

BZ Belize City Cruise Port Guide

Your Complete Guide to Ancient Mayan Ruins, Wildlife, Barrier Reef & Rainforest Adventures



Belize is one of the most unique cruise destinations in the Caribbean and Central America. While many ports are known primarily for beaches, Belize offers an incredible combination of **ancient Mayan history, lush rainforests, exotic wildlife, cave adventures, and the second-largest barrier reef in the world.**

For adventurous travelers, Belize is often one of the most anticipated stops on a Western Caribbean cruise.

Whether you're exploring centuries-old Mayan temples, floating through jungle caves, snorkeling vibrant coral reefs, or spotting howler monkeys in the rainforest, Belize delivers experiences unlike anywhere else in the Caribbean.

Arriving in Belize City



Unlike many Caribbean ports, **large cruise ships anchor offshore** and passengers are transported to land by tender boats.

The tender ride typically takes **15–25 minutes**, depending on sea conditions.

You'll arrive at the **Belize Tourism Village**, which features:

- Restaurants
- Duty-free shopping
- Local craft vendors
- Coffee shops
- Tour operators
- Restrooms
- Free Wi-Fi (limited)

Because Belize is a tender port, always allow plenty of time to return to your ship.



Explore Belize Tourism Village

Many visitors immediately leave on excursions, but the Tourism Village offers:

- Local artwork
- Handmade crafts
- Belizean rum
- Coffee
- Chocolate
- Souvenir shopping
- Waterfront restaurants

It's a pleasant place to spend an hour before boarding your tender back to the ship.

★ Top Shore Excursions

🏛️ Altun Ha Mayan Ruins



One of Belize's most popular excursions.

Located about one hour from Belize City, Altun Ha was once an important Mayan trading center.

Highlights include:

- Ancient pyramids
- Archaeological ruins
- Museum exhibits
- Wildlife
- Spectacular jungle scenery

Unlike many archaeological sites, visitors can still climb portions of some structures (subject to current preservation rules).

🚣 Cave Tubing Adventure



Belize is famous for cave tubing—and for good reason.

Float gently through underground rivers while passing:

- Massive limestone caves
- Stalactites
- Stalagmites
- Ancient Mayan ceremonial sites

It's one of the Caribbean's most unique shore excursions and a favorite among repeat cruisers.

Zipline & Rainforest Adventure

Many excursions combine:

- Ziplining
- Rainforest hiking
- River tubing
- Wildlife viewing

Perfect for active travelers and families.

Belize Barrier Reef Snorkeling



Belize is home to the **second-largest barrier reef in the world**, stretching more than 180 miles along the coast.

Snorkeling excursions often feature:

- Coral gardens
- Sea turtles
- Nurse sharks
- Rays
- Tropical fish
- Crystal-clear water

Shark Ray Alley

One of Belize's most famous marine adventures.

Swim alongside:

- Nurse sharks
- Southern stingrays
- Tropical fish

Despite the name, nurse sharks are generally docile and harmless when encountered responsibly through guided excursions.

Belize Wildlife & River Safari

Cruise along Belize's rivers while spotting:

- Crocodiles
- Howler monkeys
- Iguanas
- Exotic birds
- Manatees (occasionally)

An excellent excursion for wildlife lovers.

The Great Blue Hole



One of the world's most famous natural wonders.

While most cruise visitors don't have enough time to dive the Great Blue Hole during a port stop, scenic flights and extended vacations offer incredible opportunities to experience this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Even if you don't visit it during your cruise, it's worth knowing that Belize is home to one of the planet's most iconic diving destinations.



Best Beaches

Belize isn't primarily known for beaches near the cruise port, but there are several options.

Bannister Island

A private island excursion offering:

- White sand
 - Snorkeling
 - Beach chairs
 - Lunch
 - Calm water
-

Goff's Caye

A tiny tropical island famous for:

- Excellent snorkeling
 - Crystal-clear water
 - Relaxing atmosphere
-

Caye Caulker

A colorful island village known for:

- Local restaurants
- Relaxed vibe
- Snorkeling
- Fresh seafood

Best suited for longer independent stays rather than most cruise visits.



Shopping

Popular souvenirs include:

- Belizean chocolate
- Coffee
- Rum
- Jade jewelry
- Wood carvings

- Handmade baskets
- Local spices
- Hot sauces

The Belize Tourism Village is the easiest place to shop before returning to your ship.



What to Eat

Don't leave Belize without trying:

- Rice and beans with stew chicken
- Fry jacks
- Fresh ceviche
- Conch fritters
- Johnny Cakes
- Garnaches
- Tamales
- Coconut tarts
- Belizean rum cake

Popular restaurants include:

- Wet Lizard
- Celebrity Restaurant
- Nerie's
- Bird's Isle



Hidden Gems

If you've visited Belize before, consider:

- Lamanai Mayan Ruins (longer excursion)
- Community Baboon Sanctuary
- Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary
- Belize Zoo
- St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park
- Bacab Eco Park

These attractions provide an even deeper look into Belize's remarkable biodiversity.

Weather Throughout the Year

Belize enjoys a tropical climate throughout the year.

Winter (December – February)

- Highs: **80–84°F (27–29°C)**
- Lower humidity
- Excellent sightseeing weather

Spring (March – May)

- Highs: **84–89°F (29–32°C)**
- Sunny and warm

Summer (June – August)

- Highs: **88–92°F (31–33°C)**
- Hot and humid
- Frequent afternoon showers

Fall (September – November)

- Highs: **84–89°F (29–32°C)**
- Warm temperatures
- Green, lush landscapes

Hurricane Season

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from:

June 1 – November 30

Peak activity generally occurs during:

- August
- September
- October

Cruise lines monitor weather closely and may modify itineraries when necessary.

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Cruise excursions
- Licensed taxis
- Independent tour operators

Because Belize is a **tender port**, we strongly recommend booking longer excursions through your cruise line or a reputable operator that guarantees a timely return to the ship.

What to Pack




Bring:

- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
 - ✓ Swimsuit
 - ✓ Reef-safe sunscreen
 - ✓ Sunglasses
 - ✓ Hat
 - ✓ Water shoes (great for cave tubing)
 - ✓ Insect repellent
 - ✓ Waterproof phone pouch
 - ✓ Dry bag for electronics
 - ✓ Reusable water bottle
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Premium Travel Group Tip

Belize is **not** a port where we recommend simply staying near the pier unless you've visited several times before. The country's greatest treasures are found inland and offshore.

If this is your first visit, choose one of these three experiences:

-  **Altun Ha** if you love history.
-  **Cave Tubing** if you're looking for adventure.
-  **Barrier Reef Snorkeling** if you want to experience one of the world's greatest marine ecosystems.

Any one of these excursions will give you memories that last long after your cruise ends.



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Why Visit Belize?

Belize offers something completely different from many Caribbean cruise ports. Instead of focusing on shopping or beaches alone, it invites visitors to explore ancient civilizations, lush rainforests, underground cave systems, incredible wildlife, and one of the world's most spectacular coral reef ecosystems. It's a destination where adventure takes center stage, making it a favorite among travelers who want to experience more than just another day at the beach.



Joe's Logbook

Belize has always stood out to me because it feels like an adventure from the moment you board the tender. This isn't the kind of port where you simply wander downtown for a few hours—it's a place that rewards curiosity. Whether you're climbing ancient Mayan temples, floating through caves once considered sacred by the Maya, or snorkeling along the incredible Belize Barrier Reef, you'll quickly realize that Belize offers some of the most unique experiences of any port in the Western Caribbean.