonally in Belize. Hopkins Village in Stann Creek comes alive in celebration of this season with all things mango. Enjoy the local games, cultural Garifuna performances, live music, food, and drinks for the entire family. Diced, sliced, on a stick, or straight off the tree, there are so many ways to devour mango!

The Made in Belize Trade Show is the perfect depiction of Belizean culture, heritage, and innovation blended and housed in the capital city of Belmopan. For almost a decade, Belizean entrepreneurs from all backgrounds have showcased their unique products and services at this spectacular exhibition designed to promote all things Belize.



BELIZE INTERNATIONAL FOOD & MUSIC FESTIVAL: This annual event is one of the more recent and popular musical gatherings. Local and international artists and chefs congregate for two days and two nights of food and music. The annual event is organized by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) in honour and promotion of Belizean musical and culinary art.

BELIZE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: This festival showcases the best independent Central American and Caribbean films and filmmakers. The festival features documentaries, dramas, narratives, short films, and music videos. The film festival is days-long and films are usually shown in multiple locations, ending with a formal award ceremony.

BENQUE FIESTA: This three-day festival is a celebration of the Mestizo and Maya cultures. Events are held in Benque Viejo town in the Cayo District. Visitors from near and far participate in various activities including cultural performances, fireworks, rodeos, games, local food, beverages, dancing, and mechanical rides.

FIESTARAMA: This grand regional celebration is held in Orange Walk Town. The three-day weekend of festivities features wholesome fun for the entire family with cultural entertainment, an abundance of bacchanal culinary treats, and drinks for sale. From mechanical rides to games, music, and business promos, the event promises to provide entertainment for all ages.

GRAND CARIBE FISHING TOURNAMENT: The Annual Grand Caribe Deep Sea Classic takes place on the resort grounds of Grand Caribe. The highly-anticipated fishing tournament starts with a briefing and the Captain's cocktail & dinner before two full days of fishing at sea, followed by the distribution of generous prizes.



AUGUST

INTERNATIONAL COSTA MAYA FESTIVAL: This event is all about pageantry and concerts. Held in San Pedro, this festival features local and international artists. Visitors come to watch the Miss Costa Maya pageant, with delegates from across Central America, and enjoy the multicultural celebration of local and regional pageantry, music, foods, and drinks.

SAN JOAQUIN FESTIVAL: This village festival was created in honor of the village's patron saint. Organized by the Catholic Church and the Village Council of San Joaquin, this event includes a religious and social component. Activities include cultural presentations, mechanical rides, live music, food, and drinks.

TRES PESCADOS SLAM TOURNAMENT: Local and international anglers descend on San Pedro for this three-day annual fly-fishing (catch-and-release) tournament. Each day is exciting for spectators to see who will capture the fly-fishing Grand Slam of bonefish, permit, and tarpon. The competition supports the preservation efforts of Belize's marine ecosystem.

MAYA DEER DANCE FESTIVAL: The deer dance is a traditional celebratory dance of the Maya. The ancient ritual imitates the deer hunt which shows the important relationship that the Maya people have always had with the land. With other fun activities included, the festival takes place in San Antonio Village in the Toledo District.

SEPTEMBER

CARNIVAL ROAD MARCH: This event starts off the seasonal celebrations for the month of September. It is a colourful and lively march through the streets of Belize City. Carnival revelers dance to Caribbean soca and reggae music. Band groups are distinguishable by their colourful and elaborate costumes.

ST. GEORGE'S CAYE DAY: This public and bank holiday is celebrated on the 10th of September. The holiday commemorates the battle that ended Spanish claims and invasion of the country and cemented Belize as a British territory. Official ceremonies, citizens' parades, and Street Bram are held nationwide, with food and live music.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: This public and bank holiday commemorates Belize's independence on 21st September 1981. Independence Day ceremonies and parades are held all over the country with the official ceremony held in the City of Belmopan. Other official cultural, religious, and sporting events are planned in most rural and urban communities.



OCTOBER

THE BELIZE BIRDING FESTIVAL: Amateur and expert bird watchers gather for a full day of fun activities with feathery friends. The three-part event comprises a birding tour, presentations, and an outdoor exhibition. From forest reserves to wetlands, grab your binoculars to look at a few migratory and resident birds from the over 500 species found in-country!

TIDE CONSERVATION FESTIVAL: A local NGO, Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), organizes this three-day Conservation Festival fund-raiser in Punta Gorda Town to raise awareness about environmental issues. The festival includes an Environmental Education Day on the first day, a TIDE Gala on the second day, and the TIDE Fish Festival on the third festival.

NOVEMBER

BATTLE OF THE DRUMS: You must travel to Punta Gorda town in the Toledo District for this event. The event is a drumming competition/battle where local and regional drumming groups compete and showcase their cultural talent. The competition has five different categories and can feel more like a lesson in Garifuna music and storytelling.

TACO FESTIVAL: All taco enthusiasts are invited. This food and music festival, held in Orange Walk town, attracts people from all across Belize. There are many taco varieties to choose from. There is live music, a canoe race, and games for everyone- this taco fest is truly an event that is wrapped in excitement.

GARIFUNA SETTLEMENT DAY: The 19th of November commemorates the arrival of the first Garinagu to Belize in the early 19th century. A re-enactment of their early morning arrival in traditional dories is the main attraction which today takes place in several destinations within Belize. Religious activities and cultural parades continue throughout the day.

DECEMBER

HOLIDAY BOAT LIGHTING PARADE: Join the nighttime festivities as colorfully lit boats parade yards from the shorelines of San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. Getting into the Christmas spirit is inevitable as the view of the glittering lights soothes and excites you. Prizes are awarded for the most creative designs with a fun party for the entire family.

THE PLACENCIA MISTLETOE BALL: The Placencia Chapter of the BTIA organizes this annual event where participants find themselves dancing in the company of new friends, as live bands offer tranquil melodies and local Caribbean beats. On this tropical night, be absorbed by the enchantment of the Holiday Season as you dance and feast under the mistletoe.

Cruise PASSENGER FACTS & Adventures

Journeying through the Caribbean or Central America offers cruise passengers a warm and wondrous experience. A stop in Belize will be an unforgettable introduction to the legacy of the ancient Maya, our colonial history, our Afro-Caribbean roots, and our Hispanic connections. While cruise passengers often have a limited time to explore Belize, a lot can be accomplished in just one day.

Belize has two active cruise ports, Fort Street Tourism Village (FSTV) in Belize City and Harvest Caye Cruise Port. Following are some of the tours and activities you can participate in when tendered to either the respective cruise ports.



FORT STREET TOURISM VILLAGE (FSTV) CRUISE PORT



FSTV is a tender port located in Belize City. Looking more like an open-air mini-mall, the village has several courtyards, snack bars, and local stores with excellent duty-free shopping. The FSTV welcomes passengers on board Carnival Cruise Lines, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Celebrity Cruises, and others.

Half-Day Cultural and Historical Tours within Belize City

Historical City Tours: Explore Belize's colonial history on foot or by horse-drawn carriage. You will find that nearly every street name and neighborhood connects us to our history as a settlement, a colony, and a new sovereign country. Maps of the city are available for self-guided walking tours.



Museum of Belize: Built between 1854 and 1857, this colonial-era brick building was once used as a prison. It was renovated and transformed into Belize's art and

history museum in 2002. The museum provides a learning experience through inclusive displays and artifacts about our history and culture.



Belize House of Culture: This elegant building was built in 1814. It has seen times of subjugation and revolution in Belize as the country transformed from a colony to a sovereign nation. The historic displays and special exhibitions speak to the administrative importance this home played during British rule.

St. John's Cathedral: Dating back to 1812, this is the oldest Anglican cathedral in Central America and the oldest colonial-era building in Belize. The tombstones of English colonist, the antique pipe organ, and the elegant sapodilla and mahogany wood inside tickles the imagination. This Cathedral is still a functioning church with regular service.

The Turton Library Center: This tiny library is located in Belize City near the historical Swing Bridge. Donated to the community in 1935, the library is a former home that dates back to the late 19th century. On display are old artifacts and pieces of Belize's

tangible culture. This little library is quaint and historical.

The Belize Swing Bridge: Proclaimed as “the only functioning manually operated swing bridge in the world” this bridge has been around since 1818. Today, it is only swung on ceremonial occasions, but a stroll across the swing bridge gives a picture-perfect view of the south and north sides of Belize City.



Baron Bliss Lighthouse: Named after a member of British nobility and one of Belize’s most notable benefactors, this lighthouse monument is the resting place of Baron Henry Edward Earnest Victor Bliss. It was established in 1885 and built on a former Spanish fortress located on Fort Street in Belize City.



The Memorial Park: This historic park, located in the Fort George area, is a monument to the soldiers who fought and fell in World War I. The park is near the seaside and offers the perfect spot for a sunset walk. The neighborhood surrounding the park also has many old picturesque colonial homes that have withstood the test of time.



Shopping: Albert Street in downtown Belize City is a main shopping area. Look for souvenirs or local food from department stores and street stalls. Before returning to your ship, stop in at the Fort George Artisan Alley where you will find unique hand crafted souvenirs made by local artisans to take back.

The Battlefield Park: Located in the center of Belize City near the busy Albert Street, this park has served as a meeting place since 1638. This park was included in the genesis of many important civic movements and organizations including the start of the People’s United Party. A bust of Labour Activist, Antonio Soberanis Gomez, sits in the park.

Full-Day Adventure Expeditions within the Belize District

River Safari & Lamanai Maya Site:

Take a boat trip and enjoy the flora and fauna of the New River on your way to visit the archeological site of Lamanai. This site is in the Orange Walk District and is approximately 1h 10m from Belize City. A river ride is required to get there - boating along the jungle has its fascination. On this tour, you can expect to see or hear plenty of wildlife as you explore the buildings and temples of the ancient Lamanai city.



Xunantunich Maya Site: From Belize City, it takes about 2h 30m to get to this archeological site. The drive to our western Cayo district will seem like a trip through a quiet countryside. A river ferry ride adds to the adventure before you arrive at the site. The grass and pastures are a special shade of green at Xunantunich. You can climb 130 feet to the top of the main structure and enjoy the panoramic view over Belize.

The Belize Zoo: The best little zoo in the world is located 29 miles west of Belize City and doubles as a Tropical Education Center. Started in 1983, the Zoo cares for about 175 native animals and promotes sustainability. Except for their fences, it is difficult to tell where the Zoo ends and the rest of nature begins since the environment is kept in its natural state.



Zip-lining and Cave-Tubing: Travel to Nohoch Che'en Park to experience the magnificent Belizean rainforest and ancient limestone caves. Zip-line through the rainforest canopy where you can expect to glide from one platform to the next. Ready yourself to float through parts of the cave systems on an inner tube guided by the light of your headlamp.



Altun Ha Maya Site: This archaeological site, the closest to Belize City, was a major Maya culture ceremonial center and the discovery site of Belize's famous Jade Head. The one-hour ride to Altun Ha will take you through several small villages where you can stop and enjoy local cuisine and purchase handmade wood carvings and other souvenirs.

Snorkel the Belize Barrier Reef: With sufficient time, there is the option to visit the popular islands of San Pedro or Caye Caulker to explore the north end of the Belize Barrier Reef. Explore the Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley to watch and swim with the nurse sharks and sting rays, dive or snorkel the living reef, or relax on the beach.



HARVEST CAYE CRUISE PORT

This docking port in southern Stann Creek District currently caters only to Norwegian Cruise Line passengers. Cruise visitors can take a tender to one of the many mainland excursions or enjoy Harvest Caye, which features a large pool, beach, zip lining, water sports, an enclosed nature area with birds and butterflies, bars, and a variety of eateries.

Cultural and Historical Tours off Harvest Caye

Fish and Snorkel: For those seeking a combination of fishing and snorkeling adventures, spend a couple of hours engaged in bottom fishing or trolling around the inner reefs of the Belize Barrier Reef. After the fishing expedition, head to one of the nearby islands to indulge in snorkeling while the morning's catch is being prepared and grilled for a delightful lunch.

Lagoon Wildlife and Mangrove Estuaries: Navigate through enchanting mangrove tunnels and be on the lookout for incredible wildlife sightings including crocodiles, manatees, iguanas, birds, howler monkeys, and occasional porpoises. This immersive tour offers a unique opportunity to connect with Belize's diverse ecosystems.

Garifuna Greats (Dangriga/Hopkins): For an authentic and

traditional Garifuna experience, stop at a local restaurant for food and drinks before you visit the Gulisi Garifuna Museum or the Penn Cayetano Art Gallery in Dangriga. Stop at Marie Sharp's factory where her famous pepper sauces are made or watch the drums being made in the traditional way while in Hopkins.

Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary: Visit the world's first jaguar reserve, for river rafting, hiking, camping, bird watching, exploring a waterfall, or simply contemplating in the quiet environment. Cockscomb has over 300 different species of birds at any given time, including Keel-Billed Toucan, King Vulture, several hawk species, and scarlet macaws.

A Day in Placencia: This small village has a mix of small guesthouses, beachfront resorts, and high-end hotels to suit any budget. There are plenty of restaurants, coffee shops, gift shops, art galleries, and cute bars to enjoy. After hanging out on the beach, head into town and get a feel for what a traditional Kriol (Creole) fishing village is like.



Chocolate Famous: The Toledo district is slowly becoming known as the "chocolate capital" of Belize. Cacao is organically planted, harvested, and processed to make some of the richest chocolate you will ever have. Enjoy a hands-on experience within a Kekchi or Mopan Maya community as you follow the Cacao trail to forest chocolate heaven.

Nim Li Punit: Situated in the foothills of the southern Maya Mountains, this Maya ceremonial site has many large stelae with well-preserved Maya drawings and writing, as well as a variety of other artifacts. Most of the carved stelae depict elite rulers, who appear to be scattering copal onto flaming braziers.

Rainforest River Tubing: Experience the countryside of southern Belize and enjoy the tranquility while gently floating along a beautiful, spring-fed jungle river while sitting on an inner tube. Along the way, you will pass through a picturesque mountain valley, over a series of small rapids, and under overhanging shady trees.

