



# Maya Reef Explorer Jungle to Reef

Explore the rich coral reefs and white sand cayes of Lighthouse Atoll plus the Maya World of Lamanai and the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary

**Duration:** 8 Nights

**Starts:** Belize City

**Finishes:** Belize City

**Seasonal Trip:** December to April

**Habitats:** Wetlands, Barrier Reef - Lighthouse Atoll

**Activity level:** ●●○○○ [2] No experience required

**Activities:** Mayan ruins exploration, birding, sea kayaking (paddling and sailing), snorkeling, handline fishing, stand-up paddleboarding

**Optional:** Scuba diving ( fees apply)

**Package includes:**

- 3-night accommodation Crooked Tree Village
- 1-night standard accommodation in Belize City
- 4-night safari style “basecamp” accommodations
- Meals (as per itinerary)
- Land and boat transfers (as per itinerary)
- Guided activities and equipment (as per itinerary)
- Park fees and taxes

**Accommodations:** Lodge at Crooked Tree, Lighthouse Reef Basecamp on Half Moon Caye, Belize City Hotel

**Package does not include:** International airfare, gratuities, medical/travel insurance, snorkel/fishing/scuba gear, meals in Belize city, post-trip taxi to international airport, additional activities, costs incurred by flight delays

**Trip Highlights:** Lamanai and Altun Ha, the Blue Hole, paddling in crystal clear waters, snorkeling at the Aquarium, glamping on a private island, fishing for dinner Belizean-style, red-footed booby colony living on the caye

**Recommended for:** couples, families with young or older children, off-grid adventurers, birdwatchers and wildlife buffs

**Pairs well with:** Cayo Caves & Temples Extension, Caracol Ruins & Sacred Caves Extension

Pricing based on Double Occupancy. Single supplement subject to availability. Contact our Trip Planners for details.





The **Maya Reef Explorer** combines an inland adventure to the Maya World of Lamanai and Altun Ha, the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary with 5 exceptional days on Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Start with touring the ancient Mayan ruins of Lamanai and Altun Ha and a boat tour through the Crooked Tree Lagoons. Next, spend five days at Lighthouse Reef, Belize's most remote tropical marine park and UNESCO World Heritage site fifty-six miles offshore. Stay on Half Moon Caye, an idyllic protected island managed by the Belize Audubon Society. Sleep in safari-style tent cabanas at our all-inclusive Half Moon Caye Basecamp. Enjoy flexible daily guided reef activities, including paddling and snorkeling excursions to 'the Aquarium' and Jacques Cousteau's renowned Great Blue Hole. This trip is ideal for guests who want to visit Lighthouse Reef and an extended inland experience in Belize's wildlife rich northern wetlands and spectacular Mayan sites.

**"Basecamping"** involves sleeping in wall-tented cabanas. These spacious safari-style tents have ample headroom to walk around, are on raised wooden floors, and have real wood-framed beds (6-inch foam mattresses). Tents can be configured with either double or single beds. All bed linen is provided.

## Typical Daily Itinerary:

**Day 1:** Upon arrival at the Belize International Airport, you will be welcomed by an Island Expeditions representative and whisked away to the Bird's Eye View Lodge in the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. This area is renowned for its extensive wetlands, and four main lagoons which are home to hundreds of species of birds and other fauna.

After checking into your accommodations, meet your fellow travelers for dinner and discuss the days ahead.

**Accommodation: Bird's Eye View Lodge**

**Meals: Dinner**

**Day 2:** You will have a full day of exploration as you travel north by road, then west by river to the Mayan ruins of Lamanai. We travel down the New River by riverboat, making stops for chances to glance wildlife and birds. Iguanas, parrots, toucans, aracaris, and Morelet's crocodiles are frequently seen. Once we reach the shores of Lamanai, we explore the many temples, plazas, palaces within the park's boundaries. We have lunch at the site, and continuing to the colonial sugar mill built at the Mayan site. In the afternoon, we depart Lamanai by riverboat, stopping for wildlife along the way, and return to toast a spectacular sunset over the lagoon at Bird's Eye View Lodge.

