



San Ignacio Resort Hotel in Belize Celebrates 40 Years

Julie Leventhal | May 9, 2017

Belize, formerly British Honduras, gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1981 and boasts a small population of approximately 350,000. Visiting Belize is easier than ever now, with more airlines from Los Angeles, Denver, Atlanta, Houston and Newark, offering direct flights to Belize City.

As you drive west from Belize City airport you will see cattle ranches such as Running W Brand Meats, orange orchards lining the roads, fields of sugarcane and papaya and avocado trees. The capital city, Belmopan is about one hour from Belize City airport but many travelers continue on straight to San Ignacio. The San Ignacio area is a prime location for experiencing adventure activities and Mayan Ruins and is only about a two hour drive to the famous Tikal Ruins in Guatemala.



[The San Ignacio Resort Hotel](#), who celebrates their 40th anniversary this year, is the only San Ignacio property that is in the jungle. It offers guests luxury accommodations in a 26-room property, the Running W Steakhouse & Restaurant who won restaurant of the year for 2016 and boasts newly renovated suites. They also have the onsite ***Iguana Conservation Project*** – Trip Advisor’s #1 thing to do in San Ignacio for the past seven years. Major remodeling endeavors include the addition of three new suites with in-suite Jacuzzis, a new contemporary and Mediterranean style lobby with a Baroque-themed Lobby Bar, a formal dining room, an extended outdoor seating area and renovations to its existing suites.

The luxurious one and two bedroom suites provide guests with views of the jungle from private balconies and are designed with local art and furnishings made from well-crafted Belizean hardwood and sustainable mahogany. Guests staying at one of the lavish suites will also receive complimentary butler service, daily breakfast, tickets to visit the Green Iguana Conservation Project, and a guided trek along their Medicinal Trails.

