

PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

VALUE BELIZE: MAYAN MOUNTAINS AND CARIBBEAN CAYE

10 days from **£1,930pp**

BELIZE / MAYA MOUNTAINS AND JUNGLE / CARIBBEAN CAYES AND COAST



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This short holiday takes you to the heart of Belize's Mayan mountains with their forests, waterfalls, wildlife spotting and snorkelling at a laidback reefside caye.

DAY 1	**Arrive Belize City and transfer to San Ignacio**
DAY 2	**Visit the Mayan ruins at Caracol**
DAY 3	**Day at leisure (optional visit to Tikal, Guatemala or the ATM Cave)**
DAY 4	**Transfer to your Forest lodge**
DAY 5	**At leisure**
DAY 6	**By road and boat to the Belize Cayes**
DAYS 7-9	**At leisure in San Pedro, optional snorkelling and watersports**
DAY 10	**Fly back to Belize airport and connect with your international flight. UK clients arrive home the following day.**

ITINERARY

In this satisfying taste of Belize you'll have the chance to visit Mayan ruins swathed in jungle, go river tubing or hiking in pristine forests, snorkel on the barrier reef or simply relax on Caribbean shores. We include an excursion to Caracol, Belize's most important Mayan site as well as the scope to head over the border to Tikal in neighbouring Guatemala, or delve into the mysterious ATM Caves.

Your holiday winds down in bustling San Pedro, Ambergris Caye - the largest island on the Belize barrier reef with chalk-white, palm-shaded sands and the aquamarine tones of the Caribbean sea. Life here is totally laid back, but there's plenty going on in the resort and you can be as active as you like with fantastic snorkelling and other water-sports available from your hotel.

DAY 1

Arrive Belize City and transfer to San Ignacio

Arrive in Belize City, transfer to your hotel



San Ignacio is a bustling little place with a daily market which is especially interesting on Saturdays when you might see indigenous Maya, native Creole speakers and Mennonites mingling among the stalls. The Hawksworth Bridge was built by the British over the Macal River in 1949 and remains a landmark to this day. In the centre you'll find a host of little bars and eateries to try local food. Your hotel is scenically located around 20 minutes' walk from the centre, with panoramic views.

In San Ignacio you are perfectly positioned for a host of activities which explore the ancient Mayan sites, forest and caves systems of the Maya Mountains. The Mayan peoples have had a presence in Mexico and Central America since well before the birth of Christ. Their civilisation, which was at its height in the 1st-9th centuries AD has left a legacy of remarkable buildings, sculptures and artefacts featuring their hieroglyphics and reflecting their artistic creativity and knowledge of astronomy and mathematics.

DAY 2

Visit the Mayan ruins at Caracol



Deep within the Chiquibul Forest Reserve, 2hrs' drive from San Ignacio, Caracol is the largest Mayan site in Belize. It was an urban centre which, at the height of its prosperity, had a population of around 180,000.

The temple rises 42m above plaza level and is the largest man-made structure in Belize. Over 70 tombs have been excavated and many hieroglyphic texts have been found on altars and wall façades. Many wildlife species can be encountered in this area which is also known as an excellent place to observe birds.

Return to San Ignacio in the afternoon.

DAY 3

Day at leisure (optional visit to Tikal, Guatemala or the ATM Cave)



You can either wake up to a day at leisure or pre-book an optional excursion with us before you depart.

Close to San Ignacio are the Mayan ruins of Xunantunich, a less extensive site than Caracol but rewarding nonetheless. Further afield is majestic Tikal in neighbouring Guatemala, probably the Mayans most impressive and complex site, its pyramids and temples shrouded by monkey-filled jungle.

If you crave Indian Jones style adventure we recommend a visit to the Actun Tunichil Muknal caves (often referred to as ATM caves though you can't withdraw any cash there!). There you hike into the caves, cross over underground rivers and enter a giant chamber which was long ago the setting for Mayan religious ceremonies and is stuffed with relics including ceramics and, rather gruesomely, skeletons.

DAY 4

Transfer to your Forest lodge



Today you'll head deeper in to the forest for a taste of the raw nature for which Belize is renowned. It's a 40 minute drive to your lodge, much of it along an unpaved road. Given its blissfully remote location you'll feel completely immersed in the wild surrounding jungle, where it is possible to catch a rare sighting all three species of toucan in just one morning.