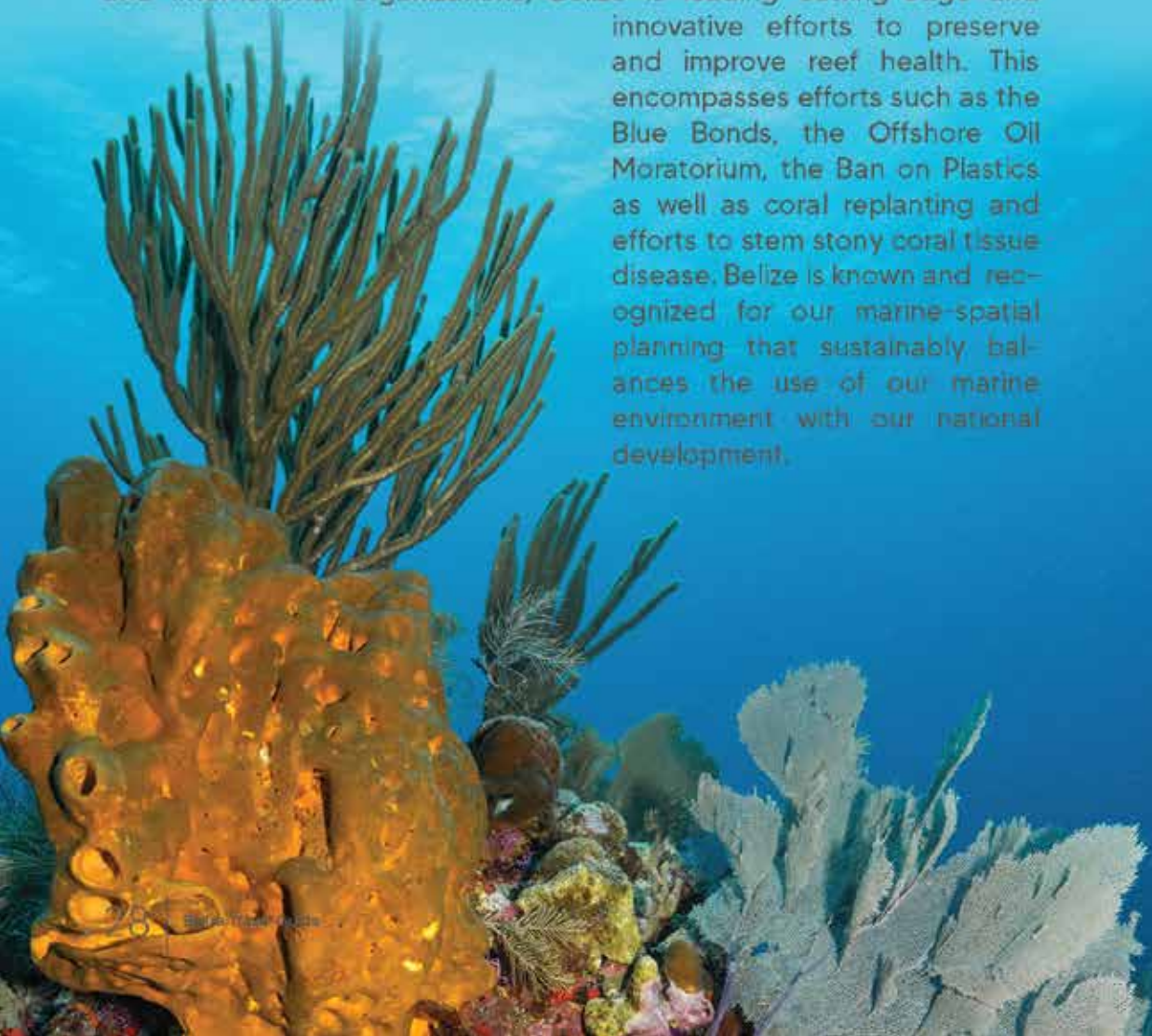
*Please note that most short tours can be conducted on rainy days. Cancellations are subject to weather intensity. The shore excursion manager on board your ship determines cancellations.

THE Belize Barrier Reef System

(A UNESCO World Heritage Site)

The Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) is nearly 700 miles/1,126km long. The system is shared between Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico. The Belize Barrier Reef (BBR) is a 190 miles/300km long section of the larger MBRS system. Our portion is significant and was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996 as the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS). With the support of local, national, and international organizations, Belize is leading cutting-edge and

innovative efforts to preserve and improve reef health. This encompasses efforts such as the Blue Bonds, the Offshore Oil Moratorium, the Ban on Plastics as well as coral replanting and efforts to stem stony coral tissue disease. Belize is known and recognized for our marine-spatial planning that sustainably balances the use of our marine environment with our national development.



The Belize Barrier Reef is considered the largest reef complex in the Atlantic-Caribbean region and the second-largest living reef system in the world. The entire system includes several protected areas, seven of which are recognized by UNESCO as a part of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System. These are:

Bacalar Chico National Park and Marine Reserve: Situated at the northernmost tip of Ambergris Caye, it is the only place in Belize where the reef meets the shoreline. Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve protects several species, including the critically endangered Goliath grouper, hawksbill turtle, and both staghorn and Elkhorn corals.

Blue Hole Natural Monument: The Great Blue Hole is a perfectly circular limestone sinkhole located on the Lighthouse Reef Atoll. It measures more than 1000 feet across and descends to an approximate depth of 412 feet. Huge stalactites can be found at depths starting around 100 feet / 30 meters hanging from the ceiling of caves.



Half Moon Caye Natural Monument: A key tourism resource, known for the beauty of the sandy beaches, the red-footed booby nesting colony, and the Half Moon Caye Wall dive site. Half Moon serves as an important spawning aggregation site, acting as a replenishment zone and supporting the traditional fishery of the Atoll.



South Water Caye Marine Reserve: Established in 1996, this island is Belize's second-largest marine reserve (approximately 47,700 hectares). It allows visitors to observe amazing wildlife, learn about mangrove ecosystems, or snorkel the lush coral patch reefs that form around the many cayes and islets within the protected area.

Glover's Reef Marine Reserve: Deep channels coincide with dramatic rising pinnacles at Glover's Reef Marine Reserve. One of the most spectacular locations for marine biodiversity, as the calm waters of the atoll's lagoon are home to at least three species of sea turtles, eight species of sharks and rays, the endangered Nassau Grouper, and many different types of coral.

Laughing Bird Caye National Park: The birds really do laugh at this small island and visitors soon find themselves doing the same. The Caye is located about 11 miles off the coast of Placencia, perfectly situated for a great day trip for some light snorkelling and diving. Visitors can expect to see the occasional Laughing Gull and nurse sharks to swim up close to.



Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve: With an area of approximately 500 square miles, it is located at the southern end of the barrier reef, east of Punta Gorda Town. This reserve is not visited often but you can snorkel or kayak to see a range of fish, manta rays, dolphins, and sea turtles. Interestingly, whales can also be spotted in this area.

OTHER MARINE RESERVES

Hol Chan Marine Reserve: Loosely translated from Maya as “Little Channel,” it is perfect for snorkelling, diving, or swimming. With its easy access from San Pedro and Caye Caulker, you can enjoy spectacular marine life with schools of grouper, snapper, barracuda, and living corals at the Hol Chan Channel, and nurse sharks and stingrays at Shark Ray Alley.



Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Reserve: A trip to Gladden Spit is an outer reef and outbody experience with its slope that drops 160 feet/50 meters into the blue abyss. A trip to Gladden Spit will most likely include a stop at the Silk Cayes. The Silk Cayes are popular for spotting loggerhead turtles and other shark and fish species.

Turneffe Atoll: The atoll is thirty miles long and ten miles wide with four zones to help manage the atoll's marine ecosystem: General Use, Conservation, Special Management, and Preservation Zone. The Turneffe Atoll is a bucket-list-worthy destination perfect for the young and the young at heart featuring the Wit dive and snorkelling site.

Lighthouse Reef Atoll: The Lighthouse Reef Atoll offers exciting views of coral and sea life in a relatively shallow area. Many cayes within this site are great for exploring. Located right off the north-western side of Long Caye is the Aquarium, a dive and snorkelling site. Its depth ranges from 25 -130 feet and it boasts an enmeshment of marine life of different sizes and colours.



Port Honduras Marine Reserve: Bordered by a pristine coastline with interconnected mangroves, seagrass, and reef, Port Honduras provides an important nursery area for commercial species, key sport fishing species, as well as threatened species such as the Antillean manatee. It is also very important to the local economy as it supports a thriving sport fishing industry.

Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary: This Sanctuary was established to protect a key resting and feeding area for Antillean manatees. It serves as an important tourism resource for coastal and caye communities near the Wildlife Sanctuary, bringing income to support tour guides and their families.

Caye Caulker Marine Reserve: This reserve is important to the economy of Belize, and more specifically to the community of Caye Caulker as it supports local tour guides as a key tourism destination. It encompasses five key coastal ecosystems - mangroves, littoral forests, lagoon, seagrass beds, and the coral reef.

Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary: Part in Belize and part in Mexico, this sanctuary is an important estuarine system that flows out to the Caribbean Sea. The sheltered waters of Corozal Bay provide a critical habitat for mating and calving West Indian manatees and a protected nursery habitat for the critically endangered goliath grouper, hawksbill turtle, and a number of shark species.

OFFSHORE ISLANDS AND CAYES

Belize's tropical islands (cayes) can offer a variety of experiences for the young and the young at heart. Whether you are visiting an island town, island resort, or a secluded island, you can snorkel, dive, sail, kayak, fish, or just relax. Here is a listing of the islands that are available to all. Slippers and smiles are all that's required - so grab your caye and go!

CAYE CAULKER: Time slows down in Caye Caulker because the only thing that is ever urgent is deciding what time the fun will start. Restaurants and bars sell authentic Belizean food. Locally made souvenirs and other merchandise are available at any of the numerous gift shops. In Caye Caulker you will find excellent SCUBA diving and snorkelling, windsurfing, manatee tours, and amazing fishing expeditions.



AMBERGRIS CAYE (SAN PEDRO):

As a prime tourist destination for international visitors, this island is known for its luxury resorts and golf cart rides. Apart from its share of fine dining restaurants, local cuisine kitchens, and party spots, this island has a variety of day activities available including snorkelling, diving, kayaking, and exploring.



ST. GEORGE'S CAYE: This island is situated eight miles east, off the coast of Belize City. At one point this Caye was the largest settlement in British Honduras. In 1798, British settlers fought off a small Spanish fleet to maintain control of the settlement. Today, majority of the island is privately owned with a small number of resorts that offer visitors a tranquil getaway from the mainland.



Belize boasts having over 400 islands to visit. The Belize Barrier Reef lines Belize's entire coast with islands sprinkled all over, making for a theme park-like scenario for snorkelling, diving, and beach adventures. Only four coral atolls exist in the western hemisphere and three (3) of them are in Belize.

HARVEST CAYE: Norwegian cruise ship passengers can expect a stop at Harvest Caye, about five miles off the coast of Placencia. Equipped with a large swimming pool, a bar & grill, luxury suites, souvenir shopping, beach chairs, and outdoor equipment for almost any fun water activity, this caye is sure to delight adults and children.

TOBACCO CAYE: This off-grid island paradise is located about 10 miles off the shores of Dangriga Town. The entire island is about five acres long and its isolated and rustic features will appeal to independent-minded travellers. Sitting nearly directly on top of the reef, this island offers some of the best diving and snorkelling in the country.

THE SNAKE CAYES: These four islands are located about 20 miles off the coast of Punta Gorda Town. Named West, Middle, East, and South Snake Caye, these islands are more popular for a chill day swimming, grilling, and basking in some of the most gorgeous waters in the country.

MOHO CAYE: This private island is open to the public for daily visits. The boat ride from Placencia to Moho Caye takes about 45 minutes. This caye is small and fun to explore. BBQ pits and picnic benches are spread across for convenience. It is breath-taking and a sight to behold so keep your camera out and your social media updated.

The Belize Barrier Reef is intertwined into the fabric of our lives, culture, and economy, and it is the pride and joy of the Belizean people. We wish to share this natural gift with all of our visitors in experiences and activities that are both enjoyable and educational.



Maya CITIES & Mystic CAVES

Belize has a rich tangible and intangible culture. Wherever you go in Belize, you will not be too far from an ancient Maya city. Not all of the cities are the same size or popular for the same things. Similar to modern cities today, these ancient communities had different industries and functions within the region. They are not situated the same or accessed the same. Some can be explored in a few hours, while others may need a full day. The names of the sites found in Belize are not ancient—most were given to the sites by early archaeologists and have Spanish or Maya origins. Belize's Institute of Archaeology monitors and manages all ongoing archeological projects in the country. A visit to any of these excavated cities, with a trained guide, will give you a glimpse into this important part of Belize's history and the lives of an ancient world and its brilliant people.



ALTUN HA (ROCKSTONE POND/WATER): This city, once a major ceremonial center, is located near Rockstone Pond Village along the Old Northern Highway in the Belize District. Altun Ha is a classic period ceremonial center that functioned as an important trading point. The site has two main plazas and 13 other structures. According to archeologists, this ancient city was first settled around 250 B.C. and was still occupied as recently as the 10th century. The grounds also include a Maya-made water reservoir, rich tombs, and the largest Maya temple in all of Belize. The famous jade head sculpture of Kinich Ahau, (the Maya sun god) was discovered at Altun Ha. At 10 pounds and six inches, the sculpture is the largest known carved jade object. This priceless artifact is often placed on display at the Belize Museum but is held for safety in a vault at the Central Bank of Belize (CBB).

CAHAL PECH (PLACE OF TICKS): Cahal Pech, also known as "The Place of Ticks" in Yucatecan Maya, is very convenient to visit as it is located along the banks of the Macal River in the Cayo District. Cahal Pech is located on an imposing hill that overlooks the twin towns of San Ignacio and Santa Elena. As one of the oldest settlements in the lowland Maya world with temples, palaces, and a ball court, it provided archaeologists with information on the earliest Maya settlements in the region, for its large number of Pre-classic figurines and complex residential architecture. First settled between 1200-1000

B.C., its Pre-classic inhabitants acquired exotic goods from the Caribbean coast and highland Guatemala and shared the symbol systems of communities across Mesoamerica. This site is about two miles wide with a total of 34 structures including workplaces, homes, temples, palaces, ball courts, and the oldest carved stelae excavated in Belize.

CARACOL (THE SNAIL): This incredible Maya city was discovered in 1937 by a local woodcutter, named Rosa Mai, who happened upon it while looking for mahogany. Getting to Caracol takes several hours travelling southeast from San Ignacio Town into the foothills of the Maya Mountains and through the Chiquibul Forest Reserve. Caracol is one of the largest Maya cities in the entire country. The Canaa "Sky Tower", 141 feet tall, is the most famous building on the compound. Standing on top of the site, overlooking the lush rainforest, is an unforgettable experience. The tower carries sound well and we could imagine how the ancient rulers of this city might have used the acoustics to their advantage. Impressively, this city also boasts 24 religious altars, 3 ball courts, 5 big plazas, 24 carved stelae, reservoirs, causeways, an astronomical observatory, 100 tombs, and 35,000 lesser buildings. It is said that nearly 180,000 people lived in Caracol.

