

TOUCAN talk



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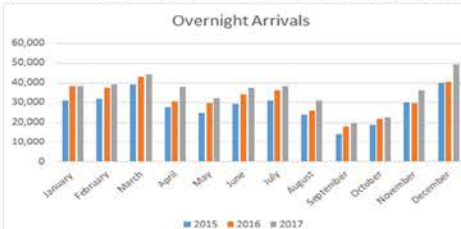
OVERNIGHT TOURISM ARRIVALS REGISTER RECORD BREAKING INCREASE FOR 2017

For the second year in a row, overnight tourism arrivals have registered a record breaking increase with the December figure for 2017 approaching 50,000 overnight visitors in one month for the first time in history. Overnight arrivals to Belize surpassed 427,000 visitors in 2017, vastly surpassing the 400,000 annual visitor threshold. This figure represented a 10.8% increase over the annual total of 2016. The total cruise ship passenger arrivals experienced an overall growth of 0.9% in 2017. This translated to over 1,000,000 cruise visitors arriving in Belize for the second year in a row. The following is a breakdown of the most recent statistics.

OVERNIGHT ARRIVALS REGISTERS 10.8% OVER THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF 2016

Traditionally March has been the zenith for overnight arrivals, but December has slowly been approaching the figure for March in recent years. The first time in recent history that December was the peak month for overnight arrivals to Belize was in 2015. In 2017, December surpassed the overnight arrival figure for March by almost 5,000 visitors! Overnight arrivals to Belize was 427,109 visitors in 2017.

	2015	% change vs. '14	2016	% change vs. '15	2017	% change vs. '16
Jan	30,858	-1.0	38,274	24.0	38,531	0.7
Feb	31,754	-1.1	37,624	18.5	39,221	4.2
Mar	39,136	1.1	43,063	10.0	44,475	3.3
Apr	27,569	-4.8	30,656	11.2	38,090	24.2
May	24,707	-8.1	29,709	20.2	32,146	8.2
Jun	29,118	1.6	34,268	17.4	37,690	10.0
Jul	30,967	2.3	36,212	16.9	38,638	6.7
Aug	23,874	2.3	25,865	8.3	30,799	19.1
Sep	14,276	19.3	18,115	26.9	19,541	7.9
Oct	18,945	22.1	21,726	14.7	22,656	4.3
Nov	28,909	33.0	29,510	-1.3	36,203	22.7
Dec	39,977	22.5	40,561	1.5	49,131	21.1
	341,161	6.2	385,883	13.0	427,109	10.8



CRUISE SHIP ARRIVALS EXPERIENCED OVERALL GROWTH FOR 2017

In 2017, total cruise ship passenger arrivals experienced an overall growth of 0.9%. This translated to over 1,000,000 cruise visitors arriving in Belize. In addition, there were 13 more calls this year as compared to 2016. This is positive news. Cruise Ship Arrivals of 1,014,231 for 2017 includes visitors to both Belize City and Harvest Caye Seaports.

	2016	% change vs. '15	2017	% change vs. '16
Jan	127,376	16.6	100,337	-19.7
Feb	85,067	-3.7	98,623	3.7
Mar	133,482	15.8	135,283	1.3
Apr	91,325	-12.3	90,657	-0.7
May	43,847	-6.4	61,977	41.3
Jun	50,790	-5.0	65,399	28.8
Jul	54,471	-19.9	51,958	-4.6
Aug	50,656	-2.7	39,119	-22.8
Sep	45,265	-5.0	54,569	20.6
Oct	40,985	-29.2	56,697	38.3
Nov	81,113	9.2	106,144	30.9
Dec	143,598	1.6	142,551	-0.7
	957,975	-1.9	1,005,394	4.9



The record increase in tourism arrivals is a reassertion that Belize continues to be a growing, viable and a must-visit destination in Central America and the Caribbean. Likewise, it emphasizes the effective and extremely successful efforts of the Belize Tourism Board to market Belize as a Curious Place and as a first-class tourism destination.



FITUR 2018 JANUARY 14TH-23RD, 2018

FITUR is a global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading trade fair for inbound and outbound Ibero American markets. In 2017 FITUR has surpassed the participation record with 9,893 exhibiting companies from 165 countries/regions, 135,858 trade participants and 107,213 people from the general public. Important to note was the increase of 18.8% of international trade visitors compared to the previous staging. Moreover, the volume of agendas organized by FITUR within the different B2B has reached 6,800 business appointments. The attendance of 7,452 journalists is a turnout that shows the importance of FITUR on the international circuit of tourism sector events. Deborah Gilharry and Althea Sebastian represented the BTB. Two private sector partners participated for Belize, Portofino and Splash Dive Center. The show was successful, resulting in over 50 contacts for travel agents in the area. In addition the Director of BTB and the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation participated in ministerial and committee meetings and also met with a few of our marketing agencies.

JGBB MIDWEST ROADSHOW FEBRUARY 25TH – MARCH 1ST, 2018

The BTB along with JG Black Book conducted a Mid-west Roadshow February 25 – March 1, 2018 covering areas in Chicago, Grand Rapids and Detroit, MI. These roadshows allow for direct face-to-face contact with travel agents and tour operators, in order to build relationships in these key emerging states. The team met with some top agencies such as ProTravel, Valerie Wilson Travel, Brenton Travel, Travel 100 Group and CWT Vacations. The BTB was represented by Travel Trade Officers Althea Sebastian and Jana Puga, while JG Black Book was represented by David Corke.

