T: 1-800-985-4852
E: info@realgap.com
P: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960

Marine Science Internship in Belize

Trip Name: Marine Science Internship in Belize **Trip Code:** BEIM **Duration:** From 4 weeks

Key Facts

This 4 week programme is designed and run by marine science professionals, to give 8 students and graduates from all areas of Marine Sciences practical experience and insight into thier chosen career by working alongside a team of researchers and government authorities in Belize, home to the second largest reef system in the world.

Throughout the programme you will shadow and work alongside the founder of one of the most highly respected organisations in Belize, the fisheries department, local fisherman and communities to learn about and tackle the threats to the marine environment, and gain experience of conservation methodologies.

During the internship you can expect to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the Caribbean fish, coral, invert species and coral bleaching and will see first hand the effect of sustainable fishing regulations on a fishing communities. Most importantly you will get to contribute a chapter to the organisation's annual report, which will be published, with full credits, and submitted to Belize Fisheries department and other key stakeholders.

Overview

Experience/ Qualifications required: Undergraduate or graduate in Marine Sciences, Oceanography or related subject with a strong academic record.
Nationalities: This programme is open to all nationalities (subject to visa requirements.)
Typical Hours: Monday-Friday; 6-8 hours per day; Weekends free for personal time and travel in Belize.
Remuneration: Unpaid position

Destination Info

Itinerary

This is an exceptional opportunity for students and graduates in Marine sciences to boost your CV and gain practical experience with one of the top marine research organisations in the Caribbean. Throughout the programme you will gain experience in marine park management and a thorough oversight of conservation methods and techniques used in Marine science today.

You will also have the opportunity assist with research into the effects of issues such as climate change, introduction of alien species into the marine ecosystem, and the socio-economic impact that regulation has on communities in the region. By the end of the programme you will have detailled knowledge and experience of the techniques, methods, challenges and considerations that exist in marine park management and a fantastic introduction to a career in Marine Science, oceanography and Marine biology. You will also develop an excellent knowledge of the diverse range of Caribbean flora and fauna, and ecosystem dynamics that exist in this spectacular part of the world. Here is a sample of what you can expect to gain from taking part in the Internship.

• Further PADI dive qualifications, an advantage in Marine Science
• Your own contribution/chapter in published Annual report

• Experience in working with Belize Fisheries department
• Monitoring experience and understanding of a broad spectrum of research methodologies

• Practical insight into Marine Park Management and liaising with fisheries officers

• Comprehensive knowledge of Caribbean fish, invertebrates and coral species
• Understanding of threats to the local marine environment
• Experience in giving fun and educational conservation presentations – to tourists and local children
• Community outreach participation
• Real life insight into the effect of marine/sustainable fishing regulations on a local fishing town

Here is a weekly breakdown of the types of activities you will be involved with during the programme.

Week 1:
This week we focus on dive training, up to Advanced diver level, and a thorough introduction to the programme.
• Induction and orientation
• Session on conservation methodologies and techniques
• PADI Dive course (Open Water or Advanced)
• Peak performance buoyancy session (for qualified divers)
• Coral identification, Fish identification, Invertebrate identification and Coral bleaching and disease identification
• Choose specialty/ area of focus for the annual report; Coral Watch, Lionfish, Commercial fish species, Lobster, Queen Conch, Whale Sharks, Reef Check
• Fun dives

Week 2:
• Further Coral identification, Fish identification, Invertebrates identification, Coral bleaching and disease identification
• Presentation/workshop with Belize Fisheries Department on Marine Park Management
• Research / Survey/Lionfish spearing dives
• Fun dives
• Training for presentation to Tradewinds guests (sail boat passengers) on the Marine Environment and the general health of the reef that they will host the following week
• Beach clean up

Week 3:
• Comprehensive study and analysis of data for given specialty
• Compilation of data for Annual Report
• Educational session with local children
• Coral, Fish, inverts and coral bleaching and disease identification
• Informal presentation to Tradewinds sail boat guests
• Beach clean up
• Survey dives
• Lionfish spearing dives
• Fun dives!

Week 4:

• Lionfish spearing. Followed by dissection, analysis of stomach contents, preparation and cooking!
• Conduct the PowerPoint presentations on general marine environment and threats to the reef
• Workshop on sustainable fishing practices with local stakeholders
• Complete written section for annual report
• Present your findings to research team, and other interns
• Wrap up party: bbq, presentation and awards

Marine Science Internship in Belize

Lots of people are yet to discover Belize, it's a hidden gem in the heart of Central America. Nestled just South of Mexico and next to Guatamala on the Caribbean Sea, Belize is only a short flight from the United States.

