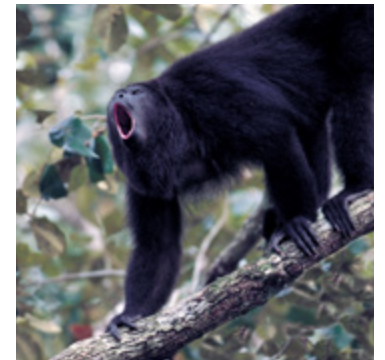


ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

BEST OF BELIZE

MARCH 7-16, 2025



A journey through the natural world, the ancient Mayan world and the modern-day world of Belize form an intriguing tapestry of experiences as you explore the best of Belize on an active eco-adventure.

Discover ancient Maya civilization – their remarkable sophistication and wide-ranging achievements. Rejuvenate in pristine landscapes: lush jungles, vibrant coral reefs, crystal-clear waters and picturesque beaches. Snorkel UNESCO World Heritage Belize Barrier Reef, the second-largest coral reef system in the world, to explore colorful coral gardens, swim with sharks and rays, and encounter diverse marine species. Savor a melting pot of cultures, reflected in the country's food, music, art and traditions.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

- Arrivals in Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport (BZE)
- Crooked Tree Lagoon, 2 nights; Bird's Eye View Resort or similar
- Cayo District, 4 nights; Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge, or similar
- Hopkins, 3 nights; Almond Beach Resort, or similar
- Optional 3-night post-tour extension to Ambergris Caye

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1 - THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2025

DEPART USA TO BELIZE – CROOKED TREE LAGOON

Independent flights to Belize. Please choose flights that arrive by 1:00 p.m. Depart the airport and drive approximately one hour, to Crooked Tree Lagoon, renowned for its more than 300 species of birds, wildlife such as crocodiles, iguanas and turtles. Discover the diverse flora and fauna right on the property and take a guided nature walk along the shore. *Bird's Eye View Lodge (B,L,D)*

DAY 2 - FRIDAY, MARCH 8 LAMANAI

Rise early to take in the spectacular scenery, bird- and wildlife on an early morning boat tour on the lagoon, before breakfast. After breakfast, drive to Orange Walk Town and the New River landing to embark on a boat for a cruise down the New River, a principal transportation route in Mayan times, past the Mennonite farms to Lamanai. Explore Lamanai, one of Belize's largest Maya sites, situated on the bank of the 30-mile-long New River Lagoon. It features monumental architecture of temples and palaces dating from the Classic and Pre-Classic Periods. A major attraction of Lamanai is the well-preserved mask of a Maya ruler emerging from a crocodile headdress. Set in tropical forest and providing amazing views from several of its large temples, Lamanai provides both a unique glimpse into the culture of the Maya and of the biological diversity of the tropical rainforest. Climb to the top for a spectacular view. We are likely to see Toucans and other birds in the high canopy. Return to our lodge and enjoy the natural beauty and sunset. *Bird's Eye View Lodge (B,L,D)*



DAY 3 - SATURDAY, MARCH 9 CAYO DISTRICT

Optional early morning nature walk to enjoy the abundant bird life. After breakfast, we drive from the wetlands, marshes and savannahs of Northern Belize into the lush, dense rainforests and rugged mountains of the Western Cayo District, a drive of approximately three hours. *San Ignacio Resort Hotel or similar (B,L,D)*

DAY 4 - SUNDAY, MARCH 10 CARACOL

Depart for a full day of exploration through the Mountain Pine Ridge to the spectacular Mayan ruins of Caracol, located deep in the rainforest beyond the mountains. This was a huge Mayan city and a major rival of Tikal. The Caana Sky Palace in Caracol is still the largest manmade structure in Belize. Here, we examine the Maya carvings that illustrate Caracol's rivalry in battle and sport with Tikal. Then discover the stunning geological formations of Rio Frio Cave and refresh in the cool waters of the Rio On Pools in the Mountain Pineridge. *Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge (B,L)*

DAY 5 - MONDAY, MARCH 11 TIKAL, GUATEMALA

Spend a day over the border in Guatemala, to visit UNESCO World Heritage Tikal to learn insights into the Maya civilization, their sophisticated and complex accomplishments. Tikal was one of the most powerful and influential Mayan cities during the Classic Period (c 200-900AD). The site features several hundred ancient structures that include towering pyramids, ceremonial platforms, residential complexes and ball courts. *Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge (B,L)*

DAY 6 - TUESDAY, MARCH 12 XUNANTUNICH

Explore the remarkable Mayan ruins at Xunantunich, situated atop a ridge overlooking the Mopan River and the surrounding jungle. The site's name translates to "Stone Woman" or "Maiden of the Rock" in the Mayan language, derived from a local legend of a ghostly female figure that is said to haunt the site. The massive pyramid temple known as "El Castillo" is one of the tallest Mayan period structures in Belize, towering 130 feet above the site.