LOCAL ROADSHOW AND INDUSTRY VISITS

In the months of January to March 2018 four destinations were visited, San Pedro, Hopkins, Placencia and Stann Creek where BTB representatives met with property owners and managers. The purpose of these visits is to gather information about the properties and how they performed during the season, to build a better relationship with them and get a better understanding of tourism development in the destination as well as to address concerns or questions the properties may have. A total of 44 properties were visited.



JGBB SALES CALLS & CTO FORUM NEW YORK JANUARY 23-27, 2018



Belize, among other destinations in the Caribbean, participated in the Focus on the Caribbean session, which was spearheaded by the CTO on January 26, 2018 at the New York Times Travel Show. The CTO Forum drew over 100 agents and media from other states to the area. Two days of sales calls/presentations with JGBB were incorporated into the Travel schedule. These sales calls/presentations would comprise of meetings with both existing and new potential agents in the area. New York remains one of Belize's top 5 states from which our overnight arrivals originate. Furthermore, Travel Agencies have expressed preference in meeting face-to-face with representatives from the Tourism Board. Meetings with agents from 7 agencies were conducted, one resulted in securing a participant for the Romance Fam in February. A total of 24 leads were obtained.

BELIZE WEDDING & HONEY-MOON EXTRAVAGANZA:HOUSTON, TEXAS FEBRUARY 9TH, 2018

The BTB conducted the first ever Wedding & Honeymoon Extravaganza, which took place on February 9th 2018 at the Houstonian Hotel. The event was a huge success. A total of 40 travel agents attended the event and were able to meet with local wedding and honeymoon hoteliers from Belize. Great feedback was received about the overall success of the event from both invited agents, as well as our industry partners.



SEATRADE CRUISE GLOBAL MARCH 6TH – 8TH, 2018

Seatrade Cruise Global took place on March 6-8, 2018. Although we met many travel agents, we observed that many people came to the booth to inquire about Belize. One of the greatest highlights of the show was that we were able to help people plan their trips to Belize not just for the cruise but for overnight.



DALLAS TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE SHOW MARCH 17TH – 18TH, 2018

The **Dallas Travel & Adventure Show** was a huge success. There was a continuous flow of traffic at the Belize booth, we were extremely busy with people stopping by to receive their Belize info and get recommendations of things to do and places to go for their trip. Michelle Bowers and Deborah Gilharry represented the BTB.

ITB BERLIN MARCH 4TH-13TH, 2018

ITB Berlin was held March 4th – 13th, 2018. This show is “the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show” where companies and organizations meet, as well as top decision-makers, experts, buyers and young professionals from hotels, tourism organizations, tour operators, travel agencies, transport companies, booking portals, systems providers and all the others. It is open to both trade visitors, as well as the general public. Director Karen Pike attended for the BTB, along with Six (6) private sector partners: Darah Travel Ltd., Matachica Resort & Spa/Gaia River Lodge, Belize Vacation Partners, and The Lodge at Big Falls, BHA, and Discovery Expeditions. Belize was well received at the show with BTB and all private sector partners conducting many meetings with tour operators.



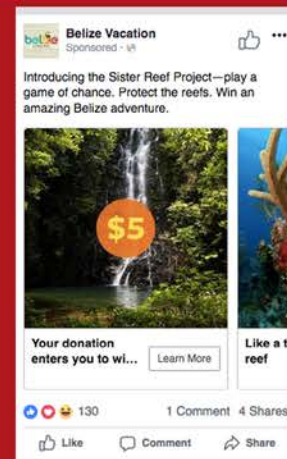
CONSUMER AND TRADE SHOWS JANUARY – MARCH 2018

In January and February, Brighter Group represented Belize Tourism Board at two well-established consumer shows in London: The Adventure Travel Show (20-21 January) and Destinations Show (1-4 February). These shows have a loyal audience of keen travellers, who generally book their holidays well in advance, so it was perfect for Belize to be present to offer a new and exciting luxury and adventurous holiday option. Having a stand at the Adventure Travel Show for the second-year running was a great way to continue build the brand of Belize as an adventurous destination for visitors, and push them to associate the destination with thrill, excitement and new experiences. At the Destinations Show, Belize had a stand on the LATA (Latin America Tourism Association) pavilion. This allowed for Belize to save on costs by stand-sharing, have more exposure on a larger stand, and also have access to other market share designated to destinations such as Costa Rica which were on the same Pavilion. In February and March, Brighter represented Belize at two agent events: the CTO roadshows in Italy, and the Aspire Luxury Forum in London. Italy is the fifth largest European market for Belize and these numbers of growing year on year. The CTO Italian roadshows allowed us to visit six different cities in three days and promote Belize alongside Italian tour operators and travel agents, creating great awareness about the destination. The Aspire Luxury Forum was held on 27 March in London. There was a dedicated Belize table, and Brighter promoted the destination with a tailor-made presentation including luxurious properties and exclusive activities. Promotional material was distributed to luxury agents and DMC lists provided to allow new operators to consider introducing the destination. Two bottles of rum were awarded to the prize draw winner and Belize was also included in pre and post-event promotions from Aspire.



