

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Discover Belize (BL 2017)



TRIPDURATION
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: BL

Trip Highlights - Discover Belize

- ✓ Crooked Tree Bird Sanctuary - Early morning boat trip to this important wetland habitat
- ✓ Wildlife - Opportunities to see howler monkeys, spider monkeys, toucans, parrots, crocodiles and much more in their natural environment
- ✓ Mayan sites - Visit the ancient temple of Xunantunich. Journey by boat along New River to the jungle site of Lamanai
- ✓ Tikal (Guatemala) - Walk through the jungle to discover this great Maya metropolis
- ✓ Mesoamerican Barrier Reef - Opportunities to snorkel over the corals of the longest reef on the Western Hemisphere and relax on Caye Caulker

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 11 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Lodge

Included Meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Start Point: Join trip: Belize City
Trip ends: Belize City Harbour

Transport: Bus, Boat

Countries: USA, Belize, Guatemala

Discover Belize

Exotic wildlife, jungle rivers, tropical forests and lost civilisations are all part of this trip to Belize. We visit lesser-known Maya sites such as Xunantunich and explore the impressive temples of Tikal (Guatemala). There are opportunities to see howler monkeys, toucans, parrots, crocodiles and much more in their natural environment. We end the trip on the island of Caye Caulker, unwinding and snorkelling in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Why Book this trip

This tour has it all - culture, nature and relaxation. Belize is a beautiful, often overlooked country. Discover Maya sites, view wildlife at Crooked Tree Wildlife Reserve, stay in a jungle lodge at Tikal (Guatemala) and enjoy time at the end to relax on Caye Caulker.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

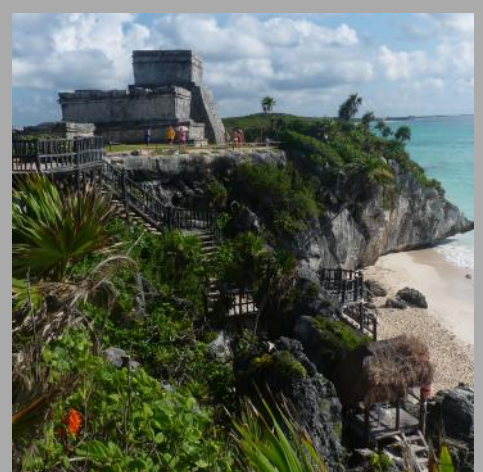
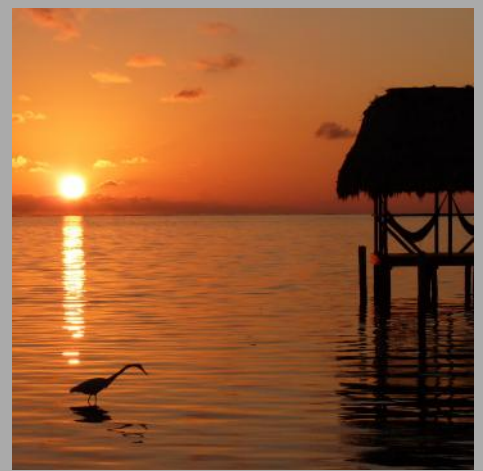
While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join trip in Belize City

We arrive in Belize City, where we will check-in to our conveniently located hotel for our first night. Belize City was the capital of Belize until 1970 and is a typical Caribbean town. Parts of the town are still largely built of wood and galvanised iron, with many of the original colonial style houses in an elegant state of disrepair. There is also a canal system through the old part of town. Creole English is widely spoken. Please note that Flight Inclusive travellers on the 5th and 26th November, 13th and



20th December departures will be flying via Miami and overnighing there tonight. You will join the tour on day 2, and will be picked up at the airport in the morning en route to the Mayan ruins of Altun Ha.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 To Crooked Tree Wildlife Reserve via Altun Ha

