



TOUCAN

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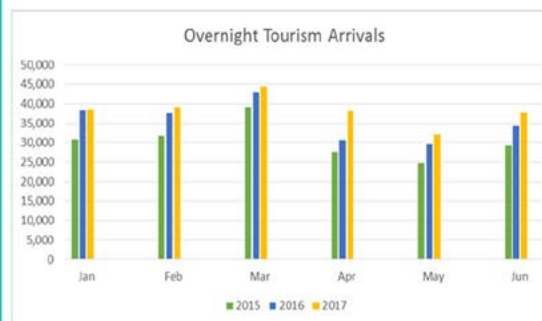
INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES

OVERNIGHT ARRIVALS

Maintaining a steady and brisk growth path, overnight tourism arrivals have again registered a positive trend for the first half of this year. The latest statistics show that the month of April registered the highest overnight arrivals (24.2%) compared to the same month last year followed closely by June with a 10% growth. There was also an overall growth of 7.8% in tourism overnight arrivals for the first half of 2017. This is a clear affirmation that Belize continues to attract an increasing number of travelers as a 'must visit' destination.

OVERNIGHT ARRIVALS REMAIN POSITIVE

The trend of overnight arrivals remained positive through the first six months of 2017, with 7.8% growth in overnight arrivals overall, and 10% growth in the month of June. June 2017 had the highest arrival total for a June month in history, with over 37,600 overnight visitors. Over the past 5 years, overnight arrivals in June have rivaled the figures seen in the high season month of January. This trend suggests a possible expansion of the number of months that are traditionally recognized as high season months for tourism in Belize.



SECOND QUARTER SHOWS AN OVER ALL INCREASE OF CRUISE PASSENGERS

In June 2017, there were over 47,000 cruise passengers visiting Belize with a total of 13 cruise calls.

The number of actual arrivals for June exceeded forecasted arrivals but did not reach the level of 2016. However in the first half of the year, there has been an overall increase of 3.1% in total cruise passenger arrivals. Arrivals for 2017 includes visitors from both the seaports in Belize City as well as arrivals to Harvest Caye in the south.



These latest statistics not only provide a very positive outlook for tourism arrivals for the remainder of this year and beyond, but they also represent the successful efforts of the industry in marketing and promoting Belize as a growing, viable and attractive tourism destination.

DIGITAL SUMMIT

The BTB's Annual Digital Summit was held on July 14, 2017 at the Belize Best Western Biltmore Plaza. The event invited local stakeholders to listen to several presenters that spoke on varying topics such as: Digital Content creation, Travel Trade in Digital, Digital Strategy, and Social Media in Digital.

The list of presenters were: Alejandro Rico- Google Accounts Director for Central America and Caribbean, Sarah Dodd- Motivational Speaker/Blogger, Mike Corey- Travel Film maker & Youtuber, Manny Melendez- Travel Clicks, Hospitality Revenue Generating Specialist, Brenda Zaldana- ING Communication, Marketing Director, Dirk Francisco- Photographer/ Social Media Influencer, James Lager- Connection Strategist, Olson, German Acevedo- CEO of Falcorp, Kenyon Williams- Accenture, Senior Principal. Approximately 120 attendees were present at the all-day event.



TOURISM INDUSTRY CONFERENCE INVITE

*You are
Cordially Invited*

Annual Tourism Industry Conference
'Sustainable Tourism and its Impact on the
Belize Market'

October 20th, 2017
8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Ramada Princess Belize City
(Queen's Room)

Networking Cocktail
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Ramada Princess Belize City
(Vogue Lounge & Bar)

RSVP by October 6, 2017 to
pr@belizetourismboard.org



TRAVEL MART LATIN AMERICA

The 41st Annual Travel Mart Latin America (TMLA) took place on September 14-15, 2017 in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The Trade show included two (2) full days dedicated exclusively to pre-scheduled business appointments at the Guayaquil Convention Center. TMLA had a small number of buyers and sellers to assure a productive and professional experience. There were over 250 "Buyers" from global markets and 250 Supplier companies/organizations from Central and South America. However, due to the hurricane devastation to the US and some Caribbean countries, there were cancellations for both suppliers and buyers. This did not affect the quality of agents that were present. Many of the buyers the BTB had meetings with were decision makers and had expressed that Belize was a destination of growing interest but that they had very limited information. The show gave the BTB the opportunity to help them understand logistics in the country and other factors pertaining to building their itineraries. One common request received was for high resolution images to put in their printed catalog or on their websites. There were also several requests made for DMCs in Belize. For those who were selling some packages to Belize, they expressed that they had difficulty finding a reliable DMC.