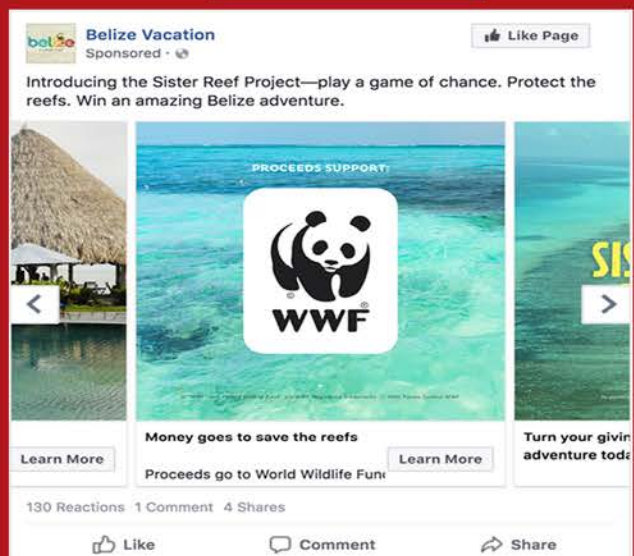
SISTER REEF CAMPAIGN

In March, the Belize Tourism Board launched the Sister Reef Project, a campaign to raise awareness and funds for Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Belize Barrier Reef. Travelers were encouraged to buy credits to enter to win multiple curious items and experiences in Belize donated by stakeholders, while simultaneously donating to World Wildlife Fund. The program has generated stories from outlets including Lonely Planet and Sport Diver, along with posts from high-profile Instagram influencers Travis Burke, Kyle Huber, Tyson Wheatley and Maddie Brenneman. A heartfelt thank you to all the stakeholders who donated prizes to this effort—your contributions have helped shed a light on an important cause as well as elevate Belize as a top tourist destination.



Belize Vacation Sponsored · 🌿

Introducing the Sister Reef Project—where you can win amazing Belize prizes while helping protect the reefs.



BELIZEAN ACCOMMODATIONS AMONG TRIPADVISOR'S TOP 2018 AWARDS

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) is pleased to announce once more that several Belizean accommodations have been recognized in this year's TripAdvisor's 2018 awards list, both at the World and Central American categories. TripAdvisor is a travel planning and booking site, and its Travelers' Choice award winners were determined based on the millions of reviews and opinions collected in a single year from TripAdvisor travelers worldwide. In the 16th year of the awards, TripAdvisor has recognized 8,095 properties in 94 countries and eight regions worldwide. The awards celebrate hotel winners in the categories of Top Hotels Overall, Luxury, Bargain, Small, Best Service, B&Bs and Inns, Romance, Family and All-Inclusive. In addition, a new "Value for Money" hotel award category was created this year. To qualify for this award, a property must have at least four stars and four bubbles on TripAdvisor, and offer annual nightly average rates that are at least 20 percent below the city average and cost less than \$300 per night based on hotel prices available on TripAdvisor. The hallmarks of Travelers' Choice hotels winners are remarkable service, value and quality. This year Coco Plum Island Resort ranked fourth in the Top 25 Small Hotel, 7th among the Top 25 Hotels for Romance and 9th on the Top 25 Hotels for Best Service in the World Category. Meanwhile, the Phoenix Resort in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye ranked 12th on the top 25 Luxury Hotels in the World Category and placed second on the Top Ten Luxury Hotels in the Central America category. Vanilla Hills Lodge in San Ignacio placed first in the top 25 B & Bs and Inns in Central America. Several other Belizean accommodations were also among the top 25 Hotels for Best Service as well as the top 25 Hotels for Romance in the Central America Category.

The BTB is delighted to congratulate all the awardees and reiterates its commitment to work very closely with stakeholders as strategic partners in marketing Belize as a Curious Destination. For further information on the Trip Advisor's 2018 Awards, please visit THE VERY BEST OF TRAVEL, Chosen by Millions of Travelers at <https://www.tripadvisor.com/TravelersChoice>



The 2018 TripAdvisor's Awards List are as follows:

TOP 25 LUXURY HOTELS – WORLD

The Phoenix Resort – (ranked 12th)

TOP 10 LUXURY HOTELS – CENTRAL AMERICA CATEGORY

The Phoenix Resort – (ranked 2nd)

TOP 25 HOTELS FOR BEST SERVICE – WORLD and CENTRAL AMERICA CATEGORY

Coco Plum Island Resort – (ranked 9th ,World and 1st for Central America category)

Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 5th, Central America category)

The Phoenix Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 6th, Central America category)

Pelican Reef Villas Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 7th, Central America category)

Xanadu Island Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 10th, Central America category)

Athens Gate Beach Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 12th, Central America category)

Belizean Dreams Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 13th, Central America category)

Sleeping Giant Lodge, Belmopan – (ranked 15th, Central America category)

TOP 25 HOTELS FOR ROMANCE - WORLD AND CENTRAL AMERICA CATEGORY

Coco Plum Island Resort – (ranked 7th, World and 2nd Central America category)

