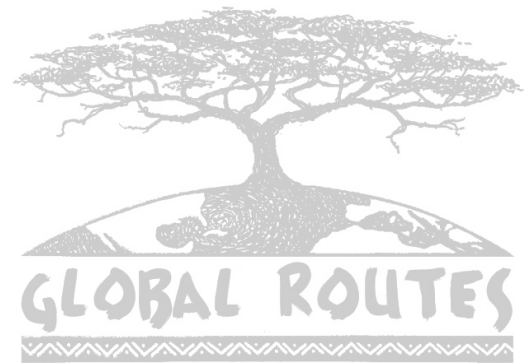


# BELIZE

## A MAYAN LEGACY



Located on the southern edge of the Yucatan peninsula and the western shore of the Caribbean, Belize is a genuine crossroads for descendants of Spanish, African, Mayan and Native American peoples. Taking pride in their small, independent country, Belizeans are eager to preserve the ancient culture and natural beauty unique to their homeland, and to share it warmly with visitors. Experience the diversity and richness of Belize as you live in a rural village, snorkel in one of the most well-preserved coral reefs in the Northern Hemisphere, and canoe through the waterways of ancient caves.

*“It takes one minute to meet someone, a day to know them, a week to love them, but a lifetime to forget them.” - Christian Bustos, Summer 2011*

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Explore subtropical jungle**, caves, and ancient artifacts of the Mayan underworld.

Join the people of a small village in **creating a public library or school cafeteria** to serve local youth.

Climb the pyramids, temples and fortress walls of the ancient **Mayan ruins of Xunantunich**.

**Learn Spanish** during lively dinner conversations in the home of a rural Belizean family or on the soccer field with local community members.

Snorkel along the **second largest barrier reef** in the world in the emerald green waters of the island Cayes.



# BELIZE DETAILED ITINERARY

## IN-COUNTRY ORIENTATION

Begin your adventure at the lush orientation site of Clarissa Falls, nestled in the tropical Macal River Valley. Climb the towering ruins of Xunantunich, built nearly 2000 years ago in the Golden Age of the Mayan civilization. As you walk along the Macal River, look for iguanas along the banks or Mayan women hand-washing their laundry. Relax in pristine natural pools and navigate your way by canoe through huge limestone caves in search of ancient pottery shards offering just a glimpse into Belize's rich history and culture. Learn the basics of a new language during beginner Spanish classes taught by a colorful storyteller.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

You are welcomed with a village-wide celebration when you arrive in your host community, set within the highlands of the Cayo district. While the official language of Belize is English, some Belizeans in this region speak only Spanish. Sharing the rituals of daily life with your community presents a rewarding opportunity to foster meaningful connections as you practice Spanish. Make homemade corn tortillas alongside your host mother, explore nearby waterfalls or return from the market with an armful of fresh mangoes for your friends on the worksite. Spend your days working with community members on a collaborative building project, such as a public library or a school cafeteria. In the afternoons, initiate creative projects as a group, such as planting a garden, painting a mural or running a day camp.

## TRAVEL ADVENTURES

Spend your final days relaxing with your group on the coast of the Caribbean Cayes. Guided by knowledgeable reef ecologists, explore parts of the 150 miles of coral reef that line the coast of Belize. Splash in remarkably clear blue waters, venture out on a catamaran boat and snorkel by day and night amidst schools of electric blue parrot fish, sixty pound groupers and formations of fan coral. The beauty, warmth and relaxed pace on these Caribbean islands set the perfect tone to celebrate a summer of adventure, hard work, friendship and fun.

## THE BASICS

**Starting/Ending Point:** Belize City, Belize

**Language Requirement:** None. English is the official language of the country. In certain parts of the country Spanish is people's first language, so some Spanish exposure is likely.

**Tuition:** TBD based on group size and activities.