Overall, Belize had a fairly strong presence at the event with three other private sector partners present and exhibiting next to each other; these properties included The Lodge at Chaa Creek, Mystic River and Belize Vacation Partners. Representing the BTB were Deborah Gilharry, Senior Travel Trade Officer and Althea Sebastian, Travel Trade Officer.



JGBB EAST COAST ROADSHOW: PENNSYLVANIA, NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT, AND MASSACHUSETTS JULY 24TH – 28TH

JG Black Book Road Show Series: Focus is primarily on the USA market in areas that show potential growth, as well those that have direct hubs to Belize. These road shows take on a sales call approach which allows us to meet with agents in the comforts of their office. This method continues to be very effective in educating agents about the destination. The team met with over 50 agents combined.



JG Black Book East Coast Roadshow



JG Black Book East Coast Roadshow

BIRD FAIR

As it has done in previous years, Birdfair once again saw an excellent turnout of 25,000 UK and overseas nature, wildlife and birding enthusiasts turn out to celebrate conservation and the natural world – both in the UK and overseas. As well as a number of travel and tourism exhibitors, there were also several celebrities in attendance, giving talks, plus charities, conservation projects, a large selection of artists, equipment companies and many more.

A steady stream of visitors to the Belize booth was received over the course of the event and were pleased to hear that Belize had so many birds, and that the small population of the country and its focus on eco and sustainable development has left the habitats largely pristine and untouched. When people learnt that many major birding and wildlife sites were also ancient Mayan ruins, they became more excited, as they liked the idea of 'killing two birds with one stone.' The jaguar reserve was also an extremely popular attraction with many, as were the many marine wildlife opportunities presented by Belize being home to the 2nd largest barrier reef in the world.



WHAT'S YOUR BELIZE SPIRIT ANIMAL?

@travelbelize offered followers the chance to find out their Belizean spirit animal! Belize is full of gorgeous wildlife like toucans, tapirs and more. The post reached 624,544 people across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and had 252 comments/replies.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

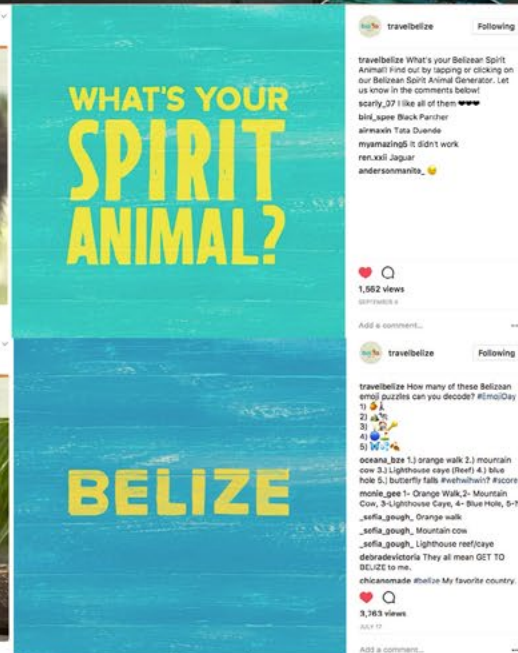
Belize Vacation celebrated 36 years of Belizean independence by sharing 36 reasons why we love Belize! Fans loved the list and shared it 215 times with their followers. What's your favorite thing about Belize?

IT'S #CARNIVAL TIME

Carnival in Belize is one of the most popular times of the year, and we host an annual costume competition, crowning winners Carnival King and Queen! Our Carnival post drove major attention with 2,513 reactions, 89 shares, and 43 comments on Facebook and Instagram.

EMOJI DAY ON TWITTER

@travelbelize joined the popular #EmojiDay on social by sharing Belizean emoji puzzles and encouraging followers to solve them! It was a fun way to join the conversation online but bring a Belizean twist to it. Can you figure out what these mean?



