

## GLOVERS REEF & RIVER OF CAVES

Six Days on Spectacular Glovers Reef Atoll with a Day of Inland Adventure!

### Trip Details

7 days / 8 nights

### Price

\$1799 USD

### Departures 2009

Nov 29, Dec 6, 13, 20, 27

### Departures 2010

Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Feb 7, 14, 21, 28

Mar 7, 14, 21

Apr 4, 11, 18, 25

### Activities

Sea Kayaking  
(paddling & sailing),  
Snorkeling, Fishing,  
Hiking, Birding,  
Photography,

### Accommodations

1 night forest cabana  
1 night jungle lodge  
5 nights Base Camp  
1 night hotel

**7 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS**



### The Setting...

Our day of inland exploration takes us from the mythical limestone caverns of the Mayan underworld to a mosaic of broadleaf tropical rainforest, cohune ridge, and rolling pine savannah. Through our first day of travel we gain a sense of traditional and contemporary life of inland Belize, before heading out to our idyllic camp on Glover's Reef.

One of three atolls offshore of Belize, Glover's Reef was named after the pirate John Glover who used this remote offshore ring of islands and coral reefs as a base from which to raid Spanish merchant ships. The shallow waters with innumerable coral reefs, mangroves and small islands were ideal waters for pirates and buccaneers to hide after plundering Spanish galleons laden with riches pillaged from the New World. Today, the attractions found within the atoll (20 miles long by 7 miles wide) are the incredible clarity of the water and the remarkable profusion of marine life. In 1993, the atoll was declared a marine park and to further efforts to protect this extraordinary environment, the site was designated as a World Heritage Site, in 1996. We travel and explore this area by sea-kayak, paddling and sailing the shallow 82 square mile lagoon with over 700 patch reefs. The reefs of Belize have long been known as the richest in the Caribbean, and Glover's is among the best in Belize!

### A Note About the Ecology...

**Flora...** Belize's Barrier Reef is the largest reef in the northern hemisphere, second largest in the world, extending 185 miles (300 km) along the coastline. Nineteen miles seaward from the eastern border of the Barrier Reef, lies Belize's most spectacular atoll – Glover's Reef. These circular shaped reef systems climb from the ocean floor and surround a central lagoon. The surrounding reef is primarily made up of two kinds of coral, the hard hydro-



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coral (reef-forming coral), such as brain coral or elkhorn coral, and the soft corals, such as sea fans and feather plumes. The sheltered lagoon harbors one of the world's most diverse sea environments; an extensive community of fish, shellfish, invertebrates living amongst countless patch reefs. One mile off the eastern shore of the atoll, the reef wall quickly drops 2600 feet to the ocean floor below. The interaction between the deeper, open waters of the Caribbean Sea and the sheltered lagoons of the atoll, results in a diversity and abundance of marine life, which is unsurpassed for sea kayaking, snorkeling and diving.

**Fauna...** From our base on Southwest Caye, we will have the opportunity to view a diverse range of marine-life and tropical birds. While exploring and snorkeling the atoll and the many patch reefs, there are opportunities to see grouper, bonefish, angel and parrot fish, stingrays, conger, moray eels, and goatfish; just to name a few. Some of the bird-life includes osprey (the billy hawk), sea gulls, boobies, frigate birds, hawks, mangrove warblers, and white-crowned pigeons. Around the atoll and the barrier reef, there are nesting sites for loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles. If we're lucky, we may see them while out snorkeling or kayaking. We will definitely have a chance to see and sample the main staple for Belizean fishermen, the spiny lobster (in season) and the queen conch.

## Typical Daily Itinerary:

**Day 0:** Arrive at the Belize International Airport, where you will be met by our representative and transferred to the Tropical Education Center, adjacent to the Belize Zoo. Here we are able to explore the surrounding savannah forest through their network of interpretative trails and wildlife viewing platforms. There is also a great interpretive center, which details the diverse ecology of Belize, and is an ideal starting point for the adventure ahead. After checking into our rustic accommodations, we are greeted with a Belizean dinner where we have a chance to meet our fellow travelers. *This day is your day to arrive before the trip starts, meet your fellow travelers and acclimatize to your new tropical environment.* Transfers from the airport are included.