This morning we leave the city and head towards the Mayan ruins of Altun Ha. On route, we will visit the Community Baboon Sanctuary project, which has the aim of protecting the habitat for the endangered Black Howler Monkey and is a fascinating insight into some of the threats that the Belize ecosystem is currently facing. After our visit, we continue to Altun Ha where we explore this ancient site. Later, we arrive at Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, where we settle down for two nights enjoying the hospitality of our local hosts on the shores of the Crooked Tree Lagoon. If you are travelling on a flight booked by Explore, on our 5th and 26th November, 13th and 20th December departures, you will be picked up from the airport on route to Altun Ha and start the tour immediately.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Boat trip to the jungle ruins of Lamanai birdwatching en route

Rising early this morning or tomorrow morning, we explore the lagoon by boat. In this birdwatchers paradise we may spot wood stork, boat-bill heron, vulture, kingfisher, grebe, hawk, snail kite, jacana and, perhaps most notable of all, the rare jabiru - the largest flying bird in the hemisphere with a wingspan of up to 4 metres. We return to the lodge for breakfast and then set off by vehicle to the New River for the boat ride upstream to the 2000 year old jungle ruins of Lamanai. Water birds are abundant in the ancient rainforest cover and crocodiles may be spotted lurking along the river bank. Lamanai, the original name of these Maya ruins, means Submerged Crocodile, which helps to explain the numerous carved crocodile representations at the site. The ruins are located some distance off the beaten track and are still not reconstructed or cleared. We approach on foot following rough trails. The surrounding rainforest with its thick canopy of huge trees, and humid atmosphere adds an aura of mystery to the scattered and overgrown relics. A cache of children's bones has been unearthed from beneath one of the stelae, suggesting that the Maya practiced human sacrifice here.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Dawn bird watching, drive to Placencia

An optional early bird walk and sunrise along the Crooked Tree Lagoon can be an unforgettable experience in this important wetland sanctuary. After breakfast, we visit the Community Baboon Sanctuary in search of howler monkeys. Here we have a chance to watch troops of black howler monkeys swinging from the trees in their natural habitat, before we begin our journey south along the scenic Hummingbird Highway, where orange and grapefruit groves are surrounded by a backdrop of lush jungle clad limestone hills - The Maya Mountains. We will visit a local organic farm and tree planting project along the way in this beautiful setting. Our day ends in the beach resort of Placencia, a town located at the end of a narrow peninsula between mangrove lagoons and the Maya Mountains and the Caribbean Sea.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 In Placencia; free to explore, snorkel or relax on beach

Surely one of Belize's best beach spots, the Placencia peninsula is still beautiful, despite the damage caused by Hurricane Iris in October 2001. Today is left free for you to relax on the beach or to take an optional day trip. Both Silke Caye and Laughing Bird Caye are ideal places to swim and snorkel. The other option is to explore the Monkey River by motor launch, accompanied by a local guide. Although there is still some evidence of the hurricane, the community is working hard to re-build itself and you're sure to find the relaxed atmosphere agreeable. We are happy to return to Placencia and see it as a positive contribution to the re-building work.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Visit Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Preserve; head to San Ignacio

This morning we visit the Sanctuary at Cockscomb Basin. This is the world's first and only jaguar reserve; the magnificent cats are a protected species here in their natural habitat and are no longer hunted as big game: however we would have to be extremely fortunate and quiet to spot one. They can grow up to six feet in length and weigh some 159 kilograms. The reserve has a variety of other wildlife including jaguarundis, peccary, brocket deer and iguanas. Toucan, king vulture and scarlet macaw are among the resident bird species. We allow some time here to walk the trails and experience the forest. Driving on towards San Ignacio on the hummingbird highway, we can stop at the 'other' Blue Hole - a collapsed limestone cavern - for a welcome swim in fresh water.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Explore the Xunantunich archaeological site

San Ignacio, a traditional Belizean town, is an ideal place to base ourselves for the next couple of days. Straddling the Macal River which was once a critical transportation artery for the Maya and later the European settlers it is now a centre for many adventurous activities. Today we make a visit to the great classical Maya site of Xunantunich, Mayan for 'Rock Stone Maiden', perhaps for phallic or fertility reasons. We go by bus and then cross the Macal by traditional hand-winchered ferry to arrive at the site. Occupied until about AD 850, the main plaza is dominated by an awesome structure called El Castillo - a massive pyramid which rises to 40 metres. On the top is a partially restored stucco frieze representing the Sun God and astronomical signs of the Moon and Venus. The superb view from the summit looks out over the forest with the Maya mountains to the south and the lowlands of Guatemala to the west. The afternoon is free for personal exploration or perhaps to go canoeing in Barton Creek, a cave-canoe trip on a slow moving stream, allowing you to appreciate the impressive cave formations.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Free day, choices include canoeing on the Macal River