CERROS MAYA (MAYA HILL):

Cerros thrived as a trading center around 400 B.C. and AD 400. It is located in the Corozal District near Copper Bank Village. During the late Pre-Classic Period (350 B.C. to A.D. 250), this site served as an important trading center. It served merchants traveling through the Chetumal Bay, as well as those from upriver on the Rio Hondo in the north and the New River to the South. It is the only Maya city in Belize that is situated on the coast. Four carved stucco masks representing Maya Cosmology are depicted at Cerra Maya. This site is 40-plus acres of hillside with ball courts, a central palace, pyramids, and a main temple that stands 64 feet above ground level. Its tallest temple rises 21 meters above the plaza floor. Cerros can be accessed by road or sea, so bring along a snorkel since swimming is an option given its proximity to water.



EL PILAR (WATER HOLE): El Pilar is one of Belize's largest Classic period Maya sites. It is located near the Belize-Guatemala border about 7.5 miles north of San Ignacio Town in the Cayo District. The center has a well-defined ceremonial section that includes both private and public areas. With 15 courtyards or plazas, the complexity of El Pilar's epicenter suggests the site was of considerable regional importance during the Late Classic period. Beyond the central precinct, settlement density is also very high, suggesting a large population lived in the site's sustaining area. The tallest structure stands around 60 feet above the plaza. Other architectural features include at least one ball court and several reservoirs that serve as water catchments. East of the site's core, in a section known as the Garden Area, a small residential plaza was conserved to demonstrate the nature of Maya households and their connection to the flora, fauna, and natural ecology.

LA MILPA (MAYA FARM): The slash-and-burn farming method is still utilized by the Maya communities today. This ancient agricultural practice was commonly used in this ancient city during its peak of existence around 300-600 A.D. Today, La Milpa's legacy is still standing at its location, deep within the Rio Bravo Conservation Area in the Orange Walk District. This city has a total of 85 structures including courtyards, two ball courts, large temple pyramids, freshwater

pools, and stelae that tell the history of the city's elites. Approximately 50,000 people might have lived here at one point. The city was abandoned around the 9th century A.D.

LAMANAI (SUBMERGED CROCODILE): Along Lamanai's scenic route, up the New River in Orange Walk by boat, enjoy viewing the birds, snakes, tapirs, and Morelet crocodiles. This city survived for more than 3,000 years while other Maya cities fell during the 9th century. Once Europeans had made contact with the Spanish, they tried to convert the local population to Christianity. The remains of two 16th-century Spanish churches close to the site, tell the story. This means that Lamanai has the longest human habitation of any Maya city in Belize since it was still occupied when Spanish missionaries arrived in 1544. As its name suggests, crocodiles were important to the occupants of this major Maya city. Representations of crocodiles are found all about the site on ceramic stones,



the architecture, and stucco façades. As one of Belize's largest ceremonial centers, it is one of the only sites to retain its original Maya name "LAMANY' or "LAMA' AYAYIN'.

LUBAANTUN (PLACE OF FALLEN STONES): This site is located near San Pedro Columbia Village in the Toledo District. It is a Late Classic ceremonial center that is known for its unusual style of construction distinctive to southern Belize. Archeologists believe that the Manche Chol Maya occupied Lubaantun during the 150 years that the city flourished. Its large pyramid and residences are made of dressed stone blocks and the buildings on top of the pyramid were made from perishable materials instead of masonry. Lubaantun is better known for its mass ceramic whistle figurines and three major ball courts. Given its size, with 14 major structures, five main plazas, and 12 ball courts, it is strange that there are no stelae found here, which is thought of as a little curious. This is the site where F.A. Mitchell-Hedges supposedly found the Crystal Skull in the early 1900s. This may be the place of fallen stones but it certainly is also the place of mystery.



NIM LI PUNIT (BIG HAT): This site is located in the Toledo District near Indian Creek Village. Nestled in the Maya Mountains, not too far from Lubaantun, this archaeological reserve spreads over 121 acres. The funny name was derived from the largest stela found at the site and its depiction of a figure wearing a hat. Nim Li Punit can be considered as Belize's stela capital as there is a total of 25 stelae with eight of them having carvings of Maya gods and heroes. This site was discovered in 1976, and findings suggest that it was an important religious and political community. There are ball courts, plazas, and the largest stela measuring nine meters (31 feet tall). A visitor center is available with descriptions of the clothing, cultural history, diet, language, and religion of these ancient people. In 2015, important new discoveries were made including a carved jade pendant that is depicted on a stela.



SANTA RITA: This particular site is located in Corozal Town and in many ways it is Corozal Town. The modern town is built over the ancient city of Santa Rita. The community was important during the Late Post Classic Period (A.D. 1350-1530) and was occupied up to the time of Spanish contact. Archeologists believe that Santa Rita is also the ancient province of Chetumal where a large part of the Post Classic population once thrived. Today, there is only one large building left that has rooms, passageways, vaults, and coastal lookout points to explore. This site would have been strategic for its ancient occupants to defend their important trade network. The ancient Maya traded products such as cacao, honey, and vanilla. Located about one mile from the town square, this great historical Maya site commemorates the birthplace of the Mestizos. Once atop the main temple, visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the town and Corozal Bay.

XUNANTUNICH (STONE WOMAN): This site is located in the Cayo District between Benque Viejo and San Ignacio Town, accessible by crossing the Mopan River on a ferry. Xunantunich is one of the more popular sites among locals and tourists. This important ceremonial city grew in importance around 700-1000 C.E. when other centers were declining. There are four main groups of buildings with the highest, El Castillo (The Castle), reaching 130 feet above the plaza. There are carved friezes on the east and west sides. This site was first explored in the

1800s and later again in the early 20th century with many of its artifacts disappearing during that time. The name, Xunantunich, comes from a tale involving a beautiful Maya maiden and a man who saw her only once but was struck by her beauty. The legend is that she was standing outside of a cave and disappeared inside it before the man could reach her.

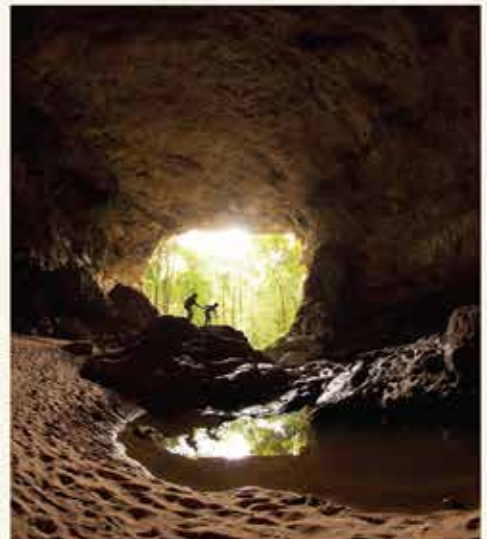
MYSTIC CAVES

The ancient Maya had many uses for caves and used them extensively for more than 2,000 years. Belize's limestone regions are full of caves, full of geological and archeological wonders. The Chiquibul Cave System is the largest cave system in the country and the longest in all of Central America. Most of the caves are open to visitors and are generally accessible by foot or boat. The river water in the cave is cold, clean, and crisp. The silence is often deafening and the insides are pitch black. One can only wonder at the reverence that the ancient Maya had for caves and perhaps their symbolic access to the other worlds, from the pottery, ornaments, and various artifacts left in the same place for hundreds of years.

NOHOCH CHE'EN (Big Cave): This subterranean site is located near Franks Eddy Village in the Cayo District. The cave was carved out of the limestone foothills of the Maya Mountain by the very active Caves Branch River. This site is a great example of the erosive

power of water turned into a natural wonder of Belize. Geological research indicates that the cave took several hundred thousand years to form and was used by the ancient Maya to conduct important rituals. This mystic, limestone wonder is a great place to cool off while you ponder on the cave's prehistoric human usage and the power of nature.

RIO FRIO CAVE: This cave, located in the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, is considered one of the best caving systems throughout Belize. With a length of around a quarter mile, there is no shortage of natural wonders along the way. Explore the many natural fresh-water pools, waterfalls, and stalactite formations. The view of the entry of the cave is in itself amazing, standing 65 feet tall. What awaits inside is nature in its most spectacular forms. Take a trip to this perfect chill spot on a hot day and be captivated by its pristine wonders.



ST. HERMAN'S CAVE: Situated inside St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park along the Hummingbird Highway, it is one of the more accessible caves in Belize and equipped with a visitor center. The forest trail that leads to the cave is also used by jaguars, ocelots, tapirs, armadillos, and other forest friends. After a guided tour through St. Herman's Cave, you can float peacefully back to the entrance of the cave, on an inner tube, and exit to St. Herman's Blue Hole. Its turquoise underwater streams and shadowy cave are an adventure combination that can add nuance to your "live stream" experience.



CHE CHEM HA CAVE: This cave is located eight miles southeast of Benque Viejo Town in the Cayo District. It was discovered by a local farmer and is most notable for its unique collection of Maya artwork and artifacts. It is said that this cave was used by the Maya for storing grain as well as a ceremonial site for their bloodletting rituals. There are different levels inside the cave. It is decorated with Maya motifs and an extensive assortment of large storage jars that line the walls of the chambers. With this cave, you have to see it to believe it.



ACTUN TUNICHIL MUKNAL: This cave is located in the Cayo District, 20 miles east of San Ignacio Town. After a 45-minute hike through the beautiful Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve, visitors can find a crystal-clear stream flowing from the cave opening. Take a short swim into the cave and a guided hike through the passage to one of the most impressive Maya sites in Belize. Also known locally as "Xibalba," you'll find evidence of ceramics, stoneware, and skeletons. One artifact,

named the "Monkey Pot", is one of four found in Central America. One skeleton, known as "The Crystal Maiden," is the calcified bones of a teenage girl.



ACTUN CHAPAT & ACTUN HALAL:

Also referred to as the Centipede Cave and Dart Cave respectively, these two wonders are located 19 miles south of San Ignacio Town in the Cayo District. The caves have terraces and man-made platforms. Astonishingly, human remains, human-made features such as terraced and raised platforms, and ceramic and wooden artifacts can be seen. Talk about eerie and mystical, these caves will leave you feeling like you crossed portals and stepped into a different world.

HOKEB HA CAVE: The name

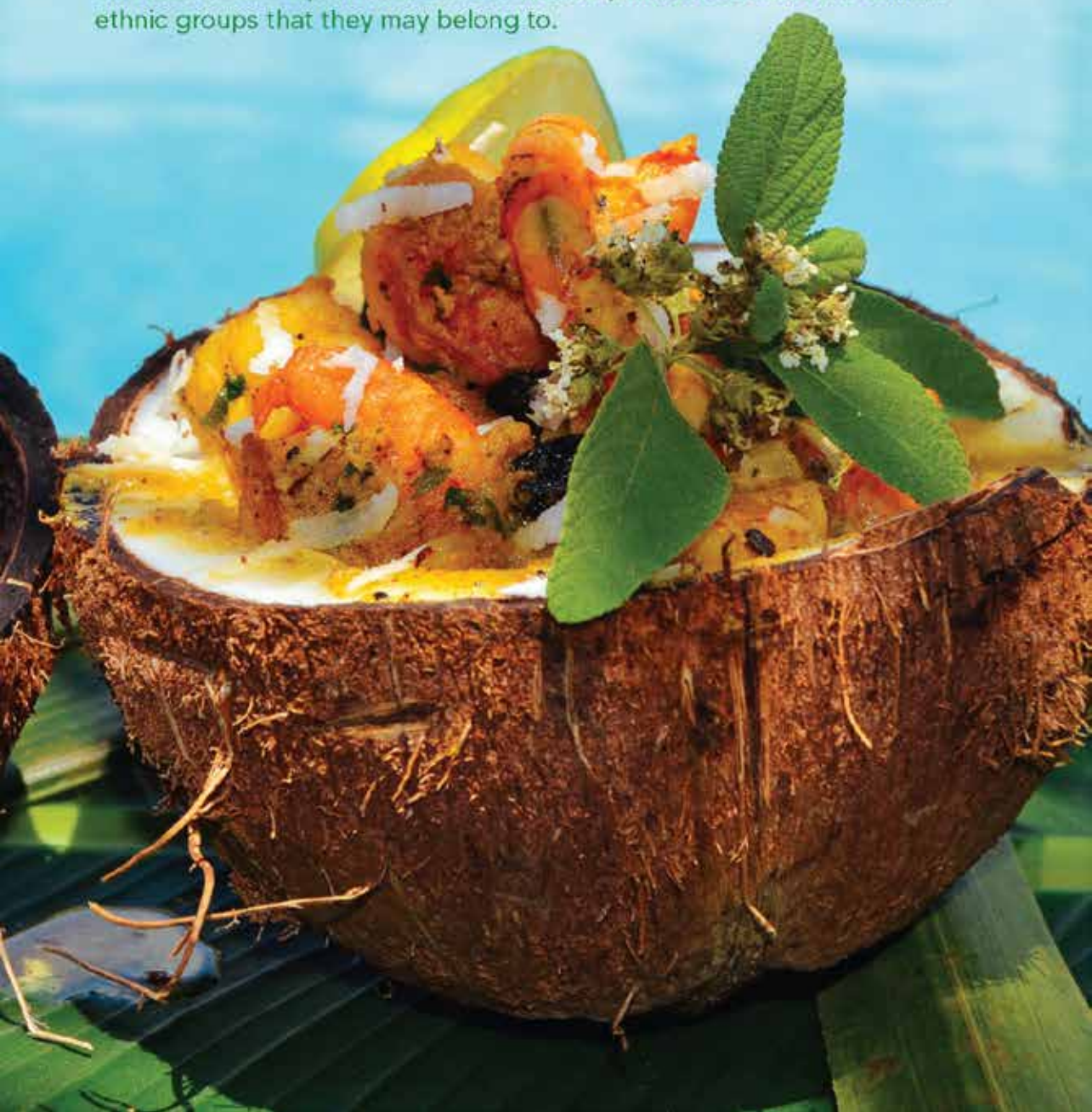
HOKEB HA CAVE: The name Hokeb Ha translates into "where the water meets the earth". However, this cave is also known by its English name "Blue Creek Cave" and can be found near Blue Creek Village in the Toledo District. Artifacts found in this cave show evidence of how it was used by the ancient Maya up to the Late Classic Period. Its huge curricular entrance, gorgeous waterfall, and leafy cool surroundings make the short hike to this mystical wonder completely worth it.

TIGER CAVE: This cave is located a 90-minute hike from San Miguel Village in the Toledo District. This site got its name after a dog chased a jaguar cub into the cave. The trail passes through areas of the rainforest and present-day Maya farms and milpas. Once inside, the way the light slips through cracks and holes to illuminate like bolts of sunshine gives this cave a celestial feeling. The cave is magnificent and getting there is half the fun.



People, Food, & Culture

The Belizean man, woman, and child are everything good and unique about Belize. Although we look different, speak differently, and live differently from each other in many ways, we are all indelibly tied to each other through one common identity. The Belizean identity is our bond, a melting pot of various ethnic groups and different ways of living. As a group, we welcome and respect all other cultures. As Belizeans like to say "All ah we dah one" (all of us are one). It is the mantra that we are taught and that we live by. Here are the Belizeans you will meet and the various ethnic groups that they may belong to.