**Accommodation:** (Lodge)      **Meals:** Dinner is included on this Day

**Day 1:** Today begins with short drive along the Hummingbird Highway toward the River of Caves. We begin with an interpretive trail through lush Rainforest to the cave entrance and then using inner tubes we embark on an enjoyable 2 hour float underground through a limestone cave system rich with classic formations including soda straw, flow stone, stalactite and stalagmite. After the caves, we continue overland to Banana Bank Lodge. We settle into our accommodations, have lunch in the lodge, and then choose between horseback riding, a river tour, or an interpretive birding walk for the afternoon. Banana Bank Lodge is a resort and an equestrian facility situated on over 4,000 acres along the banks of the historic Belize River. Our location is superb. For those who wish to stay behind and relax, there are wildlife viewing platforms, a greenhouse with over 50 varieties of orchids, and a night-sky observatory at our disposal.

**Accommodation:** (Lodge)      **Meals:** B,L,D



## Recommended

### Tour-books:

Eltringham, Peter. 2004. Belize: The Rough Guide. London. Penguin Publishers.

### Hidden Belize

with Catherine O'Neil (3rd edition, revised, Berkeley: Ulysses Press 2003)

### Reading:

Rabinowitz, Alan. 2000 Jaguar, One Man's Struggle to Establish the First Jaguar Sanctuary New York. Island Press.

Les Belesky Belize & Northern Guatemala 2005, Interlink Books



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*Itinerary cont'*

**Day 2-6:** We depart early in the morning by charter boat out past the main Barrier Reef to our private base-camp on Southwest Caye, at Glover's Reef Marine Reserve. We are introduced to our new environment and get settled into our accommodation. Once settled, the guides provide instruction, teaching the fundamentals of sea kayaking, snorkeling and safety in the tropics. Then, we paddle out to a nearby patch reef and start to explore some of the 700 snorkel sites that Glover's Atoll has to offer.

Glover's is one of only four atolls in the Caribbean Sea, and is truly the most spectacular marine environment in Belize. Due to its isolation from the mainland, the waters are exceptionally clear with inspiring scenery and a fabulously rich reef system that offers the best kayaking, snorkeling and diving in the Caribbean. We spend the days exploring the atoll with both single and double kayaks (rigged for sailing!). Our itinerary is flexible in order to respond to both group and individual desires and abilities. Activities include: sea kayaking, snorkeling the inner and outer walls of the reef, and learning to sail a kayak. For experienced snorkelers, guides can provide full instruction with our Sea-Breathe Diving System: a free floating air pump designed to provide air by hookah lines down to 20-25 feet. In the mornings and the evenings, we host informative sessions on a range of topics, providing an opportunity for guides to share their knowledge of Belize, the marine environments and local culture. Perhaps a high stakes game of Hermit Crab Racing to finish the day! If all this sounds a little too busy you always have the choice of just kicking back in a hammock and relaxing with a good book and a cold drink.



**Accommodation:** (Tent-Walled Cabanas)

**Meals:** B, L, D

**Day 7:** For our last morning at Glover's, the choice is yours. We may choose to don mask, snorkel and fins for a last visit to your favorite coral reef, or work the flats with your most productive Bonefish fly, before our motor charter comes to pick us up for the return ride to Dangriga. Here we arrive to a waiting vehicle that whisks us to the local air-strip for a flight to Belize City. Once airborne, we have the Manatee Lagoons over our left shoulder and the Belize Barrier Reef over our right, giving us an impressive view of Belize's coastal topography from the Caribbean sea to the Maya Mountains. We end our journey with a comfortable night at the Belize Biltmore Plaza, where they have a wonderful pool-side courtyard and bar.