DAY 5

At leisure

A full day at Black Rock. You're remote here, so why not take time to enjoy some of the on site activities. The lodge offers complimentary on site river tubing and mountain biking. Other hikes requiring guides (payable locally) are available such as night hikes and bird watching with an expert. As well as being able to swim in the fresh mountain waters of the Macal river's pools there's also a small swimming pool at the lodge.

DAY 6

By road and boat to the Belize Cayes



Drive to Belize City and take the water taxi (90 mins) to San Pedro on Ambergris Caye, a large coral island where twisted mangroves are framed by tropical shores. The Caribbean waters there are as turquoise as gemstones. In common with much of Belize's coast you'll find narrow sandy beaches here and there alongside shore-side terraces and jetties where you can also relax. The island's main attraction is the first class snorkelling and diving on offer just off its shores.

There's only one town on the island, San Pedro, Belize's foremost holiday resort. Thanks to regular air and boat shuttles, San Pedro is a very convenient spot to unwind and although ever popular it remains relaxed: golf buggies still outnumber cars on the roads. Your hotel is moments away from all the action.

DAYS 7-9

At leisure in San Pedro, optional snorkelling and watersports



It's great just to kick back by the pool or on the terrace and enjoy the sea views, or wander between San Pedro's watering holes which spill out onto the sandy shore. You you may be tempted by a menu of optional activities which can be arranged and paid for locally. Among these are snorkelling and diving excursions and sunset boat tours.

Being part of a major barrier reef system, the undersea life here is a kaleidoscope of colour, with thousands of exotic, tropical fish and other marine creatures on display. You can visit Blue Hole, a premier snorkelling and dive site. Resort dive classes are available locally.

The island is not big enough to warrant much vehicular transport so the main way of getting around this lovely, lazy place is by golf cart. If you like, hire one to explore the town, visit the museum and discover the new 16km north road.

DAY 10

Fly back to Belize airport and connect with your international flight. UK clients arrive home the following day.

Step across the street to San Pedro's tiny airstrip for your 20-minute Cessna flight to Belize City airport – a scenic excursion in itself, with wonderful views as you fly low across the reef and islands. From here you can connect with your international flight home (not included).

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Guided excursion to Caracol Mayan ruins

ESSENTIALS

1 local flights (20 mins); 1 water taxi (1.5 hrs), 3 road journeys (longest 2.5hrs).

For this holiday we have carefully chosen mid-range accommodation throughout with an eye for location and value for money. In San Ignacio and San Pedro you have the freedom to explore independently, whilst at Black Rock Lodge you're remote but wit access to onsite facilities and activities.

Breakfast daily.

10 days, 9 nights: San Ignacio 3, Black Rock 2, Ambergris Caye 4.

There are no long days of travel on this trip. This holiday is suitable for couples; friends; single people; families, honeymooners; history, wildlife and active adventure enthusiasts.

If you have a disability or other special requirements, please call us. In the summer (Jun-Oct) the weather can be extremely hot and humid, you might bear this in mind if travelling with small children or elderly persons.

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

The best weather conditions are during the dry season December to May. It can be cool in the highlands in winter, while the jungle areas are hot and humid all year round. There's a low risk of tropical storms or hurricanes from June to November.

Bring plenty of light, loose and preferably cotton clothing and good, comfortable walking shoes, trainers or sports sandals. We suggest that you plan to 'layer' your clothing; it is easier and more efficient to put on a couple of light layers than one thick jumper, and sensible to have long sleeves for areas where mosquitos or sand flies may be.

Protection against the sun (sunblock, sun hat) and mosquito repellant are essential and you should bring swimwear. A daypack is useful for carrying sun block, guidebook, water and any extra layers. Binoculars are strongly recommended.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in Central America.

The unit of currency in Belize is the Belize dollar which is always 2 to 1 US dollar .(US dollars also accepted).

Cash machines are available Belize City and San Pedro (Ambergris), and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip. In each of the hotels, as well as shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds. We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency, Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

The Belize exchange rate is fixed at $2 Belize dollars to 1 $US. Both currencies are widely accepted in cash and credit cards can be used at the hotels.

A budget of around US$75 per person per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir.

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi

drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

There is an international departure tax of $20 to be paid on departure, also a security tax of about $5 and a small conservation charge.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements, including advice on yellow fever and malaria tablets. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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