

## LIGHTHOUSE REEF SHORT

Tropical Wildlife & Hidden Coral Reefs!

### Trip Details

5 days / 6 nights

### Price

\$1369 USD Contact us for current CDN prices

### Departures 2010

Dec 20

### Departures 2011

Feb 12, 16

Mar 26, 30

Apr 15

### Activities

Sea Kayaking  
 (paddling & sailing),  
 Snorkeling, Fishing,  
 Hiking, Birding,  
 Photography,  
 Natural History

### Accommodations

1 night Lodge  
 4 nights at Halfmoon  
 Caye basecamp (safari-



### The Setting...

We begin our trip with an introduction to the inland waterways of the *Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary*. Here we experience the astounding diversity of birds and wildlife for which Belize is renowned. Located 33 miles northwest of Belize city the sanctuary provides both the abundant food sources and the safe resting areas necessary to support a large and diverse population of birds.

Our Journey to Lighthouse Atoll takes us 60 miles offshore to Belize's most remote and spectacular atoll. On our way to Lighthouse we weave our way through channels and picturesque islands within Belize's Barrier Reef, then after crossing the reef wall we enter a keyhole passage and wind through narrow mangrove-lined channels to reach the eastern Coral Wall of Turneffe Atoll and then continue another 20 miles to the world renowned Lighthouse Reef Atoll and Half Moon Caye. One of only four coral atolls in the Caribbean, Lighthouse is home to the famous Blue Hole. In 1972, Capt. Jacques Cousteau and the intrepid crew of the *Calypso* explored and filmed this incredible atoll, exposing its amazing underwater diversity to the world for the first time.

In partnership with the Belize Audubon Society, Island Expeditions Co. has established an Adventure Camp within the Half Moon Cay Marine Reserve, opening up for the first time this spectacular wilderness to kayakers, snorkelers, adventurers.

### A Note About the Ecology...

Belize's Barrier Reef is the largest reef in the northern hemisphere, second largest in the world, extending 185 miles (300 km) along the coastline. Approximately 35 miles beyond the Barrier Reef, lies one of Belize's most spectacular atolls – Lighthouse Reef Atoll. These circular shaped reef systems climb from the ocean floor and surround a central la-



# LIGHTHOUSE REEF ADVENTURE

goon. The reef structure is primarily made up of two kinds of coral, the hard hydro-coral (reef-forming coral), such as brain coral or elkhorn coral, and the soft corals, such as sea fans and feather plumes. The lagoon shelters one of the world's most diverse sea environments; harbouring an extensive community of fish, shellfish, and patch reefs. One mile off the eastern shore of the atoll and the shallow waters of the lagoon, the reef wall drops precipitously over 3000 feet to the ocean floor below! The interaction between the deeper, open waters of the Caribbean and the sheltered lagoons of the atoll, results in a diversity and abundance of marine life, which is unsurpassed for sea kayaking, snorkeling and diving.

## Fauna...

On Half-Moon Caye, there is a diverse range of marine-life and tropical birds. While exploring and snorkelling the atoll and the surrounding patch reefs, there are opportunities to see grouper, bonefish, angel and parrot fish, stingrays, conger, moray eels, and goatfish; just to name a few. Some of the bird-life includes osprey, royal terns, red-footed boobies, frigate birds, hawks, mangrove warblers and Half Moon Caye has one of the Caribbean's most important nesting colonies of red-footed boobies. Around the atoll and the barrier reef, there are nesting sites for loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles and often we see them while out snorkeling or kayaking.

**Day 0:** Arrive at the Belize International Airport where you will be met by an Island Expeditions representative and transferred to the Birds Eye View Lodge, in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. After checking into our accommodations we have a chance to meet our fellow travelers and enjoy a fine meal and as time permits explore Crooked Tree Village, one of Belize's oldest Creole Settlement. Transfers from the airport, dinner activities and lodging are included. *This day is your day to arrive before the trip starts, meet your fellow travelers and acclimatize to your new tropical environment.*

**Accommodation:** (Lodge)

**Meals:** Dinner

**Day 1:** Coffee is served at sunrise, and with binoculars in hand, we enjoy the waking wilderness and many hundreds of birds feeding right in front of the lodge along the shores of the Crooked Tree lagoons. After a healthy Belizean breakfast we'll embark by boat to explore the area. Throughout the sanctuary we have tremendous birding and wildlife opportunities: iguana, turtle, parrot, ibis and Morlet's crocodile are frequently seen. Later in the morning, we'll drive along the old Belize Road to the sea where we board our motor charter that takes us through white sand cays and mangrove ranges, then past the main barrier reef to Lighthouse Reef Atoll, at the furthest edge of the Belize Reef System, 60miles offshore of the mainland. On reaching Halfmoon Cay your guide team will orient you to our new island setting and settle you into your accommodations and camp and enjoy a late lunch and an afternoon snorkel or kayak around Halfmoon Cay.

**Accommodation:** (Half-moon Basecamp)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 2:** Perhaps an early swim or before breakfast participate in a yoga session with our resident yoga instructors (yoga is not available on all departures please check our website or call the office for a current schedule of trips with yoga instructors) After a healthy Belizean breakfast we gather to plan the days activities. To begin our activities



## Recommended Tour-books:

Eltringham, Peter.  
Belize: The Rough  
Guide .London. Penguin  
Publishers.

Perottet, Tony.  
Belize: Insight Guide  
Singapore. Houghton  
Mifflin Publishers.  
-Great photographs and  
written by a Belizean!