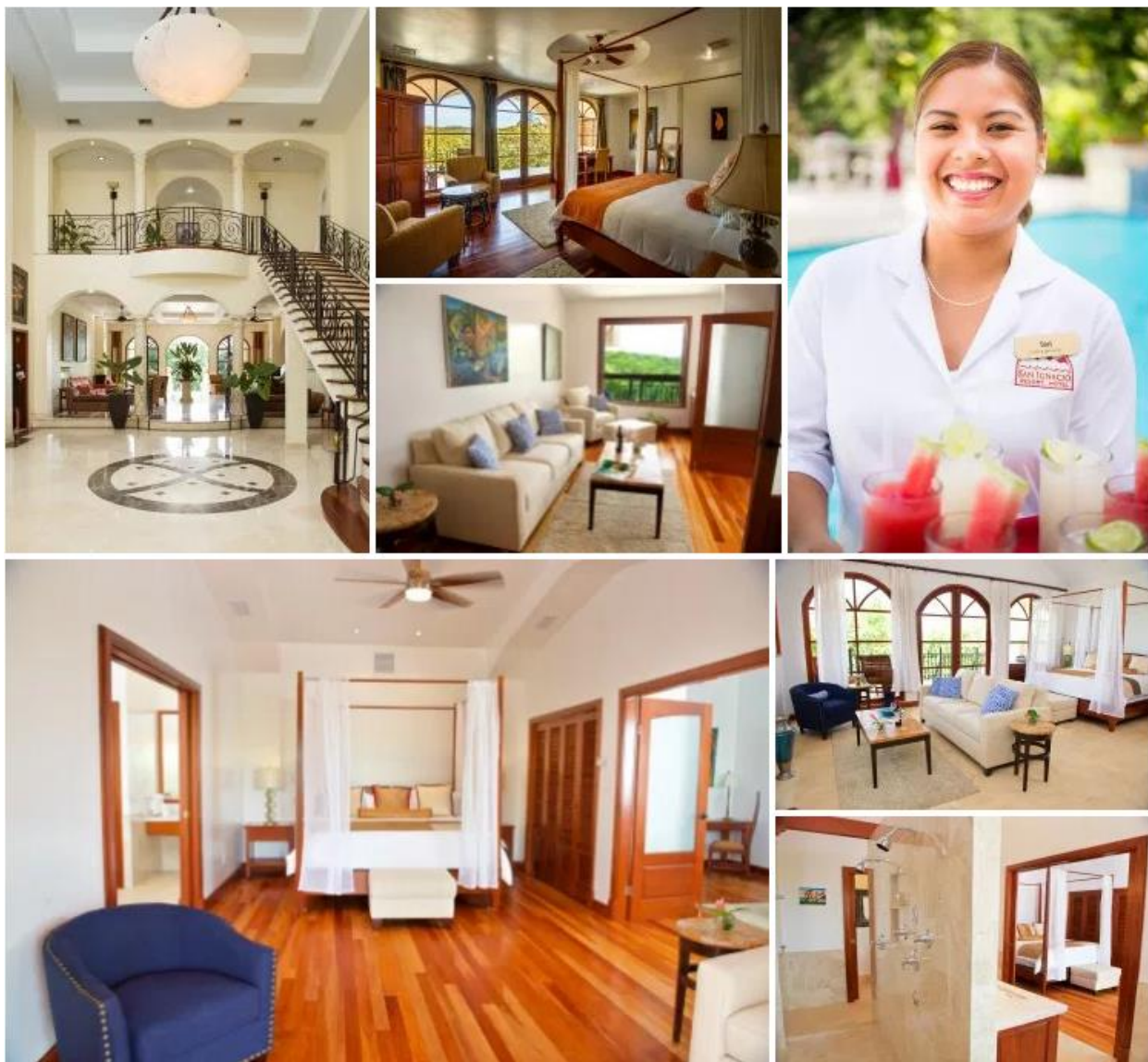


Located on-site, the Green Iguana Conservation Project, is an interactive exhibit that educates guests on the life of Green Iguanas and allows for an up close and personal experience with the reptile. You can meet

Oscar and Stargazer, among other iguanas as large as six feet and see the way Nigel has taken care of them in their iguana sanctuary. This self-sustained project, which began in 1996, allows guests to participate in their "Adopt an Iguana Program" and the "Iguana Kids Club", two programs aimed at fostering relationships between the species and visitors.

Guests looking to learn more about Belize's foliage and how it plays a role in the ecosystem, can do so on the tour of medicinal plants and herbs found within the resort's 17-acre private estate. The guided tour will take participants on hiking trails through the lush tropical rainforest for a hands-on educational tour of natural remedies that were used by the Mayan community to heal numerous illnesses. Learn how oregano can cure an earache and the plants and tree bark that you can use in your tea to prevent nausea and menstrual cramps or improve male impotency.

Onsite bird watching is another amenity offered by San Ignacio Resort Hotel in which an experienced guide walks guests through the jungle in the early morning to enjoy the sights and sounds of San Ignacio's feathery friends. Look out for toucans and other exotic birds that soar through the jungle spreading their colorful wings sometimes getting close, just long enough for you to snap a photo. They might even join you on a nearby branch as you sit and enjoy your morning coffee on the patio overlooking the jungle.



With 48 hours in the region here is a suggested itinerary...

Day 1

9:00 AM: Start your day with a Belizean breakfast: fry jacks, eggs your way, refried beans, fried plantains, ham and Gouda cheese.

10:00 AM: Head over to Hanna Stables for a horseback ride with Santiago and his team along the Mopan River Valley. Explore the jungle on horseback passing through cattle farms and wide open trails along the river. You may even come across a howler monkey and some iguanas climbing in the trees. After you can stop at the market along the river for local souvenirs such as handmade hammocks and secret boxes carved by the locals.

1:00 PM: Lunch at Benny's with specialties such as Cow Foot Soup and Pibil (pork meat cooked underground served with vegetable sauce and corn tortillas).

2:00 PM: Hike up to Xunantinic Mayan Ruins imagining what life was like in Mayan Times or listen to San Ignacio Resort Hotel's expert tour guide Cruz as he educates you on Mayan cultures and traditions. From the top of the tallest ruin you can see all the way to Guatemala. On a hot day remember to wear a hat and bring water, this is a steep one.

4:00 PM: Back at San Ignacio Resort relax and take a dip in the pool or enjoy a chocolate or coffee scrub or banana mask in the spa.

