

THE PLUNGE

Belize Honeymoon Getaway Guide

By Ashley Mateo | June 7, 2018



Thanks to its accessibility and relative affordability (versus, say, Tahiti), the Caribbean has become a kind of...predictable choice for a honeymoon. But before you write Belize off as just another island getaway, know two things: 1) It isn't an island—it's bordered by Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the south and technically part of the Caribbean *and* Central America (which doesn't really matter except *know your geography, dude*), and 2) there's no way you're going to have the same experience in Belize as you would in the more touristy islands nearby, like Turks and Caicos, Barbados, or St. Lucia. Not that we're knocking them, but we want something different (and less crowded) for you newlywed types. That's why we put together this handy Getaway Guide for your adventurous honeymoon to Belize.

—Ashley Mateo

The Pros & Cons of Belize

One of the best things about Belize is that a ton of people aren't traveling here yet. In 2016, 385,583 tourists arrived in Belize; that's significantly less than the 2,181,684 vacationers who dropped by Jamaica, right to the east. Belize also boasts the lowest population density in Central America, with 35 people per square mile—especially appealing if you and your bride really want some privacy to indulge your post-wedded bliss.

The weather is another major plus. While Belize does have a hurricane season, it doesn't typically get as many direct hits as neighboring islands. And while the wet season lasts from June through December, there's a break in late July and August called the "little dry" with weather that mimics the dry season (between February and May). No matter when you go, you'll get an average yearly temperature of 84°F, and consistent humidity around 85 percent—perfect for the beach, but not unbearable.

One thing to be aware of in Belize is safety—the U.S. Department of State warns tourists to exercise caution, as violent crime (including sexual assault, armed robbery, and murder) is common and local police lack the resources to respond effectively. So always plan accordingly. But, that shouldn't stop you from going, but make sure to travel smart and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Remind Me: Why Belize?

One of the top sources of revenue in Belize is eco-tourism. So if traveling in a way that preserves the natural beauty of a location is important to you, this is an economy you want to support. If not (what's wrong with you?), you can still enjoy the benefits, because this means Belize is one of the most pristine, undeveloped destinations in the Caribbean or Central America. In fact, there are only four highways in the entire country (one of which is the stunning Hummingbird Highway on the southern coast, which practically demands to be Instagrammed...multiple times). Not only are the natural sites unspoiled, but there are plenty of gorgeous eco-resorts built right into the natural landscape, which means you have your stunning views, all the amenities, *and* not feel guilty about what you're doing to the environment. (Fun fact: *The Godfather's* Francis Ford Coppola's family has three separate eco-resorts in Belize! Now, how can you refuse.)

Belize is also the only English-speaking country in Central America—perfect if you're not looking to get lost in translation on your honeymoon. But it's home to a number of ethnic groups that have a distinct influence on the culture. About 35-percent of the population is Kriol, descendants of enslaved Africans and English and Scottish log cutters; 34-percent are Mestizo, or a mix of Maya and European; 10 percent are descendants of the indigenous Maya and fall into three groups: Yucatec, Mopan, and Q'eqchi' Maya; and about 6-percent are Garifuna, a mix of West African, Central African, Island Carib, European, and Arawak descent. Not only does that make for a rich, diverse cultural experience, but it makes for really good *food*. No matter where you are, local ethnic groups offer their own flavors and customs, so make sure to seek those out.

Where To Stay in Belize



Where you stay truly depends on what you want to do. The international airport is in Belize City, in the north, but you'll want to book it right out of the city. Go to the northern islands, like Ambergris Caye, the largest and one of the most well-known islands in the country, where you can visit the Belize Barrier Reef. If that's too touristy for you, Caye Caulker is a much more laidback option where the main mode of transport is foot or bicycle. Both destinations are home to some of the best scuba diving and snorkeling in the area—especially at Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Mexico Rocks, and Shark Ray Alley—as well as windsurfing, manatee tours, and saltwater fishing.

Northern Belize is off the beaten track, but home to Corozal, a quiet haven with close ties to nearby Mexico, and Orange Walk, the country's fourth largest town, along the banks of the New River. This is a great place to set up camp if you're interested in exploring the rural side of the country and soaking up the varied cultural influences while visiting some of the major Maya landmarks like Lamanai and Cerros.

Down south, you'll find eco-tourist destinations like Placencia, Hopkins, and Dangriga, which have all the charm of old fisherman's villages (and less tourists than up north). Road trip down Hummingbird Highway or visit the world's only jaguar preserve (to celebrate the fact that you won't need a big cat picture for Tinder anymore!). Kayaking, snorkeling, saltwater fly-fishing, and whale shark watching are also top-notch ways to spend your days here.

Head west to San Ignacio Town if you're looking for more of a jungle experience. It's a great home base if you want to go caving in Actun Tunichil Muknal, chasing waterfalls, or exploring ancient Mayan

archeological sites like Caracol, Xunantunich, and Cahal Pech. You can also get your nature fill at Noj Ka'ax H'Men Eljio Panti National Park. Learn those pronunciations!

Head to the western jungle for a three-night stay in the gorgeous San Ignacio Resort Hotel on the hillside of the Macal River. The honeymoon packages includes accommodations; air transfers; daily breakfast; two dinners; a romantic dinner on your suite balcony; aromatherapy massages; a full day tour either cave tubing, zip-lining, or to Actun Tunichil Muknal cave; horseback riding to Xunantunich with a picnic lunch; and access to the on-site iguana conservation project and Rainforest Medicine Trail. Three nights start at \$2,760 per couple; you can add on after that.

Best Attractions and Activities in Belize



Belize isn't the kind of place you head to if you just want to sit on the beach all day sipping Panti Rippas, arguably the country's most popular cocktail (it's coconut rum and pineapple juice)—although you can do that, because there are plenty of beautiful beach bars and bartenders happy to serve them. Just maybe do that *between* visiting some of Belize's coolest sites.

At 984 feet across and 410 feet deep, The Great Blue Hole is basically, well, a sinkhole. But it's also part of the Barrier Reef Reserve System—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is the world's largest natural formation of its kind. It's about 62 miles off of Belize City, on the central coast, and it's a hugely popular destination for recreational scuba divers.

At one point, Belize was the center of the Maya world. If you and your new wife are history buffs, head up north to Lamanai, one of the largest Maya ceremonial centers. It was occupied for over two millennia, making it the longest inhabited Maya city. Other Maya highlights include Xunantunich, the second tallest ruin in all of Belize located towards the west; Caracol, which is one of the most challenging Belize ruins to reach (it's on the western edge of the Maya Mountains) but totally worth it thanks to its 140-foot tall pyramid; and Lubaantun, another ceremonial center on the southern coast.

The Chiquibul Cave System is the longest cave system in Central America, stretching underneath parts of western Belize as well as in Guatemala. You can explore Actun Tunichil Muknal, or "Cave of the Stone Sepulchre," an ancient Mayan underground ceremonial area (it's home to the "Crystal Maiden," a calcified skeleton that sparkles in the light—romantic!). Or canoe the 4.5 miles of Barton Creek Cave, float through float what the Mayans called Xibalba—their mythic underworld—a river-carved subterranean cave in the Maya Mountains, or drop into Actun Loch Tunich, "the mother of all caves," which requires rappelling 300 feet through a black basin into the cave. Just make sure you've packed properly.

<< [See Full Article](#) >>