

GLOVERS REEF & MAYA RAINFOREST ~ 9 Days

Did you Know?

Archaeologists believe that over a million **Maya** were living in Belize at the height of the lowland civilization some 1500 years ago. The Maya civilization was never united under one governing body. Instead, independent city-states connected by trade routes through much of Central America shared many traits and beliefs that categorized them as Maya. Our discovery of the Maya culture in Belize involves both historical and contemporary exploration.



Marine Location

The marine portion of the trip will be based from Southwest Cay on Glovers Atoll. One of three atolls offshore of Belize, Glover's Reef was named after the pirate John Glover who used this remote offshore ring of islands and coral reefs as a base from which to raid Spanish merchant ships. The shallow waters with innumerable coral reefs, mangroves and small islands were ideal waters for pirates and buccaneers to hide after attacking Spanish ships laden with riches pillaged from the New World.

Today, the attractions found within the atoll (20 miles long by 7 miles wide) are the incredible clarity of the water and the remarkable profusion of marine life. In 1993, the atoll was declared a marine park and to further efforts to protect this extraordinary environment, the site was designated as a United Nations World Heritage Site in 1996. Our location has close access to numerous patch reefs, lagoons the outer reef walls and mangrove habitat. Transportation to the atoll is by motor-launch, once at our base-camp we explore the surrounding areas by sea kayak. The reefs of Belize have long been known as the richest in the Caribbean, and Glovers is among the best in Belize!

Our facilities include indoor and outdoor dining area, field kitchen, library and lounge area, compost toilet and shower. Participants sleep in Tents. Refrigeration is ice chests and lighting is a 12 volt solar power. Communication is by VHF radio and/or cellular phone.



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Activities include:

- * Sea kayaking instruction (first-time to advanced), sailing with kayaks and numerous trips exploring the atoll
- * Snorkeling, swimming, and Sea-Breathe,
- * Coral & mangrove ecology, marine invertebrates,
- * Garifuna history and culture.
- * Marine navigation, chart reading, route-finding
- * Windsurfing
- * Fishing
- * Inter-tidal exploration

Inland Location

Our inland activities will focus around the world-renowned Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve and the South Stann Creek River. This portion of the trip will be operated in conjunction with the Belize Audubon Society (who are responsible for managing the national parks of Belize) and operates under special permit. The Cockscomb Basin encompasses over 100,000 acres and is one of largest protected rainforests in Central America. Draining the Cockscomb Basin is the South Stann Creek and its tributaries the Juan, Mexican and Sittee branches. Our river trip will focus on descending the South Stann Creek through the heart of the Cockscomb Basin. The river is flat-water with Grade 1 & 2 primarily and one short section that involves a Grade 2-3 rapid.

Activities include:

- * River paddling instruction
- * Swimming
- * Rainforest ecology,
- * History and cultures of Belize.
- * Nocturnal and Diurnal rainforest exploration
- * Mayan cultural Exchange in local village

Accommodations

Tropical Education Center The Education Center has comfortable, rustic accommodations in a beautiful pine savannah setting. The Center has a fantastic interpretative center and harbors Belize's largest collection of tropical animals, with a great network of trails and wildlife viewing platforms, perfect for exploring this rare forest environment.

Glover's Reef Base Camp On Southwest Cay, we are "base camping", sleeping in tent-walled cabanas. These spacious safari-style tents are have ample headroom to walk around and are on raised wooden floors with double or single beds. On the island, we have a fresh-water collection system for drinking water, access to fresh-water showers, modern composting toilets, a fully equipped. We also have a large dining area with bar, resource library lounge, weather station and a field marine lab.



