

MAYA REEF EXPLORER JUNGLE TO REEF



Crooked Tree Wetlands, Creole and Mayan cultures,
and the renowned coral reefs of Lighthouse Atoll

Duration:	8 nights	Web address:	www.mayareef.travel
Starts:	Belize City	2015/2016 Departures:	
Finishes:	Belize City		Dec 19, 23; Jan 31;
Guides:	2-6 leaders		Mar 27; Apr 10, 24
Price:	\$2149 USD or \$2299 CAD		
Habitats:	Wetlands, Lighthouse Reef Atoll	Yoga Instructor at Basecamp on some departures	
Activity level:	2/3 - No experience necessary		

Activities: Sea Kayaking (paddling and sailing), Snorkeling, Fishing, Beachcombing, Birding, Photography, Natural History Interpretation, Exploring Mayan Ruins and Rainforest, Stand Up Paddleboarding. Scuba Diving (optional - cost not included in trip price); yoga on select departures.

Accommodations: Lodge at Crooked Tree, Half Moon Caye Basecamp, Belize City Hotel

The Maya Reef Explorer combines an inland adventure to Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary with an excursion to Lighthouse Reef Atoll. View Belize's birds and wildlife on a boat tour through the Crooked Tree Lagoons. Tour the ancient Mayan ruins of Lamanai and Altun Ha. Visit Crooked Tree, one of Belize's oldest Creole settlements. After three days of inland exploration, you'll spend five days on Lighthouse Reef atoll. Lighthouse Reef is a remote tropical marine park and UN world heritage site fifty-five miles off the shore of the Belize Mainland. Stay on Half Moon Caye, a protected island that is managed by the Belize Audubon Society. Sleep in safari-style tent cabanas at our all-inclusive Half Moon Caye Basecamp. Enjoy a choice of flexible daily guided reef activities, including paddling and snorkeling excursions to 'the Aquarium' and Jacques Cousteau's legendary Blue Hole. This trip is ideal for guests who would like to visit Lighthouse Reef, and also experience Belize's tropical wetlands and ancient Mayan culture.

Typical Daily Itinerary:

Day 0: You'll arrive at the Belize International Airport where an Island Expeditions' representative will meet you and welcome you to the country. You'll be taken to Bird's Eye View Lodge in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. After checking into your accommodations you'll have a chance to meet your fellow travelers, enjoy a fine meal and if time permits, explore Crooked Tree Village. Crooked tree Village is one of Belize's oldest Creole Settlements. Airport transfers, dinner, and lodging are included.

Accommodation: Lodge

Meals: Dinner

Day 1: You will have a full day of exploration as you travel overland and by river to the Mayan ruins of Lamanai. With the very best guides you explore the many temples, plazas, palaces, and museums within the park's boundaries. In the afternoon, you'll depart Lamanai by riverboat and your guides will help you discover amazing opportunities for birding and viewing wildlife. Iguanas, parrots, toucan, aracarís, and Morelet's crocodiles are frequently seen while traveling down the New River. You will return to your lodge along the banks of the Crooked Tree Lagoons.

Accommodation: Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 2: Coffee is served at sunrise. With your binoculars in hand, you'll enjoy the sounds and sights of the awakening wilderness. You'll also have the opportunity to see hundreds of birds feeding along the shores of the Crooked Tree Lagoons. This protected area was created in 1984 primarily to preserve resident and migratory birds. It consists of a network of inland lagoons, wetlands, and waterways, which shelter one of the world's largest flying birds, the Jabiru Stork. On this day, you'll enjoy boat tours through the protected lagoons and a tour to the Mayan ruins of Altun Ha. Alta Ha is considered one of the major Mayan ceremonial centres of Belize, and functioned as an important trading center between the people of the interior and the coast during the Classic Period (250-900 AD). Within the site, there are more than 275 structures and 250 to 300 unexcavated mounds.

Accommodation: Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3: This morning you'll travel to Belize City, and board a chartered water taxi to Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Our route takes you along numerous white sand, partially submerged, mangrove cayes until you cross Belize's Barrier Reef. From there, you'll enter the narrow passages within the Turneffe Islands before crossing the blue waters towards Lighthouse Atoll. Upon reaching our Half Moon Caye Basecamp, your guide team will orient you to your new setting and accommodations. You will receive thorough instruction on the fundamentals of sea kayaking, snorkeling, and safety on the Caribbean Sea. In the afternoon, weather permitting; you'll have an opportunity to sea kayak and snorkel within this marine reserve.

Accommodation: Half Moon Basecamp **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Days 4 - 6: Early risers may want to go for a swim, do some yoga - or just grab a cup of coffee and watch the tropical sunrise. After a healthy Belizean breakfast everyone gathers to plan the day's activities. The waters of Lighthouse Reef Atoll are exceptionally clear with a fabulously rich reef system, which offers some of the best kayaking, snorkeling, and diving in the Caribbean. Throughout your stay, you'll have the opportunity to try a variety of activities as you explore this remote and magical part of Belize. Snorkeling at the 'Aquarium' is a favorite guest activity. The Aquarium has a profusion of tropical fish and towering coral formations, and is an unforgettable underwater experience. You'll also be taken on a snorkeling excursion to the renowned Blue Hole, a site made famous by the legendary explorer Jacques Cousteau. The Blue Hole is an underwater cave and sinkhole in the middle of the Lighthouse lagoon. In the mornings and evenings, a favorite guest activity is to walk to the red-footed booby colony to watch nesting boobies come in from the sea to tend their nests and feed their chicks.

Accommodation: Half Moon Basecamp **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: For your last day on Lighthouse Reef, choose from a variety of activities. Don a mask, snorkel, and fins and swim to a favorite patch reef. Circumnavigate Half Moon Caye by kayak or explore by Stand Up Paddleboard. Walk the trails, or beachcomb along the island beaches. Our water taxi typically arrives later in the afternoon to take everyone back to the mainland. The Belize Biltmore Hotel is your final destination for today, a comfortable hotel located on the outskirts of Belize City.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8: This last day is yours to enjoy at your leisure before you fly home or continue on your travels. Relax by the pool or investigate the optional tours offered by the hotel activity desk.

Note: Dinner on day 7, and breakfast and transportation to the airport on day 8 are not included.

Please note all itineraries are subject to change depending on weather or safety considerations. Flexibility as our guest and as an international traveler is the key to an awesome experience.

Please visit www.mayareef.travel for further trip details and images.