Sleeping Giant Lodge, Belmopan – (ranked 7th, Central America category)

Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 9th, Central America category)

Caribbean Beach Cabanas of Placencia – (ranked 11th, Central America category)

Belizean Dreams Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 12th, Central America category)

Colida Cabanas, Caye Caulker – (ranked 13th, Central America category)

Black Rock Resort, Cayo – (ranked 15th, Central America category)

TOP 25 SMALL HOTELS – WORLD AND CENTRAL AMERICA CATEGORY

Coco Plum Island Resort- (ranked 4th, World and 1st, Central America category)

The Phoenix Resort – (ranked 3rd, Central America category)

Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 4th, Central America category)

Xanadu Island Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 6th, Central America category)

Chabil Mar Resort, Placencia – (ranked 8th, Central America category)

Turneffe Island Resort, Turneffe Island – (ranked 18th, Central America category)

Belizean Dreams Resort, Hopkins – (ranked 20th, Central America category)

Sleeping Giant Lodge, Belmopan – (ranked 21st, Central America category)

Gaia Riverlodge, Mountain Pine Ridge – (ranked 23rd, Central America category)

TOP 25 B&Bs AND INNS – CENTRAL AMERICA

Vanilla Hills Lodge, San Ignacio – (ranked 1st)

The Inn at Twin Palms, Belmopan – (ranked 4th)

Amanda's Place, Caye Caulker – (ranked 19th)

Sea Dreams Hotel, Caye Caulker – (ranked 21st)

TOP 25 HOTELS – CENTRAL AMERICA

Las Terrazas Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 8th)

Victoria House Resort & Spa, San Pedro – (ranked 9th)

TOP 25 HOTELS FOR FAMILIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Athens Gate Beach Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 3rd)

Grand Caribe Belize Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 4th)

Grand Colony Island Villas, San Pedro – (ranked 9th)

Hol Chan Reef Villas, San Pedro – (ranked 18th)

TOP 25 BARGAIN HOTELS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Tobacco Caye Paradise, Tobacco Caye – (ranked 15th)

TOP TEN VALUE FOR MONEY HOTELS – CENTRAL AMERICA CATEGORY

Ramon's Village Resort, San Pedro – (ranked 7th)

BTB PRESENTS U.S. \$59,934.00 CHEQUE TO CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION AS CONTRIBUTION TO "A DOLLAR FOR THE CARIBBEAN RELIEF FUND"

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB), in collaboration with tourism industry stakeholders, raised U.S. \$59,934.00 (Bz \$119,868.00) as part of the Dollar for the Caribbean Relief Fund campaign. The fund was created to assist victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which severely devastated many Caribbean countries in September last year.

This morning Ms. Karen Pike, BTB's Director of Marketing and Industry Relations, presented the cheque to Mr. Hugh Riley, Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) during a virtual press conference hosted by CTO in Barbados.

In presenting the cheque, Ms. Pike said "when we got the news on the Caribbean Relief Fund Campaign, we embraced it immediately because it was not only the right thing to do, but also because it brought all of us in the Caribbean once again even closer together in a unified effort to assist those in need." She added: "As part of the Dollar for the Caribbean Relief Fund Campaign, the BTB reached out to the entire country of Belize through the media, press releases, the BTB's website and its news distribution network."

In his response, the Secretary General said, "we thank you Belize on behalf of the entire Caribbean family." During the press conference, an overview on the state of the tourism industry in the Caribbean was also presented.

As part of its Dollar for the Caribbean Relief Fund Campaign, each participating tourism stakeholder donated a \$1 for every guest; the BTB then contributed by donating \$1 for every tourist arrival for the month of October therefore, creating a multiplier effect. The BTB initiative was supported by the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), the Belize Hotel Association (BHA), Tropic Air, the Belize Airport Concession Company (BACC), Tour Operators, water taxis, and hoteliers amongst many others.

During the first week of September, category 5 Hurricane Irma pummeled a number of Caribbean countries in the northern Leeward Islands and the northern Caribbean leaving a long trail of devastation. Many residents of these countries were left homeless, without food, power, water and basic essentials. Two weeks later, Hurricane Maria followed the same path further exacerbating the level of destruction throwing many of these countries in a severe state of despair. The Caribbean depends on tourism as their chief means of survival and the devastation by both hurricanes has stalled the economies of countries affected, which may take several months or perhaps years to recover.

The BTB and the Belize tourism stakeholders are extremely pleased that they were able to make a contribution towards the Caribbean Relief Fund and take this opportunity to offer their heartfelt thanks to all Belizean stakeholders and organizations that donated generously in order to ease the road to recovery for our Caribbean sister countries.

According to the CTO, approximately U.S. \$135,000.00 was raised by the Caribbean Hurricane Relief Fund Campaign.



From left: Travis Williams and Roanne Badillo from Tropic Air presenting a cheque for Bz \$3,970.00 towards the Hurricane Relief Fund to BTB's Director of Cruise & Destination Planning, Noriko Gamero. The cheque was included in the BTB's presentation to CTO.



BTB's Director of Marketing and Industry Relations, Ms Karen Pike, presenting the \$59,934.00 U.S. cheque to the CTO. She was assisted by Mike Hernandez Jr., BTB's Communication & P.R. Officer.