CREOLES

Belizean Creoles are the descendants of Africans and Europeans. The two merged after enslaved Africans were brought here to work by European settlers (Baymen) who started to ship logwood in the 17th century. Eventually, these same enslaved people would work the mahogany camps and process timber. Centuries later, their interracial descendants thrived as one of the major ethnic groups in Belize. Creoles are known for their musical genre of "bruk-down" music. Traditional delicacies include boil up, cowfoot soup, and a local favourite, rice and beans, stew chicken, and potato salad. Some sweet treats include coconut crust, fudge, tableta, and fruit preserves.

Belize City has the highest density of Creoles, but no matter where you visit in the country, listen to hear the Kriol language, which most Belizeans speak. Kriol is a local patois of English and African words and pronunciations. For practice say "Yo betta Belize it!" (You better Belize it). From food to language, customs, music, and dance, Creole culture is a pillar of Belize's cultural mosaic and what makes the jewel a truly unique destination.

GARIFUNA

A spiritual and passionate people, the Garinagu are an ethnic intermarriage of Carib and Arawak Indians, later infused with influences from enslaved sub-Saharan Africans. This

group's intermarriage and legacy began nearly 400 years ago on the island of St. Vincent. Once the British invaded the island, they would eventually leave the island and remain displaced along the coast of Central America. The first Garifuna arrived on Belize's shores on November 19, 1802. Since that time, this incredible ethnic group has assimilated and ascended as a part of the Belizean culture. The influence of the Garifuna people has remained powerful over the years. Influences of their music, food, and art are felt throughout Belizean culture.

Some of the more popular Garifuna dishes include sere, hudut, and cassava bread. The sound that most powerfully depicts this group's musical genre like the Paranda and Punta music, are the Garifuna drums. There are numerous forms of Garifuna folk dance such as the sambai, berusu, and most popular, the punta. As they say in Garifuna- Buiti binafi (hello) and Bungiu bun (have a good trip).

EAST INDIANS:

The East- Indians of Belize are majority Bharatiya descent from Bharat. Apart from having a very distinct look, many of the East Indians have seeped over into the larger population. The first arrival of East Indians to Belize happened in the mid-19th century when rebel soldiers from India were deported for fighting against the British Empire in India. More would soon arrive to work on the local sugarcane, timber,

and banana plantations. Hindus first settled in the Corozal district where they formed a village called Calcutta. Today, the largest population of East Indians is found in the Toledo district, maintaining their strong ties to agriculture and subsistence farming.

Though they have not been able to maintain much of their religious and linguistic practices, they have retained some culinary dishes, traditional dress, and folklore. Ask any Belizean about curry chicken and East-Indian spices. Some of their traditional culinary tools include the dal-ghutna, the swizzle, the kneading bowl, and the grater that helped them to perfect the art of their delicious ancestral dishes.

MESTIZOS

Many people of this heritage migrated from Mexico in the mid-1800s, to flee La Guerra de Castes or the Caste Wars. Mestizos are found everywhere in Belize, but most make their homes in either the northern district of Corozal and Orange Walk, the western district of Cayo, and the Northern Islands. This ethnic group is colourful in everything that they do. Their traditional wear is an embroidery of bright red, blue, pink, and green threads on white linens. Their foods such as tamales, escabeche, chimole, panades, and sweet treat, stew pumpkin (dulce de Calabaza), are very tasty. Most Mestizos are fluent in Spanish and English, helping to fortify Belize's ties to



Latin culture and Latin America.

Some popular Mestizo music includes the marimba which is made using a xylophone-like instrument accompanied by Caribbean sounds. Another genre popular with the Mestizo is the cumbia which is similar to salsa and other Latin dances. Coming from a Spanish word meaning "mixed" the Mestizos of Belize are certainly an amazing ethnic blend that has complimented Belizean culture for centuries now.

MAYA

The Maya culture is the legacy of Belize, ancient and astonishing. The Maya civilization began around 2600 B.C. and lasted for nearly 2000 years. Every year, new archaeological discoveries and excavations reveal something



new about them and their important advancements. Even today, the Maya of Belize live mostly in rural communities where they still practice many of their ancestral traditions. The three sub-groups of Maya in Belize are Yucatec, Ketchi, and Mopan. The Maya culture is thousands of years old with traditions such as the “Dance of the Deer” surviving to this day. Known for their connection to nature, weaving skills, and farming practices, the Maya are a vital component of Belize’s unique cultural identity.

Our local chocolates can be attributed to this community. The ancient Maya grew cacao many millenniums ago. Today, the Belizean Maya community incorporated traditional farming practices to grow and produce our local chocolate brands. Chocolate and Belize go hand in

hand thanks to our amazing Maya community. Visitors can join in the experience of making chocolate with the various immersive experiences available.

MENNONITE

Like other groups in Belize, the Mennonite community has various factions that have their similarities and differences. This group first arrived in Belize in the 1950s and has since been allowed to practice their religion in peace. Overall they are of Dutch/German descent with the majority of them being involved in Belize’s carpentry, engineering, and agricultural industries. While some Mennonites allow some modernity into their daily lives, the majority have remained conservative and keep with their strong religious beliefs. The Mennonites have their schools, churches, and financial institutions in their communities. They reside in the Orange Walk and Cayo Districts in six main communities: Blue Creek, Shipyard, Little Belize, Progresso, Spanish Lookout, and Barton Creek, to name a few.

They are industrious people who own many of our local poultry, automotive, and produce companies. They are easily distinguished from other Belizeans by wearing their traditional clothes (the women in bonnets and long dresses and the men wearing denim overalls and hats), driving their horse and carriage, and mostly by their European features.

OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

Many other ethnic groups from across the world have made their way to Belize, making it their forever home. The first group of Chinese to arrive in Belize came mostly as contracted labourers and today, the third generation of Chinese Belizeans talk Kriol, eat rice and beans, dance punta, and include themselves in all aspects of Belizean culture while still practicing many of their traditions. In addition, there is a growing number of Taiwanese, Lebanese, Nigerian, Canadian, and Expat communities. Our Creole culture is unique and our Belizean identity, is like no other. We are a small nation but we welcome anyone and any culture that is as open, free, and loving as we are, to visit and enjoy our diversity.

LOCAL FAVOURITES

With so many different cultures living together in the same country, it's only natural that we would have a wide variety of food. From seafood to traditional food to wonderful BBQ, there's plenty to love about eating here. For the best in Belizean cuisine, look no further than local eateries and food stands. Locals know what good food is.

Rice and Beans: Typically used to complement a main dish, white rice, and red kidney beans are most commonly found in Belize and a specialty in this region. A

truly authentic Belizean dinner would pair either of these varieties with stewed or fried chicken.

Meat Pies: Belize City is the hot spot for this traditional Belizean dish. Ask the locals and they'll have a favourite place to get their meat pies and a tried and true way to eat it. Meat pies are a delicious combination of onions, peppers, meat, and spices inside a warm crust.

Cow Foot Soup: For a culinary experience not found at home, try Cow Foot Soup when visiting Belize City. The cow's foot is boiled to soften and mixed with a variety of vegetables including okra, coco, seasoning, and pepper.

Stewed Chicken: Stewed chicken is one that every visitor should experience. The secret to this delectable dish is to brown the chicken that's been rubbed with an annatto paste called "recado," and sprinkled with salt, pepper, and garlic before adding water, a dash of vinegar, chopped onions, and sweet peppers.

Escabeche: This dish expertly blends flavours from Mestizo, Spanish, and Maya cultures with a spicy combination of chicken smothered with onions in vinegar, peppers, and other spices. Fresh corn tortillas are made to complement the dish.

Chimole Soup: Chimole, also known as "Black Dinner" is a tasty, black-coloured soup with roots in Maya and Mestizo cultures but enjoyed by all in Belize.

This savoury hearty soup made with the unique ingredient, black recado, is a local favourite and commonly found in Corozal or Orange Walk.

Cohune Cabbage: Most commonly found in Toledo, Cohune cabbage, made with hearts of palm flavoured with yellow ginger (turmeric), is one not to be missed! This curried cabbage is commonly served with white rice made with coconut milk and chicken.

Seafood: Due to Belize's excellent geographical location, the seafood is plentiful, of high quality, and available almost anywhere in the country. Conch, shrimp, squid, crab soup, and ceviche are just a few of the seafood selections found on Belizean menus.

Lobster: Several coastal towns including San Pedro on Ambergris Caye, Caye Caulker, and Placencia host the world-renowned Lobster Fests to celebrate the opening of the lobster season in June. This celebration features live music and dancing along with the delicious catch of the season, prepared in various forms.

Popular Belizean Products: Ask any Belizean upon arrival at the international airport, on your way to your hotel, or when visiting a local restaurant, they will share notable hints of our must-try locally produced habanero blended hot sauces, the beer of Belize, our organic dark chocolates, and the best rum of Belize. Every packed lunch for the day's hike, every restaurant on the island or mainland, and every sunset cruise along our beautiful barrier reef will allow you to try one of these internationally recognized Belizean-made products. Without a doubt, you will find a favourite and want to take it back home with you. Do not worry if you only bring a carry-on or forget to pick it up at the local stores as you will be able to purchase a few bottles, bars, or jars of your favourites at the international airport's departure lounge.



Activities TO DO IN Belize

With large areas of land and sea designated as Protected Areas, our natural environment was created to soothe the soul. Belize is home to the world's first jaguar preserve located inside the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (with an estimated 122,260 acres). We have a Community Baboon Sanctuary for howler monkeys and several butterfly breeding centers. Nature is a constant here as birds, squirrels, squash, and even tiny foxes are common to see in rural areas.

Take long walks on a beach, a quiet stroll down a flowery path, listen to waves crash and 'ssshhhh" unto the shore, observe the serenity in a quiet forest, smell the earth after the rain, feel the sun on your skin, or discover any of the infinite numbers of ways mother nature can bring clarity and calm. Our seascape and landscape attract nature lovers from across the globe.



WATER ACTIVITIES



DIVING: Belize has the largest living reef system in the Northern Hemisphere and three out of the four coral atolls in the Meso America Barrier Reef System (MBRS), making scuba diving in Belize otherworldly. Underwater views of the colors, the activity, the habitats, and the life of the different species of coral, fish, turtles, sting rays, sharks, crab, conch, lobster, etc., are indescribable. There are many hues of purple, blue, green, yellow, and even gold under the water. Going several feet beneath the water's surface and diving through an old boat wreck or getting so near the rocks and corals that you can see the tiny details, can nearly make you feel like an active participant in that world. The water is warm and clear- visibility extends for hundreds of feet beneath the surface. Diving in Belize is unique for beginners and masters as the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS) is protected, preserved, and pristine.

SNORKELING: Our reefs are a kaleidoscope of colors found in hard and soft corals, sponges, and over 500 species of fish. Although snorkeling makes you the casual observer from up-top, the fun of watching schools of tiny fish swim by, lazy lobsters traversing the sandy bottom, gazing at spiky sea-urchins, dodging the occasional barracuda, the snorkeling experience can still feel quite immersive. There are numerous beautiful

coral formations within the blanket of Belize's turquoise waters including Boulder Corals, Brain Corals, Finger Corals, Lettuce Corals, Sea Cucumbers, and more! There are many snorkeling sites along the Belize Barrier Reef including Shark Ray Alley, Laughing Bird Caye, Lighthouse Reef Atoll, the Wit Concrete, and so many more. The colors and underwater scenes can seem like they are constantly changing with all the activity happening. Make sure your mask is clean- you will not want to miss a beat.

FISHING: Whether it's for sport or leisure, for professionals or amateurs, fishing in Belize is never dull so be prepared to keep standing. From fly fishing to deep sea fishing to reef fishing, you are always guaranteed to "catch" a good time. Belize has some of the best saltwater flats on the planet which makes it ideal for fly fishing. Fish a Grand Slam while you are here- it is possible to catch a bonefish, permit, and tarpon on the same day as we protect our fish too. As leaders in catch and release, all three sport fish are protected by Belizean law. The wahoo, tuna, billfish, dorado, and marlin immediately come to mind when deep sea fishing in Belize. Our reef is healthy and so is the next jack, snook, mackerel, barracuda, or tarpon that could be on the next rod you set when reef fishing.

SAILING: Explore Belize's pristine islands on a sailboat with friends, hopping from one location to the

next. We recommend taking the sunset sailboat tour, offered at either Caye Caulker or San Pedro, Ambergris Caye. Snorkel the crystal-clear waters of Belize at South Water Caye to see gliding sting rays and a school of fishes. Spot a few dolphins or a sea turtle near Half Moon Caye! Throw your line to catch a snapper, or feel the thrill of your tour guide spearfishing a lionfish or getting a conch. The tour takes as long as you wish, gently bobbing along the crystallized waters of the Caribbean. The sunset paints a phenomenal backdrop against the sky, and the captain doubles as a chef as he cooks up some fresh ceviche and (rum) punch. Some seagulls might stop by, and their cries only complement the feeling of relaxation as you sail quite literally into the sunset.

Swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, kiteboarding, and parasailing are a few of the water activities that visitors enjoy doing when in Belize. The Caribbean Sea is relaxing, it is warm, and it is salty, with a constant hue of emerald green or bright turquoise. The reef forms a protective barrier from the surf creating a calm environment ideal for water sports activities. Kayaks are a great way to explore the waters of Belize, bird watching, gazing at colourful fish, and catching a glimpse of the occasional manatee, sting-ray, or even a dolphin. Parasailing can feel like flying and floating above the reef and beaches as the bird's-eye view of the surroundings is breathtaking. Water activities require a strong

sense of adventure and a really good water camera to capture all the unique views of the coastline. For a great workout, try paddle boarding. Go at your own pace with this popular activity as you balance weight, water, and wind.



INLAND EXCURSIONS



ARCHAEOLOGY: With only a small percentage of our ancient Maya temples uncovered, it's not uncommon to come across ancient pieces of pottery or hear that a distant hill is a temple. Whether you want to explore for an afternoon, a day, or a week, the ancient Maya sites are well worth it. All sites are managed by the Institute of Archaeology and have interpretive centers, as well as trained guides to show you around. From Caracol and Cerros to Lamanai and little villages and forest areas, pretty much anywhere you go here, you'll find ancient Maya temples. Get your hat and whip ready, Belizean-a-Jones.

CANOE/KAYAKING: Whether you're a beginner at canoeing or really know your way around a boat, we have the waterways for any paddling traveler. Tour companies and jungle lodges also cater to canoe travelers, with some of the best areas being on the Mopan and Macal Rivers in the Cayo District. There, you can paddle through the jungle, see wildlife, and then make your way through little villages to get a look at how life is in less traveled areas. As long as you're there, you may want to dock your boat and take a jungle hike or stop and say hi to the villagers.