**Accommodation: Bird's Eye View Lodge**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Day 3:** Coffee is served at the break of dawn, allowing you to savor the sounds of sunrise. With binoculars in hand, we head out onto the Crooked Tree lagoon exploring the lagoons, wetlands and waterways. The sanctuary was created in 1984 primarily to preserve resident and migratory birds, which shelters one of the world's largest flying birds, the Jabiru Stork. This afternoon, we tour of the Mayan ruins of Altun Ha. Alta Ha is considered one of Belize's major Mayan ceremonial centers and functioned as an important trading center between the people of the interior and the coast during the Classic Period (250-900 AD). There are more than 275 structures and 250 to 300 unexcavated mounds within the site.

**Accommodation: Bird's Eye View Lodge**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

All itineraries are subject to change depending on weather and safety considerations.  
**As our international guest, flexibility is key to an unforgettable and un-BELIZE-able experience.**



*My husband caught 2 barracuda. The cooks then prepared the barracuda for our group for lunch and we were all able to share in the stories! Wonderful memorable experience thanks to these folks!  
Bravo!*

*Karen - MB Canada  
Maya Reef Explorer*

### **Itinerary Cont.**

**Day 4-5:** After breakfast, we travel back to Belize City, make a quick stop at a local shop and head to our waiting motor boat charter. We travel by boat 56 miles out to sea, passing through mangrove ranges, white sand cayes, arriving at Belize's furthest island group, on Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Upon arriving at Half Moon Caye, your guide team will orient you to the island and camp to settle you into your accommodations. You will then enjoy a late lunch and then a session of sea kayak and snorkeling instruction before heading out on the water.

Over the next few days, you will have many options to explore, including a quickly disappearing shipwreck just north of the cayes. The guides will present activities each day based on the weather conditions, and the group's desires. And, of course, we always give you the option of hanging out in a hammock with a good book and a cold beverage!

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

**Day 6:** The "Aquarium" is today's big adventure. We will pack a hearty lunch and snorkel gear and plan to be away for most of the day. We paddle our kayaks (with motor boat support) to the neighboring island, called Long Caye. After a good paddle, we snorkel a local patch reef and return to the island dock for lunch in the field. Next we jump into the water and drift snorkel the "Aquarium", an undersea cliff known for the profusion of fish and towering coral formations. We raise the sails and sail our kayaks or paddle back to camp.

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

**Day 7:** Today, we travel to the world renowned Great Blue Hole. A huge collapsed sink hole formation, that was discovered and made famous by ocean explorer, Jacques Cousteau. We motor boat or paddle the 6 mile journey, to this perfectly circular formation bejeweled with soft and hard corals of many different colors. After a full day of exploring, you'll return just in time for a wonderful seafood dinner prepared especially for you by our cooks. After dinner, we have a cultural presentation of drumming and dancing to celebrate the last night at Half Moon Caye  
**Accommodation: Half Moon Basecamp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Day 8:** The choice is yours for your last morning at Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Snorkel your favorite patch reefs, walk the island trails, and swing in a hammock or beach comb along the immaculate island beaches. After lunch, a motor charter arrives, and you'll begin to prepare for your trip back to the mainland. You will arrive at the Belize City Biltmore Hotel, usually by late afternoon to enjoy a fresh shower and swim in the hotel's pool.

**Accommodation: Biltmore Hotel Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Not included**

**Day 9:** 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.

**Accommodation: None Meals: Not included**

**Travel Notes:** Meals in Belize City (dinner on day 8 and breakfast on day 9) are not included. Transportation to airport on day 9 is not included.

Due to the remote location of the Lighthouse Reef Basecamp, the activities on the reef portion of this trip are weather-dependent and are subject to change.

**Contact our Trip Planners for Flight & Hotel Packages or to extend your Belize itinerary by combining this trip with another Island Expeditions adventure or extensions.**