Belize

Travel by Bus
Summer of 2005

Dr. Amy Owen
History

• Formerly “British Honderas”
• British Colony
• Became independent nation within Commonwealth in 1981
• Member of Caribbean (CARICOM)
• Considers itself culturally both Central American and Caribbean

http://www.wikipedia.org
Economy

- Adopted US dollar
- Tourism largest industry: best to use guides and tip them!
- Agricultural sector is important for subsistence
- Growth 3.8%: growing trade deficit and debt
- Unemployment: 9.4%
- Poverty: 33%
- Good lifestyle and harmonious ethnic relations

http://www.wikipedia.org
Demographics

- Population: 200,000
- Racially diverse and mixed (Belizean)
  - Mestizo 50%
  - Creole 25%
  - Mayan 11%
  - Garifuna
  - Mennonite
  - South Asian
  - “Expats” from everywhere

http://www.wikipedia.org
Mennonites

AnaBaptist

Reject Modern Culture

Off the Grid
Hurricanes

- “Hattie” destroyed Belize City in 1961
- Capital moved to Belmopan.
- “Mitch” (1998) damaged Barrier Reef - killed 11,000 people, 8,000 missing
- Reef second longest in world.
Languages

• English
• Spanish
• Creole and Caribbean Trade Language

• All of these spoken everywhere – highly multilingual people.
“Rough Tourism”

- Little infrastructure
- Minimal and inexpensive accommodations
- Electricity unpredictable
- Bus travel inexpensive, old “Bluebirds”

My Itinerary:
- Jungle and Beach “Surf and Turf”
- $30/Day for 45 days
Districts

1. Belize
2. Cayo
3. Corozal
4. Orange
5. Stann Creek
6. Toledo
Arrival District 1: Belize

- Belize City
- Port of entry for tourists
- High murder/crime rate
- 6 murders a month, many by gun

- Cruise ship access to Mayan Ruins, jungle walks and dive sites

www.peoplesguide.com
District 2: Cayo

• Gateway to “Jungle Treks”
• “Extreme” Day Tripping

• Mayan Ruins
• Caving and Rafting
• Horseback riding and jungle hiking
Ruins near Cayo

- Xunantunich
- Cahal Pech

Caracol least accessible
Tikal across border
Xunantunich

- Ceremonial Center
- Plazas, Temples and Palaces (Castillo)
- Architecture built to embody Mayan Spirituality 13 Heavens (7 “days”, six “nights”, 9 Underworlds, 20 based system for cycles of time)
Mopan Ferry
13: Heavens, divisions

9: Underworlds or levels

20 steps: Sacred repeating number is base of calender
Stelae

Mayan Characters and “Day Signs” Of Calender, 

Predictions and Historical record over 5,000 years

18 Rabbit at Copan

Photograph by Haley Hodnett
Actun Tunichil Muknal ATM Cave

- Caves part of Mayan underworld
- Burial and ritual site
- Hour hike through jungle
- Three stream crossings
- Cave underground swimming
- Cave climbing without ladders or safety ropes
- Six hour Trek
Cave entrance
Curtain Stalactites
Crystal Maiden
Blue Morpho Butterfly House
Mayan Artist
Market Day
Sambutes
Hummingbird Highway
Stann Creek

- Dandriga and Garifuna Communities
- Placencia
- Caye Caulker
Garifuna

- Known also as “Black Caribs”
- Carib group: Venezuelan Indians and Africans from slave boat crashes
- Men and women have different languages
Ferry to Placencia from Dandriga
Cabanas on Beach in Placencia
Swimming with Fish, Rays, Sharks, Dolphins and Turtles
Caye Caulker: sand streets
Caretaker
Mennonite Adult Baptism
Aftereffects..
Human Botfly