CAVE/RIVER TUBING: For a wet-and-wild trip down rivers and through the limestone caves of

Belize, travelers can take advantage of the many cave-tubing adventures offered here. They range from easy walks to challenging hikes that can often turn into squeezes, crawls, climbs, rappels, and swims. In most caves, you'll find extensive stalactite and stalagmite formations and pottery shards. Caves Branch River, Barton Creek Cave, and Crystal Cave all take visitors on an adrenaline-pumping ride down the rivers of these ancient caves. In Actun Tunichil Muknal (ATM) cave, you will find intact pottery and skeletons while other natural formations such as underground waterfalls can be found at Blue Creek.

HIKING: As intimidating as some of our trails may look on a map, don't worry as most are designed in loops so you easily return to your starting point. Some trails are self-guided, and some require the expertise of a licensed tour guide who can point out birds, wildlife, and local plants. Whatever level of hiker you consider yourself, we have the trail to match what you're looking for. Take a day tour or spend several days camping—either one provides you with the chance to encounter exotic tropical plants and birds or to see wildlife, including howler monkeys, crocodiles, or the tracks of the elusive jaguar and tapir.

HORSEBACK RIDING: Some of the most beautiful places can only be accessed on foot or hoof. Horseback riding tours can be arranged through many resorts or tour operators. Popular tours

travel through the lush rainforest or across shallow river streams in the Cayo District, where you can see Maya sites like El Pilar, Xunantunich, and Cahal Pech. In northern Belize, you can find horseback riding at the Mennonite community of Blue Creek. Saddle up and explore unexcavated Maya mounds and the farmlands and planes, stretching across the region. Trailing through the canopies with the rising sun shining through the broadleaf is perfect for the nature-loving couple or family.



BIRDING: Over 500 species of feathered friends call Belize home from time to time. No matter if you just want to check out a few exotic birds or if you are an avid birder, all you have to do is look up. Some of the best places to see migrant and resident water birds are Crooked Tree and the seashores of Belize. Going on a zip-lining trip? You may see a toucan. Cruising the Hummingbird Highway to southern Belize? Pull over and check out a few

birds. In the Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve? So are birds. Our resorts and tour operators offer birding trips that will show you all the birding hot spots.



ZIP-LINING / WATERFALL RAPELLING: Hundreds of feet in the rainforest canopy, with the views of vast Maya mountains and meandering creeks stretching below, quickly becomes addicting. Zipping through the sky on just a harness and your faith in your guide is enough to get your blood pumping. Rappel up to 250 feet high if you pick the right waterfall to overcome, or choose a more forgiving waterfall if you're a newbie. One place where you can practice your rappelling skills is at Bocawina National Park. While secured on a harness plunging down the face of the waterfall, you will be able to appreciate the gushing waterfalls in a whole new way.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES



FOOD TOURS: What makes the culinary scene in Belize so unique is that our recipes are infused with our cultures, making them subjective. That same ceviche dish that became your go-to while in Caye Caulker may differ in ingredients when in Orange Walk Town, allowing you to appreciate all versions of it and surprise your taste buds each time. The side of rice you add to your Relleno soup in Belize City may be replaced by corn tortillas in Corozal Town, both proving to be delicious. There is no wrong way to eat a dish here in Belize, as there is no wrong way to cook it. With this in mind, many travelers take the opportunity to book cooking lessons and food tours while visiting so they may learn how to create their favorite Belizean food from scratch. Whether restaurant-hopping in San Pedro to sample their very best dishes, to learning the thorough process of making tortillas, the Belize local food experience is unparalleled as they all incorporate the diverse cultures our country offers. The next time you visit our country, we urge you to dig a little deeper into Belize's fire-hearth, and taste the flavors shaped by history.

ROMANCE: Belize is all different kinds of beautiful. Romance is easily felt and captured in the heart and still pictures. Romance is in the clear mornings when the sun begins to light up the blue sky with deep hues of red and

orange, it is when the colors spill over the distance and the sea becomes tinged with a warm light that bounces off the glassy surface of the sea. Romance is slowing down after a full day of activities and watching the last moments of light settle behind the horizon as the sun beautifully spreads itself before disappearing. Romance can be felt during a hike in the forest and a quick upward gaze at the canopy - a glance will remind you of nature's majesty. Romance is quiet walks, candle-lit dinners, boat rides, or just sitting swaying in a hammock. We offer luxury and romance differently. Set aside the big, dramatic, or expensive and think of intimate, dreamy, and earthy. Our type of all-inclusive is more like all-included. We will include adventure, nature, wellness, health, excitement, inspiration, and most other things that will stir your imagination. So if you are visiting as newlyweds or honeymooners, allow yourself to go with the flow.



WEDDINGS: If you and your special person are planning your wedding or a symbolic ceremony, you'll need a stunning location! Belize is renowned for its diverse landscapes, from cascading waterfalls hidden within the lush green rainforest to the white sandy beaches gently caressed by the waves of the Caribbean Sea. The beauty of the natural environment, the soft outdoor ambiance, and our charming venues, will create the perfect background that matches your unique love story. Tie the knot barefoot on a sandy beach, walk down an aisle of seashells to a coconut leaf arch, or be captivated by the awe-inspiring panoramic views of mountains and a lush green rainforest. A symbolic ceremony to celebrate the special day is okay, but if the intention is to make it legal in Belize, the process is straightforward and easy to follow. Marriages in Belize are recognized as legal all over the world. Many resorts offer personalized wedding packages that can be customized for special preferences through the help of an onsite wedding coordinator.

WELLNESS: Sometimes a trip, a getaway, or a vacation is more about settling the mind than stirring the imagination. Whether it is our open natural environment, an amazing choice of accommodations, or cultural connections, you might say that Belize was created to soothe the mind, body, and spirit. Dive into the cerulean blues of the Caribbean Sea and

explore a treasure trove of marine flora and fauna. Book a Maya cleansing and healing ritual where a shaman will use herbs to cleanse your aura and help you heal, an unforgettable experience brought about by ancient traditions. Mountain Pine Ridge is the perfect place to shut yourself off from the world and focus on you in a jungle lodge with an eco-spa, where the only interruption residing here are the monkeys cooing or the birds twittering. The seawall at the Split was made for beach sunsets, in other words, sunsets that make you forget about all your worries. Be present in the moment and soak in the Caribbean sun. There is something about being surrounded by greenery, the sea and taking in a lung full of fresh air that has a calming, therapeutic effect on our body and mind. Being surrounded or in contact with nature makes us feel happy and contributes to our overall physical wellbeing.

CULTURAL TRAVEL: Learning a new culture and ways other people live can remind us that we are all connected in more ways than we think. Happiness, love, gratitude, and smiles are universal.

Enjoy a truly immersive experience of the Maya culture while staying with an indigenous family in their village. Participate in daily activities such as cooking a yummy meal and gain a deeper understanding of their way of life. Learn about the vibrant rhythms and traditions of the Garifuna

people through a cultural tour that unveils the beauty of their music, dance, and cuisine. Take a chance at mashing the plantains for a delicious bowl of hudut, or let loose as you participate in a session of dancing Punta! These cultural activities provide a unique opportunity to connect with Belize's diverse heritage, leaving you with cherished memories and a deeper appreciation for the country's rich cultural tapestry. Seeing Belize through the lens of locals at shops, restaurants, bars, hotels, and tour operations, can often be more fulfilling. Familiarize yourself with the food, language, art, literature, and music. A cultural connection is a human connection - we hope that you make many of them.



ECO-TRAVELLING: Belize is often praised for its undisturbed flora and fauna; with untamed rainforests and 'no-take' marine zones, it only makes sense the green country encourages its visitors to take care of Mother Nature as well. As the term 'ecotourism' gets thrown around more and more in the industry, travelers should become aware of how to lessen their carbon footprint when visiting our 'eco-first' country. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education." With Belize phasing out plastics in 2019, expanding 'no-take' marine zones' and banning offshore drilling, visitors can follow in the green footsteps by undertaking these tips.



Tips

FOR ECO-TRAVELLING:



Public transportation. Instead of renting a car and burning more fuel, opt to ride a bus that can take you to your destination – should be easy since everything in Belize is close to each other!



BYOB. The last “B” here stands for bottle. Help reduce the use of plastics by bringing your own water bottle and filling it up at your hotel or restaurant.



Ask for Biodegradable Silverware. More Belizean restaurants are taking the initiative of not using plastic silverware. Therefore, patrons are encouraged to skip out on the plastic straw.



Turn off everything before leaving. Stepping out for some waterfall hiking? Turn off your hotel room A/C. The Caribbean breeze from your window is much better!



Reuse what you can. In hotels, try reusing your towels to save water. You can also bring reusable clothes; who needs 26 pairs of bikinis anyway?



Volun-tourism. Whether enrolling in a marine biology program or helping build schools in Maya villages, you’ll know you’ll be making a difference.



Bike Tours. On top of saving on carbon emissions, bike tours are also quite fun and you get to see so much more than just whizzing by on a car.



Visit Nature Preserves. Plan your agenda with visits to nature parks such as jaguar preserves and baboon sanctuaries, just to name a few, that leave the environment the way it should be.



Don’t purchase artifacts. Make sure to avoid buying any authentic Maya artifacts or pieces of coral. Let’s make sure the beauty remains where it should: in the wild!



Corozal

DISTRICT

The Corozal District is our northernmost area and it shares a border with Mexico. This district is accessible by land, air, or water. Many of the residents here speak both English and Spanish. Corozal is popular for its spacious landscape and sprawling housing developments that make this district popular for foreign retirees.

This town's settlement and infrastructural history is a rich story that includes ancient Maya cities and the plight of refugees fleeing the Caste War of Yucatan in the late 19th century. Corozal Town sits at the edge of the Corozal Bay, which is a tiny inlet of the larger Chetumal Bay. The first thing that catches the eye of this town is the turquoise water that flows in the front. On calm days, the water from the Bay can look like a glistening emerald crescent. The cool breeze can feel a lot like being at a beach as you walk along admiring the murals on the walls of the buildings and fences. It is no wonder that the ancient city of Cerros was such an important trading center during the height of its importance. Cerros and



Santa Rita archeological sites are among the more popular tourist attractions in this district; however, a walk along this town or a drive through the outskirts of the town can bring its own adventure. Small villages such as Xaibe, Patchakan, Chan Chen, Chunox, and Sarteneja still have Maya names to this day.

The Corozal District is fascinating for its ties to the Yucatec Maya, the founding of its main town in 1848 by refugees from the Maya Indian Uprising, and its picturesque landscape along its Bay.



01

Archaeological
Explorations

Cerros
Santa Rita

02

Offshore
Adventures

Corozal Bay
Consejo Shores
Sarteneja
(fishing village)

03

Places of
Interest

Corozal House
of Culture
Corozal Free
Zone
Fort Barlee
(Corozal Town)

04

Natural
Attractions

Shipstern Nature
Reserve
Freshwater Creek
Nature Reserve
(Cenote Azul)
Corozal Bay
Wildlife Sanctuary

05

Cultural
Experiences

Art in the Park
Wall Murals
Little Belize Village
(Mennonite
community)
Libertad Village
(Garifuna Museum &
Old Sugar Factory)
East Indian Museum

06

Festivals
& Events

Maya Wedding
Reenactment at Santa
Rita (February)
Annual Corozal
Coconut Festival
(February)
La Fiesta de
San Joaquin (August)
Hanal Pixan Cultural
Celebration
(Food for the Souls)
(October)

A black howler monkey is the central focus, perched on a light-colored tree branch. The monkey has dark, shaggy fur and a black face with striking orange-brown eyes. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest with tall grasses and various leaves. In the top left corner, there is a horizontal bar with a light blue gradient.

Corozal

TOP PICKS

Orange Walk DISTRICT



Belizeans know Orange Walk as “Shuga City” (sugar city). The explanation is obvious. Belize’s sugar industry, which goes as far back as the mid-19th century, is farmed and operated by families and residents in this area. Today, the industry is still thriving because of this community. Their love and skill of farming was perhaps passed down by the ancient Maya who is said to have utilized methods of advanced agriculture to plant corn and root crops. The archeological site of Cuello is located in this district and it is perhaps a symbol of Orange Walk’s ancient significance.

When driving through this town you can expect to see scattered pieces or bundles of sugar cane on the road. During the harvest season, long lines of trucks are often waiting to deliver their cargo to the Tower Hill Sugar Mill. Orange Walk Town is a quiet, industrious, and family-oriented community. The population is mostly Mestizo descent, which is a mixture of Spanish and Yucatec Maya. Lamanai archeological site is another well-known tourist attraction in this district, accessible by road through



some remote villages or by boat up the New River Lagoon. Some communities have held on to old traditions, as in the case of Yo Creek Village whose residents have revived the ancient Maya game of pok-a-tok.

Apart from the fresh sugar cane and sweet rums, visitors will enjoy this district for its marshes, savannas, and broad-lead forests. Howler monkeys, Morelet's crocodiles, wild cats, and over 400 bird species will enthrall nature lovers and outdoors enthusiasts. Off the beaten path or on a boat ride up the New River, safari adventures are popular in this district.