## Recommended Reading:

Rabinowitz, Alan. Jaguar,  
One Man's  
Struggle to Establish the First  
Jaguar Sanctuary  
New York. Island Press.



# LIGHTHOUSE REEF SHORT

the guides provide instruction; teaching the fundamentals of sea kayaking, snorkeling and water safety on the sea. From this point we venture forth into a world that most of us can only dream of; turquoise waters, solitary beaches and a remarkable abundance of marine life surrounds us wherever we are. Over the next few days we have many options to explore, including a shipwreck that looms just north of the caye. In 1971, a ship named the Ermlund lost power during a storm and was deposited on the reef by a large wave. This 4000 ton wreck sits silent as Due to it's isolation from the mainland, the waters of Lighthouse Reef Atoll are exceptionally clear with a fabulously rich reef system that offers some of the best kayaking, snorkeling and diving in the Caribbean.

**Accommodation:** (Half-moon Basecamp)      **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 3:** The "aquarium" is today's big adventure. We pack a hearty lunch and our snorkel gear in our kayaks and paddle with motor support. This dive spot is known for its profusion of fish and towering coral formations. We return home, stopping at the Half-moon Wall for a spectacular drift snorkel over the undersea cliff of the atoll.

**Accommodation:** (Half-moon Basecamp)      **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 4:** Today, we paddle along the protected waters of the southern reef to Long Caye where we have a chance to snorkel some of the atoll's best patch reefs. After a full day of exploring, we return just in time for a wonderful seafood dinner prepared by our cooks.

**Accommodation:** (Half-moon Basecamp)      **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 5:** For our last morning at Lighthouse, the choice is yours. Don a mask, snorkel and fins for a visit to a favorite patch reef enjoy walking the island trails or beach comb along the island beaches before the motor charter arrives to pick us up for the return boat trip back to the mainland. We transfer to the Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel where the trip finishes.

**Accommodation:** (Hotel)      **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**\*NOTE: Due to the remoteness of the Lighthouse basecamp, the activities on the reef portion of this trip are weather dependent and the following itinerary is a 'guide,' and will remain flexible and open to changes at the trip leaders' discretion.**



## Scuba Divers...

There are some great opportunities to dive at Lighthouse Reef. Optional diving is available for certified divers on certain days of the trip. Single tank dives are available from \$49 US. Please let us know in advance if you are considering diving during the trip as we often need to make special arrangements in advance. We can also arrange a variety of dive packages before or after your trip. For further information please contact our office.

3 Day Dive Package—\$319 USD

Includes: 8 dives (1 night dive & blue hole dive), Snacks and drinks, use of dive light during night dives

## Equipment...

While at our private base-camp on Half-Moon Caye, our guests have unrestricted use of the following equipment: Double Kayaks (outfitted with special sails), Single Kayaks, Complete Research Library and we have a motor skiff for kayak support, for fishing trips and On the island, we are in communication with the mainland via Satellite phone.

# LIGHTHOUSE REEF ADVENTURE

## Accommodation...

On Day 0, we stay at the Birds Eye View Lodge, in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a wonderful place to be introduces to the inland flora and fauna of Belize, and a chance to explore one of Belize's oldest villages.

On Day 1 to 4 we are "base camping", sleeping in tent-walled cabanas. These spacious safari-style tents have ample headroom to walk around and are on raised wooden floors with double or single beds.

On the final night we will be arriving back to Belize city in the afternoon and transfer for the night at Belize Biltmore Hotel, located 3 1/2 miles north of Belize City. This is a modern and comfortable hotel, with a lovely central, courtyard and swimming pool to relax and unwind.

## What's Included...

All meals (fully catered) while you are at our Half Moon Cay base-camp  
Some complimentary beer, wine or rum drinks  
Unlimited use of our Equipment and facilities  
Professional guide and sports instruction services with Belizean and North American leaders  
Comfortable BaseCamp accommodations  
Half-moon Caye Marine Park user fee  
Comprehensive pre-trip information package  
Financial Support for Conservation and Education programs in Belize

## What's Not Included...

Gratuities  
International Flights & Airport Departure Tax  
Snorkeling or Dive Gear & Scuba Diving fees  
Blue Hole Park Fee  
Extra costs due to late Arrivals and other circumstances beyond our control

## Thinking about seeing other parts of Belize with IEC?

Why not come a day or two early and explore more of Belize's interior, including a boat journey on the New River to the Mayan city of Lamanai. Also for those who are interested in visiting both of Belize's premiere atolls take a look at our 3 day Glovers Reef Getaway or full week trip. Call our office for details.

## Getting back to Belize City ...

Your transportation back to Belize City is included in the cost of the trip. This is a great point to make extra arrangements to travel further on in Belize, or to return to the International Airport which is just a short taxi cab away. We would be happy to answer any questions, or provide you with further directions after the trip.

## Thinking About Traveling Independently, Before or After Your Trip?

With over 20 years of exploration in Belize, our very knowledgeable and experienced office staff can offer you a wealth of travel information to help you plan the best vacation possible! However, we do recommend that you read up on the country and find what interests you. Once you find an area of interest, give our office a phone call.



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Phone: 604.452.3212  
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Email: [info@islandexpeditions.com](mailto:info@islandexpeditions.com)  
Website: [www.islandexpeditions.com](http://www.islandexpeditions.com)  
School Trips: [www.educationaltrips.org](http://www.educationaltrips.org)

**Hey Teachers & Parents!** Did you know Island Expeditions Co. has been operating custom educational trips for high schools and colleges for close to a decade! For more information, please visit: [www.educationaltrips.org](http://www.educationaltrips.org)