



BELIZE: BEACHES, JUNGLES, AND RUINS

FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 5, 2018

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sea kayaking in clear water in a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Snorkeling among coral reefs in one of the richest marine environments in the entire Caribbean, including the famous Blue Hole
- Exploring inland Belize including world class birding, a Mayan ruin, and a community baboon sanctuary
- Feasting on fresh seafood, tropical fruit, and local cuisine
- Experiencing all the benefits of camping without any of the challenges

TRIP AT A GLANCE

Dates:	Feb 25 - Mar 5, 2018
Location:	Belize, inland and islands
Cost:	\$2,695.00
Activities:	Multisport
Arrive:	In front of the lobby at the Bird's Eye View Lodge, Belize, 5:30PM
Depart:	Depart anytime on the last day

TRIP OVERVIEW

On this trip, we start with an exploration of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary in inland Belize, learning about the natural history as we take a boat tour through the Crooked Tree Lagoons and the human history as we visit the Mayan ruin of Lamanai. We'll also visit a community based baboon sanctuary, overseen by a local women's conservation group. We then move to our private island basecamp on Lighthouse Reef Atoll, a remote tropical marine park 55 miles offshore from the mainland that is managed by the Belize Audubon Society. We sleep in comfortable safari-style tent cabanas located right on the beach and enjoy meals of fresh seafood, tropical fruit, and local dishes. A flexible daily schedule offers opportunities to paddle and sail kayaks, swim and snorkel, beachcomb and bird watch, and try stand up paddleboarding (SUP). Visiting "the Aquarium" and Jacques Cousteau's famous Blue Hole are sure to be highlights. Activities are geared to people of all interest and ability levels so you can choose the vacation you want. It doesn't matter whether you're brand new to any sport or already experienced, the guides will make sure you learn what you need to know to stay safe and have fun. Maximum group size: 22

RATING

This trip is designed for women of all interest and ability levels who want an active vacation in a warm winter environment. With different options for activities each day, you can decide just how active you want to be. To fully enjoy the level 3 activities, participants should be engaging in aerobic conditioning, such as walking vigorously up hills, jogging, cross country skiing or stair stepping for 30 - 45 minutes at least 3 - 4 times a week. **Rating:** [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) 4 5.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- An AGC guide and 2-6 Belizean guides (most likely male) and staff depending on group size
- Eight nights lodging as described, and meals from dinner on Sunday through dinner the following Sunday
- All kayaking, snorkeling, kayak sailing, paddleboarding and equipment
- All transportation within Belize, except transport to the airport at the end of the trip

What's not included: Travel to and from Belize, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, traveler insurance, and transport from our hotel to BZE at the end of the trip.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

FEBRUARY 25, SUNDAY



Arrive at the Belize International Airport no later than 3:00pm, where an AGC representative will meet you and take you to Bird's Eye View Lodge, our lodging for the next two nights. Located in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, the Bird's Eye View Lodge sits along the banks of the Crooked Tree Lagoon and couldn't be more aptly named - this is a birders' paradise and if you've never been a birder, this may convert you. The protected area was created in 1984 primarily to preserve resident and migratory birds, and consists of a network of inland lagoons, swamps, and waterways. There are literally hundreds of species within the sanctuary, including, snail kites, tiger herons, snowy egrets, ospreys, black collared hawks, and the reserve's most famous resident, the massive jabiru stork. We'll gather as a group for welcome and introductions, and enjoy our first dinner together. If time permits, we'll explore Crooked Tree Village, one of Belize's oldest Creole Settlements.

DAY 2

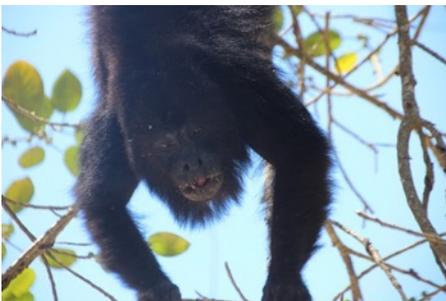
FEBRUARY 26, MONDAY



Today we have a full day of exploration as we travel overland and by river to some Mayan ruins. During our exploration of the New River en route, we'll learn the history of this ancient mahogany trading route. In addition to the large variety of bird species (including parrots and toucans), monkeys, crocodiles and other animals may also be seen. What a way to arrive at Lamanai, the site was one of the longest continuously occupied Mayan cities, from about 500 BC to 1675 AD. During our guided tour, we'll thoroughly explore the many temples, plazas, palaces, and museums within the park boundaries. Perhaps we'll meet one of the four troops of howler monkeys that make their home here. We'll welcome the return to our lodge along the banks of the Crooked Tree Lagoons for another delicious dinner.

