



## BLUE CREEK RAINFOREST & SOUTH WATER CAYE

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### Day 1

Arrive at Belize International Airport. After clearing immigration and customs, you will be greeted by Lil's Travel Service who will assist you in boarding your shuttle bus to Blue Creek Rainforest Preserve. A stop for lunch will be made along the way. (Group expense) Upon arrival, you will be given an orientation to the facilities, check into your lodging, and enjoy dinner.

Blue Creek, hidden deep in Southern Belize, is a private rainforest preserve and wildlife sanctuary owned & operated by IZE. It is the only true primary rainforest available to those traveling in Belize seeking both adventure and the ecologically spectacular. The cabins, which serve as your home during your rainforest experience, are nestled within this luxuriant habitat overlooking the tranquil waters of the Blue Creek River. Unique to Blue Creek station are the myriad of interconnecting clear blue pools populated by many species of freshwater fish perfect for swimming & snorkeling. Several trails are accessible just steps away from your cabin door. At every turn along the trail a novel discovery awaits you, from hundreds of species of exotic birds and plants, dozens of species of reptiles, amphibians & mammals, to the parade of the leaf cutter ants. Our expert guides will trek with you sharing their knowledge & history of their culture for a rainforest experience you will carry with you for a lifetime! The Blue Creek preserve is also home to the intricate cave systems of "Hokeb Ha" Mayan for "where the water enters the earth". Hokeb Ha is complete with crystalline lagoons, cascading waterfalls & beautiful mineral pools. Be on the lookout for Mayan hieroglyphics, enormous stalactites, and stalagmites.

A delicious homemade Mayan meal will be served in the lodge for dinner.



Design your day spent at IZE's Blue Creek Field Station by choosing two activities per day from the list below.

**Short Cave Hike:** The Ultimate Tropical Rainforest Experience! You will follow your Maya Guides up a steep incline to the entrance of one of the most spectacular limestone caves in Belize. Stalactites hang from the ceiling and colonies of bats dwell in the darkest crevices. Long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, hiking boots or sturdy-soled sneakers are recommended. Be sure to take along your camera and headlamp!



***Home Stays** - We can arrange an overnight stay with a family from the village of Blue Creek. Living with a family, you can take part in the day-to-day rhythms of Mopan Maya culture. Observing and participating in making the day's tortillas, listening to the strains of Mayan music by firelight in a thatched hut, - these experiences will turn into memories to last a lifetime.*

**Iguana Hike:** Two-hour activity where you will swim and hike along the clear blue river as your Mayan guides look for iguanas in the overhanging trees. Belize is home to 21 of the 700 species of lizards! Shorts, T-shirts, water shoes or sturdy hiking sandals are recommended. Bring along a dive mask if you are interested in helping the guides.

**Monkey Hike:** Three-hour activity where you will have an opportunity to meet "The howlers" known locally as baboons! Slow moving and often quiet they sometimes go unnoticed on the trails, so stay alert and on the lookout. But when the males let loose...their loud and piercing chorus of roars is sure to surprise you. Long pants or shorts, a long sleeve shirt, ( tank top of light weight material worn under your long sleeve shirt for the hot walk back ) hiking boots or sturdy sole sneakers, sunscreen and insect repellent are recommended.

**Bird Walk:** Three-hour activity. Enjoy the dynamic diversity of birds with your local guide. Early morning and late afternoons are when you find most birds active and vocal. Over 300 species of ornate birds can be observed from the keel-billed toucan to the purple-crowned fairy. Don't forget to bring your binoculars. Shorts and long pants, T-shirts, hiking sandals or sneakers are recommended.

**School Tour:** Visit the local elementary school where you will have the chance to participate in classroom activities, exchange ideas, and stories. Join in the fun during recess by participating in a game of soccer or softball.

**Ethnobotany & Farming:** Two-hour activity where you will explore the medicinal and culinary uses of the local herbs, plants, and trees. The Mayans were masters at utilizing the jungle's natural resources for their medicinal needs. You will learn about the vines that store drinking water and other remarkable remedies that nature offers. You will get a firsthand look at the crops Mayans harvest such as avocados, citrus, cocoa, mango, cashews, rice, beans, etc.