Today is free to relax in town or take any one of the many optional day trips available. One possibility is to hire a canoe, either with or without a guide, and paddle along the Macal river from the Belize Botanical Gardens down to San Ignacio town. The river is slow-moving and rich in birdlife, butterflies and iguanas, and you will share your canoe with one or two other people.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Explore the great Mayan metropolis of Tikal (Guatemala)

Leaving Belize today we drive to Tikal, just over the border in Guatemala. Arriving at Tikal we spend the day exploring this great Mayan metropolis, which can justly be compared with Egyptian and Greek masterpieces. Initially settled about 600 BC, Tikal was abandoned by its rulers around AD 890 and totally deserted a hundred years later. The city covered an area of 16 square kilometres. Re-discovered in 1848, only a few of its great temples and pyramids have yet been excavated. Accessible by foot are a number of outlying and little known temples still covered by a tangle of undergrowth, and for those with a head for heights, the views from the temple tops out over the jungle and the hidden city below are mesmerising.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Optional re-entry to Tikal

Today we rise to the sounds of the surrounding jungle coming to life. Unaccompanied, we have a chance to return to the site for a further exploration of the jungle encroached ruins. It is possible to go into the site to watch the sunrise from atop of Temple 4, the highest structure in the site at more than 200ft above the forest floor. Clear sunrises are uncommon however owing to the humidity the rainforest generates. Witness instead the roof combs of the surrounding temples reveal themselves as a forest wakes and the sounds of toucans, parrots, spider and howler monkeys fill the air. Alternatively you can enjoy the day relaxing, excellent bird watching and wildlife can be seen around the hotel pool! There are also two small museums located close to the hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Visit Belize Zoo, boat journey to the idyllic island of Caye Caulker

This morning we visit the Belize Zoo. Described as 'The Best Little Zoo in the World', its role is more of a rescue and education centre. The animals, which include jaguars, pumas, ocelots and red macaws have all been rescued in one way or another. The zoo is visited regularly by parties of schoolchildren and is instrumental in teaching Belizeans how to better appreciate their rich natural heritage. Then we drive to Belize City and take a water taxi to Caye Caulker. Once a pirate lair, this tiny but enchanting tropical island lies 34km northeast of Belize City and about 1.6km inside the greatest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere. The water taxi transfer takes about an hour and is a highlight in itself, speeding through the turquoise waters. The island remains uncrowded, and unluxurious, with relatively modest prices in restaurants and bars, owned and run by the friendliest of local people. The local fishermen produce lobster, conch, fish and crab to supply the domestic and foreign markets. Fresh seafood is readily available and lobster is the best buy when in season from Jun to Feb. There's time to relax - our hotel has a beach, which is rare on the island - as well as to enjoy a number of optional trips. You may take a snorkelling trip out to the nearby Hol Chan Marine Reserve & Shark and Ray alley, or take a full day trip out to Goff's Caye to observe the Manatees in their natural mangrove habitat. Scuba diving is also available.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Free time in Caye Caulker; relax by sea or snorkel boat trip

Today we spend some time either relaxing or we can participate in one of many of the optional activities available on the island.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 13 Relax on Caye Caulker; optional trip to observe manatees

Today we have another day to enjoy the various activities Caye Caulker has to offer.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 14 Tour ends Belize City

Return mid-morning by boat to Belize City where the Land Only tour ends. Clients on the group flights to London transfer to Belize City International airport.