**Accommodation:** (Hotel)

**Meals:** B, L (Dinner is not included on this night)

## **Accommodation...**

On 'Day 0', we will be spending the night at the Tropical Education Center. The Education Center has comfortable, rustic accommodations in a beautiful pine savannah setting. The Center has a fantastic interpretative center and harbors Belize's largest collection of tropical animals, with a great network of trails and wildlife viewing platforms, perfect for exploring this rare forest environment.

On 'Day 1', we will be staying at Banana Bank Lodge, located at the gateway of the Cayo District. This spectacular resort is spread over 4,000 acres, and houses a restaurant, a main lodge, and a number of small cabanas. Our accommodations for the evening are beautifully furnished, thatched, roofed cabanas, outfitted with ceiling fans and hot water showers. On the premises there is also an (continued next page)

## **Equipment...**

While at our private base-camp on Southwest Caye, our guests have unrestricted use of the following equipment: Double Kayaks (outfitted with special sails), Single Kayaks, Sit-on-Top Dive Kayaks, Sea-Breathe Dive System, Complete Research Library, Field Marine Lab including microscope and Hand Lenses, and Weather Station. On the island, we are in communication with the mainland via VHF marine radio.



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## Accommodations con't

Orchadia which houses more than 50 varieties of orchids and bromeliads, a night sky observatory, a two-story birding platform overlooking the lagoon, as well as an art gallery.

On Day 2 to 6 at Southwest Caye, we are "base camping", sleeping in tent-walled cabanas. These spacious safari-style tents are have ample headroom to walk around and are on raised wooden floors with double or single beds. On the island, we have a fully equipped kitchen, fresh-water collection system for drinking water, access to fresh-water showers and modern composting toilets, We also have a large dining area, resource library lounge, and a field marine lab.

On the final night we will be staying in Belize City. Our accommodations are at the Belize Biltmore Plaza, a comfortable, modern hotel with a inviting pool-side courtyard and bar. The Belize International Airport is a short cab ride from the hotel, which can be arranged through the front desk. The hotel also has a tour desk that can help you arrange activities if you are planning on staying longer.

## What's Included...

All meals (fully catered) while you are at our Southwest Caye base-camp  
Selection of chilled wines and rum are served with dinner, or as cocktails on some evenings  
Unlimited use of our Equipment and facilities  
Professional guide and sports instruction services with Belizean Guides and North American leaders  
All accommodations including lodge on 'Day 0' and hotel the night after the trip ends.  
Glovers Reef Marine Park fees of \$25US per person  
Belize 9% Hotel tax  
Belize 10% Sales Tax  
Cave Entrance Fees  
Comprehensive pre-trip information package  
Financial Support for Conservation and Education programs in Belize  
Charter flight from Dangriga to Belize City after the trip

## What's Not Included...

Beer & soft drinks at Glovers  
Gratuities  
International Flights

## Thinking about seeing other parts of Belize with IEC?

The Glover's Reef & River of Caves combines well with our popular Maya World Extension, which gives you a great opportunity to visit some of the ancient ruins of Belize and the Crooked Tree Bird Sanctuary. Or, experience both of Belize's spectacular Atolls in one trip to Belize! The Lighthouse Reef trip itinerary takes you even further offshore, on beautiful Half-moon Caye National Monument.

## Getting back to Belize City ...

At the end of your trip, we will provide you with a charter flight back to Belize City. The final night is spent at the Belize Biltmore Plaza, 3 1/2 miles north of Belize City Central. This is a great point to make extra arrangements to travel further on in Belize, or to return to the International Airport the following morning, which is just a short taxi cab away.

## Thinking About Traveling Independently, Before or After Your Trip?

With over 20 years of exploration in Belize, our very knowledgeable and experienced office staff can offer you a wealth of travel information to help you plan the best vacation possible! However, we do recommend that you read up on the country and find what interests you. Once you find an area of interest, give our office a phone call.



**CANADIAN RIVER  
EXPEDITIONS**

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