Formerly known as British Honduras, Belize gained its independence in 1981 so it is still a developing nation. It is a small country, only 8866 sq mile (23,300 sq km), 174 miles (280 km) long and 68 miles (109.5 km) wide and has a population of less than 350,000 people.

The official language is English and the majority of the citizens read and speak English fluently making it a perfect holiday destination. Creole people speak their own 'pigeon' dialect as well as English, and Garifuna is spoken in the south. Spanish is the first language in the north and in some towns in the west. Other languages are Mayan, Chinese, Mennonite German and Hindi making it a true melting pot of not only languages but also cultures!!

The Belizean people are very friendly and polite. Travellers feel welcomed and comfortable and lots of locals, especially in Punta Gorda where our Internship is based, love to talk to tourists and hear all about other countries and cultures!

Unlike lots of developing nations Belize has an anti harassment law which is extremely refreshing. People may try and sell baskets, jewellery etc, but will not overly harass tourists and are extremely polite about it!

The Belize barrier reef, a UNESCO world heritage site, is the second largest in the world and boasts an incredible spectacle of marine life.

Your base, the Sapodilla Cayes, Belize

The Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve covers an area of approximately 125 square kilometers and includes fourteen sand and mangrove cayes along the southernmost tip of the Belize Barrier Reef. It is a World Heritage site and is located nearly 40 miles due east of Punta Gorda.

The outer portion of the reserve is characterized by shallow water reefs which occur as a fringe around the cayes. The depth of water over these fringing reefs is often less then 15 feet, and some of them are exposed at low tides. The drop off east of the islands is gently sloping, in contrast to the near vertical walls further north and surrounding the outer coral atolls.

Marine Science Internship in Belize

Step 1: Application
To apply for this internship we ask you to either call us or apply online. When you apply we will request information on your emergency contact details, passport number and your health background and other important information. At this stage a deposit payment of £199 is requested, this deposit is non-refundable, unless your application is declined by our team in Belize.

Once your application has been recieved we will request the following details from you.

• A current CV /resume detailing your work and study history
• A cover letter outlining your key objectives you plan to achieve during your Internship

Please note: If your internship is part of your university course, and requires accreditation we also request a letter from your tutor supporting your application for an internship.

Step 2: Acceptance of your placement
Once our team in Belize have reviewed your application, and accepted you onto the programme for your preferred dates we will contact you to confirm your application has been successful. We recommend you purchase insurance as soon as you secure your placement.

Step 3: Online account details
Once your placement has been secured, we will set up and send you details of your online account login which will take you to your personal Real Gap secure website. Here you can view details of your internship, along with info specific to your time in Belize. This includes; what to expect during your time in Belize, what to take with you, country and visa information and details such as insurance and where to get necessary vaccinations. Once you have your login details you can go ahead and book flights, to do this please contact your travel advisor who will give you a quote.

In the run up to your placement, our expert team will be here to answer any questions you may have and to fully prepare you for your time in Belize.

There are plenty of things to do in Belize, besides diving, like taking a trip to the ancient Mayan ruins, dating back to 500AD. Lim Ni Punit or Lubaantum are both about a 45 minute drive from Punta Gorda where you will be based at weekends. Lim Ni Punit has the most amazing views over the jungle and Lubaantum is famous for its crystal scull!

Caracol near San Ignacio is a vast Mayan city hidden deep in the jungle, the largest in Belize, its population was circa 150,000, more than half of Belize's population today!

The famous Tikal in Guatemala, one of the world's most impressive Mayan sites. It is so big that you need at least 2 days to see the major parts.

Visit other Cayes such as the travellers favourite Caye Caulker or the popular Ambergris Caye and dive the famous 'Blue Hole'.

Visit the nearby Blue Creek National Park for spectacular rivers and waterfalls. Swim through the amazing caves at Blue Creek where you eventually get to an underground waterfall. Visit the stunning waterfalls at San Antonio and Rio Blanco.

Take a combined trip to include Mayan Ruins, jungle tours, visiting traditional Mayan villages and the amazing waterfalls. Take a boat trip up one of the spectacular rivers and discover the incredible wildlife, the many varieties of birds, howler monkeys and iguanas in the trees.

Take a fishing trip to Port Honduras Marine Reserve and see the Manatees at Pains Creek National Park.

There is something for everyone in or around PG and the ReefCI team are here to help book any tours, set you up with interesting local tour guides or simply point you in the right direction for some of Belizeans best food and live music!!

