

# Global Experiential Learning Excursion



Volunteer

Information Packet

# BELIZE

## **Belize**

With a long Caribbean coast, Belize is culturally similar to many of Britain's former West Indian island colonies, with a majority creole/(Afro-European mixture) or Afro-Caribbean population. Inland are the native Maya people, and especially in the north and northwest of the country Spanish is often spoken. In the south east along the Caribbean coast live the Garifuna (Black Caribs) an Afro-Amerindian culture. German speaking Mennonites also call Belize home. World class attractions include exploring the lush jungles with exotic plants and animals, deep sea fishing, swimming, snorkeling and diving in the Caribbean sea with its attractive reefs, and visiting the Mayan ruins. Income levels are still very low and the infrastructure is very basic. The Belizeans are very proud and friendly to visitors and the tourist industry grew greatly in the last decade.

## **History**

Like the neighboring parts of Guatemala and Mexico, this area was settled for thousands of years by the Maya people. They are still here, an important part of Belize's people and culture. While the Spanish Empire claimed the area in the 16th century, the Spanish made little progress in settling here. The British settled first on the coast and offshore islands for logging. In 1798 British Belizean forces defeated a Spanish attempt to drive them out in "the Battle of St. George's Caye", whose anniversary is still celebrated as a holiday each 10 September.

The colony of "British Honduras" grew in the 19th century. At first Africans were brought in as slaves, but slavery was abolished here in 1838. Many refugees from the 19th century Caste War of Yucatan escaped the conflict to settle in Belize, especially the northern section.

The government of Guatemala long claimed to have inherited the Spanish claim to Belize; the territorial dispute delayed the independence of Belize until 1981. Guatemala refused to recognize the new nation until 1991.

Belize escaped the bloody civil conflicts of the 1980s that engulfed much of Central America, and refugees from the conflict in Guatemala arrived, mostly settling in the west. While Belize has not been immune to the rampant drug crime and grinding poverty of its neighbors it is a comparatively safe destination in a conflict prone part of the world.

Tourism has become the mainstay of the economy as the old agricultural products -- sugar, banana, and oranges -- have lost ground. The country remains plagued by high unemployment, growing involvement in the South American drug trade, and increased urban crime. In 2006 commercial quantity oil was discovered in the Spanish Lookout area.

## **Language**

As a former British colony the official language of Belize is English, which makes it stand out from its Spanish speaking neighbors. Spanish, Maya, Garifuna (Carib), and Belizean Creole are widely spoken in various parts of the country. Many Belizeans speak a mix of Creole and English among friends, and full English to foreigners. The strong Caribbean accent may take some getting used to.



## **People**

Belizeans are some of the most socially relaxed people in the world, especially if you venture inland away from the tourist islands of Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker. The pace of life is generally slower in Belize, so it's good practice to begin any social interaction, even to ask a quick question, with eye contact and a genuinely pleasant greeting. Most rural Belizeans enjoy casual conversation and you could easily find yourself chatting it up for a few hours. Hey, it's part of the charm!

The Maya communities can be a little more reserved at times. As always, a little respect and politeness will carry you through.

## **Stay Healthy**

Belize is a relatively healthy country. Bottled water is a must in most areas. And, unless you eat only at tourist restaurants, dysentery may strike at some point; be prepared with over-the-counter medication and prescription antibiotics.

The CDC lists all of Belize except Belize City as a malaria risk area, and recommends the antimalarial drug chloroquine. Other drugs may also be recommended in certain circumstances - consult a qualified professional specialist.

Insect/mosquito bites should be prevented with appropriate clothing, repellents and insecticides, and bed nets if sleeping in non-air-con/unscreened rooms.

The sun, as anywhere else in the tropics, is very intense. A hat, high-SPF sunscreen, and sunglasses should do you fine.

Many places in Belize are very hot and humid, and dehydration is a risk. An expat suggests to drink as much water as you want, and then drink that much again.

The adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is currently at 2.5% or 1 per 40 adults.

