

LIGHTHOUSE GETAWAY

Tropical Wildlife & Hidden Coral Reefs!

Trip Details

3 days / 2 nights

Price

\$549

2012/2013 Departures

Dec 19

Feb 9, 23

Mar 1, 9, 23, 29

Apr 6, 20, 26

Trip Starts and Finishes in Belize City

Activities

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

Accommodations

2 nights Basecamp



The Setting...

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 Caye Marine Reserve, opening up for the first time this spectacular wilderness to kayakers, snorkelers, and adventurers.

A Note About the Ecology...

The Mesoamerican Coral Reef stretches from Cancun, Mexico through Belize to Honduras. It is the largest reef in the western hemisphere and second largest in the world. In Belize this reef is a well formed wall 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 up from the ocean floor and surround a central lagoon. 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.



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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 birds. While snorkeling the area there are opportunities to see grouper, bonefish, angel and parrot fish, stingrays, conger, eels, and goatfish - just to name a few. Some of the bird-life includes osprey, terns, red-footed boobies, frigate birds, and mangrove warblers. Half Moon Caye has one of the Caribbean's most important nesting colonies of red-footed boobies. Around the atoll and the Reef there are nesting sites for loggerhead, green, and hawksbill turtles, and often we see them while out snorkeling or kayaking.

Typical Daily Itinerary:

Day 1: We meet in the lobby of the Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel at 8:00am. From there we transfer to the sea where we board our motor charter at 9:00am that takes us through white sand cayes, mangrove ranges, and the heart of Turneffe Atoll, 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 Half-Moon Caye your guide team will orient you to our new island setting, and settle you into your accommodations and camp just in time for you to enjoy your first lunch on the island. To begin our activities the guides provide instruction; teaching the fundamentals of sea kayaking, snorkeling, and water safety on the sea.

Accommodation: Half-moon Basecamp **Meals:** L, D

Day 2: Perhaps an early swim or participate in a sunrise 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 day's activities. During our time here we have many options to explore - 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:** B, L, D

Day 3: For our last day 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 beachcomb along the island beaches. After our afternoon's activities our 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.

Meals: B, L

*NOTE: Due to the remoteness of the Lighthouse Basecamp, the activities on 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.



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



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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. Please let us know in advance if you are considering diving during the trip as we often need to make special arrangements ahead of time. We can also arrange a variety of dive packages before or after your trip. For further information please contact our office directly.

Equipment...

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

Accommodation...

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.

What's Included...

- All meals (fully catered) while you are at our Half Moon Caye Basecamp
- Unlimited use of our equipment and facilities
- Professional guide and sports instruction services with Belizean and North American guides
- Comfortable Basecamp accommodations
- Half-Moon Caye Marine Park fees
- Comprehensive pre-trip information document
- Financial support for Conservation and Education programs in Belize
- 12.5% Belize Sales Tax

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 or the Yucatan 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 Glover's 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 25 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
Website: www.islandexpeditions.com
School Trips: www.educationaltrips.org

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