01

Archaeological
Explorations

Lamanai
Cuello
(Yo Creek Road)
La Milpa

02

Offshore
Adventures

Cenote Tillett Escape
Blue Creek Dam
Programme for
Belize

03

Places of
Interest

Las Banquitas
House of Culture
Sandy Hunter Library
BSI Sugar Factory
Gallon Jug

04

Natural
Attractions

Rio Bravo
Management Area
& Hill Bank
Honey Camp
Lagoon
Three cenotes in
San Antonio Village

05

Cultural
Experiences

Shipyard
Mennonite Village
Yo Creek Village
Blue Creek Village
August Pine Ridge

06

Festivals
& Events

Orange Walk
Rum Festival
(February)
Fiesta Rama (July)
Orange Walk
Tourism Expo
(August)
Orange Walk
Tacos Festival
(November)

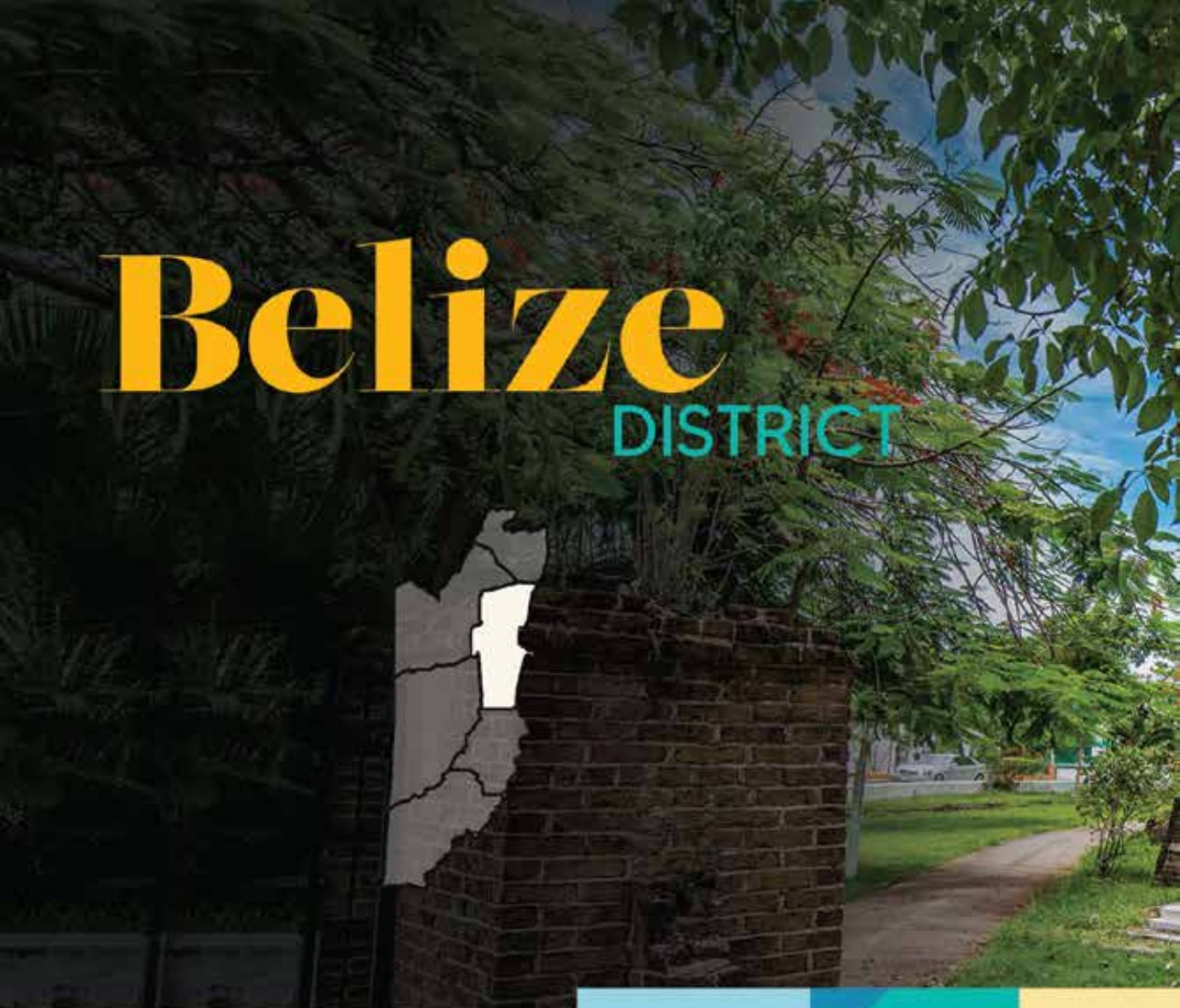
Orange Walk

TOP
PICKS



Belize

DISTRICT



The Belize District is located in the central-eastern seaboard of the country. Belize City is the capital of the district and the former capital of Belize. The colonial-era buildings and homes, the tropical weather, the lazy-looking fishing boats that harbor at the Swing Bridge, and the breeze that blows at the seawall, make Belize City quaint and picturesque. Visitors can enjoy walks to the Museum of Belize or House of Culture, boat rides up the old Belize River, quick trips to the outer cayes, horse-cart rides around the city, and day excursions to popular tourist attractions in the area.

The landscape in this district has many creeks and mangrove swamps. Many of the communities in the rural areas are built on reclaimed land, but with interesting beginnings of their own. For example, Hattievillage Village, just outside of Belize City, was built after Hurricane Hattie demolished Belize City in 1961. The ancient archeological site of Altun Ha is located in the Belize District, but more fascinating and perhaps even



more ancient, is the Old Belize River. Throughout the centuries, this river has served the ancient Maya people, early buccaneers, and British settlers, and now it is a source of relaxation and adventure for Belize's thriving tourism industry, as manatees are seen cruising down or up the river.

The Belize District is the hub of Belize's political and industrial history and is the home and headquarters for the majority of its major businesses. Whether visitors fly in at the Phillip Goldson International Airport (PGIA) or disembark from a cruise ship, a glimpse of the "old capital" (Belize City) or the rural communities in this district, will stir the imagination.

01

Archaeological
Explorations

Altun Ha
(Maskall Village)

02

Offshore
Adventures

Manatee Spotting
on Belize River
Boat Ride
(Belize City)

St. George's Caye
Goff's Caye

03

Places of
Interest

St. John's Cathedral
The Government
House of Belize
Baron Bliss
Lighthouse
Museum of Belize

04

Natural
Attractions

Crooked Tree
Wildlife Sanctuary
(Crooked Tree Village)
Community Baboon
Sanctuary
(Burrell Boom Village)
The Belize Zoo

05

Cultural
Experiences

Belize City
House of Culture
Belize River
Valley Village
Gales Point Village

06

Festivals
& Events

The Belikin La Ruta
Maya River Challenge
(March)
Crooked Tree Cashew
Festival (May)
Belize International
Music & Food
Festival (July)
Willows Bank Fyah
Haat Festival (Sep)
Belize Birding Festival
(October)



Belize

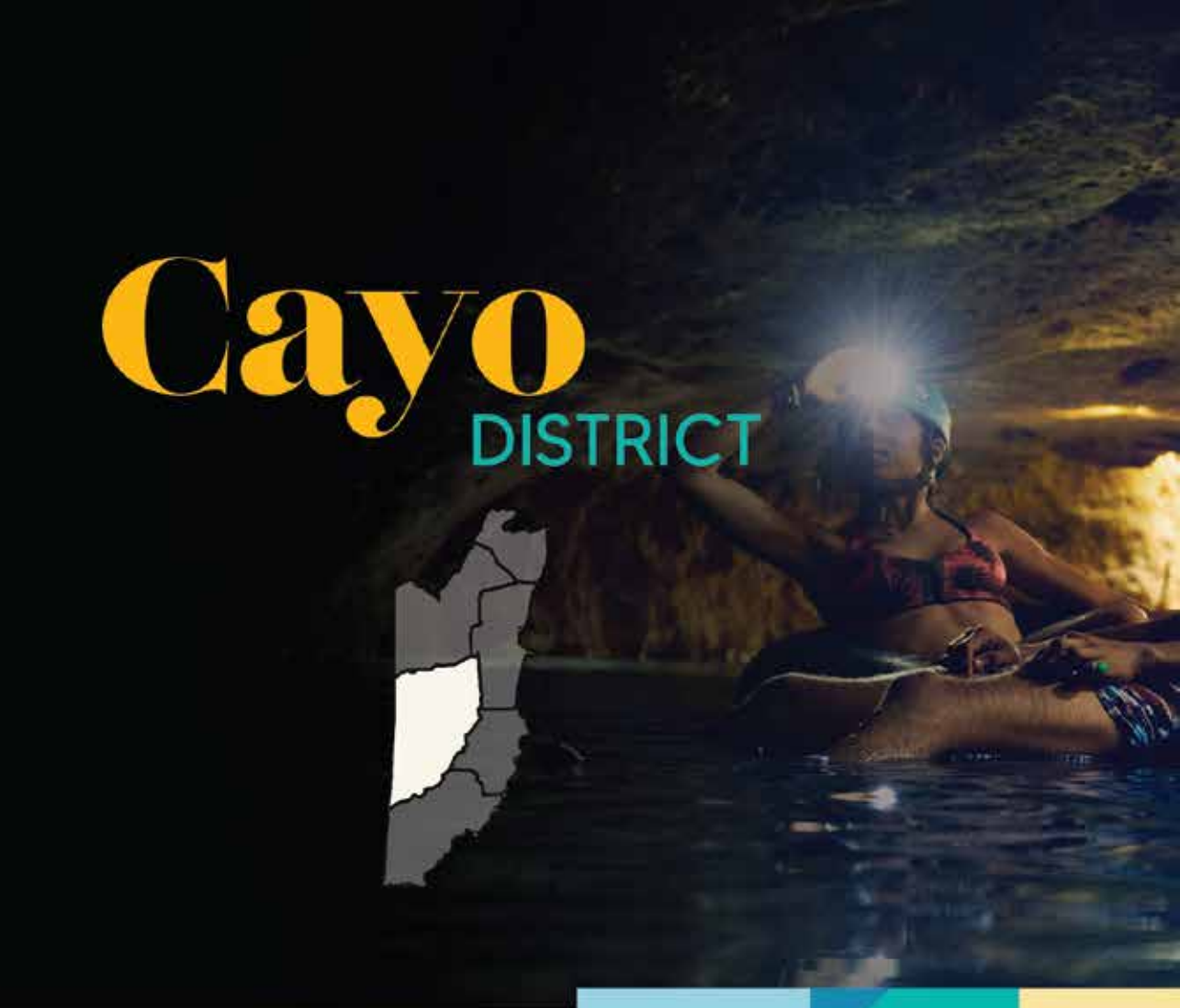
TOP PICKS



Baron Bliss Lighthouse

Cayo

DISTRICT



Cayo is home to the capital city of Belmopan! The planned city was established in 1970 due to the devastation of Hurricane Hattie in 1961. Known as the Garden City, it's the go-to place for food hubs, cafes, government offices, and outskirts hotspots like St. Herman's Blue Hole, Banana Bank, and the Belize Zoo. A little further west are the twin towns of Santa Elena and San Ignacio. Sitting on hills, these towns are separated below by the Macal River and joined above by the Hawksworth Bridge. Together they are the mecca of tourism for this district. Freshly grown and organic foods are in constant supply at local markets and grocery stores.

After a short drive away, along the Benque Road, and a quick trip across the Macal River, visitors can find themselves immersed in the ancient Maya city of Xunantunich. The Maya City of Cahal Pech is nestled within San Ignacio Town and is very accessible. The entire Cayo district is a popular visitors' route, as they can get the best of both worlds. They have the



option of secluded resorts nestled within the Mountain Pine Ridge or enjoying a quaint stay at a hotel in town instead.

Cayo District is always an excellent choice for hikers, birdwatchers, and everything pertaining to nature lovers. The terrain is miles of grazed hills, green farmland, and breezy, cool, manicured pastures. Freshwater rivers and lazy grasslands in this western district can feel like life on the prairie. The Cayo district is pretty- and that is putting it simply. The Cayo District shares a major crossing point with Guatemala. Visitors must cross the border from Melchor, Guatemala into Benque Viejo del Carmen, Belize.

01

Archaeological
Explorations

Xunantunich
(San Jose Succotz)

Cahal Pech
(San Ignacio Town)

Caracol
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

02

Inland
Adventures

Birdwatching at
Guanacaste National
Park (Belmopan)

Sibun River
Kayaking

Green Iguana
Conservation Project

Rio On Pools
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

03

Cave
Explorations

Actun Tunichil
Muknal (ATM) Caves
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

Barton Creek Cave
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

Nohoch Che'en

Rio Frio Cave
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

04

Natural
Attractions

Big Rock Falls
(Mountain Pine Ridge)

Guanacaste
National Park

St. Herman's Cave
Blue Hole
National Park

Five Blues Lake
National Park

1,000 Foot Falls

05

Cultural
Experiences

San Ignacio
Market Day

San Antonio
Women's Group

San Ignacio Murals

06

Festivals
& Events

Holy Week in
Benque Viejo (March)

The National
Agricultural &
Trade Show (April)

San Ignacio
Festival (May)

Made in Belize
Trade Show
(June)

Benque Fiesta (July)



Cayo

TOP PICKS

Caracol (Mountain Pine Ridge)

Stann Creek

DISTRICT



Stann Creek, called “Griga” for short, is known as the “culture (kulcha) capital” of the entire country. This southern district is fondly called so because of the tremendous contribution the Garifuna people had on the Belizean culture. Apart from Dangriga Town, other Garifuna villages such as George Town, Seine Bight, and Hopkins have been just as influential to local music, dance, painting, and other art forms that can be experienced by visitors in the present day.

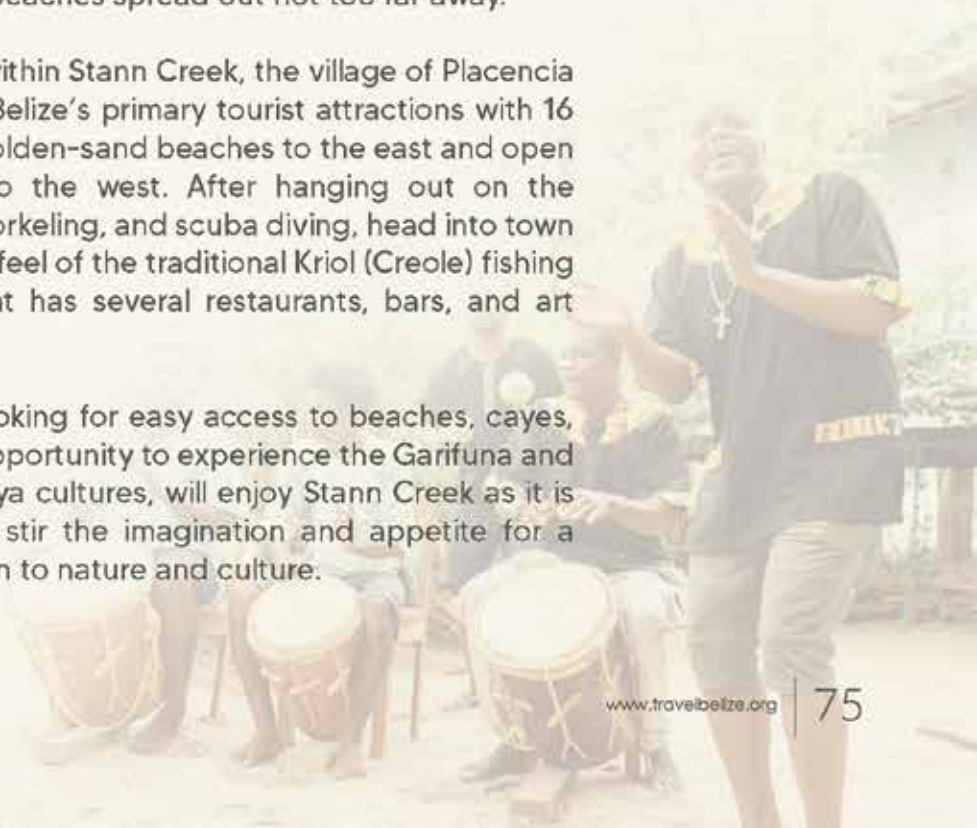
Citrus and banana, two of our major agricultural exports, are grown throughout this area. Take a drive through the Hummingbird Highway and down the Southern Highway to see hills and orchards of each fruit- these industries have been around since the 1800s. However, the Maya Mountains in this area have been around for longer. Stann Creek is Belize’s most mountainous area with hills, valleys, and creeks. Victoria Peak, the second-highest point in the country, is popular among hikers and campers. Maya mountains shoot up in the rare view periphery even



as sandy beaches spread out not too far away.