DAY 3

FEBRUARY 27, TUESDAY



For early risers, coffee is served at sunrise. With our binoculars in hand, we'll enjoy the sounds and sights of the awakening wilderness and watch hundreds of birds feeding along the shores of the Crooked Tree Lagoons. Today we truly enjoy the rain forest as we enjoy boat tours through the protected lagoons of this top neotropical birding site in Belize. It's then on to visit the Community Baboon Sanctuary. We'll discover the important role women from local communities have played in promoting and maintaining sustainable ecotourism that protects habitat for the endangered Black Howler Monkey. Their efforts focus around conservation, education, research, and tourism. We'll enjoy our final stay at the Lodge tonight, with sadness about leaving and anticipation for the next leg of our adventure.

DAY 4

FEBRUARY 28, WEDNESDAY



This morning we return to Belize City where we board a chartered water taxi to Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Our route first takes us along numerous white sand, partially submerged, mangrove cayes until we cross Belize's Barrier Reef. From here, we enter the narrow passages within the Turneffe Islands before crossing the blue waters towards Lighthouse Atoll. Upon reaching our Half Moon Caye basecamp, we receive an orientation to our new island paradise. Have you ever wanted your own private Caribbean Island? Yup, no one else here but Audubon headquarters. Safari-style tents with beds on cots, in a row along a beautiful beach looking out to the ocean are our new accommodations. This afternoon we receive thorough instruction on the fundamentals of sea kayaking, snorkeling, and safety on the Caribbean Sea. Weather permitting, we'll have an opportunity to sea kayak and/or snorkel within this marine reserve.

DAY 5- 7

MARCH 1, THURSDAY - MARCH 3, SATURDAY



It would be misleading to spell out a daily itinerary because there is so much flexibility and so many options that you could have a very different trip from the person you're sharing a tent with. If you're an early riser, you might choose to start the day with sunrise yoga, a walk along the beach, or a cup of coffee as you watch the sunrise. After a healthy and hearty Belizean breakfast, we'll gather to plan the day's activities. The waters of Lighthouse Reef Atoll are exceptionally clear with a fabulously rich reef system, which offers some of the best kayaking, snorkeling, and diving in the Caribbean. You can paddle, snorkel, learn how to SUP (stand up paddleboard), try your hand at fishing (they prefer to call it "catching" as the fishing is uncertain), and learn how to sail a kayak.



Snorkeling "the Aquarium", an area with a profusion of tropical fish and towering coral formations, is always a highlight. You'll also be taken on a snorkeling excursion to the renowned Blue Hole, a site made famous by the legendary explorer Jacques Cousteau. The Blue Hole is an underwater cave and sinkhole in the middle of the Lighthouse lagoon. Kayaking options are suitable for both novice and experienced kayakers. With both double and single kayaks available, you can try a different boat every day. And always, when you're tired of doing, you can kick back in a hammock and enjoy a good book, or walk to the red-footed booby colony to watch nesting boobies come in from the sea to tend their nests and feed their chicks. After all, this is vacation and not boot camp! The local guides are a wealth of information and they love to share their vast knowledge of Belize, its unique marine environments and local culture.

Tonight we'll enjoy a farewell dinner on our island paradise.

DAY 8

MARCH 4, SUNDAY



This is the kind of place that is so hard to tear yourself away from! Today like every other day, you can choose from a variety of activities. Don a mask, snorkel, and fins for a final swim to a favorite patch reef. Circumnavigate Half Moon Caye by kayak or explore by Stand-Up Paddleboard. Walk the trails, or beachcomb along the island beaches. Our water taxi typically arrives later in the afternoon to take us back to the mainland. We'll spend our last night at the Belize Biltmore Hotel, a comfortable hotel located on the outskirts of Belize City. We'll share a final dinner in town, toasting each other and our magical time in Belize.



You can leave anytime this morning or enjoy the day at your leisure before you fly home or continue on your travels. Relax by the pool or investigate the optional tours offered by the hotel activity desk.

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

You will fly into the Belize International Airport (BZE).

