

## PARADISE ISLANDS

A lodge to lodge Sea Kayak and Snorkel Adventure on the Southern Barrier Reef

### Trip Details

6 nights

### Price

\$1699

Trip Begins - Belize City

Trip Ends - Dangriga

### Summer 2014

### Departures

June 21, 28

July 19, 26 & Aug 2, 9

### Activities

Birding,

Rainforest Zipline,

Sea Kayaking

(paddling & sailing),

Snorkeling,

Photography,

Natural History

### Accommodations

1 night Jungle Eco-Lodge

5 nights Island Lodges

### Group Size

Minimum 4, Maximum 12



### **The Setting...**

The Mesoamerican Coral Reef stretches from Cancun, Mexico, through Belize, to Honduras. It is the largest reef in the western hemisphere and the second largest in the world. In Belize this reef is a well formed wall and extends 185 miles along the coastline. Along the Barrier Reef are over 225 cayes, ranging from small sand-fringed islands perched along the reef's edge to larger islands of partially submerged mangroves.

Historically, ships avoided this area of the Caribbean Sea because of inaccurate charts and the difficulty of navigating the shallow reef-strewn waters. Teeming with brilliantly coloured fish, sea grass beds, and patch reefs, the reef systems have not seen nearly the level of human impact as witnessed in Mexico to the north and Honduras to the south. We travel in the less developed southern regions of Belize's Barrier Reef, which remains a near-pristine marine ecosystem and is unparalleled in the Caribbean. It is in this region that we find the best sea kayaking and snorkeling. Our Operations Base in the southern coastal community of Dangriga is the ideal launching point for us to explore this spectacular region.



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## A Note About the Ecology...

### Flora...

The ecology of the Belizean coast is a complex combination of coral reefs, sand flats with extensive turtle grass, and mangrove ranges. The Barrier Reef shelters the Belizean coastline from the rougher open waters of the Caribbean sea. It acts as a huge breakwater and holds in the sand, resulting in beautiful islands forested with coconut palms, sea grape, and coco plum, as well as remarkable protected reef structures. The 'breakwater' action also enables the diverse ecosystems of the mangrove and turtle grass to flourish. These tangled partially submerged 'forests' provide essential feeding and nursing habitat for hundreds of species of fish, shell-fish, reptiles, marine mammals, and birds.

### Fauna...

We have plenty of time to snorkel, fish, and enjoy the scenery and marine life of the Caribbean Sea. We explore many different regions of the reef, including the inner and outer walls, patch and fringing reefs, mangrove ranges, and protected lagoons. Our traveling routes often cross those of the fishermen who make their living from the sea and with this interaction we gain good company and an insight into a way of life that is very different from our own.

## 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

## Typical Daily Itinerary:

**Day 0:** Arrive at the Belize International Airport and transfer onto a Maya Island Air domestic flight to Dangriga (book your international flight to arrive any time today, as all flights arrive at Belize International during daylight hours). You will be met by an Island Expeditions' representative at the Dangriga Airport and transferred to Mama Noots Jungle Lodge - a 25 minute drive into the Southern Maya Mountains. Our lodge is situated within the Mayflower Bocawina National Park, a 7000 acre rainforest park adjacent to the world famous 100,000 acre Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve.

After checking into our accommodations, we enjoy a 'Welcome to Belize' dinner. *This day is your day to arrive before the trip starts, meet your fellow travelers, and acclimatize to your new tropical environment.* Transfers from the airport and lodging are included.

**Accommodation:** Jungle Lodge      **Meals:** D

**Day 1:** Many may opt to rise at dawn for an early morning birding walk in the mist-shrouded jungle. Waking up to the sounds of the tropics is a pure delight, with the chatter of parrots and parakeets flying overhead, the fresh morning air scented with tropical blossoms, and the expectation of an exciting adventure filled day ahead.

After breakfast we hike up slopes to the start of the rainforest canopy zip line. After a thorough safety briefing from your guides and outfitted in your safety harness, you climb to the first platform where your adventure through the canopy begins!

We depart for Dangriga mid-morning and transfer to our waiting motor boat which takes us out to the cayes. Upon arrival at Tobacco Caye, we settle into our accommodations and enjoy a delicious Belizean lunch. In the afternoon, we will have an introduction to our tropical marine environment and then begin learning the fundamentals of sea kayaking, including safety and group/self rescues, and touring techniques.

**Accommodation:** Island Lodge      **Meals:** B, L, D

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**Day 2:** Situated right on the Barrier Reef in the heart of the *Southwater Caye Marine Reserve* we are ideally positioned to explore the surrounding reefs and cayes. Starting with a steaming mug of coffee and fresh tropical fruits, we enjoy an early morning swim or paddle before breakfast. Our focus for the morning will be snorkeling and kayaking. Our first morning snorkeling session begins with a thorough instruction and demonstration (beginner through to advanced skills are taught) at the Tobacco Caye cut and the outer reef walls.

**Accommodation:** Island Lodge      **Meals:** B, L, D

**Day 3:** We will enjoy a morning kayak and then looking south, with our gaze following the line of breaking waves along the Barrier Reef crest, we can see the next island we'll be travelling to today – Southwater Caye. After packing the kayaks with our personal gear bag and wishing fond farewells to our hosts, we will start our day on the water with an introduction to kayak sailing. From here we'll paddle and sail our kayaks along one of the most beautiful sections of the entire reef system. The waters are shallow and clear and we will see a tremendous variety of marine life, including southern sting-rays, eagle rays, grouper, nurse sharks, and more. As we make our way to Southwater Caye, with its coconut palms swaying in the wind, this is a day you will wish could go on forever. We'll land our kayaks on the beach, check into our accommodations, enjoy an ice cold drink, and explore the island before dinner. Then we can maybe try a little bone fishing action on a fly-rod or even a night time snorkel session on Southwater cut.