TOP TRAVEL AGENTS CONCLUDE ROMANCE FAMILIARIZATION TOUR TO BELIZE

A team of ten travel agents from the United States and Canada have concluded a one-week familiarization tour to Belize, from February 23 to March 2, after getting a first-hand experience of what Belize has to offer as a Wedding and Honeymoon destination. This was the first of its kind organized by the Belize Tourism Board. The team from the United States included representatives from FROSCHE New York, Dreams and Destinations, Kiel Travel and Alacrity Lifestyle. The team from Canada was comprised of representatives of Romantic Planet Vacation, Now Destinations, McTavish Travel, Crystal Water Weddings, TTI Travel and Travel Agent Next Door. As part of the tour, the team visited Placencia where they experienced a sunset cruise offered by Splash Dive Center. They also had the opportunity to visit top resorts such as Ellysian resort, Chabil Mar Villas, Laru Beya, Robert's Grove, Belize Ocean Club, the Placencia Hotel, Naia Resort & Spa among others. Placencia is a gorgeous emerald peninsula in southern Belize with 16 miles of white sandy beaches which offer an ideal location to celebrate a wedding or spend quality time during a honeymoon. The Caribbean Sea is to the east and the charming Placencia lagoon lies to west looking towards the Maya Mountains on the mainland. The entire peninsula can be easily navigated on a beach cruiser bike but the busy part of Placencia lies in the south where the visitor will find the greater concentration of coffee shops, bistros, internet cafes, the harbor, guest houses, taxi and bus station, banks and local restaurants.



The travel agents had the opportunity to view a Maya Chaman performing a wedding at the foot of the main temple at Xunantunich archaeological site organized by Signature Belize Wedding & Events

From Placencia, the travel agents journeyed to Hopkins where they visited Villa Verano and Almond Beach Resort. They also travelled to the Cayo District, where they had the opportunity to experience first-hand the services offered by Mystic River Resort, San Ignacio Resort Hotel, the Lodge at Chaa Creek and Ka'ana. The agents also visited the Mayan site of Xunantunich where they had the opportunity to see an authentic Mayan wedding and vows renewal conducted by a Maya Chaman and organized by Signature Belize Wedding & Events, a Belizean wedding planner. While in the Cayo District, the group visited the Mountain Pine Ridge. As the oldest and largest protected forested area in Belize, Mountain Pine Ridge (MPR) covers 300 square miles of area, where visitors can find a sharp contrast to the tropical landscape. This pine tree-dominated forest is more than just a vast wooded area: visitors find deep ravines, traverse dramatic granite expanses atop the Maya Mountains and observe meandering rivers, streams, waterfalls and pools amid the sweet fragrance of the evergreens. It is also the home of the Rio Frio Caves, and the Rio On pools where visitors can relax in the swirling pools especially during the summer months. While visiting the Mountain Pine Ridge the travel agents were able to tour Hidden Valley Resort and Gaia River Lodge. From the Cayo District, the team travelled to San Pedro where in addition to enjoying a sunset cruise they visited Mahogany Bay Village, El Secreto Resort, Portofino Beach, Matancha Resort & Spa, Las Terrazas, Coco Beach Resort, Grand Caribe, Ramon's Village Resort, the Phoenix Resort, Banyan Bay Suites, Xanadu Island Resort and Victoria House among others. In San Pedro, the group viewed a wedding re-enactment at Mahogany Bay Resort Beach Club, organized by Confetti, a wedding planner and decoration company. The group also had the opportunity to snorkel at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Alley. The team also had a chance to experience the unique cuisine offered by various Belizean restaurants, including Mayan Beach Bistro and Crave House of Flavors, Blue Water Grill. The travel agents departed the country on Friday, March 2nd and were very impressed with Belize's attractions and warm hospitality.



"Belize is amazing. I have found that there is something for everybody, for honeymooners, for couples, for nature travelers, family, great relaxation, amazing spas as well as beautiful hotels very upscale to the clientele," said Belinda Serrano from FROSCHE New York. She added: "Belize has a lot more to offer, the architecture of the hotels is amazing. The people are very friendly. Belize is unbelievable!" The Honeymoon and Weddings is a growing niche market throughout Central America and the Caribbean. Belize's panoramic views of the turquoise Caribbean Sea, swaying palm trees, charming white sandy beaches, ancient Mayan cities, amazing sunsets and exotic flora offer a picture-perfect backdrop that inspires couples to say those magical words at the right moment. The travel agents' visit to Belize is also part of BTB's unwavering marketing efforts to promote Belize as a Curious Place and the best honeymoon and wedding destination in Central America and the Caribbean region.

TRIPADVISOR NAMES THE TOP HOTELS IN BELIZE FOR 2018

TripAdvisor, the world renowned travel planning booking site, has named the top hotels in Belize for 2018 and the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) joins industry stakeholders in congratulating these Belizean accommodations for a well-deserved recognition.

TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice award winners were determined based on the millions of reviews and opinions collected in a single year from TripAdvisor travelers worldwide. In the 16th year of the awards, TripAdvisor has recognized 8,095 properties in 94 countries and eight regions worldwide. The hallmarks of Travelers' Choice hotels winners are remarkable service, value and quality.

