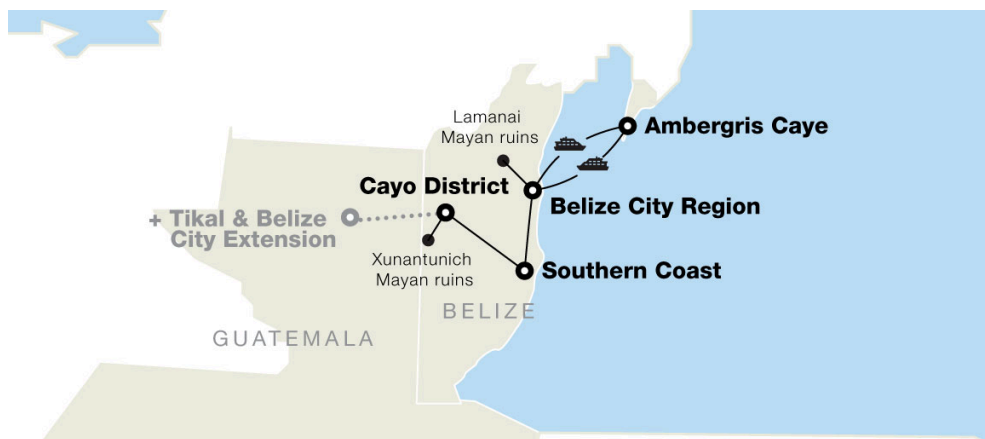




A Week in Belize: Ruins, Reefs & Rainforests

9 days | 12 days with Tikal & Belize City extension

Nestled along the Caribbean Sea in the northeastern corner of Central America sits a country that beckons beachgoers, history buffs, and nature lovers alike. How does one tiny nation hit this travel trifecta? Well, Belize is home to one of the world's healthiest barrier reefs, archaeological sites once at the center of Mayan civilization, and a lush rainforest. We could go on, but we'll let those views and the local culture on this small group Adventure Tour do the talking. If you aren't quite ready to stop listening, stretch your trip a few more days by adding the extension to neighboring Guatemala, and let the twin Pre-Columbian cities of Yaxha and Tikal awe you.



Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 2 lunches
- 4 dinners with beer or rum punch
- 1 cooking class
- 1 food tasting
- 8 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 2 ferry transfers

Included highlights

- Lamanai Mayan ruins
- Hol Chan Marine Reserve
- Coral Gardens snorkeling
- Orange farm
- Garifuna drum lesson
- San Antonio Women's Cooperative
- Xunantunich Mayan ruins

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2.5 hours daily over moderately uneven terrain including paved roads, grass, and sand with some hills and stairs.

Group size

12-22

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Belize City Region → 2 nights

Day 1: Arrival in Belize City

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Belize! Join your Tour Director and fellow travelers at a welcome dinner tonight.

Day 2: Sightseeing tour of Lamanai Mayan ruins

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Meet up with a local guide for a sightseeing tour of the Lamanai Mayan ruins, a once prominent pre-Columbian city named after the crocodiles that live in the nearby river.

- Board a boat and cruise along the New River Lagoon, the country's largest fresh body of water
- Keep an eye out for a variety of wildlife including spider monkeys, crocodiles, and birds
- Walk through the archaeological site to see the Jaguar Temple and ball court
- Opt to climb to the top of the High Temple and soak in the views of the ruins
- Enjoy an included lunch before traveling back to Belize City

Ambergris Caye → 2 nights

Day 3: Ferry to Ambergris Caye

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Board a ferry and travel to Ambergris Caye. This stunning island, which is the largest in Belize, is located off the country's eastern coast and known for its white-sand beaches and diverse marine life. You'll pass the surrounding barrier islands and Caye Caulker en route. Then, sit down for an included dinner this evening.

Day 4: Marine biologist chat, Hol Chan Marine Reserve & Coral Gardens

Included meals: breakfast

Join a local marine biologist to learn about the Mesoamerican reef ecosystem.

- Hear about the coral, fish, turtles and sharks that live here
- Discover how NGOs and the government are working to increase conservation efforts and address coral bleaching

Then, meet up with a local guide and board a boat to explore two of the world's top snorkeling spots—Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Coral Gardens.

- Admire views of the sparkling blue water
- Relax on the boat or hop in the water to snorkel through the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef
- Try to spot local wildlife including turtles, dolphins, and some of the over 160 species of fish that call the marine reserve home
- Learn about the country's commitment to preserving the coral reef and marine life

Head back to Ambergris Caye and spend free time relaxing on the beach.

Southern Coast → 2 nights

Day 5: Ferry to Belize City & transfer to Southern Coast via orange farm

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Board a ferry and travel back to Belize City this morning. Then, visit an orange farm to learn how the fruit is grown and picked.

- Join a local guide for a walk through the orange groves and try your hand at harvesting the fruit
- Sample your fresh-picked orange as you learn about the farm's sustainable practices, including how the farmers plant and care for the orange trees
- Stop at an on-site cottage and sip some fresh-squeezed orange juice

Continue on to the Southern coast, an area famous for its beautiful beaches, and enjoy a free evening.

Day 6: Garifuna drum lesson

Included meals: breakfast

Spend a free morning on the Southern Coast, or add an excursion.

This afternoon, learn about the country's traditions and heritage.

