



## College Study Tours

# Environment & Culture in Belize

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### Day 1: Fly to Belize

**Arrive in Belize City:** Welcome to Belize. In Belize's largest city, you'll find an interesting mix of Caribbean charm and eclectic culture. Belize achieved independence from Britain in 1981 and attracts visitors to its famous Barrier Reef, rainforests and Mayan ruins.

### Day 2: Belize City | New River Lagoon | Lamanai | Belize City

**Excursion to New River Lagoon:** Hop aboard a boat and head for New River Lagoon, Belize's largest body of fresh water. The ecosystem it supports includes exotic birds, colorful fish and crocodiles—and hopefully you'll get a chance to meet them all.

**Lamanai ruins:** "Lamanai" means "submerged crocodile" in the Mayan language, a fact you won't forget as you discover crocodile carvings and artwork all over these ruins—some dating back as far as 1500 B.C. View three large pyramids, residential areas, some open plazas and a ball court. Make sure to check out the views from both the spectacular High Temple and the Mask Temple, where tall stone faces are carved into the sides of the structure. Later, return to Belize City for the night.

**Old Sugar Mill:** During your journey through the jungle, you'll come across the brick and wooden remains of a sugar mill that was actually imported from New Orleans. Now home only to the surrounding wildlife, the old mill has become almost entirely intertwined with the jungle.

**School visit:** Get a glimpse of education in Belize with a visit to a local school. (May take place on a different day.)

### Day 3: Belize City | Peccary Hills National Park | San Ignacio

**Travel to Peccary Hills National Park:** Depart Belize City for Peccary Hills National Park and its 10,000 acres of preserved rainforest.

**Jungle hike:** Explore rainforests crisscrossed with streams and caves once inhabited by the Maya as you trek through this tropical paradise with a guide. Look for tropical birds fluttering in the canopy, reptiles soaking in the sun and perhaps an old turtle making its way through a cool stream—it's all part of an average day in Peccary Hills.

**Zip-line tour:** After your hike up to the jungle canopy, the zip-line platforms await. You'll learn how to properly navigate a zip-line before being safely secured and traveling through the air. The view of the worlds below are truly breathtaking.

**Travel to San Ignacio:** Make your way to the small town of San Ignacio to relax after a busy day.

### Day 4: San Ignacio | Xunantunich | San Ignacio

**Travel to Xunantunich:** Travel to the Mayan ruins of Xunantunich, crossing the Mopan River in a traditional hand-cranked ferry.

**Xunantunich ruins:** Perched on a hilltop with a magnificent view of the upper Belize River Valley, the Xunantunich ruins offer visitors an experience they won't soon forget. First discover the imposing El Castillo pyramid, a mountain of intricately carved stone that ranks as the second-tallest structure in all of Belize. Then, wander through what remains of the city center, a display of classical Mayan architecture with six plazas and more than 25 temples.

**Chaa Creek Natural History Center:** Take a trip through Belizean history as you unearth a vast collection of impressive artifacts—Mayan and otherwise—that will introduce you to the region's native peoples, architecture, culture and unique languages. You'll also discover the area's diverse flora, including medicinal plants used throughout Belizean history and to this day.

**Return to San Ignacio:** Head back to San Ignacio for another night by the Macal River.

### Day 5: San Ignacio | Burrell Boom | Ambergris Caye

**Travel to Burrell Boom:** Head to Burrell Boom, a small town on the banks of the Olde Belize River. The name "Boom" comes from the iron chains used for logging during the 1700s—chains that remain in the river today.

**Belize Zoo:** Take a trip to the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, which was started in 1983 to provide a home for wild animals which had been used in making documentary films about rainforests. It has since grown into a sustainably-minded zoo and research center and is home to over 150 animals and over 45 species—all native to Belize.

**Community Baboon Sanctuary:** Discover the complexities of life as a Black Howler Monkey—"baboon" in Creole—on your visit to this unique preserve. Founded and powered entirely by voluntary grassroots efforts, the organization has recruited more than 200 private landowners to help protect the habitat of this endangered monkey.

**Travel to Ambergris Caye:** Return to Belize City, where you'll hop aboard a ferry headed to idyllic Ambergris Caye, located just off the tip of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.

### Day 6: Ambergris Caye

**Snorkeling in Hol Chan:** The Ambergris Caye coastline is protected by the Belize Barrier Reef, a diverse ecosystem with over 500 species of fish, hundreds of invertebrates and over 90 varieties of coral identified. At Central America's first marine reserve—Hol Chan—you'll have the chance to discover it all for yourself. Strap on a snorkel and discover colors you didn't even know existed in the warm waters of the "little channel."

🔗 **Snuba:** Blending aspects of snorkeling and scuba diving, Snuba offers a completely new take on underwater discovery. Using weights, tubing, mouth pieces and goggles, the Snuba technique lets you go deeper in your exploration of the world's second largest barrier reef—who knows what you'll find.

### Day 7: Depart for home

**Return home:** Take a ferry back to Belize City, where you'll board your international flight home.

### 🔗 1-DAY TOUR EXTENSION

#### Day 7: Ambergris Caye

**Free day in Ambergris Caye:** Ambergris Caye is less than 25 miles long and about 1 mile wide, but the number of incredible activities available makes the island seem much larger. The bustling town of San Pedro is home to a varied population including descendants of the Maya, Mexican, English and Spanish who lived here centuries ago, and the coastline is dotted with beautiful sandy beaches for more snorkeling or just relaxing. Take the day to discover the island at your own pace.

#### Day 8: Depart for home

Take a ferry to Belize City, where you'll board your international flight home.