This year TripAdvisor recognized Belizean accommodations in the following categories: **TOP 10 SMALL HOTELS, TOP 10 HOTELS FOR ROMANCE, TOP 10 HOTELS FOR BEST SERVICE, TOP 10 B&Bs AND INNS and TOP 10 BARGAIN HOTELS.**

The 2018 TripAdvisor's Awards List for Belizean Hotels are as follows along with their respective rankings:

TOP 10 SMALL HOTELS – BELIZE

1. Coco Plum Island Resort – Belize Cayes
2. The Phoenix Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
3. Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort – Hopkins Village
4. Xanadu Island Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
5. Chabil Mar – Placencia
6. Turneffe Island Resort – Turneffe Island Belize
7. Belizean Dreams Resort – Hopkins
8. Sleeping Giant Lodge – Belmopan
9. Gaia Riverlodge – Mountain Pine Ridge
10. Pelican Reef Villas Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye

TOP 10 HOTELS FOR ROMANCE – BELIZE

1. Coco Plum Island Resort – Belize Cayes
2. Sleeping Giant Lodge – Belmopan
3. Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Belize – Hopkins Village
4. Caribbean Beach Cabanas of Placencia – Placencia
5. Belizean Dreams Resort – Hopkins
6. Colinda Cabanas – Caye Caulker
7. Black Rock – San Ignacio
8. Matachica Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
9. Ka'ana Resort – San Ignacio
10. Victoria House Resort & Spa – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye

TOP 10 HOTELS FOR BEST SERVICE – BELIZE

1. Coco Plum Island Resort – Belize Cayes
2. Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort – Hopkins
3. The Phoenix Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
4. Pelican Reef Villas Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
5. Xanadu Island Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
6. Athens Gate Beach Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
7. Belizean Dreams Resort – Hopkins
8. Sleeping Giant Lodge – Belmopan
9. Chabil Mar – Placencia
10. El Pescador Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye

TOP 10 B & Bs AND INNS – BELIZE

1. Vanilla Hills Lodge – San Ignacio
2. The Inn at Twin Palms – Belmopan
3. Amanda's Place – Caye Caulker
4. Sea Dreams Hotel – Caye Caulker
5. A Belizean Nirvana – Placencia
6. Mariposa Beach Suites – Placencia
7. Weezy's Ocean Front Hotel and Garden Cottages – Caye Caulker
8. Macaw Bank Jungle Lodge – Cristo Rey, Belize
9. Bocawina Rainforest Resort & Adventures – Hopkins
10. Villa Boscardi – Belize City

TOP 10 BARGAIN HOTELS – BELIZE

1. Tobacco Caye Paradise – Tobacco Caye
2. Colinda Cabanas – Caye Caulker
3. Seven Seas Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
4. Chaleanor Hotel – Dangriga
5. Captain Jak's Cabanas – Placencia
6. Rumor's Resort – San Ignacio
7. Hotel de la Fuente – Orange Walk
8. Banana Beach Resort – San Pedro, Ambergris Caye
9. Jungle Jeanie's by the Sea – Hopkins
10. Barefoot Beach Belize – Caye Caulker

The BTB is delighted to congratulate all the awardees and reiterates its commitment to work very closely with stakeholders as strategic partners in marketing Belize as a Curious Destination.



WINNER OF BTB'S EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN REDEEMS PRIZE

Debbie Gonseneauaskas, owner of Casa de Mango Resort in San Pedro Ambergris Caye, this week redeemed her prize as winner of the BTB's Early Bird Guest Accommodation Registration campaign held from July to August last year.

The campaign was geared at encouraging first-time owners, managers or operators of guest accommodations to register early with the Registrar of Hotels at BTB as required by law. This includes owners of resorts, hotels, inns, vacation homes, villas, beach houses, bungalows, apartments, cottages, cabins, motels or condominiums, camp sites, bread and breakfast facilities to name a few.

Being a registered guest accommodation service with BTB gives owners the benefit of having a hotel license to operate legally and freely, of contributing meaningfully to the sound development of our dynamic tourism industry, as well as to benefit from the strategic plans and promotions of the BTB.

The package included an overnight stay for 2 at San Ignacio Resort Hotel. Activities included: Iguana Trail & Zip Lining at Calico's Jungle Lodge as well as meals at Guava Limb Café and the Running W Steak House.

Debbie, originally from Canada, enjoyed her visit to the Cayo District so much that she decided to extend her stay for an extra two days where she engaged in numerous fun-filled and adventurous activities.

In the photo, Debbie and her husband pose for the camera as they received their Gift Certificate from BTB's Communication and PR Officer, Mike Hernandez Jr.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM UNIT:

Sustainable Tourism

Contingency Planning Workshops for accommodations were hosted by the Belize Tourism Board in the Corozal and Stann Creek Districts during the months of February and March. The Contingency Planning workshops were intended to equip stakeholders with ideas and strategies to successfully implement contingency plans for their respective accommodations. The workshops also covered Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change adaptation and guided and assisted hoteliers with creating effective and personalized emergency plans.

