



SAN
IGNACIO
RESORT
HOTEL

SAN IGNACIO, BELIZE

Photos by MARK EDWARD HARRIS
Images courtesy of SIRH



THE
BOUNTIFUL
BLISS
OF BELIZE

The small Caribbean country of Belize boasts an amazing bounty of natural wonders, including the wealth of the world's second largest barrier reef, a snorkel and diving mecca with nearly 200 islands and a protected ecosystem of diverse tropical wonders, stunning coral gardens, abundant colorful fish and sea life, grazing manatees, playful dolphins, rays and sharks. The beauty extends to the rich diversity of the Belize people, the treasures of the once thriving Mayan culture in archaeological sites and discoveries of temples and palaces still being reclaimed from the lush tropical rainforest. Canoeing and tubing, caves and caverns are closely monitored, revealing amazing formations, sinkholes, and waterfalls. A birder's wonderland, the rainforest is also a source of medicinal plants. The Belize interior landscape is dotted with large and small villages, rolling wooded hills, farms and ranches, and rich agricultural valleys prized by Mennonite communities.

It is easy to fall in love with the land and people of Belize, their welcoming hospitality, the contrasts of experiencing archaeological wonders in the west and the Caribbean reef seascape wonders of the east. Modeliste invites our readers to discover Belize from the warm welcome of a family owned property for those travelers seeking the rare personalized experience making this destination most memorable.

The adventure begins at the lovely boutique San Ignacio Resort Hotel in the western Belize city of San Ignacio, gateway to the Mayan mystique, the ruins of Xumantunich and Cahal Pech, and, just across the Guatemalan border, the extensive Mayan site of Tikal. Your welcome begins in the heart of the hotel, the attentive staff greets guests at the doors to the stunning lobby. Across the lobby, the view is impressive, from the sweeping staircase to the upstairs suites, outside to the sparkling pool and splashing waterfall, the rainforest surrounding it and the covered dining terrace completing the scene.

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In 1994, the San Ignacio Resort Hotel hosted Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Belize, an honor that continues in extending guests a royal welcome. There is a family history, an immigrant story of vision and success that has continued across generations, family owned and managed along with successive generations of community families working and committed to its success.

The 26 guest rooms are continually updated with modern amenities including flatscreen TV's, Wifi, mini fridge, ultra comfortable beds, large bathrooms with select toiletries, and some family rooms with outdoor seating, hammocks and grassy areas perfect for children. The large pool is a welcome escape with a terrace of sun umbrellas and loungers sheltered by rainforest just beyond. One two bedroom suite with outdoor jacuzzi, and two one bedroom suites upstairs are exceptionally spacious with comfortable sitting areas, kitchenette with microwave and mini fridge. A four poster bed with a rainforest view plus an extraordinary bath, jetted tub and family size double shower head walk-in shower adds to the luxurious feel. An in-room dining or work area with a view and balcony seating area makes for perfect early morning views of the singing toucan greeters and an array of other tropical birds.

Dining on the covered outdoor terrace or the more formal inside dining room is a delight, from the fresh fruits and breakfast choices to the surprising diverse dinner menu reflecting Belize cuisine's many cultural contributions from Lebanese to Italian, grilled beef from the family's cattle ranch, and locally sourced vegetables from the San Ignacio Farmer's Market. Refresh with the healthy frosty juice smoothies, creative cocktails, national Belikin Beer, and full bar menu. The hotel is a bustling conference and social center for locals, international presentations, and events including weddings, anniversaries, and reunions.

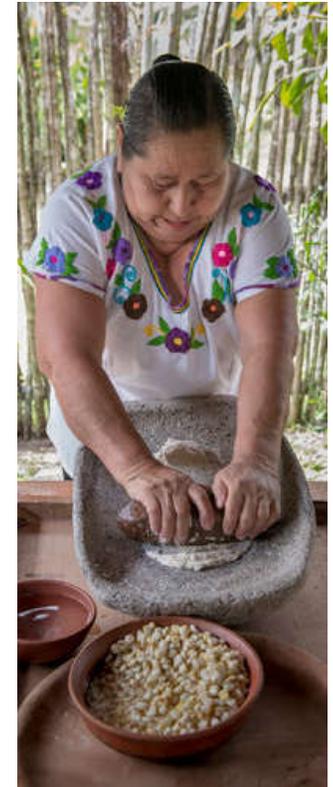


The archaeological sites of Xunantunich and Cahal Pech have become popular wedding destinations where the San Ignacio Hotel event planners create a respectful link to the beautiful stone temples for a private and most memorable backdrop for your ceremony. Choose a reception in the San Ignacio Hotel ballroom, dining room or poolside, catered by the amazing hotel bar and restaurant.

The San Ignacio Resort Hotel concierge team schedules guided tours of the Mayan sites with your knowledgeable guide who brings the history of the once flourishing Mayan culture, its arts, celestial calendar observations, mathematics and engineering building skills to life, and enlightens the mystery of its sudden demise and displacement centuries before the arrival of Spanish explorers. The ongoing excavations are exposing new finds revealing wonderful glimpses into the world of the ancients, their social structure, religious ceremonies, and accomplishments.

A canoe tour of the amazing Barton Creek Cave reveals ancient Mayan religious sites and amazing crystalline formations, stalactites resembling hanging chandeliers and sculptures.

The history of the earliest known cultivation of the cacao plant led Modeliste to a celebration of chocolate at the local AJAW chocolate producer, learning the extraordinary nutritional values of the cacao bean, the rewarding process of creating the dark chocolate "paste", the only sweetener a drop of local honey, and grinding cacao beans to a powdered chocolate for a nutritional porridge. We now know chocolate in its purest form is truly a fully balanced healthy nutritional diet and supplement - just as we have always believed!



Modeliste is dedicated to supporting Women's Empowerment throughout the world. Our visit to the nearby San Antonio Women's Center was inspiring. This is a wonderful opportunity to interact with women across generations, women reviving lost ancient Mayan arts in pottery now restored by archaeologists studying the process and symbolism, traditional weaving, natural food preparations, promoting education, financial empowerment, teaching traditions to share and remind younger generations of their rich heritage. Side by side we worked the clay as the archaeologists have shown the ancient Mayans did, polishing without a glaze, painting hieroglyphics, traditional designs and some inserts of creativity, and the art of Mayan kiln firing. Experience grinding corn with mano and metate to appreciate the skill and the amazing difference in tortillas made fresh on the outdoor wood burning stove camal skillet. These memories are gifts; interacting and supporting their women initiatives is inspiring.

There is a passion and pride that resonates at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel. They are eager to share their community, inviting guests to interact with local artisans and farmers at the San Ignacio farmer's market, a colorful array of fresh produce and handicrafts, local foods, and arts. The new cultural center has transformed the old abandoned hospital into a civic venue with traveling exhibits, historic photos, and community activities from concerts to wellness fairs.

The San Ignacio Resort Hotel demonstrates its commitment to ecotourism with its dedication to preserving and educating with its guided on-site rainforest pathway tour combining bird watching and a medicinal plant tour, and the Green Iguana Conservation Project.