## **Climate**

Tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to November); dry season (February to May). Hurricanes season (June to November) brings coastal flooding (especially in south).

## **Terrain**

Flat, swampy coastal plain; low mountains in south. Highest point: Victoria Peak 1,160 m. Lowest Point: Caribbean Sea, at 0 m.

## **By plane**

The Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (IATA: BZE) (ICAO: MZBZ) is in Ladyville, to the northwest of Belize City where it receives international direct flights from Atlanta, Charlotte, Newark, Miami, Dallas, Houston, Flores, San Salvador, Roatan and San Pedro Sula.



## Travel Information

### Weather

The climate in Belize is hot and humid with an average temperature of 85 degrees. For a current forecast go to [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and type Belize in the "Local Weather" box.

### Clothing

Summer clothing is appropriate with the high temperatures and humidity. Please wear modest clothing. Please bring shoes that are comfortable for walking long distances as we may be required to do some hiking .

### Showering

You will want to use unscented items if at all possible to help cut down on bug attractions.

### Passport

It is required to have a passport valid for at least 6 months after your departure date to travel to and from Belize . Forms are available online as well as finding the location nearest you accepting applications. To find the information needed you can go to [travel.state.gov/passport](http://travel.state.gov/passport) on the web.

### Money

It is best to bring cash. Traveler's checks are also accepted in some places and credit cards are only accepted in some places. I.E. some in your wallet, some in your suitcase, etc.

### Customs

You will be required to fill out a customs form on the plane before you arrive in Belize. The address you should put on this form will be provided to you by your team leader in Miami the night before departure.

### Luggage

We ask that your checked luggage be donated items for the current project underway. You should be able to fit your clothing and personal items in a rolling carryon. However, due to the tightened restrictions, please check with the airline on toiletries allowed in carry-on. It might be necessary for you to pack some things in your checked luggage. If you do not have enough supplies to donate, our donations coordinator can ship additional items to the team leader.

### Immunizations

Immunizations are not required to be admitted into Belize. However we suggest you go to [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) to see the recommended immunizations, medical precautions, as well as handling the prescription medication you may be bringing with you. These immunizations are typically available at your County Health Department at cost or at any Travel Clinic. We advise you to have a current Tetanus Shot as well.

### Food

We will provide you with meals . We will supply you with clean drinking water during your stay.



## Approximate Trip Costs

Based on a 7 day/6 night stay.

- Airfare Varies Volunteers are responsible for making their own flight arrangements but are asked to book on a predetermined flight into and out of Belize Airport (BZE).
  - Non-Refundable \$25 Application fee to reserve your spot on the trip. Due at time of application.
  - Mission Trip Fee- \$1000 to be sent with your application, this covers the cost of Rooms & Board, drivers, tipping, escort fee, etc.
  - Supplies Varies 4 The World asks that all volunteers use 2 pieces of “checked luggage” for supplies. If the team does not have enough supplies to fill the bags, items can be shipped to the team leader from our donations coordinator.
- Volunteers are responsible for any extra expenses incurred during their stay.



## What to Bring

**We suggest that you bring the following items with you...**

- Cash in twenties, tens and fives
- Unscented Soap, Shampoo & Lotion
- 100% Deet Bug Spray (Available at Target or other camping supply stores)
- Flashlight
- Walking Shoes
- Modest summer clothes, i.e. tee shirts, shorts or capris.
- Wet Wipes
- Antibacterial Hand Gel
- Wide Mouth Water Bottle with Lid
- Color Copy of Passport

Items to return to 4 The World prior to departure

- \$25 Application Fee
- Mission Trip Application
- \$1000 Mission Trip Fee
- Volunteer Release Form
- Emergency Contact Information Form
- Medical Information Form
- Acknowledgment Page
- Color Copy of Passport
- Copy of Medical Insurance card



# Volunteer Release Form

We are delighted with your decision to travel with 4 The World, and we are more than willing to help you with some of the arrangements. However, any travel is accompanied by certain risks. As our organization is comprised entirely of volunteers like you, it has limited funding and has no insurance to cover these risks. Each volunteer is expected to assume any and all risks that may result from his or her activities and to procure insurance coverage as he or she deems appropriate.

