

Coral Reefs & Mayan Pyramids

Belize & Guatemala Wildlife Walking Adventure



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JOURNEYS™

DAILY ITINERARY

Belize & Guatemala: Coral Reefs & Mayan Pyramids | Wildlife Walking Adventure



“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

— *Travel + Leisure*

Monkey-Watching, Kayaking, Snorkeling & More

This is a Central American eco-vacation taken to beautiful and fascinating extremes. You experience rainforests teeming with keel-billed toucans, ocelots, and spider monkeys on great walks with naturalists. Out of those jungles rise imposing Mayan pyramids, like the one you climb at Tikal. At Ambergris Caye and Hol Chan Marine Reserve, you go snorkeling or kayaking on the world's second largest barrier reef. Every day, the variety of nature and local culture is truly spectacular, from a soaring cave (absolutely no spelunking required) to a chocolate making demonstration on a cacao plantation. And lodgings in both countries offer tropical comfort at its best, whether you're tucked into the heart of a private nature reserve or sprawled alongside a gleaming white Caribbean beach.

DAY 1

CAYO RAINFOREST

• Pay a hands-on visit to a cacao plantation

We meet our local guide in Belize City and head for the nearby Cayo rainforest, one of the finest in Central America. Our first fascinating stop is at a cacao plantation. As much as many of us love chocolate, the story of how it's created is much different than you might expect. We'll learn about growing cacao beans and try our hand at grinding them with the traditional method. You'll also get a taste of the original Mayan-style "hot chocolate". Then we check in at our eco-lodge that's nearly hidden in the midst of its own private nature preserve. You may want to take an afternoon dip in the pool or relax with a cocktail, serenaded by the sounds of the forest. At dinner tonight in San Ignacio town, you'll quickly learn Belize is a melting pot of Indian, Chinese, Nigerian and Central American cultures. That makes for a wonderful variety options. Just keep in mind that some are very spicy!

Overnight: Cayo Rainforest region

Meals: D

DAY 2

SAN ANTONIO

• Learn about Mayan ceramic making • Walk through the rainforest to a massive limestone cave

In San Antonio, the local women still make ceramics like the ancient Mayans did. We'll visit their cooperative to see them at work, and they'll show us the traditional way of grinding corn and making tortillas on a fire hearth. Add some roasted chicken and handmade salsa, and our lunch is served. Just steps away, we've arranged a visit to San Antonio's local school. Because our groups are small, the school welcomes our visit. We will meet the kids and teachers.(Consider packing pens, pencils and notebooks for the village children.) This afternoon, we're headed underground! In the limestone bedrock of Belize, great caverns are common, and the Mayans believed they were entrances to the underworld. Aboard canoes, we float through the cave in search of pottery and other artifacts amid the fascinating rock formations.

Overnight: Cayo Rainforest region

Meals: B, L

DAY 3

XUNANTUNICH / GUATEMALA

?• Cross the Mopan river on a hand-cranked ferry • Explore remote Mayan ruins at Xunantunich • Deliver dinner to an island of monkeys

Just as you'd expect, breakfast includes a wonderful selection of fresh tropical fruits and more. Fuel up because you're about to have a fun and fascinating Indiana Jones kind of day. Our first stop: the cattle ranch and stables owned by our friend Santiago. You have the choice of climbing into the saddle or taking a scenic walk through shaded forest, over the lazy Mopan River by a hand cranked ferry (cranked for us!), to the 1,500-year-old ruins of Xunantunich. Nobody knows for sure why the city was abandoned around 750 A.D., but we'll learn a lot about its history on a guided stroll around the site. Right at the center, there's a 130-foot-high pyramid called El Castillo, and from the top you can see all the way to Guatemala. Back at the ranch, we will enjoy an al fresco lunch. Then we take an easy drive across the border into Guatemala. At our boutique eco-lodge, you'll love the waterfront suites, each of which has a deck that juts into Quexil Lagoon. This evening is more fun than an island full of monkeys. Well, actually, it is an island full of monkeys. We're invited to accompany naturalists on a cocktail cruise of the lagoon to an island where they breed and care for spider monkeys. Taking along fresh fruits and vegetables, we assist in feeding them and have a fantastic chance to see the friendly creatures close up. Dinner tonight is in the resort's open-air restaurant with a wonderful menu of local gourmet flavors.