Situated within Stann Creek, the village of Placencia is one of Belize's primary tourist attractions with 16 miles of golden-sand beaches to the east and open lagoons to the west. After hanging out on the beach, snorkeling, and scuba diving, head into town and get a feel of the traditional Kriol (Creole) fishing village that has several restaurants, bars, and art galleries.

Visitors looking for easy access to beaches, cayes, and the opportunity to experience the Garifuna and Ketchi Maya cultures, will enjoy Stann Creek as it is bound to stir the imagination and appetite for a connection to nature and culture.



01

Visitor
Attractions

Marie Sharp
Pepper Factory

Sabal's Cassava
Factory

Henriette Delille
Center

Drums of our Father

02

Offshore
Adventures

South Water Caye
Marine Reserve

Glover's Reef
Marine Reserve

Laughing Bird Caye
National Park

Silk Cayes
National Park

03

Natural
Attractions

Victoria Peak
Natural Monument

Cockscomb Basin
Wildlife Sanctuary
(Jaguar Preserve)

Davis Falls

04

National
Parks

Rio Blanco
National Park
(Santa Cruz Village)

Billy Barquedier
National Park

Mayflower Bocawina
National Park

05

Cultural
Experiences

Gulisi Garifuna
Museum
(Dangriga Town)

Placencia Village
Sidewalk
(Placencia Village)

Pen Cayetano
Art Gallery

Belize Maya Center

06

Festivals
& Events

Placencia
Sidewalk Art Festival
(February)

Hopkins Mango
Street Fest (June)

Placencia Lobster
Festival (July)

Placencia Annual
Fishing Tournament

A woman in a patterned dress is cooking over a large open fire in a traditional kitchen. She is holding a long wooden stick and a large black pan. The fire is bright and intense, with sparks flying. In the background, another person is visible, and the kitchen is filled with various items and wooden structures.

Stann Creek

TOP
PICKS



Toledo

DISTRICT

Toledo is the southernmost district of the country and Punta Gorda Town is its capital. All of Belize's landscape can be described as luxuriously lush, but for an experience in an environment that reaches even higher on the primeval scale, Toledo is the place. Here you will find ancient Maya archeological sites such as Nim Li Punit and Lubaantun, a lush rainforest, coastal lowlands, extensive cave systems, and plenty of offshore cayes. But, what makes this district so special is its feeling of simplicity and welcome as nothing is too complicated here. Everything and experience is earthy, authentic, and real.

Punta Gorda Town is a quaint and homey place where visitors can truly immerse themselves in a living Maya experience, chocolate making, or touring spice farms and botanical gardens. Tourism is active, but not as busy as other parts of the country. Here you can expect to find friendly and familiar faces at the local farmers' market and just about everywhere else. The population in the town is diverse with a large East Indian



community. It is also home to other primary indigenous ethnicities like the Creole and Garifuna, hailing some of Belize's musical pioneers, such as Leela Vernon, Paul Nabor, and Andy Palacio. The Toledo coastline shares a small part of the Bay of Honduras and looks more like a large lake on calm days, while Maya villages line the outskirts of the Town.

The adventure options in Toledo are as expansive as the kindness of the people there, and as remarkable as the primordial elements of the environment. Experience the scenic Maya mountains and immerse in the glistening Caribbean Sea as you travel through this less-explored culture-rich destination.



01

Archaeological
Explorations

Nim Li Punit
‘Big Hat’
(Indian Creek Village)

Lubaantun
‘Fallen Stones’
(San Pedro
Columbia Village)

Uxbenka
‘Ancient Place’
(Santa Cruz Village)

02

Offshore
Adventures

Port Honduras
Marine Reserve

West Snake Cayes

03

Cave
Explorations

Hokeb Ha Cave
(Blue Creek Village)

Tiger Cave
(San Miguel Village)

Yok Balum Cave
(Santa Cruz Village)

Oke’bal Ha Cave
(Santa Cruz Village)

04

Natural
Attractions

Rio Blanco
National Park
(Santa Cruz Village)

05

Cultural
Experiences

Cacao Farming &
Chocolate Making
Experiences:
(San Pedro Columbia,
San Felipe, San Miguel,
& Indian Creek)

Leela Vernon Creole
Cultural Museum
(Punta Gorda Town)

Maya Living Experiences
(Santa Cruz Village &
Big Falls Village)

Market & Local
Artisan Crafts
(Punta Gorda Town)

06

Festivals
& Events

Chocolate Festival
of Belize (May)

TIDE Fish Festival
(October)

Battle of the Drums
(November)

Toledo

TOP PICKS



Chocolate Making Experience

www.toledotour.com

11



Caye Caulker

OFFSHORE ISLAND

Get off the water taxi or a Cessna Grand Caravan at Caye Caulker and you immediately feel that somehow you had been there before. In some way, there is a tremendous feeling of familiarity. The small community of locals who live there and who devote themselves to the development and care of the island are the reason for that. Be prepared to throw on some shorts and a T-shirt to go out to dinner. End your days with drinks at any seaside bar and watch the colors change in the sky as the sun melts in the background.

Caye Caulker is about eight miles long and less than a mile wide. Better get used to the constant sounds of water swooshing and swishing, because the Belize Barrier Reef is so close, it is a constant source of pleasant white noise. The famous Shark Ray Alley is just a short boat ride away. With water clear enough to see the sandy bottom, swimming, and snorkeling can seem like the only sensible things to do while you are here. The main part of the island is separated by a split. The Split is a channel



that is used for boats to pass from the choppy waters in the front of the island to the calm bay at the back. Tourists and locals congregate at the split to sunbathe, socialize, eat, drink, and catch a “vibe”.

Once a village that relied heavily on fishing as its main industry, today Caye Caulker is a budget-friendly, hyper-eco-conscious, personable, and endearing tourism destination. It is popular among young visitors looking for a laidback and chill vacation experience.

An underwater photograph showing several divers swimming in clear blue water. The divers are silhouetted against the bright light filtering down from the surface. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the overall scene is serene and adventurous.

San Pedro Ambergris Caye OFFSHORE ISLAND

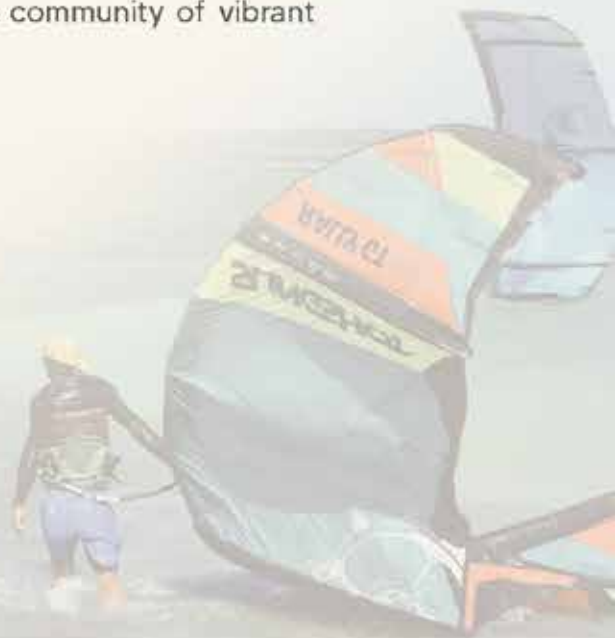
San Pedro, Ambergris Caye is Belize's largest and most populated offshore destination. The entire island is approximately twenty-five miles long and about one mile across in width. Throughout Belize, this island is affectionately referred to as "La Isla Bonita". San Pedro is known for its snorkeling, diving, resorts, cute lounge areas, food, and active nightlife. The island is big and modern enough for every vacation experience.

Travel to La Isla Bonita and immerse yourselves in any of the island's various traditional celebrations. Celebrate the onset of the Lenten Season with this sinful "pass" celebration, "San Pedro Carnaval", inclusive of beach parties, painting, local food and drinks, live entertainment, a masquerade ball, and the significant burning of Don Juan Carnaval doll (cleansing of the sins). Getting into the Christmas spirit is inevitable, as the view of the glittering lights, the feel of the gentle Caribbean breeze, and the numerous island activities soothe and excite you. Join the night-time festivities, as the colorfully lit boats parade yards from the shorelines



of Ambergris Caye! Be free in this community of vibrant and friendly people!

Most residents move about on golf carts- larger vehicles are discouraged. Piers and bridges of all shapes and sizes stretch out from the front of the island towards the Belize Barrier Reef. The reef is close enough to hear the waves crash and collide with the corals. San Pedro has all the amenities of living on the mainland with the added benefit of being surrounded by turquoise water and happy palm trees. No matter your style or budget, Ambergris Caye is the perfect place to stay and explore.



01

Archaeological
Explorations

Marco Gonzalez
Archaeological
Reserve
(San Pedro)

02

Offshore
Adventures

Hol Chan
Marine Reserve
(San Pedro &
Caye Caulker)

Shark Ray Alley
(San Pedro &
Caye Caulker)

Great Blue Hole

Calabash Caye

03

Island
Hopping

San Pedro
(Ambergris Caye)

Caye Caulker

Half Moon Caye

Laughing Bird Caye

04

Marine
Reserves

Glover's Reef
Marine Reserve

South Water Caye
Marine Reserve

Half Moon Caye
National Monument

Swallow Caye
Wildlife Sanctuary

05

Cultural
Experiences

Carnaval de
San Pedro
(San Pedro)

Dia de San Pedro
(San Pedro)

06

Festivals
& Events

Lobster Festivals
(Caye Caulker &
San Pedro) (July)

Grand Caribe
Fishing Tournament
(San Pedro) (June)

San Pedro Carnival
(San Pedro)
(September)

An underwater photograph of a diver in a blue and white patterned wetsuit, equipped with a scuba tank and mask, swimming in clear blue water. The diver is surrounded by a school of yellow-striped snappers. The background shows a coral reef with various types of coral and other smaller fish. The text 'Offshore Islands TOP PICKS' is overlaid in white at the top right.

Offshore Islands

TOP PICKS



Overnight Adventure ITINERARIES

With the majority of our international flights arriving either late morning or early afternoon, visitors may have the opportunity to squeeze in a light adventure activity on their travel day. These can include sunset paddle boarding off the island of Caye Caulker, enjoying a relaxing massage with a view of the lush green rainforest in San Ignacio, or snorkeling with the nurse sharks off Ambergris Caye. One can even create everlasting memories to and from their hotels with a scenic drive down either of the highways, a boat ride over the various shades of blue from the Caribbean Sea, or a Cessna caravan that offers an aerial view of the second largest living barrier reef in the world and the lush protected rainforest.

Organize your return transfers with your hotel ahead of time. Keep in mind the recommended arrival at the airport at least 2 hours before your international departure time. We encourage you to take a different mode of transport to the Philip Goldson International Airport, allowing you to experience Belize's beauty both on the ground and from above.



Retreat **to** Serene Discovery:



DAY 1

Book an excursion with a licensed tour operator to see the stunning marine life at the nearby Hol Chan Marine Reserve, one of the many reserves at the world's largest living Barrier Reef. Here, you'll encounter a variety of fish, turtles, rays, and more. Continue the adventure at Shark Ray Alley to swim with the nurse sharks (maintaining a safe distance of 6 feet). To culminate your day with allure, indulge in a serene sunset sailing experience, letting the hues of the setting sun cast a magical glow over your marine adventure.



DAY 2

Catch the sunrise and enjoy breakfast at a local restaurant. Thereafter, head over to Secret Beach in Ambergris Caye or the Split in Caye Caulker to explore these popular retreats. Settle down at one of the many beach bars, take a swim, hop on a kayak or paddle board, drink, eat, listen to music, or opt for a relaxing beachside massage.



DAY 3

No visit is complete without witnessing the magnificent Great Blue Hole. Do an early morning flyover for breathtaking aerial views or hop on a scheduled tour to snorkel or dive into this natural wonder. In the late morning, take a flight or ferry to Belize City and venture West to the Cayo district via a land transfer. Become one with nature by staying at one of the many jungle properties ensuring to explore the surroundings before dinner.



DAY 4

Embrace ancient Maya history by visiting archaeological sites like Cahal Pech, Caracol, or Xunantunich. Climb the stairs of different plazas for breathtaking views. Cool off in one of the natural water pools - Rio on Pools or Big Rock Falls are great options, or relax on board a pontoon cruise as you sail down the Macal River enjoying a Belizean Barbeque and cold beverage.

Option 2: Venture north of Belize to explore the ancient temples of Lamanai Archaeological site. The journey begins with an exhilarating boat ride along the New River Lagoon where you can view a variety of birds, crocodiles and even get a glimpse into the daily lives of the

Mennonites in the Shipyard community.

Arrive at Lamanai “Submerged Crocodile” and visit the temples. Enjoy the amazing view of the river from the High Temple.

You can choose to combine your day trip with a visit to the traditional Mennonite community in Indian Creek. You get an understanding of the simplistic lives they lead and get to sample their traditional meals. This is very different from the other communities you may come across on your visit, who have evolved and become more industrial over time.



Wherever you are in the country, there is sure to be a “Market Day” worth experiencing. Experience the local vibe by visiting the market on a Saturday for a delightful breakfast at one of the stalls. Explore the diverse offerings of fruits, vegetables, and souvenirs. If you are in the San Ignacio area, do a visit to the Green Iguana Conservation project to discover more about the reptiles and their significance to the ecosystem - a captivating activity suitable for both adults and children. Another great option if you decided to remain North is a picnic along the bay of Corozal, combined with a visit to the water park, fun for kids and adults.

Uncover Nature & Leave Only Footprints:



Delight in freshly brewed local coffee as you embark on an early morning birding expedition, observing a diverse mix of migratory and resident birds. Following this avian adventure, visit the local market in Punta Gorda Town for a delectable breakfast showcasing a blend of Kekchi Maya, Mestizo, and Kriol cuisine. Explore organic farms, delving into the intriguing history and uses of local and foreign spices and medicinal plants grown in Belize.



Starting at 8:00 am, travel to the village of Santa Cruz. Begin your day with breakfast in the town, followed by an immersive experience with a traditional Maya family. Engage in activities such as cacao harvesting, meal

preparation, chocolate making, and gain insights into the traditional way of life and beliefs of the Maya.



DAY
3

Fuel up with a hearty breakfast before embarking on a 4.5-hour drive from Punta Gorda to Mountain Pine Ridge, a nature reserve in the Cayo District established in 1944 to safeguard native Belizean pine forests. Take a detour to Placencia Village, and hop on a boat to explore one of the islands along the southeast coast of Belize, snorkel the Belize Barrier Reef, and learn about conservation efforts to preserve and protect our reef and marine life.