Then, enjoy a relaxing canoe trip down the Macal River while surrounded by the lush jungle, as our guides point out the colorful birds, butterflies and wildlife along its banks.

Sweet Songs Jungle Lodge (B,L,D)

DAY 7 - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13 HOPKINS

We depart the Cayo District this morning, and drive approximately four hours to Hopkins. The scenic journey first winds through the mountainous terrain of the lush inland jungle then descends to the plains and wetlands of the coastal region. Pass through colorful small towns and villages, glimpsing local life. Arrive in the village of Hopkins, known for its laid-back vibe, Garifuna culture and spectacular beaches. After lunch, choose to relax at the resort, take a self-guided hike, or an optional guided river tubing tour in the Cockscomb Jaguar Preserve: Hike a short (20 minutes) distance into the jungle, then float on inner tubes down the serene South Stann Creek River, amongst the birdlife and verdant foliage. (Additional cost, reserved on-site.) *Almond Beach Resort (B,L,D)*



DAY 8 - THURSDAY, MARCH 14

BELIZE BARRIER REEF RESERVE / GARIFUNA CULTURE

This morning, we head out onto the reef for snorkeling by boat. The Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the second-largest barrier reef in the world and is renowned for its incredible diversity of coral species, including vibrant hard corals, soft corals, and sea fans. The reef's healthy coral formations are home to a vast array of marine life, including colorful tropical fish, sea turtles, rays, eels, and countless other species.

Return to the hotel for lunch. This afternoon, learn about the Garifuna people through an immersive experience. We kayak a short distance across the pristine waters of a lagoon, to the Palmento Grove Cultural and Fishing Lodge, a small island facility created to capture the essence of a Garifuna village. Here, we'll learn how the Garifuna fish, produce and use coconut, grow and use medicinal herbs and how food is prepared over an open hearth. Enjoy music and drumming, and indigenous art. *Almond Beach Resort (B,L)*

DAY 9 - FRIDAY, MARCH 15 SOUTH WATER CAYE

This morning, take a boat out to the reef for snorkeling, then enjoy lunch on the small, picturesque island of South Water Caye. Return to the resort by boat in the afternoon. *Almond Beach Resort (B,L)*

DAY 10 - SATURDAY, MARCH 16

DEPARTURE OR BEGIN AMBERGRIS CAYE EXTENSION

Early morning departure from the hotel to Belize International Airport for flights departing after 12:00 p.m. (B)

Or, begin extension to Ambergris Caye



INCLUDED:

- ✓ Accommodations in four-star hotels and resorts
- ✓ Professional Conservancy Travel Expert Local Guide
- ✓ All meals as per the detailed itinerary (B – breakfast; L – lunch; D – dinner)
- ✓ Potable water to refill your water bottle while on tours
- ✓ All activities as described as included in the itinerary
- ✓ Transportation in late-model van or mini-bus (based on group size)

NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare
- Travel insurance
- Beverages other than purified water on excursions
- Gratuities to guides and drivers, suggested at \$10-\$15/per day per guide / driver; hotel staff
- Laundry
- Personal expenses
- Passport Fees / Belize Departure Tax

What to Expect on a Belize Journey

This is an active journey, suitable for healthy individuals seeking an active, educational holiday that features local culture, Mayan history and outstanding nature explored with light hikes, snorkeling, and a sense of adventure. Belize is known for its commitment to ecotourism and sustainability. Many accommodations in Belize prioritize environmental conservation and offer eco-friendly amenities. Traveling between sites includes drives of two to four hours over paved and unpaved roads. Travel and outdoor activities in a tropical environment.

For Detailed information and Registration

www.conservancytravel.org/UMI2025BZE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Kunath-Bowling
contact@conservancytravel.org
334-770-1700



BEST OF BELIZE

March 7–16, 2025

\$5,544 per person sharing a double room

\$7,194 single rate

Deposit: \$1,200 per person

Final Balance Due: November 7, 2024

**AMBERGRIS POST-TRIP
3-NIGHT EXTENSION**

March 16–March 19, 2025

\$1,799 per person sharing a double room

\$2,299 single rate

Deposit: \$600 per person

Final Balance Due: November 7, 2024

Includes: 3 nights stay at Ramon's Village Resort or similar, Daily breakfast, Full day Caye Caulker Day Sail including snorkeling stops at Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley, Round trip ferry transfer from Belize City to Ambergris Caye, Road Transfer from ferry to BZE airport for flight departure