1. If you are arriving on Sunday, February 25, arrive by 3:00pm. Arrivals will be grouped together and met by an AGC representative who will transport you to the Bird's Eye View Lodge, about a 40-minute drive.
2. If you are arriving early than the 25th, we suggest staying at the Biltmore Hotel, where we can arrange to pick you up as well. Information on the Biltmore Hotel will be provided in your Pre-Departure information.
3. We will end our trip with a night at the Belize Hotel. You can leave at any time. Transportation back to BZE at the end of the trip is not included. The cost of a taxi is \$25-\$30 and typically people whose departures are similar will share a taxi. The front desk staff at the Biltmore Hotel can easily arrange a taxi or a shuttle for you.

If you would like help with any travel plans we recommend our travel agent Sara Schuitemaker at sara@scaneastwest.com or call 800/727-2157

ACCOMMODATIONS

We'll spend three nights at [Bird's Eye View Lodge](#), four nights at the private Half Moon Caye basecamp in our ocean-view tent cabanas, and one night at a [Belize City hotel](#). The rooms at the lodge all have two beds with ensuite bathrooms and plenty of hot water. The tent cabanas have wood floors pitched on the beach, 8' by 12' and 6' high where the roof meets the walls. Each tent has 2 single beds or one double bed with a 6-inch firm foam mattress on a cot. Additionally, inside each tent there is a night stand, oil lamp, a place for your bags and some hanging shelves for your clothes. Outside there is a small deck with 2 chairs and hammocks beckon from nearby trees. Compost toilets and cool water showers are 30 to 60 yards away. Is this "camping"? Not like you've ever tried it before.

WEATHER

The climate of Belize is sub-tropical. Temperatures range from 70 - 105 degrees Fahrenheit with high humidity during the day, dropping at night to 70 - 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Although we are traveling during the dry season, there can be the infrequent "Northerly" winds which blow down from the Gulf of Mexico bringing with it cooler temperatures and rain. These rarely last more than a few days. Inland conditions can change quickly with afternoon thunderstorms, lower temperatures, and heavy rainfall common in some parts of the country. In 2016, the inland lows were in the low 50s. From December to May conditions are usually clear, sunny, and warm.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH COVERS YOUR COST IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP for medical reasons, trip delay, lost baggage, and other unforeseen emergencies. Adventures in Good Company will send you information about travel insurance with your registration information, or you may purchase coverage through your own insurance company. To avoid disappointment and expense in the event that you must cancel your trip we strongly urge you to purchase some type of insurance coverage. You can also sign up for it online at [Travelex Insurance](#). To get the best rates, use 20-0016 as your location number on the Get A Quote page.

PACKING LIST

Don't bother buying fancy new gear for your trip. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater kayaking. Light colored clothing is also preferable to keep you cooler in the sun.

FOOTWEAR:

- 1 pair Teva/Chaco sandals, river shoes, or dive booties for loading and unloading kayaks in water
- 1 pair comfortable walking shoes for ruins and foot protection on island
- 3-4 pairs of lightweight wool or synthetic equivalent socks such as Smartwool, Thorlo, or Darn Tough (neoprene socks are too thick for inside the fins)

CLOTHING

- 1-2 pair of comfortable supplex/nylon lightweight pants for hiking - zip-offs work well
- 1-2 pairs of shorts (quick drying nylon is recommended)
- 1-2 loose skirts/sarongs - great for the island
- 3 synthetic or lightweight merino wool T-shirts
- 1-2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts (a surfing shirt, called a "rash guard" is great for snorkeling and kayaking; a button up long sleeve shirt with collar is great for protection from sun and bugs)
- long synthetic underwear or nylon leggings to prevent burn while snorkeling
- 1 lightweight fleece jacket, sweatshirt, or other warm layer
- 1 lightweight rain jacket with hood and rain pants - **waterproof**/breathable fabric like Gore-Tex. Water resistant rainwear is **not** recommended
- Underwear / nightwear
- 1 wide-brimmed hat for sun and rain (a string tied to the hat will keep the wind from blowing it away)
- 1-2 bathing suits (nylon shorts and a running bra also work as swimwear)
- 1-2 changes of comfortable clothes to wear at end of day

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- Biodegradable soap and shampoo, toothbrush, paste, dental floss, hand sanitizer, lotion, contact lens paraphernalia, sanitary supplies
- Personal first aid/patch kit - Band-Aids, 1 safety pin, moleskin, compeed (or blister bandages), ibuprofen, benadryl, foot powder, seasick medication (if tendency to motion sickness), any personal medications

Please note: Individuals who have had or have the potential for a severe allergic reaction to insect stings, specific foods or medications must bring an epi-pen. Please consult your physician and tell your guide.