Recommended Reading

Greenfield, David E., Thomson, Jamie E. 1997
Fishes of the Continental Waters of Belize University Press of Florida

O'Neal, Catherine 2003
Hidden Belize: Including Tikal, Copan, and the Cayes Ulysses Press

Rabinowitz, Alan. 1986
Jaguar, One Man's Struggle to Establish the First Jaguar Sanctuary New York. Island Press

Peedle, Ian 1999
Belize in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture Interlink Publishing



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Typical Daily Itinerary

B= breakfast L = lunch D = dinner

Day 1: Arrive at the Belize International airport and transfer to Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center. After settling into our quarters we are led by a senior zookeeper on a unique nocturnal tour of the Belize Zoo. Organized around the theme of "a walk through the habitats of Belize" with trails leading into pinelands, the forest edge, rainforest and wetlands we are able to see first-hand, the remarkable diversity of wildlife in the neo-tropics. The Belize Zoo has gained an international reputation for its outstanding conservation and education achievements within Belize. *Overnight: Tropical Education Center. D*



Day 2- 6: We travel by motor charter 40 miles offshore to our base camp at Glovers Reef Marine Reserve. Here we have over 70 square miles of pristine coral reefs and remote islands as our natural classroom. Using sea kayaks we are active each day paddling and snorkeling amongst coral reefs and mangroves; we study fish behavior, coral reef ecology and invertebrates. Glover's sheltered beaches and warm water is the perfect setting for developing students snorkeling and sea kayaking ability and appreciation. We also learn about Belizean and Garifuna culture; with creative projects and demonstrations involving crafts, stories and music. Our last evening on the island is a grand celebration with a mouth-watering seafood feast, fresh coconut baking and traditional Garifuna drumming and dancing.

Overnight: Island Base camp. B,L,D

Day 7- 8: Leaving Glovers Reef in the morning we travel to the 102,000-acre Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve for the next stage of our journey. We stay in a Mayan village or at the Reserve Headquarters. River paddling, hiking, wildlife viewing, tropical forest ecology, biodiversity, Mayan culture and archaeology are all part of the action as we explore Belize's largest protected rainforest environment. *Overnight: Maya Center or Park Headquarters B,L,D*

Day 9: In the afternoon as you board your flight back home you marvel at how different the world is and how much you have experienced and learned in such a short time. *B,L*

Student Responsibilities

- * eager participation in activities
- * understand that we are traveling in remote settings and respond fully to direction from leaders, guides and teachers
- * assist with camp set-up, breakdown, meal preparation and clean up with direction from trip leaders and teachers



Guides and Group Leaders

Both Belizeans and North Americans will pilot the trip. Alongside our NA trip leaders, we will bring in guides who have specific expertise pertaining to the local area. Typically this will involve Garifuna or Creole captains and fisherman on the sea and Mayan or Creole bush guides. Leaders are trained and certified in Emergency First-Aid procedures

Teachers/Facilitators Responsibilities

Generally work with IEC leaders and guides to ensure smooth flow of activities and logistics. Responsible for assigning sleeping arrangements, mustering students to staging areas for meals and activities. Establish standards for accepted behavior.

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Equipment...

Island Expeditions will provide all group and specialized equipment for the duration of the trip. This will include but is not limited to:



- * Base camp equipment at Glover's Reef
- * Expedition-equipped sea kayaks, two-person and single boats, paddles, lifejackets.
- * Inflatable two person river kayaks
- * Tents for sleeping
- * safety equipment
- * emergency response kit
- * VHF Radio and satellite communication devices as required in remote

Services

- * 2-4 guides/leaders
- * Meals as per itinerary
- * Accommodations, hotels and camps
- * All camping and field facilities
- * International flight arrangements (optional)
- * Grovers Reef Park fees
- * Transportation within Belize
- * Pre-trip information packages
- * Free trip for facilitator

Not Included

- * Belize Departure Tax - \$20US
- * Personal gear as specified on equipment list including masks fins, snorkel
- * Items purchased that are of a personal nature

Did you Know?



Watch out for **Hawksbill Sea Turtles** (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) while snorkeling out at Glover's Reef. They

have a distinctive hawk-like beak and an attractively coloured shell of overlapping scales and feed primarily on sponges. As an endangered species they are in high demand for several commercial products including perfume, oil, and cosmetics.

Trip Costing

The cost of your Belize trip is based on several factors:

- * Group size
- * Number of Facilitators
- * Activities included
- * Dates of travel
- * Length of trip

Itinerary revisions and adjustments are possible and we encourage you to discuss your objectives with our office staff. These changes may effect the trip cost.

The Belize Audubon Society

Is a membership organization founded in 1969. The society is involved in enhancing the development of Belize's Natural Resources through environmental education, protected areas management and advocacy programs.



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