We can arrange any of the above or book you on jungle kayak trips, bird watching tours or to visit a cacao farm and see first hand how chocolate is made. We can arrange cheap bike hire, mayan village stays and even a private lesson at the local drumming school, the hands-on fun way to learn about Garifuna drumming and culture.

Accommodation

During your time at the project you'll be staying in beautiful cabanas with sea views; you'll have your own cabana but bathroom facilities are shared. Accommodation is basic but comfortable and is all you'll need after a long day of diving. See the Pics and Vids tab for photos of the accommodation.

Accommodation at weekends is included in the programme, you will be based in a beautiful house in the town of Punta Gorda on the Belize mainland. The house has a fully fitted kitchen, hot running water and cable tv. Meals are not included but you can save money by cooking as a group. Many participants take the opportunity to use your free time to travel in Belize and experience some of its fascinating sites and sounds. The team at the project are able to assist you in arranging weekend accommodation elsewhere if you wish and have some great recommendations for all budgets.

Meals

Three meals per day will be included and prepared for you by the team while you're on the island. Meals will generally consist of local ingredients and plenty of fresh fish! Most dietary requirements can be catered for, but

please ensure that you make us aware prior to departure, as well as the in-country team when you arrive.

At weekends, meals are not included but this is a great opportunity to explore other areas of Belize and try out some of the great local restaurants. The team in Belize will be able to give you some great recommendations on places to visit during your free time.

What's Included

- Board and lodgings Monday – Friday on the island
- Weekend accommodation in house on the mainland (food not included)
- PADI Open Water or Advanced course (US$50 admin fee paid locally)
- Dive equipment (not including mask, snorkel, wetsuit, booties and dive torch)
- Education on conservation methodologies and techniques; Coral Watch, Lionfish spearing, Commercial fish species surveys, Lobster monitoring, Queen conch monitoring, whale shark and Reef Check
- Caribbean fish, coral and invertebrate identification
- In depth training on one element of conservation methodologies for annual report
- Education on sustainable fishing practices and threats to the Marine Environment
- Comprehensive study of data collected and data analysis
- Contribution in weekly marine/conservation education sessions with sail boat passengers from Tradewinds cruise club
- Workshop on sustainable fishing practices with local stakeholders and local fishermen
- Practical insight into marine park management
- Involvement in community outreach programs
- Educational session with local school children

What's Not Included

- Meals at weekends
- International flights
- Vaccinations
- Travel insurance
- Marine reserve fee – US$25 per week or US$75 per month

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore you may not need all of the listed items on your travels.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Cash for airport departure tax
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Guidebook on country – recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints
- Photocopy of your passport

General

- High factor suntan lotion.
- After-sun lotion.
- Lip salve (those with sun protection are best).
- Dark sunglasses.
- Mosquito repellent recommended with DEET (available to buy in Belize)
- Small travel alarm clock.
- Torch with spare batteries.
- Swiss army knife (optional)
- Wash towel and beach towel.
- Camera.
- The in-country team are happy for our customers to bring underwater housing for those who are
- interested/passionate about photography.
- Power adapter (US).
- Standard medical kit i.e. re-hydration tablets, anti histamine, headache tablets etc.
- Books.
- Playing cards.
- CDs for the evenings if you have any favourites!

Clothing

- Swimwear, at least a couple of bikinis or shorts as you will be in the water most days.
- Shorts, at least a couple of pairs.
- Vest tops/t-shirts.
- Long trousers for the evenings.
- Thin long sleeved fleece for the evenings (only during winter months).
- Walking boots or trainers for jungle visits, walking etc.
- Thin waterproof jacket pref. breathable. (thicker for the boat during winter months)
- Something light to sleep in i.e. thin nightdress for women.
- Flip flops and/or sandals.
- Sunhat or head scarf.

Dive kit

- Long wetsuit 3mm is recommended, shorties may be OK for some people
- Booties
- A dive mask and snorkel
- Dive torch – required if you wish to participate in night dives
- Dive computer or dive watch if you wish to use one (these are not compulsory)
- PADI certification cards (if applicable)
- PADI log book.
- Non divers need to purchase the PADI Open Water manual and Recreational Dive Planner
- Divers planning courses need to bring the PADI manual for the planned course

The rest of the dive kit will be supplied – the team in Belize will just need to know your size.

It is also advisable, but not mandatory, that you purchase the Paul Humann Reef Fish, Reef Coral and Reef Creatures identification books. These can be obtained on line or you can try a local dive shop. These are great reference books which will increase your knowledge of local species. It will be helpful if you can familiarise yourself with the main fish groups prior to your arrival, but not essential. Nb. These books are heavy so the team don't expect you to take them with you, unless you have space, they have copies on the island for you to use during your stay.