Please sign and date this document and return it to 4 The World, acknowledging this notification, releasing us from liability, and indemnifying us from claims against us arising from your activities. We must receive a signed copy of this letter before we can continue to plan your trip. Thank you.

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receiving this letter, and acknowledges the risks assumed by volunteers of 4 The World, its officers, directors, members and all other persons and organizations working on its behalf from any and all loss, liability, actions, claims and demands of any nature, past, present or future, that may result from or be in any way related to the undersigned's activities conducted under the auspices of 4 The World.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DESTINATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF DEPARTURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF RETURN HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.  
4 The World  
404 Butler Dr.  
Garner, North Carolina  
Attn: Mission Trips  
admin@4theworld.org



# Emergency Contact Information Form

## Volunteer Emergency Contact Information

Please provide us with the name and contact information of the person we should contact in case of an emergency.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EVENING PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE/PAGER NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.

4 The World

404 Butler Dr.

Garner, North Carolina

Attn: Mission Trips

admin@4theworld.org



## Medical Information Form

Please provide us with the following medical information in case of an emergency.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITONS: \_\_\_\_\_

ALLERGIES: \_\_\_\_\_

LIST ANY MEDICATION YOU ARE CURRENTLY TAKING: \_\_\_\_\_

DOCTORS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER OF DOCTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE INFORMATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return release prior to Volunteer Trip.

4 The World  
404 Butler Dr.  
Garner, North Carolina  
Attn: Mission Trips  
admin@4theworld.org

## Acknowledgment Page

A mission trip can be a very rewarding experience. However, if a volunteer goes to a third world country unprepared it can make for an unpleasant experience. It is vital that all volunteers read and acknowledge that they understand the risks, requirements and expectations of travel to Belize

After reading the mission packet please sign the following document and return to the Mission Director along with the release of liability, emergency contact information and medical information form. Please also send a color copy of your passport and a copy of your medical insurance card.

Thank you.

4 The World, Board of Directors

The undersigned hereby acknowledges, receiving this Mission packet, and acknowledges that they have read and understand all requirements and expectations listed herein.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mission Trip Application

## Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Health Information

Describe your general health condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you taking any medication? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Blood type: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Physician: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Physician Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Insurance Company for trip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Insurance Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

## Travel Information

Have you ever been to Belize before? \_\_\_\_\_  
Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
How will you be arriving to Belize? Airline: \_\_\_\_\_  
Flight number: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you want to book your own ticket from Miami to BZE? \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Important Questions

Have your fees been forwarded to the appropriate address? \_\_\_\_\_  
What method were they sent? (regular mail, courier etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional information or comments:

What is your primary motivation for this trip? \_\_\_\_\_  
Any other helpful comments or suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_



\*\*\*PLEASE BE AWARE THAT MEDICAL INSURANCE IS NOT ONLY RECOMMENDED BUT ALSO REQUIRED FOR YOUR JOURNEY TO BELIZE BY OUR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM.\*\*\*

IN SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING:

- The above information is true to the best of my knowledge.

4 THE WORLD AND / OR IT'S VOLUNTEER STAFF CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ACCIDENT OR INJURY THAT COULD OCCUR WHILE IN BELIZE.

NAME:

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SIGNATURE:

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DATE:

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Any questions should be directed to:

4 The World

ATTN: Volunteer Mission Trips

404 Butler Dr.

Garner, NC 27529

Phone: (919) 278-7584

Email – admin@4theworld.org

**Your place will be reserved once we receive the following:**

1. Completed application
2. Appropriate fees (payable in US funds to 4 The World in the form of cashier check, money order , paid via PayPal or on our website)
3. Volunteer Release Form
4. Emergency Contact Information Form
5. Medical Information Form
6. Acknowledgment Page
7. Color Copy of passport
8. Copy of Medical Insurance Card