DAY
4

Kick-start the day with a farm-to-table breakfast, savoring fresh and locally sourced ingredients. Embark on an immersive journey in the footsteps of the Maya as you ascend the stairs of Caracol, the largest archaeological site in Belize at 141 feet. Explore the main pyramid, named "Caana" (Sky Palace), featuring four palaces and three temples. After your archaeological adventure, rejuvenate with a refreshing swim and enjoy a delightful picnic at either Rio On Pools or Big Rock Waterfalls.



DAY
5

Head over to the San Antonio Village in the Cayo District where the San Antonio Women's Group preserves and shares their vibrant culture. Immerse yourself in the intricate process of preparing a traditional Maya lunch, allowing you to participate in the rich culinary heritage of the community. Explore your creativity as you try your hand at pottery making, a cherished craft passed down through generations. Dive into the fascinating history of the group, gaining insights into their traditions and unwavering commitment to cultural sustainability.



Natural Wonders & Aquatic Bliss:



Embark on the ultimate aquatic adventure, exploring off-shore islands with captivating full-day experiences in diving, snorkeling, and fishing. Each day unfolds with 2 to 3 exhilarating dives, revealing a world of wonders beneath the waves. A standout is the full day at Lighthouse Reef Atoll, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offering the mesmerizing Great Blue Hole, exceptional diving spots around Long Caye, and the pristine allure of Half Moon Caye. Dive into breathtaking discoveries, complemented by a refresher course for confidence. Enjoy a beach BBQ at Half Moon Caye, savoring delicious cuisine amid the island's natural beauty.



Embark on a captivating journey, as you delve into the mysteries of the Witconcrete, a sunken ship located just off the Turneffe Atoll. This submerged vessel, once a repository for sugar and molasses, has metamorphosed into Belize's latest and most intriguing dive site. With dimensions that command attention, measuring an impressive 375 feet in length, 56 feet in width, and 38 feet in height, this sunken giant promises an awe-inspiring and unforgettable dive experience for avid enthusiasts.



Explore other dive sites along the south and east of Turneffe Atoll, near the Belize Barrier Reef, and revel in the diverse flora, fauna, and marine wildlife. Make sure to include a night dive at Turneffe Atoll's "Elbow". Under the cover of darkness, the marine environment undergoes a



a magical transformation. Bioluminescent organisms come to life, creating a surreal and otherworldly atmosphere. The nocturnal activity of marine creatures adds an extra layer of excitement to your dive, providing a unique and unforgettable underwater experience.



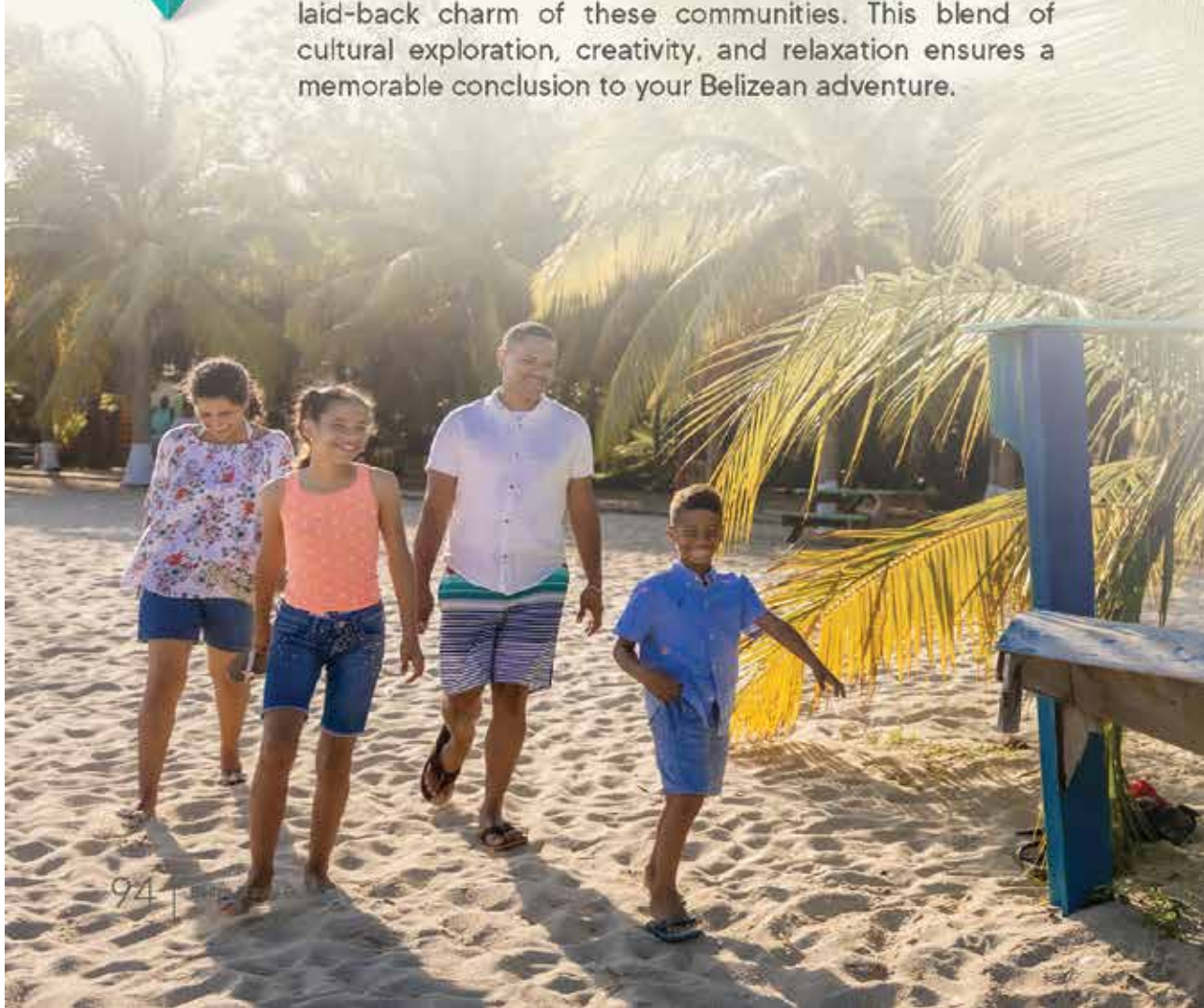
DAY
4

Head to Glover's Reef Atoll for a night amidst nature's tranquility. The atoll provides a unique chance to deeply connect with the surroundings, offering a serene ambiance with the soothing waves and a star-studded sky. Opting for an overnight stay creates a memorable, immersive, and secluded retreat. If your visit aligns with April, May, or June, seize the chance to dive with whale sharks at Gladden Spit during their spawning season—an extraordinary opportunity to witness these majestic creatures in their natural habitat.



DAY
5

Devote your last day to unwinding in the villages of Hopkins or Placencia, immersing in Belizean culture, enjoying local cuisine, and exploring the art scene. Indulge in hands-on experiences such as crafting traditional drums or creating unique jewelry from lionfish, connecting with local traditions. Unwind with a beer or two, embracing the laid-back charm of these communities. This blend of cultural exploration, creativity, and relaxation ensures a memorable conclusion to your Belizean adventure.



Thrilling Adventures & Adrenaline Surges:



Start your day early in San Ignacio Town, savoring a delicious Maya breakfast from the local market. Afterward, embark on an adventure to the breathtaking Mountain Pine Ridge area, exploring Caracol, one of Belize's largest Maya sites. Wander through the ancient plazas, absorbing the rich history that echoes through time. As your journey through Caracol unfolds, marvel at the architectural grandeur and cultural significance of this archaeological gem. After this enriching experience, trace your steps back to San Ignacio Town, bringing the day's adventures to a close amidst the town's inviting ambiance.



Journey east on the George Price Highway to Teakettle Village, then follow a winding dirt road to the Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave (ATM). Wade through creeks to the entrance of the Maya underworld, Xibalba, revealing the secrets of the ancient Maya civilization. Explore the underground realm, guided by echoes of history through intricate cave formations. After emerging, journey westward, the tales of your underground adventure lingering. Conclude the day with relaxation; indulge in a spa experience or gather with fellow adventurers for a meal and wine, creating lasting memories of a day filled with exploration.



Drive 2.5-hour to Mayflower Bocawina National Park after checking out from your hotel. Delve into an invigorating rainforest hike to Antelope Falls, taking a refreshing dip before a thrilling 250-foot rappel and zip along Belize's longest line. Head to Placencia, an idyllic barefoot paradise, opting for a boutique or luxurious stay for memorable moments. Explore the fishing village, unwind at the Placencia Municipal Pier, swim at pristine beaches, or stroll the sidewalk known as the world's narrowest street. Your journey promises a cascade of captivating moments, transcending the ordinary for an extraordinary experience.



Embark on a 1.5-hour journey to the lush Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary. Immerse yourself in the experience upon arrival at the Welcome Center. Set out on an exploration of the diverse trails that wind through this wildlife haven, each offering a unique perspective of the sanctuary's natural beauty. Opt for guided tours like Tiger Fern and Ben's Bluff for in-depth insights into the sanctuary's secrets from expert guides. Alternatively, venture solo on trails like Curassow Trail, and Rubber Tree Trail - River Path, for a personal connection with nature. Feel the trail beneath your feet, listen to the forest melodies, and discover hidden wonders at every turn.



Enjoy a delicious fried fish breakfast or some local fruits before taking on the day in Ambergris Caye. Explore lively streets via golf cart, the island's preferred transport. La Isla Bonita offers diverse accommodations, ensuring a perfect fit for every visitor. Immerse in aquatic exploration with snorkeling at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve or Shark Ray Alley. Elevate your experience with thrilling parasailing over the Belize Barrier Reef. Discover Secret Beach's hidden charm or revel in the lively Boca Del Rio Bar Strip. Each moment unfolds, crafting an immersive day capturing Ambergris Caye's beauty and vibrancy. Explore, savor, and embrace the island's unique culture and natural wonders.

Luxury Retreats & Culinary Delights:



Take a scenic shuttle ride to Kukumba Beach Marina in Belize City, where you will be greeted by your concierge with a local Belizean punch before boarding your luxury boat. Feel the gentle breeze of the Caribbean Sea as you set sail, surrounded by good company or a good book. Indulge in a fresh afternoon snack skillfully crafted by your chef, anticipating a delightful dinner experience. Dock at Rendezvous Caye or Starfish Caye for a beach dinner featuring fresh seafood, a bonfire, and stargazing.





Sails are set as you head to the 'go-slow' island of Caye Caulker. Along the way, enjoy an exclusive snorkeling stop with abundant marine life just feet away from the Belize Barrier Reef. As you continue to sail up North to Caye Caulker, enjoy a few more snorkel stops. Anchor outside of Caye Caulker and meet up at the world-famous Split to enjoy a walking brunch tour. Gain knowledge of the island and the locals during this leisure tour or venture to the back of the island to feed the tarpons, spot sea horses, or hang out with the sting rays, just before witnessing one of the best sunsets in Belize.



If you're an early riser, catch the beautiful sunrise over the blue Caribbean Sea. Set sail further North to the island of San Pedro, but not before stopping for your final snorkel at Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley. Catch views of rays, turtles, nurse sharks, and schools of fish. No luxury trip is complete without a chartered flight over the Great Blue Hole in a small aircraft or helicopter. The views can only be described as awe-inspiring, as the blue hues of the Belize Barrier Reef will surely be the highlight of your trip south to the village of Placencia. Check in to your hotel and enjoy some downtime before heading out for a private wine and cheese tasting. The colorful village of Placencia provides visitors with a step back in time to quaint simplicity, as they walk down the narrowest main street in the world.



Find your Zen as you start your day with an hour-long sunrise yoga session on the pier. Let the sounds of the waves and budding life around inhibit you. Continue to enjoy being pampered in style and head to the spa for the ultimate relaxation and reset session. Embracing the abundant sounds of nature, while getting your spa treatment, brings the experience full circle. End your day off relaxing on the beach, enveloped in the soothing embrace of the Belizean breeze.



Retirement, Business, & Pleasure

BLEND IN BELIZE



Qualified Retired Person

With its bountiful beauty, adventure, laid-back atmosphere, and inviting people, Belize is known as a destination of choice for expatriates. You don't have to be retired - or even of retirement age - to take advantage of the Qualified Retired Person Program. However, you must be 40 years or older and currently benefiting from a retirement income.

Who Qualifies?

- ✓ Any person 40 years or older
- ✓ Must be the beneficial recipient of a retirement income of \$2K monthly or \$24K annually generated from a source outside of Belize in an approved foreign currency [US Dollar, Pound Sterling, The Euro, and Canadian Dollars.
- ✓ Must be able to remain in Belize for a minimum of 30 consecutive days annually.

SCAN
to learn more!



Work Where You Vacation

This amazing program offers you the opportunity to work remotely from Belize. From 9 to 5, you can get down to business with a scenic view. Then, after logging off for the day, discover an entire country's worth of natural wonders, exciting activities, rich cultures, and delicious cuisine to enjoy. If you have children, this program lets them learn where you vacation! All kids under 18 are eligible to enroll in Belize's outstanding school system. Spend six months living in, working from, and falling in love with Belize!

The Work Where You Vacation program includes:

- ✓ Work permits waived for participants
- ✓ Student permits waived for children of participants
- ✓ Special offers on activities, entertainment, and accommodations.

SCAN
to learn more!



belize



MAP KEY

Symbol	Category	METERS	FEET
Red circle	Capital		
Red circle with dot	City	6000	20000
Red circle with horizontal lines	Major Town	6000	20000
Red circle with vertical lines	Town	6000	20000
Blue line	Barrier Reef	6000	20000
Green triangle	Major Archaeological Site	6000	20000
Black cross	Local Airport	6000	20000
Black airplane	International Airport	0	0
Blue triangle	Water Fall Route	91	300
Red circle with horizontal lines	Gas Station	389	1276
Red circle with vertical lines	Drive Site	503	1650
Red circle with diagonal lines	Swimming Site	714	2343
Red circle with dots	Point of Interest		

BELIZE TRAVEL APP

LICENSED HOTELS TOUR OPERATORS



APPLE



ANDROID



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Get the information you need to explore Belize by scanning the QR code to the Belize Travel App, which offers features such as itinerary building, blogs, local activities, facts about Belize, and more. Plan your perfect trip to Belize and find your way around! By allowing the app to access your locations, you can see what's around and get notified about nearby attractions and events, even when the app is in the background. Add events, attractions, and tours to your custom itinerary. Sign in to save your plan and you can even access it without an internet connection. Uncover hidden gems and explore confidently, while staying informed by the Belize Travel App's rich and updated content, ensuring every moment is tailored to your desires.

- ✓ local activities
- ✓ itinerary building



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