- Visit a cultural center to meet the local Garifuna people and learn about their Afro-Caribbean culture, language, and musical traditions
- Participate in an interactive Garifuna drum lesson, a UNESCO-recognized art form

+ Cockscomb Basin & Jaguar Preserve Hike

Cayo District → 2 nights

Day 7: Mayan chocolate factory & transfer to Cayo District

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner

Spend the morning touring a Mayan chocolate factory to learn about the history of one of the country's most delicious foods.

- See how cacao is produced, harvested, and turned into chocolate before sampling the sweet treat
- Meet with a Mayan guide who will teach you about the different herbs and plants used in traditional medicines and healing ceremonies—then get a chance to taste some of them yourself

Afterward, travel through the rainforest to the Cayo District and enjoy a free afternoon or add an excursion.

Tonight, gather together for an included dinner with your group.

+ Jaguar Paw Cave Tubing in Belize

Day 8: San Antonio Women's Cooperative & Xunantunich Mayan ruins

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, farewell dinner

Join a local guide to dive into the region's Mayan history and culture.

- Head to the San Antonio Women's Cooperative and meet the women dedicated to preserving Mayan traditions
- Participate in a hands-on lesson to learn about Mayan weaving and basket-making techniques
- Discover how the women use the proceeds they receive to support their community
- Enjoy a cooking lesson to see how to make tortillas over a fire and sit down for an included lunch

This afternoon, set off on a guided tour of the Xunantunich Mayan ruins.

- Cross the Mopan River by ferry en route to the Xunantunich Mayan ruins, which translates to "Sculpture of Lady"
- Hear the stories behind the archaeological site's more than 25 temples and palaces

- Choose to climb to the top of the famous El Castillo pyramid, the second-tallest structure in Belize

Celebrate your trip at a farewell dinner this evening.

Flight Home

Day 9: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Belize City airport for your flight home or continue on to Guatemala.

+ Tikal & Belize City extension

Three urban centers, separated by millennia, await on this tour's extension. Begin by crossing into Guatemala and visiting a pair of important Mayan cities: ceremonial Yaxha and UNESCO-recognized Tikal. Then, hop back to the present with an additional night in Belize City, stopping in the island town of Flores en route.

Tikal Region → 2 nights

Day 9: Flores via Yaxha Mayan ruins

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Travel to Flores, Guatemala and enjoy an included lunch. Then, tour the Yaxha Mayan ruins with a local guide.

- Travel through Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park
- Learn about the history of the archaeological site
- Watch the sunset over the magnificent Mayan ruins, pyramids, and plazas

Sit down for an included dinner this evening.

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Tikal Mayan ruins

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Meet up with a local guide and take a tour of the UNESCO-recognized Tikal Mayan ruins.

- Explore the great plaza, pyramids, and temples in the heart of the rainforest
 - Discover why these are considered to be the most famous of all Mayan ruins
 - Enjoy an included lunch
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Belize City → 1 night

Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Flores & transfer to Belize City via hot sauce factory

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner

Join your Tour Director on a walk through Flores, a town located on an island in Lake Petén Itzá.

- View the colorful colonial architecture
- Stroll through the Spanish plaza

Travel back to Belize City and stop to tour a hot sauce factory en route.

- See where the peppers are grown and how they're harvested
- Sample different kinds of locally made hot sauces and learn about the unique carrot-based recipe
- Hear why hot sauces are a must-add to any local dish

Sit down for an included dinner this evening.

Flight Home

Day 12: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Belize City airport for your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: goaheadtours.com/BEL | 1-800-597-0350

Day 6: Cockscomb Basin & Jaguar Preserve Hike

\$89/\$99* (3.5 hours, departs in the morning)

Start the day with a visit to the Maya Center for a chance to view and shop for Mayan arts and crafts. After, transfer to the unique Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and Jaguar Preserve, the only jaguar preserve in the world. Join a ranger for a lecture on the history of the park, and learn about its importance to preserving wildlife and the relationship it has with the local communities. Then, head out for a hike through the sanctuary with a local guide. While hiking, keep your eyes peeled for wildlife such as howler monkeys, agouti, and more than 300 bird species. Please note: Jaguars are extremely reclusive and nocturnal, and sightings are not guaranteed—while you may see recent signs of jaguar activity in the reserve, it is highly unlikely you will see a jaguar during your visit. The hike takes roughly 40-60 minutes over mostly flat, unpaved trails.

Day 7: Jaguar Paw Cave Tubing in Belize

\$75/\$85* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Travel to Jaguar Paw Park and meet up with a local guide. You'll receive your personal inner tube and be fitted for water shoes, which you'll wear during this excursion. Enjoy included access to the locker rooms where you can change into your bathing suit, store your clothes, and strap on your water shoes before you set off on your cave tubing adventure. Your guide will connect the tubes together in a line so they can pull and navigate your group as you float on a river through a network of caves. All you have to do is sit atop your tube and enjoy the views! Learn about the geology of the caves and enjoy periodic glimpses of the sunshine and surrounding jungle. You'll also hear about Mayan history, including where they worshiped and sourced their sacred water. After your 20–30-minute tubing adventure, walk back to the Jaguar Paw Park entrance. You'll have time to shower, change, and purchase a snack from the on-site restaurant. Please note: Travelers will need to walk 20 minutes to and from the cave, be able to descend the steps into the cave, and feel comfortable getting in and out of the inner tubes.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at goaheadtours.com/terms