**Accommodation:** Island Lodge      **Meals:** B, L, D

**Day 4 & 5:** We will have plenty of time to kayak, snorkel, fish, and enjoy the scenery and marine life of Belize today. We explore different regions of the reef including the inner and outer walls, patch and fringing reefs, mangrove ranges, and protected lagoons. For divers we can arrange dives as requested and for those who'd like to try out diving for a first time, we can arrange Discover Scuba courses with prior notice. As we explore by kayak, our routes often cross those of the fishermen who make their living from the sea, and with this interaction we gain good company and an insight into a way of life that is very different from our own. On our final evening, we celebrate our time together with a Belizean farewell dinner and island festivities.

**Accommodation:** Island Lodge      **Meals:** B, L, D

**Day 6:** After an early breakfast, our water taxi carries us back to the mainland and the town of Dangriga where the trip finishes. Any extra luggage that you have stored at our Operations Base will be made available to you to repack. Taxis can be arranged to your connecting flight to the Belize International Airport or local bus stations to continue exploring Belize on your own.

**Accommodation:** N/A      **Meals:** B only

**Travel note:** For those making connections home on this day, international connections departing Belize should be booked for **after** 11:30am. In order to connect with the Friday afternoon departures from Belize you will require a short domestic flight from Dangriga to the International Airport at a cost of \$85US per person.

Please visit [www.paradiseislands.travel](http://www.paradiseislands.travel) for further trip details and images.



## What's Included...

- Comprehensive Pre-Trip Information Package
- All meals, transfers, and accommodations as described in the Itinerary. Includes domestic flight from Belize International to Dangriga on 'day 0'
- Unlimited use of our equipment, including sea kayaks .
- A full zipline tour,
- Reef activities and specialized instruction
- Waterproof dry bags
- Accommodation the day before the trip (Day 0)
- Professional guiding services
- Marine Park Fees
- 9% Belize Hotel Tax
- 12.5% Belize Sales Tax

## What's Not Included...

- Transfer back to Belize City
- Snorkeling/Dive Gear & Scuba Diving Fees
- Gratuities
- International Flights
- Extra costs due to late arrivals, lost baggage, and circumstances beyond our control.

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## Accommodation...

On 'Day 0' we will be spending the night at Mama Noots Jungle Lodge. Our lodge is situated in the midst of the jungle and is entirely off the grid. Power is supplied by solar and small scale hydro-electricity. This is a small lodge with a total of nine rooms in various configurations. Each room has either queen or single beds with bathroom ensuite and hot and cold water. There is a dining room and bar on-site with a satellite WiFi connection. There is a network of trails in the surrounding rainforest that leads to waterfalls, swimming holes, and small Mayan ruins.

While out on the cayes we kayak between islands along the Southern Barrier Reef and stay in small Belizean owned lodges. Facilities include running water and fully serviced bathrooms. We stay a total of 5 nights along the eastern edge of the Barrier Reef. On the final morning after breakfast we take a water taxi back to the mainland in time to make your flight connections home or connect with the next stage of your trip.

**NOTE:** You will be carrying your personal equipment and clothing in waterproof bags which go into the hatches of each kayak. Island Expeditions will supply each person with a mix of 10 & 20 litre waterproof bags for this purpose.

**Single Traveler Pricing** - Many of our guests travel on their own. Our style of trip is ideal for single travelers combining the benefits of group camaraderie and group security with lots of individual flexibility in what you want to do each day. Single supplement options vary by trip style. Standard trip pricing is based on double occupancy. Solo guests can request either to share twin accommodations with another traveler or request single accommodations for an additional fee. If you are willing to share and we are able to match you up - no problem and no extra cost. If we cannot match you up then we have a simple, affordable \$99 supplement fee. This fee will be applied at the time of booking, but will be reimbursed before your departure if we are able to match you up.

Should you prefer private accommodations, we can provide you with your own room and the following charges apply. Note that the number of single rooms available on most departures is limited, and may not be available at each location. If we are not able to provide your own room throughout the trip, we will pro-rate the supplement fee. Single Supplement Fee - \$350

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

Paradise Islands combines well with these 3 day/2 night inland adventures - the Maya World Extension and Rainforest Canopy Extension. On the Maya World, take a boat journey on the New River to the Mayan city of Lamanai, the ruins of Altun Ha, and Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. On the Rainforest Canopy, enjoy a zipline, hiking, waterfall adventure in the Southern Maya Mountains.

## Getting back to Belize City ...

Our North American office can help you make arrangements for your return to Belize City the day after the trip ends unless you have made other arrangements with us. We can book a domestic flight from Dangriga to Belize City or directly to the Int'l Airport. The flight (25 minutes) cost is approximately \$85US per person or you can travel overland by bus (3-4 hours) for around \$10US.

## Thinking about traveling independently, before or after your trip?

With over 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.



Toll-free: 800.667.1630  
UK Toll-free: 0.800.404.9535  
Phone: 604.894.2312  
Fax: 604.894.2314  
Email: info@islandexpeditions.com  
Website: www.islandexpeditions.com

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