Corozal Town's workshop was held from February 5th – 6th, 2018 at the Corozal Town House of Culture. Placencia Village's workshop was held from March 15th – 16th, 2018 at the Placencia Community Center. Dr. Minerva Pinelo from Right Insights and the Belize Tourism Board facilitated the workshops. The accommodations that participated included Hok'ol K'in, Aldy's Guesthouse, Las Palmas, Orchid Bay Beach Club Casitas, Orchid Bay Casitas Seafront Condos, Tilt – Ta Dock Resort, and CSFI – Shipstern Conservation & Management Area in Corozal and Sand Garden Rooms, Crocodile Creek Cabanas, Wild Orchid, Hatchet Caye Resort, The Flamboyant Tree, Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort, Placencia Beach House, Sundowner Lodge, Suites at Three Iguanas, Belize Paradise Cabanas Rental, Colibri House, Blue Garden House, Capp's Inn, Coconut Inn, Decked Out House, Dolce Cabana, Kat Casa, Kitty's Place Seaview Guesthouse, Maya Lodge, Pearl Beach Dome House, Romantic Sunset Cove, Silver Leaf Villa & Cabana, and Yellow Bella in Placencia. Accommodations who participated received certificates of completion. Stakeholders are encouraged to sign up and take

advantage of the information being shared in the Contingency Planning Workshops. More workshops are being planned for 2018. The Belize Tourism Board thanks all participating accommodation stakeholders who took advantage of the free workshop.

National Tour Guide Program

The first quarter of 2018 marked the end of the training cycle of the National Tour Guide Program in Belize. Ten (10) institutions/organizations assisted the Belize Tourism Board in delivering the training program to a total of 292 potential tour guides countrywide.

The Belize Tourism Board would like to thank ITVET Belize City, Cayo CET, Sacred Heart Junior College, San Pedro Junior College, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Sarteneja Fishermen Association, the Caye Caulker chapter of the BTIA, the Dangriga chapter of the BTIA, the Placencia chapter of the BTIA, and the Toledo chapter of the BTIA for their continued support and partnership in the development of their residents into professional Tour Guides.

Standards:

In order to keep enhancing the quality of tours being offered in Belize, the Belize Tourism Board has embarked in continuing to develop minimum standards for the tourism industry. The beginning of 2018 has seen the commencement of the development and drafting of Water Sports minimum standards. These standards are being developed to address the safe operation and good quality of service to be provided by watersports establishments operating in Belize and seek to complement the role of organizations that currently regulate some aspect of water sports in Belize.

The Water Sports minimum standards are being developed with the assistance of the High Risk Activity Sub-Committee comprised of Private and Public Sector organizations, as mandated by the Standards Act, through all-day technical meetings.

COMPLIANCE UNIT:

Applying Inspections:

Inspections are conducted on properties that have applied to the Registrar of Hotels for a Hotels and Tourist Accommodation license to legally operate. These inspections are part of the licensing processes established under the Business Development Department.

During the period January-March 2018, the Compliance Team carried out a total of 19 applying inspections in multiple destinations that included Caye Caulker, San Pedro, Placencia and Cayo.

Baseline Inspections

Inspections are conducted of all accommodation facilities against the final draft of minimum standards to proactively address any area of concern as we work towards full compliance of all properties by the December 2018 license renewal cycle.

During the period January-March 2018, the Department carried out a total of 222 inspections in multiple destinations that included Belize City, Belize Rural, San Pedro, Placencia, Offshore North and Cayo.

CRAFT MARKET- MEMORIAL PARK

In an effort to enhance the Belize experience at the Fort George Tourism Zone, the Destination Planning and Cruise Department embarked on the construction of a Craft Market in the Memorial Park, Sales Pavilions and Waiting Areas in the Fort George Tourism Zone.

The proposed design is that of a colonial theme. They are (8) 10'x 16'x 8' structures which are divided in (4) 5'x 8' kiosks. There is space around each kiosk for the free movement of patrons. The space is maximized to fit 32 kiosks in 8 structures. The booths include shelves and hanging space on the walls to display the products.

Structures were placed in the South corner of the Memorial Park replacing 4-5 booths that existed in the space. On January 25th, 2018 the construction of the craft market was completed.

Two sets of Hair Braid Stations and Sales pavilions were also erected throughout the area. Other projects in the pipeline will be to provide signage to direct the tourist, offer new uniforms to the Tour Guides and lastly, place security cameras and new garbage bins to improve the security and cleanliness of the Zone.



Electrical meters are up and operational- each vendor will have access to their electric bank.



Doors open out and are flush against the wall- extra space for artisans to hang items.



Pegboard go from the ceiling to about 2 feet from the ceiling to allow for air to pass through the building.

SELF-SUSTAINABLE REVENUE GENERATION PROGRAM – CAYE CAULKER AND PUNTA NEGRA VILLAGES

As a part of the continuous effort of The Belize Tourism Board's (BTB) Destination Planning and Cruise Department to achieve the goals of the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and enhance the tourism experience of our visitors, the department recently embarked on a self-sustainable revenue generation program to develop the leisure product in Caye Caulker and Punta Negra destinations. Two destinations, Caye Caulker and Punta Negra were selected for the implementation of the first phase of this project as Caye Caulker is the second most visited destination with 140,223 tourists visiting the island in 2017. Punta Negra was selected since the plan is to increase the tourism product in the Southeast Coast area and establish a tourism corridor. With Punta Negra being accessible from both Toledo and Placencia developing tourism products in this area creates additional revenues and tourism opportunities for residents and tourists. As part of the revenue generation project, BTB donated the beach chairs, tables, umbrellas and bases, to the two destinations. The furniture will be readily available to tourists at a low rental cost whereby the income would then be used to maintain the furniture and further develop the area with a view of increasing tourists' arrival and expenditure to the respective destinations. These beach items are readily available for this Easter Break 2018.