Overnight: Flores, Guatemala

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

TIKAL / FLORES

• Take in the view atop the tallest pyramid in the Western Hemisphere • Stroll the cobblestone streets of Isla Flores

Tikal, the premier Mayan site in Guatemala, is near our lodge. After breakfast, we'll make our way on white gravel paths to the tallest pyramid in all of the Western Hemisphere. Up the steps we go—yes, it's a climb, but incredibly worth it—to take in the vast views from the top. Other nearby pyramids jut up through a forest canopy that's home to lively spider monkeys. We'll have time to wander and explore before lunch at a cafe amid these archeological wonders. Back at the hotel, you'll have time

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to relax by the lagoon, explore any of the nature trails on the 200-acre reserve, or sip a drink by the infinity pool. Later, we're off to Flores Island in Lake Petén Itza. The town is populated by descendants of the Maya, and we see women in their blouses called huipiles. Traditionally, the bright, geometric patterns contained clues to status and beliefs. The locals also like to visit the local street food market that was started by families from the nearby village of San Miguel. It's well-known for its desserts and drinks; and we'll pause for a treat, before we enjoy a stroll and shopping before dinner.

Overnight: Flores, Guatemala

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

AMBERGRIS CAYE

• Visit a family-run sugar cane plantation • Explore our luxurious beachside resort • Kayak on turquoise water at Ambergris Caye

Sugar is Guatemala's most important agricultural export, and the country is the fifth-largest sugar exporter in the world. We'll start our day with a visit to a family-run sugar cane plantation, where we see how the cane is harvested, and enjoy a homemade slushy from the tasty juice. Then we cross the border back into Belize for our midday flight to Ambergris Caye, an island right next to the Belize barrier reef. Our luxury resort sits right on the Caribbean Sea. You can take advantage of the many amenities and activities including two pools, ladder golf, bocci and bicycling. If you'd like, we will outfit you with sea kayaks so you can paddle your way around the amazingly clear water. Tonight, it's your choice to dine poolside at the hotel or try one of the small local restaurants in San Pedro.

Overnight: Ambergris Caye

Meals: B

DAY 6

HOL CHAN RESERVE

• Cruise the Caribbean Sea by catamaran • Snorkel in the world's second largest barrier reef

This morning we hit the water! From the decks of our friend Steve's catamaran, Steve will dive for lobsters and fish that his sister (and on-board chef) turns into the freshest seafood lunch you've ever eaten! You'll have an opportunity to try your hand at fishing if you choose. Timing our visit for when the tourist boats have all headed back to shore, we'll make a stop at Hol Chan Marine Reserve. It is among the best snorkeling you'll find anywhere - shallow, clear and warm water. We provide all the gear, and you come nose-to-fin with natural life in the barrier reef. The coral forest is almost beyond words, with dazzling schools of fish flashing through clear water. Sea turtles, spotted eagle rays and docile nurse sharks are common sights. It's an experience you won't forget. (And it will make you the envy of anyone who's ever put on a mask and fins.) Tonight's farewell dinner is the perfect climax to a fantastic day of sun and sea.

Overnight: Ambergris Caye

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

AMBERGRIS / BELIZE CITY

• Linger longer on the beach • Return home

After breakfast this morning, we part company. You can return to Belize City by ferry or on a 15-minute hop by plane. If you have an afternoon or evening flight, why not hit the beach one last time?!

Meals: B



Tour Hotels



Chaa Creek

Set in a private 365-acre nature reserve on the Macal River, each of this lovely lodge's palm-thatched cottages has its own verandah with rainforest views. There's a bi-level infinity edge pool and a spa.

OVERNIGHT: San Ignacio | **NIGHTS:** 2



Las Lagunas Boutique Hotel

The lush Guatemalan rainforest enfolds this retreat in the heart of Mayan lands. Each waterfront bungalow suite has a private deck built out over Quexil Lagoon. Part of a 200-acre reserve, the hotel invites you to do some lazy tropical living.

OVERNIGHT: Flores | **NIGHTS:** 2



Victoria House

White Belizean beaches and turquoise seas are practically at your front door in this award-winning, plantation-style resort. There's a beachside pool, spa and wonderful restaurants – all less than a mile from the world's second largest barrier reef.

OVERNIGHT: San Pedro | **NIGHTS:** 2

Tour Dates & Prices

To see the full list of dates and prices for this tour, go to our website by clicking [here](#).

Want to travel with just your group on a date of your choosing? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about Private Journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH	7 Days, 6 Nights
START	Radisson Fort George Hotel lobby, Belize City, Belize
END	Victoria House, San Pedro, Belize
TERRAIN	Easy to moderate forest, beach and jungle trails. 2 to 3 hours of walking per day.

What's Included

- All breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- Invisible Check-In
- Privileged Access Events

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-800-200-3887

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

moreinfo@classicjourneys.com

AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to [a whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

THE Classic Journeys Difference

HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.



At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!


President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:
Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:
You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:
Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



Small Group Travel:
With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:
From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:
"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Belize & Guatemala...

- Arriving by horseback to the impressive ruins of Xunantunich
- Cruising a lagoon to a monkey preserve to help feed the monkeys
- Canoeing through an ancient Mayan cave with your local guide
- Spotting amazing local wildlife from your lagoon front casitas in Guatemala
- Exploring with local guides who are passionate about their Mayan heritage

"I never felt like a tourist."
-Elizabeth C., New York, NY