ESSENTIALS

- Passport** and photocopy of passport
- 1 one-quart water bottle
- Sunscreen and lip protection (**see Notes**)
- Small day or fanny pack for day use
- Travel snacks (no chocolate - it melts)
- Sunglasses - 100% UV protection w/ retention strap (**see Notes**)
- 2 to 3 garbage bags - serves as extra waterproofing protection and keeps wet gear separate
- Insect repellent (20-100% DEET)
- Headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries
- Bandanna
- Ear plugs (for a good night's sleep!)
- 1 towel (light camp towel or thin beach towel)

OPTIONAL PERSONAL GEAR (if you want it, bring it – personal preference and not required for the trip)

- Binoculars
- Watch - water resistant
- Extra sunglasses
- Wet bath wipes (for camping)
- Camera - film/memory card and an extra camera battery (**see Notes**)
- Powdered hydrating drink mix (Gatorade, Crystal Light, lemonade, etc.)
- Snorkeling gear (if you have your own snorkel mask, we recommend bringing it; otherwise the mask and fins will be provided by the outfitter)
- Small drybag for daytrips in kayak
- Gloves for paddling - (bike gloves work well)
- Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen
- Swim goggles for exercise

NOTES ON PACKING

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers everything you need to assure your safety and comfort. You may not use everything you bring; however, you need to come prepared for all possible weather conditions. At the same time, you must be able to carry your own luggage, sometimes up and down stairs.

CLOTHING: The Caribbean is typically warm and dry, but when it rains, it can rain for several days. Bring clothing that can get wet (synthetics are best). Clothing will get salt stains, do not bring new clothing.

BIODEGRADABLE SUNSCREEN: One of the most harmful things to the natural underwater environment is sunscreens, oils, and sun-block worn by people. While swimming, these oils come off and settle on the coral reefs and other marine life, and in volume can act like an oil slick in water, creating damage to the delicate ecosystems. The reefs are suffocated, and sunscreens are one of the biggest causes of bleaching to our reefs, and the death of much of the world's coral.

Biodegradable sun-block is environmentally friendly sunscreen that lacks the harmful ingredients that are destroying the world's coral reefs. These sunscreens are biodegradable, meaning they break down naturally in the environment, and eco-friendly, meaning that they minimize damage to the environment. We strongly encourage using only biodegradable sunscreen anytime you are going to be in the water. If it doesn't say it is on the package then it isn't. None of the major brands (Coppertone, Banana Boat, No-Ad) are biodegradable. An interesting article on the subject can be found here: <https://www.ecotourling.com/blog/archives/08-2016>

Raw Element and/or Badger are both reef safe and available at Amazon or REI. Not all sunscreens work well for all people. If you have a sunscreen that you know works well for you, bring that also for times that you are not snorkeling.

RAIN GEAR: Typically we recommend rubberized rain gear for sea kayaking trips, since they are warm, work best in steady downpours, and their effectiveness is not diminished by salt water. Since this trip is in the Caribbean we are recommending a jacket made of waterproof/breathable fabric or coated nylon. This layer will most likely be worn more often as a wind-proof layer than a rainproof layer on this trip, so having it be breathable is a good addition. Coated nylon is not very breathable, but it is lightweight, waterproof, and can be relatively inexpensive. Gore-Tex (and other brand-identified waterproof materials) is a great material, but can be quite expensive. **If you have any questions about raingear, please call us.**

WATERPROOF BAGS: If you choose to bring waterproof bags for your day bag, several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for first aid supplies and the like. Ziploc bags are handy for many uses.

BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A SEA KAYAKING TRIP: Ocean water is highly corrosive to camera equipment. To protect your camera from the salt, pack it in a waterproof sports bag. Many outdoor retailers and most camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps. Phoenix, Basic Designs, and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags.

SUNGLASSES: In addition to strongly recommending 100% UV resistant sunglasses to protect your eyes, we also recommend Polarized lenses to reduce glare on the water. This allows you to see into the water from the kayak, thus seeing rays and nurse sharks and fishies.