7:00 PM: Live music can be enjoyed on the patio of Running W Steak House. Local singers and bands including Aldo Pineda and Justin Castillo & Ray will serenade you as you enjoy a rainforest cocktail (secret recipe) or purple parrot (Blue curaçao, vodka, pineapple and grenadine) poured by Keith at the bar.

8:00 PM: Dinner at Running W Steakhouse & Restaurant inside the San Ignacio Resort Hotel includes great cuts such as the black angus rib eye or the 21-day aged Running W premium NY strip. You can also try the Lebanese sample platter of lamb kebab, vegetables, pita bread and the family's own hummus recipe. If you are lucky enough to be there on a Wednesday when Trey is hosting, Steak Your Claim Night, he will grill everything right on the deck in front of you using his own sauces and techniques. You can also find him on weekends at Trey's Barn and Grill. For the pescatarians or vegetarians they have options including grilled shrimp skewers, delicious pan seared grouper and a Bounty of Belize salad made with ingredients from the local farmers.

Day 2

8:00AM: Start your day with a light breakfast enjoying one of the juices on the menu. Favorites include the Guava & Apples made with guava, green apples and spearmint or the Breakfast Heart made with watermelon, guava, coconut pulp and pineapple.

9:00 AM: As you hit the road to the Barton Creek Cave Tour you'll be glad you ate light as this long and unpaved road provides for quite an adventure before you even arrive at the caves. Put on your helmets with the headlight attached and enter into Barton Creek Caves. San Ignacio Resort Hotel tour guide Cruz highlights the history of the cave and its many archeological findings. Paddling in your canoe in the dark,

watch out for bats and sharp corners in the cave and make sure to dive in the water to refresh yourself on the way out! This one is not to be missed!

12:00 PM: Next stop Calico Jack's Ziplining in the Mountain Pine Ridge area. Here you have the choice to do a cable walk, jungle swing, rappel or zip line through the jungle. You fly high above the trees and if you make it to the advanced level you can even fly Superman style. The team of experts will make your experience as safe and enjoyable as possible. Short uphill hikes are part of the itinerary so be prepared with close toed shoes and water on those hot Belizean days.

2:30 PM: Back at San Ignacio Resort Hotel, enjoy shrimp and conch ceviche poolside as you sit back and decompress from your adventure filled morning. Sip on a Belikin beer and enjoy the beautiful weather.

4:00 PM: Get acquainted with the iguanas on property at the interactive exhibit, The Green Iguana Conservation project.

7:00 Head into the town of San Ignacio for dinner at the popular Ko-Ox Han-Nah or Crave. At Crave the menu changes daily as everything is made based off the freshest ingredients at the farmers market. At Ko-Ox Han-Nah the lamb chops with coconut rice and the curries are the highlights! Make sure to wash it down with ice cream from Molly's Ice Cream Shoppe next door to Crave. Rainforest ice cream, vanilla with Brazilian nuts is a local favorite and also available at San Ignacio Resort Hotel.

If you are able to extend your stay for several days, there are many other off-property tours and activities that can be arranged onsite at San Ignacio Resort Hotel. Day tours to the Mayan Ruins, such as Tikal in Guatemala and Caracol (about 2 hours from the hotel), tubing, Macal River canoeing, a visit to the Howler Monkey Sanctuary or the Belize zoo are just a few.

In 40 years, San Ignacio Resort Hotel has been the recipient of numerous awards including, most recently, "Hotel of the Year" (2016, 2012) and "Restaurant of the Year" (2016) by the Belize Tourism Board, as well as winning the "Hospitality Award" (2015) at the 13th Annual National Tourism Awards.

The staff at San Ignacio Resort Hotel including the four sisters, Mrs. Mariam Bedran Roberson, Mrs. Paulita Bedran-Figueroa, Mrs. Nazle Bedran Kuylen, Mrs. Terry Bedran Carter, Reuben, Mrs. Perla, Stephanie, Cruz, Mariela, Nora, and the rest of the team all make you feel like family the moment you arrive. With welcome cocktails, flowers that decorate your bed and rooms, and a warm smile and friendly demeanor they certainly create an "Unbelizeable" experience you will remember for years to come. For more information visit www.sanignaciobelize.com.



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