EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Discover Belize (BL 2015)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOURDURAT
14
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Busy

Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard

tour Code: BL

Tour 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

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	11 nights Standard Hotel 2 nights Standard Lodge
Included Meals:	11 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
Start Point:	Join tour: Belize City
End Point:	Tour 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 Mayan sites such as Xunantunich and explore the impressive temples of Tikal. We end the trip on the island of Caye Caulker, unwinding on the sandy beaches and snorkelling in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Why Book this tour

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.

Tour Comfort: Standard

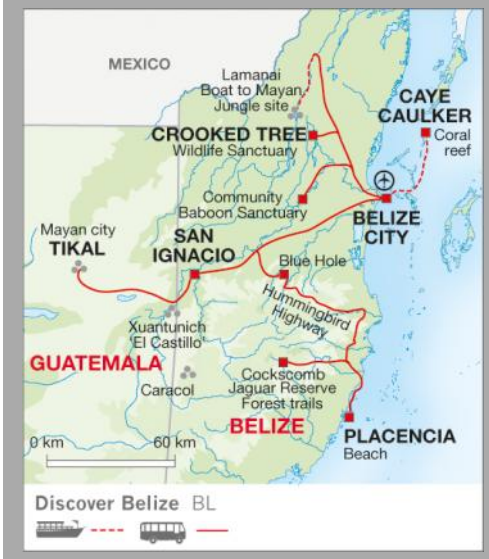
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

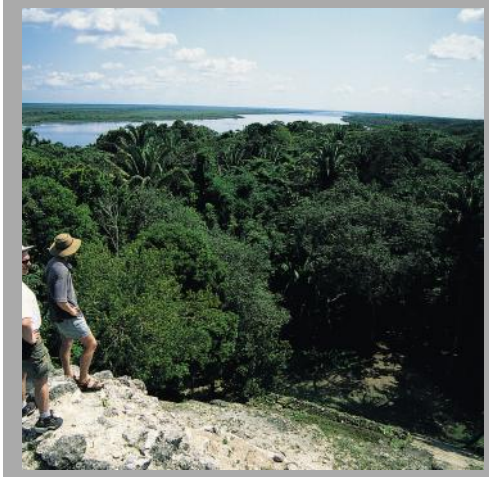
Tour Style: Classic

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: Busy

There may be early starts, long journeys and tiring days along the way, but you'll return home feeling you've really experienced as much as you possibly could.





Your tour 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 Tour only passengers join tour Belize City, flight inclusive passengers overnight in Miami

Tour only clients will arrive and check in at the first nights' accommodation in Belize City. Clients who have booked flights through Explore, will spend the first night of the tour in Miami (unescorted). Please be aware that single rooms are not available whilst in Miami. 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 2 To Crooked Tree Wildlife Reserve, visit baboon sanctuary

This morning is free in Belize City. We then drive along the coastal road to pick up the people joining from London at the international airport, before stopping at the Community Baboon Sanctuary. Here we have a chance to watch troops of black howler monkeys swinging from the trees in their natural habitat. Later in the afternoon, 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

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**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Explore the Belize Zoo, 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 begin our journey south, firstly stopping at 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. From the zoo we continue via Belmopan and 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-winched 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.

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, rich in birdlife, butterflies and iguanas.

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

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Return to Belize City; boat journey to the idyllic island of 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: 11 breakfasts, 1 lunch,1 dinner included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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 £: 9.00

Dinner £: 17.00

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 £: 1.20

Water £: 0.70

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.
Tikal - 2nd visit to ruins US$21; Sunrise tour US$35
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

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

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.
Accordingly, you should allow US$40 for group tipping. 10-15% is expected in restaurants.

Foreign Exchange

USA

ATM Availability: Widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Widely accepted just about everywhere.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be used just about everywhere, although local stores are not keen to change anything over $50.

Local Currency: US Dollars.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Bring your money in US$ cash or Travellers Cheques which can be used almost everywhere

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$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. 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 Tour

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.

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.

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

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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

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.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA (If flights transit): According to US law, passengers will have to disembark, collect luggage and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight.

Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This applies if you enter the country by sea or by air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/ onward ticket. The passport requirements are that it must be machine readable, and must contain a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

All passengers travelling to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must provide their details online no later than 72 hours prior to travel. British travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be detained and sent home.

When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. Anyone applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ESTA) to travel under the Visa Waiver system will be charged a fee of 14USD (9GBP).

For more information, and to apply online, please visit the following website at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov. Once obtained, the application will be valid for a period of two years, or for the validity of your passport (whichever is shorter).

For more information about who is eligible for the VWP, or any other questions you may have regarding your eligibility, or machine readable passports, please contact your local consular office, or visit www.usembassy.org.uk

Belize: Visas not required by UK, USA, AUS, NZ and CAN citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. Tax to leave Belize
overland is US$18.75.

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 malaria, typhoid, tetanus, TB, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria 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.

Guatemala

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on malaria. Please note: If you are entering from any of the following countries (Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, French Guyana, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia and Sudan) are now required to produce an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis documenting yelllow fever vaccination before entry to Costa Rica will be granted. Certificates are valid 10 days after the date of vaccination. 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 Tour

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 tour: 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 & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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, elephant, 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.

Our commitment to the environment

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 and traditional, 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), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

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

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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

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 LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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