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Top 5: Diving spots in Belize

With abundant marine life and a sprawling barrier reef, Belize should be on every diver's watery wish list

By National Geographic Traveller (UK). Published on 13th January 2018



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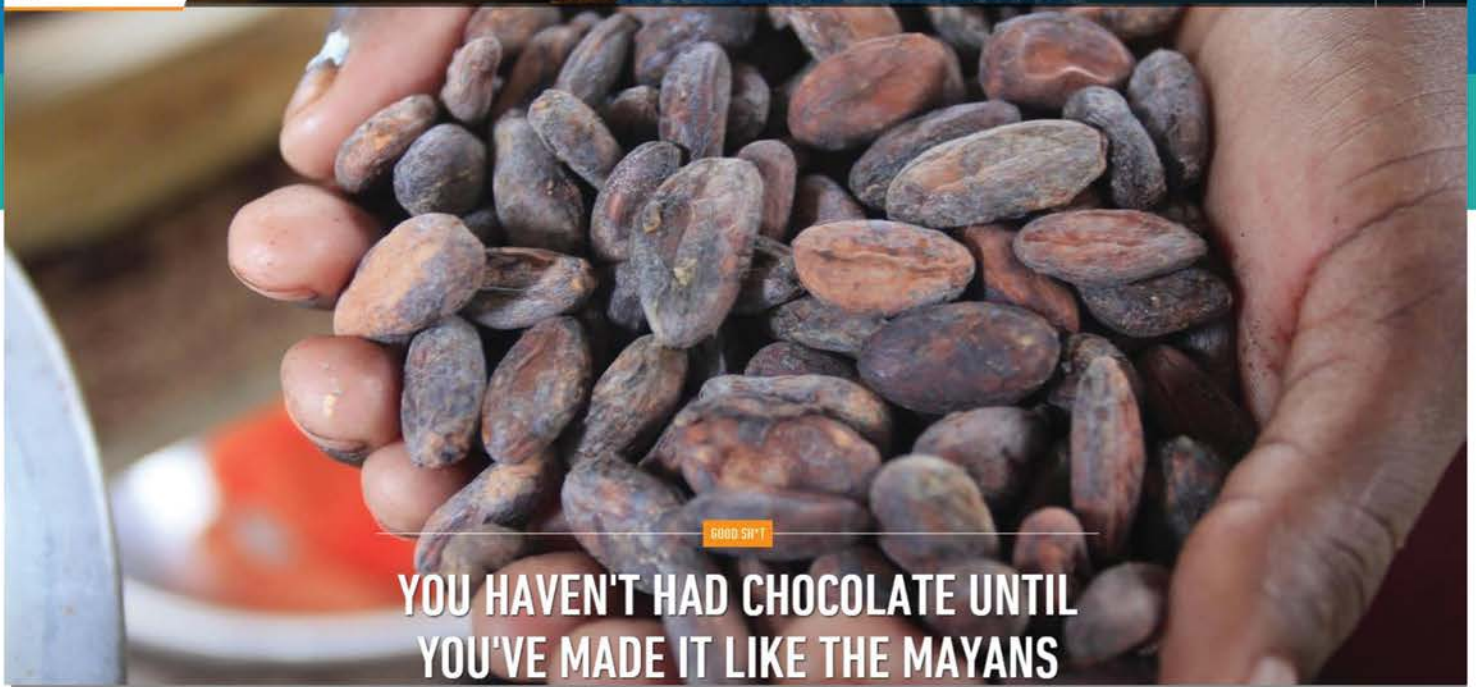
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Wildside column: Bird watching in Belize

By Dan Wilcox on Mar 3, 2018 at 6:00 a.m.



Bird expert and tour guide Carlos Corrales feeding a Collared aricari at Black Rock Lodge in Cayo District, Belize. Photo by Dan Wilcox.

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February 30, 2018

A woman with long blonde hair is posing in a blue swimsuit on a beach. She is standing next to a tree trunk and looking towards the camera. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean.

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How to buy a holiday home in Belize

It's off the radar for most buyers, but the tiny Central American nation's appeal is growing

Emma Wells
January 14 2018, 12:01am,
The Sunday Times

A small white house with a thatched roof is situated on a tropical beach. There are palm trees in the background and the ocean in the foreground.

Interest from Brits investing in Belize has risen despite the 32-hour journey time
ALAMY

The Coppolas are not the only movie A-listers who have felt compelled to create their own paradise in this corner of the Caribbean. Leonardo DiCaprio has invested in a project on Blackadore Caye, an unpopulated 104-acre island just west of Ambergris Caye. Building work on his eco-resort — and on 36 luxurious