**Arts & Crafts:** Three-hour activity where you will work with local Mayan and Kekchi craftsman as they create colorful embroidery, jippi jappa weavings, slate carvings, and pottery. You are welcome to participate in the production of these native arts & crafts. During this activity, you will be entertained with fables and folklore that have been passed down through generations.

**Cave Snorkel & Swim:** Three-hour activity that starts with a hike from IZE's field station that winds along the river to the mouth of the cave. You will have the opportunity to swim and snorkel in the interconnecting crystalline lagoons, majestic waterfalls and mineral pools teeming with exotic fish.

**Jungle Climb:** This four-hour adventure will have you trekking through the jungle and up the mountains behind IZE's Blue Creeks Field Station. As you follow the path along the river, you will experience wildlife, flora & fauna and the incredible sounds of the jungle. You will take in the magnificent views of the valley and enjoy a spectacular 360-degree view of the surrounding countryside and hills of Guatemala. The reward for your effort is waiting for you at the bottom as you dive into the clear blue pools at the mouth of Blue Creek Cave. **This adventure is recommended for those in very good physical condition.**



## Day 4

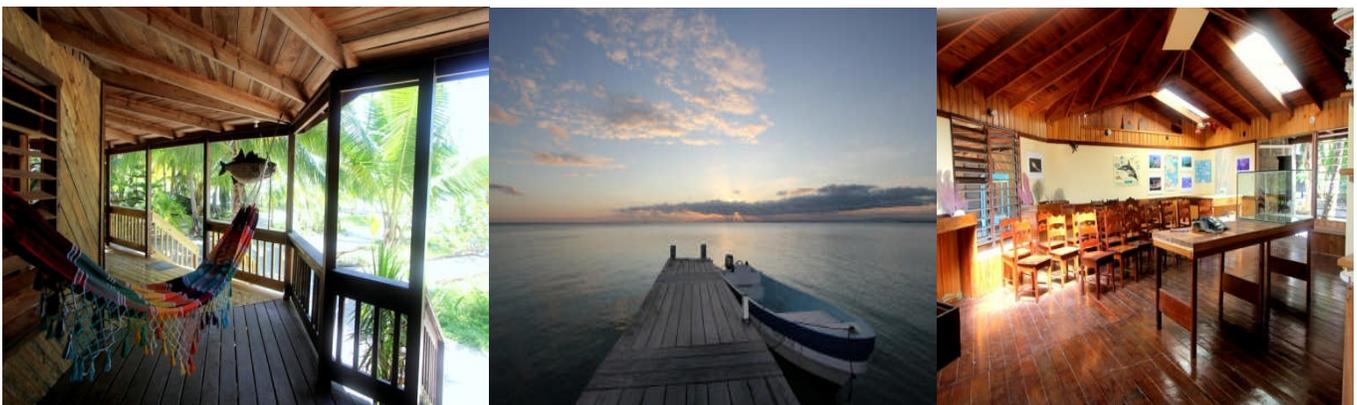
After breakfast, you will meet your chartered bus for the ride to Hopkins Village. On the way, you will stop at Lubantuun, the place of the Fallen Stones. This Late Classic Mayan site has 11 major structures grouped around five main plazas. Pottery and other archeological finds at the site are on display at the visitor's center.

You will have time to explore the quaint Garifuna village of Hopkins before lunch at the Lebeha Drumming Center at 12:00pm.



Lunch is a traditional Hudut: fish cooked in a coconut milk broth served with mashed plantain. Watch the pounding of the plantain in the traditional mahogany mater! The drummers do a commentary along with their performance, talking about their music, language and culture. They take a break mid-way and audience members are invited to sit at the drums and try their hand, with one member of the group coaching. After lunch you will meet your boat captain for the transfer to South Water Caye.

After lunch, you will make your way to the WHY NOT dock, where your boat captain will transport you across 14 miles of sapphire blue water, to South Water Caye. This 12-acre island paradise, covered with coconut palms, tropical flowers, and white sand beaches, is perched on the second longest barrier reef in the world and offers some of the BEST diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean. The Belize Barrier Reef has been named by U.N.E.S.C.O. as a "World Heritage Site" and the waters surrounding South Water Caye is a marine reserve.



