



Pre-Departure Information

BELIZE PRIVATE JOURNEY



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WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** (www.wildernesstravel.com) or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com.

Travel Information

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Belize (and Guatemala if you extend your adventure). In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) (the service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (<http://www.passportvisaexpress.com/?affId=2120>). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry a photocopy of the photo page and the entry stamp page of your passport as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

MONEY

The currency in Belize is the Belize Dollar (BZ) and the exchange rate is approximately \$1US = \$2BZ. The quetzal (GTQ) is the currency of Guatemala (\$1US = 7.6 quetzals). We suggest you bring spending money in US cash; traveler’s checks are not recommended, as they can be difficult and time-consuming to cash. Be sure to bring some small-denomination cash for buying souvenirs and taking care of personal expenses. You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, international and domestic airport taxes, and personal items such as phone calls, beverages, etc.

Major credit cards are accepted in most tourist areas. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad. ATMs are becoming more common in Belize, but should not be part of your planned travel budget. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$80-\$100 USD per trip member for the Trip Leader, which can be given in US Dollars or local currency. The Trip Leader takes care of gratuities for luggage handling and for waiters at restaurants.

DEPARTURE TAX

International departure tax from Belize is approximately US\$39.25 per person and domestic airport tax is \$2.50 (many airlines now include these fees in their ticket price). Sales tax for goods and services in Belize is 12.5%. Departure tax from Guatemala is approximately US\$30 per person plus a US\$3 security fee.

SPECIAL DIETS

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

COMMUNICATIONS

Time Zone

Belize and Guatemala are one hour ahead of Pacific Standard Time. Daylight Savings Time in the US may affect these times.

Telephone

The international dialing code for Belize is 501; for Guatemala, 502. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

Email & Internet Access

Internet access is generally not available at our lodges.

ELECTRICITY

Belize and Guatemala have 110V current and plugs with two flat prongs, the same as in the US. If you need a three-prong outlet for any appliance, bring a plug adaptor kit.

Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>)
Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** (<http://www.travmed.com>) and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**. (<http://www.magellans.com>)

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In case of serious illness or injury, it may be necessary to evacuate you to Belize City, Guatemala City, or even back to the US. Evacuation by air may or may not be available. If you require evacuation from a trip, you are responsible for payment of all evacuation costs. You must pay evacuation costs directly to the evacuation service prior to the evacuation.

Acceptable forms of payment are typically cash or travelers checks. Credit cards may or may not be accepted. If you are able to use your credit card, be aware that a service charge will be assessed in addition to the actual cost of the evacuation. You must bring one of these forms of payment with you in case of emergency.

We strongly recommend that you purchase medical evacuation insurance, which usually reimburses you in the event of an emergency medical evacuation. Please note: You typically need to get approval of evacuation from your insurance company prior to the evacuation. Check with your insurance company for further details.

INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required for entry into Belize and Guatemala. Entry requirements and international health situations are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

Hepatitis

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

Tetanus Booster

A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

Typhoid

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna, a course of four capsules, one every other day for a week, with full effectiveness reached in a week. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

MALARIA PREVENTION

Incidences of malaria have been reported in Belize. All travelers are urged to take antimalarial medications, available only by prescription. Please discuss antimalarial medication with your doctor, who will explain various antimalarials and their side effects and recommend a regimen for you. In addition to medication, a further precaution against malaria is to wear long sleeves and long pants at dusk. Thin clothing should be sprayed with insect repellent, especially around the elbows and ankles. Use repellent containing DEET.

If, after returning from your trip, you have a persistent fever with chills, muscle aches, and headache, report to your doctor the possibility of exposure to malaria.

For further malaria information, consult your doctor or the **CDC Malaria Hotline**(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/malinfo.htm>): 888-232-3228.

STAYING HEALTHY

The food at our lodges and hotels is generally safe but we still urge you to avoid restaurant water (even if they say it is boiled), ice in your drinks, salads, and ice cream. In hotels, don't brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water. Don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. When in doubt, ask your Trip Leader for guidelines.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical facilities are very limited and doctors are often unavailable. Please understand that your local guides do not necessarily possess first aid training. People with serious medical concerns must take this into account in choosing Belize as a destination. We recommend that you bring an ample supply of personal medications with you in your carry-on luggage.

BOT FLY BITES

Bot flies bites are a rare occurrence for travelers in the Central American tropics and rarely cause serious health problems, but we want you to be aware of the possibility, especially if you are staying in a rainforest. If you have been in the deep jungle and have a mosquito bite that seems extremely itchy, is swollen or raised, looks like a spider bite or a boil, or has a small hole in the center, ask your local guide or Trip Leader how to treat the problem. If you have already returned home, see your doctor and be sure to tell him or her that you have been in a tropical jungle. Note: Few US doctors are knowledgeable about bot fly bites, so try to find a doctor who knows about tropical medicine. In general, judicious use of mosquito repellent with DEET is the best way to avoid bites.

Helpful Information

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** (<https://www.borrowlenses.com/discount/wildernesstravel>), with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to wtphotoblog@gmail.com or tag us **@WildernessTravel** on social media.

Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

A NOTE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Past clients have enjoyed taking photos of the underwater treasures and sharing them with other trip members after the snorkeling excursions. We recommend bringing a waterproof camera or waterproof housing for your camera. For more information, visit **Best Underwater Compact Cameras** (<http://www.toptenreviews.com/electronics/photo-video/best-waterproof-cameras/>).

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** (<http://wildernesstravel.newheadings.com>).

LUGGAGE

- Medium-sized duffel bag or soft-sided roller bag, with small padlock (must be unlocked for travel). We discourage hard-sided suitcases as they are difficult to stow in vans, boats, etc.
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want with you during the day

NOTES ON CLOTHING

Try to keep your clothing and gear to a minimum. Lightweight and casual resort wear is the general rule for the warm climate. A sweater or sweatshirt and a windbreaker are sufficient for evenings. Pack primarily for comfort, weight, and ease of washing. Reliable laundry services are available at the lodges.

CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only.

- Lightweight windbreaker with hood
- Lightweight long pants. Synthetic “travel” fabrics dry easily. Jeans are not recommended because they can be hot and take a long time to dry if they get wet.
- Walking shorts; fast-drying nylon travel fabrics are the best.
- Long-sleeved shirts. Quick-drying fabrics like nylon are ideal.
- T-shirts
- Shade hat with wide brim
- Good walking shoes or sturdy sneakers with traction and ankle support
- Tevas or other sturdy waterproof sandals
- Underwear/ socks. Synthetics dry faster
- Bathing suit (one or two), beach coverups. For cave tubing, you might want to wear shorts over your bathing suit.
- Sleepwear
- Casual city/hotel attire
- Medium-weight fleece (Guatemala Highlands Extension)

EQUIPMENT

- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is invaluable should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Personal toiletries
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries—important for night walks
- Assorted plastic bags for organizing items in your duffel
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Snorkel, mask, fins. Equipment can be rented but we strongly recommend bringing your own.
- Net dive bag to carry snorkeling gear
- Binoculars

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member should bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF #30 or higher. The tropical sun is strong: take special care while snorkeling! We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headache
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent. DEET content of about 30-35 percent is ideal (higher DEET content is not recommended). Wipe DEET off your hands before touching plastic surfaces such as binoculars because it can damage plastic. Aerosol repellents are useful for spraying on
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. "Liquid band-aids," such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing (at least 60% alcohol to be effective)
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Anti-seasickness medication such as Dramamine
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Camera, spare batteries, spare memory cards
- Reading/writing material
- Travel clock

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