Medical Kit

- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Anti-malarial tablets if required
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Personal medication e.g. prescription drugs/inhalers
- Painkillers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Plasters
- Lip Balm with SPF
- Tweezers (not in hand luggage!)
- Scissors (not in hand luggage!)
- Sanitary products for women if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (ensure it contains DEET or equivalent)
- Antihistamine tablets
- Rehydration salt sachets
- Ear Plugs – in case you sleep close to a snorer!
- If you suffer from seasickness think about tablets for boat based research

Basic medical items can be bought locally, however you should certainly bring with you an ample supply of any medicine or drug which you use regularly.

Flights

Your flight to Belize should arrive at Punta Gorda Air Strip on your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

Please note: If you are flying to Belize via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD$14 to register. To register, please visit: www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

1. **Do I need to take a sleeping bag?**
   No, all bedding will be provided for you.

2. **Do I need to take a mosquito net?**
   Mosquito nets aren't provided so if you want one then you will have to take one with you. They don't have too many bugs as a nice sea breeze normally keeps them at bay!

3. **Will there be a safety deposit box/safe available?**
   No safety deposit box will be available however you will be on a private island which has a caretaker at all times so all belongings are secure!

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

In Belize the currency is the Belize Dollar (BZD; symbol BZ$), which is subdivided into 100 cents. Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents and 1 Belize Dollar. Notes come in denominations of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50

and 100 Belize Dollars.

The US Dollar is also accepted as widely accepted. The best credit cards to take are American Express, Visa or MasterCard which are accepted by larger business and at ATMs (cajeros automáticos) in all but the smallest towns. Most businesses will charge an extra 5% service charge for payment with a credit Card.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant $4.88
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) $1.69
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) $0.92
Water (0.33 litre bottle) $0.70

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of up to 30 days, citizens of the following countries are not required to hold a visa when visiting for tourist purposes only;

Andorra, Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Holy See, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kiribati, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Western Samoa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

All other nationalities should consult their nearest Guatemala Embassy or High Commission.

Cultural Considerations

Greetings

Belize is a very informal country with a relaxed laid back style of life. It is polite to acknowledge people on the street with a simple “Good Morning” or “Good Evening”. Belizeans are extremely friendly and genuinely interested in foreign visitors to their country. Be prepared for people to stop you on the streets, in restaurants and bars and ask where you are from and what brings you to town.

Social Hierarchy

The family is hugely important to Belizeans. It is common for three generations of families to be living together under the same roof. It is a way to increase the household income and to help one another. As you would expect, older people are treated with great respect. Women are traditionally responsible for bringing up the children, although this has begun to change in recent years. Men are still very proud of their machismo and view whistling and “hollering” at women as a compliment. Ladies, take it in your stride. You may be subjected to catcalls and the best way to deal with these is simply to ignore them!

Religion

The dominant religions in Belize are Roman Catholic and Protestants. However, Belize is a complete melting pot of cultures and religions with sizeable populations of Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites and Jehovah’s Witnesses, especially in Southern Belize,

Clothing

On the island it is perfectly acceptable and very practical to live in swimwear, t-shirts and shorts. However, when in town, it is advisable for men to wear t-shirts and ladies to not walk around in bikinis. Short skirts and tight clothing is the norm for many Belizean women but ladies, be sensible, if you don’t want a lot of unwanted attention then dress a little more conservatively.

With the warm climate and humidity, we advise that you pack a selection of lightweight clothing. The weather can sometimes be a little unpredictable so a light, long sleeve top is advisable especially during the winter months. A waterproof jacket is essential for those unexpected showers and for the boat journey.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Belize, and readily available. During the diving week, whilst we want you to have fun, we need you to be safe and don’t advise diving after consuming a lot of alcohol. Of course you are on holiday, we expect you to enjoy a beer or 2 at the end of the diving day, but we advise to only have a couple of drinks if you intend to take the early morning dive the next day. At the weekends your time is your own and there is lots of great live music and a good fun social scene in town ready to be explored.