Each day you will have a chance to explore this pristine marine habitat. IZE's marine biology field station is located in the center of the island surrounded by a wrap around verandah overlooking the tropical flowers and trees with the beach just steps away. Private cottages are nestled in the mangroves on the eastern shoreline of the island to take advantage of the cooling trade winds. They feature secluded decks and private bathrooms. While enjoying the relaxing atmosphere on South Water Caye, consider brushing up on your species identification of reef fish, coral and invertebrates, by sitting in on one of the classes being offered by visiting universities!

Belize is well known for having the second largest living barrier reef in the world with 185 miles of coral formations of marine life. The area around South Water Caye offers unique snorkeling opportunities for both beginners and the experienced. With visibility ranging from 60 to 100ft, spotting eagle rays, sea turtles, exotic fish, and even dolphins can frequently be seen! Below is a sampling of a few of the adventures that await you.

**Fore Reef** - A leisurely drift snorkel adventure along Belize's Great Barrier Reef. Colorful, healthy spur and groove coral formations, spotted eagle rays, turtles, tarpon & grouper may join you as you drift along taking in this spectacular reef.

**Carrie Bow Caye** - A guided tour around the Smithsonian's research station. Visits to Carrie Bow Caye include a shallow depth snorkel around the islands reef where wrasses, octopus, and angelfish can regularly be found.

**Third Cut of the Reef** - This narrow channel location is where local deep water fish migrations funnel into the lagoon. Large groupers, schools of horse eyed jacks, and more can be regularly spotted.

**Twin Cayes** - A mangrove snorkel! A great opportunity to see seahorses, upside-down photosynthesizing jellyfish and possibly, the gentle giant Manatee!

**Whale Shoal** - Whale Shoal is a picture perfect patch reef where you're sure to see triggerfish, rock beauties, Creole wrasses, parrotfish and an assortment of angelfish. The coral gardens are also teeming with sea fans, large brain coral formations to stag horn coral!

**The Aquarium** - The name says it all! This shallow snorkel is delightfully abundant with colorful tropical fish and soft coral gardens.

**Tobacco Cut** - In this deep channel cut through the great barrier reef, you will have the opportunity to swim with stingrays, spotted eagle rays and sometimes even manta rays!

**Night Snorkeling** - The thrill and excitement of night snorkeling make for a great adventure! Octopus, shrimp, and many forms of coral, that most of the time are closed up during the day, are all magnificent during the night!

Each night after dinner a forum held. And movies showing at our theater under the stars complete with fire pit for roasting marshmallows!



## Day 8

After breakfast, you will board the boat to Dangriga. Once in Dangriga, you will board your chartered bus for transport to Belize International Airport for your flight home.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- (4) Night private cabana accommodation South Water Caye Marine Reserve
- (3) Night accommodation Blue Creek Rainforest Preserve
- All meals (B, L, D)
- Air transportation (BZE\_PND, PND\_DGA, DGA\_BZE)
- Ground transportation (PND\_BC, BC\_PND)
- Boat transfers (DGA\_SWC\_DGA)
- (2) 1/2 day guided tours **daily** at Blue Creek
- Excursion to the ruins of Lubaantun
- (3) guided snorkeling excursions on South Water Caye
- Unlimited use of kayaks, paddle boards and marine facility
- All taxes ( 9 % hotel , 12.5 % GST )
- \$10.00 US per person South Water Caye Marine Reserve fee
- (This does not include Lubaantun admission ( \$5 US ) and transportation from the airstrip in Dangriga to the dock ( \$5-10 US )

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

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- International Airfare
- Any meals during transportation between IZE sites or any meals off site
- Scuba Diving Costs

Deposits are nonrefundable unless a trip is cancelled by the provider, then the deposit is 100% refundable.  
Deposit amount is \$250/person. \*\*Full payment is due 60 days prior to travel

**We strongly recommend travel insurance for all of life's unknowns.**  
Contact our office for a list of Travel Insurance Companies!

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