 **Included Meals:** None

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

USA

Lunch £: 15.00

Dinner £: 21.00

Belize

Lunch £: 13.00

Dinner £: 20.00

Guatemala

Lunch £: 4.00 - 6.00

Dinner £: 8.00 - 10.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

USA

Bottle of Beer £: Varies for different towns, average £4.00

Water £: 1.10

Belize

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 1.00

Guatemala

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 - 4.00

Water £: 1.00 - 2.00

International Departure Taxes

Land departure tax from Belize to Tikal is 18.75US\$ (payable day 9), entry tax to Guatemala 2US\$ (payable day 9)

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Placencia - Full day boat excursion to Laughing Bird Caye US\$80. Scuba diving available at approx US\$75-125.

San Ignacio - Caving/canoeing at Barton Creek, half day US\$40; Guided botanical garden self guided tour plus 3hr canoe trip and lunch US\$60 (full day), Botanical garden night tour and meal US\$55; Cahal Pech US\$5

Tikal - 2nd visit to ruins US\$21; Sunrise tour US\$35, Visit Flores Island US\$40

Caye Caulker - Snorkel / boat trip to Caye Caulker Marine Reserve US\$40, Snorkel / Boat trip to Hol Chan Marine Reserve US\$70, Scuba diving is approx US\$90 for a single tank dive on barrier reef. Sea Kayak Bird Watching tour US\$20; Full day Manatee Search and Snorkel with BBQ lunch - US\$110 (min 4 pers)

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

In North America tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry, including restaurants, activity suppliers, taxis and guides. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this the Tour Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour. For this we suggest US/CAN\$ 40.

For all non-included services and meals on your North American trip, we recommend tipping at around 15%

Foreign Exchange

USA

ATM Availability: Widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Widely accepted just about everywhere.

Local Currency: US Dollars.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Bring your money in US\$ cash.



Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities. Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Belize

ATM Availability: Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques: We do not recommend Travellers cheques, they are difficult to exchange.

Local Currency: Belize Dollar

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD is legal currency in Belize

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Guatemala

ATM Availability: Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Local Currency: Quetzal

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking

at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Belize: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. Guatemala: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

USA: An electronic travel authorisation (ESTA) is required by British citizens transiting via the USA. This must be done on line (<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>) no later than 72 hours prior to travel. You must also have an electronic passport with a digital chip. The UK electronic passports feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. Please note that if you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan in the past five years you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

USA

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Belize

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, TB, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

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Guatemala

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

USA

There are great variations in the altitude and terrain of the areas visited and this is reflected in the temperatures. Desert areas can be extremely hot in the summer months (49°), though temperatures can drop dramatically at night. The mountains are cooler and wetter especially in the north of the Rockies. At the beginning and end of the season there may still be some snow around in the high passes and it can be cold, whereas in mid-summer the day time temperatures can soar.

Belize

Sub-tropical with a brisk prevailing wind from the Caribbean. Summer highs are rarely above 35°C, winter lows rarely below 15°C. Annual rainfall ranges from 107cm in the north to 364cm in the south and humidity can be high at any time of year. The rainy season extends from June through October with a short dry period in August, but some rain can be expected throughout the year.

Guatemala

In the high plains (1524m-1981m) the climate is temperate all year round. In lower areas the climate is semi-tropical. The mountains can be cool especially at night. In general, the dry season in Guatemala lasts from Nov - April. From May to October there are often fine mornings and clear evenings but afternoon rains tend to be heavy. The Peten lowlands tend to be rainy all year round though less so from February to April.

Clothing

Bring lightweight, informal clothing. A jumper or fleece is advisable for cool evenings and you'll need a good waterproof jacket all year round. Long sleeved shirts and long trousers give protection against thick forest growth and insects on jungle walks. A swimming costume and sun hat are essential.

Equipment

Insect repellent, a torch, water bottle, and suncream. Binoculars are essential for bird watching.

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots are preferable for jungle paths, and you'll want to bring sandals. Bring shoes you don't mind getting wet for exploring caves and wet beach landings.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of luggage and a daysack. Remember, you are expected to carry your own baggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

USA

Population: 312,609,000

Size of Country: 9,826,675 sq km

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -9

Belize

Population: 333,200

Size of Country: 22,966

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Guatemala

Population: 13,276,517

Size of Country: 108,890 sq km

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: Catholic and Protestant

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Electric Supply & Plugs

USA

2 Pin Flat

Belize

2 Pin Flat

Guatemala

2 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to - and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association



of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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