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Belize or to purchase or consume any whilst here. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else’s luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Belize has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including “soft” drugs like marijuana, which are readily available, are ILLEGAL. Do not be fooled by the image of a laid back Caribbean town. You will find the youths, especially young men, smoking marijuana and they will tell you it is not a problem! IT IS!! If you are caught with one marijuana cigarette you can get up to 5 years imprisonment! Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

Tipping

Staff on the project work extremely hard to ensure you get the most out of your experience, a tip is always greatly appreciated! The same goes for in the bars and restaurants in town. If you get good service then a small tip (typically 10%) goes a long way. If you are not impressed with the service then don’t feel obliged to leave a tip, it should be to reward good service.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Although Belize City is a notorious crime hot spot, the rest of the country is generally pretty safe. Punta Gorda is a small Caribbean fishing town and is know for being a safe, laid back town.

The Belizeans are very friendly towards tourists and harassment is not an issue. In fact, there is a law in Belize where locals can get up to a $2,000 fine or 6 months in prison if a tourist reports them for harassment!

However, be aware that Belize is still a third world country and there will always be opportunists ready to make a quick dollar, it is best to be vigilant and not carry huge amounts of cash.

This information is not supposed to scare you or put you off, it is just to make sure that you are informed and can take the appropriate precautions where necessary.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk
USA: www.travel.state.gov
Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief. To avoid this it is advised that you withdraw cash inside the bank at the counter. You will need your passport and driving licence and they will direct you to the teller to obtain your funds. It is more time consuming than using the ATM, but is the most secure way of withdrawing money.

Food & Drink

The food is plentiful and a real highlight of the trip. During your time on the island you will be extremely well fed with a delicious fusion of local and international dishes. Meals are all freshly cooked from wholesome locally sourced ingredients and wherever possible organic produce. All dietary requirements are catered for.

As you will soon discover Belizeans love to eat! On the mainland you will find there are many food stalls and restaurants. Prices vary depending on the restaurant you choose. Belizean places serving bbq chicken, stewed chicken, rice and beans, tamales etc are much cheaper than those serving American food. A typical American meal costs circa $20 Bz $10US (£7) and a typical Belizean meal can be as little as $6-10 Bz $3-5US (£2-£3). Belize has great 'street' food, which is cheap and delicious!

A typical Belizean breakfast consists of eggs, beans and tortilla or fried jacks (the Belize equivalent to fried bread!) Chicken or fish with rice and beans or beans and rice (there is a difference!!!) will be on most menus and you must try the homemade hot pepper sauce, it varies from place to place but is always guaranteed to have a kick!!

Drinks

All the normal soft drinks are available and popular throughout Belize. Fresh watermelon, lime or orange juice is available at most eateries along with the very popular and healthy coconut water!

Alcohol-wise, Rum is the drink of choice for most Belizeans, served with cranberry, orange or pineapple juice, coconut water or coke. Wine is available in some shops and restaurants, usually Chilean, but it is expensive. Beer and Stout are widely available and there is a small range to choose from. Some bars serve a wider variety of mixed drinks and cocktails.

Public Holidays

To view a list of the public holidays for Belize, please see the link below:

www.worldtravelguide.net/belize/public-holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. Many schools, government offices, stores and banks are closed on National Holidays. Please note that there may be slight date variations for some of the holidays each year and that the list is not exhaustive.

Weather

Belize has a comfortable tropical climate with an average annual temperature of 29C (84F). The island sea breezes provide cooling relief even in the hottest summer months while winters can be cool but never very cold. In short, the climate is pretty much near perfect.

Even in winter the temperature in Belize rarely falls below 60°F (16°C), while throughout summer the temperature is consistently around 86°F (30°C). Humidity is also fairly consistent at around 85 percent.

Belize has two, rather than four seasons, rainy and dry.

Belize's dry season, falling between February and May, has significantly lower rainfall than the rest of the year, and when rain does come it is usually in mild, short bursts.

June through December marks Belize's wet season. Wild storms associated with the Caribbean occur, usually in the late afternoons. The most frequent rainfall usually occurs in June or early July and is punctuated by a break in

late July or August known as the "little dry."

Hurricane season in the Caribbean is officially June through to November. However, hurricanes rarely hit Southern Belize. Hurricanes are more predictable in October when this project does not run.

Visibility for diving is excellent from March through June; on some days it can get as good as 30-40 metres! The visibility in the Caribbean is always good and the diving is always top class, with water temperatures averaging 28 degrees and dropping no lower than a comfortable 26 degrees.

Time

Guatemalan time is seven hours behind GMT.

Electricity

Electricity in Belize is 110 Volts, alternating at 60 cycles per second. If you travel to Belize with a device that does not accept 110 Volts at 60 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter.

Outlets in Belize generally accept 2 types of plug:

Flat blade plug

Two parallel flat pins with ground pin

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone: 1-800-985-4852
Email: info@realgap.com
Post: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960
Web: www.realgap.com