BTB CONDUCTS DIGITAL MARKETING TRAINING FOR TOUR OPERATORS

As part of its strategic plan to equip tour operators with pertinent marketing skills and information in order to be more competitive, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) over the past weekends conducted digital marketing training workshops for 16 tour operators in Placencia Village and Belize City.

The second workshop was held at the Placencia Village Centre on August 5th & 6th and a similar training was held at the Samuel Haynes Institute of Excellence in Belize City on July 29th & 30th. Both training events were organized by the BTB and conducted by Maynor Larrieu, a digital strategist.

The workshops covered the components and benefits of digital marketing including: websites and SEO contents, blogs, online video content, email marketing, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and mobile marketing.

Digital marketing gives tour operators the ability to use internet marketing tools to interact with targeted audiences in real time. Digital methods of communication and marketing are faster, more versatile, practical and streamlined to close sales with travelers before arriving in Belize.

The workshops allowed for one-on-one interaction with operators on how to create or enhance their existing digital presence. The following are some tour operators' testimonials:

- "This was a very (almost too) informative class that will definitely help me in my business."

- "He (the instructor) was very professional at what he did. I learnt a lot over the course, and I will implement it in my business."

- "The instructor sure taught me well, he was great and shared a variety of information with us. I definitely learnt a lot that I can bring to my business to take it to the next level. Job well done."

Both workshops follow the successful BTB's digital summit held on July 14th, which provided a unique learning experience for tourism stakeholders.

The Belize Tourism industry has a huge potential for digital growth. Historically Belize's natural beauty, location and most importantly its archaeological ancestry has made it an easy sell for travelers to Belize. In this new era of online strategy and tactics, it is vital for Belizean tour operators to understand the tools and best practices of their regional and international competitors for their continued success. The digital marketing training workshops, are a step in the right direction to equip our operators with the digital arsenal to be digitally competitive.



Participants of the training workshop in Belize City



Group work session during the workshop in Belize City



Participants of the training workshop in Placencia Village



Group work session during the workshop in Placencia Village.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INDUSTRY STANDARDS UPDATES

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 July-September 2017, the Department carried out a total of 12 applying inspections in multiple destinations that included Corozal, Caye Caulker, Hopkins, San Pedro, Toledo, Cayo, and Placencia

Minimum Standards for Accommodations Consultative Sessions:

Two additional consultation sessions were held in San Pedro and Caye Caulker to consult with accommodation stakeholders as part of the regulatory process to replace the 1999 Hotel and Tourist Accommodation Regulations.

The BTB thanks all those that participated in the sessions held countrywide for your input and time in supporting this process.

Destinations	Persons Attended	Properties Represented
San Pedro – 2 nd Session	31	36
Caye Caulker – 2 nd Session	30	28
Total	61	64



ACCOMMODATION AUDIT CYCLE COMMENCED IN SEPTEMBER 2017

During the second half of 2016 and first half of 2017, BTB embarked on its final round of a nationwide consultation process with accommodation stakeholders, to further update and revise the minimum standards that are being proposed to replace the existing Hotel and Tourist Accommodation Regulations, 1999. We take this opportunity to thank you for your input and to share with you that the revision process is now moving to the next stage, where the final draft has been approved by the BTB Board of Directors and will now be forwarded to the Office of the Solicitor General for legal processing and finalization.

As shared with you during the consultation process, the BTB will now be embarking on conducting a countrywide assessment of all accommodation facilities against the final draft minimum standards. This assessment is intended to provide us with the necessary data to be able to effectively quantify the sector's compliance to the proposed 2017 minimum standards. It will also provide an opportunity for the BTB to work with each stakeholder directly, to proactively address any area of concern as we work towards full compliance of all properties by the December 2018 license renewal cycle. A standard audit inspection requires access to the entire facility, office, documentation, vessel fleet, equipment, and any other related component of the accommodation operation. We are therefore asking for your assistance and cooperation in having a senior representative from your establishment available to receive and facilitate the audit

inspections to be carried out in the months ahead. We look forward to your usual cooperation and support during the audit inspections and if you have any queries or comments, kindly contact us via telephone or email.

** For more information on audits and inspections conducted by the BTB, please contact Ms. Vanessa Jacobs at vanessa.jacobs@belizetourismboard.org*

CONTINGENCY PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR ACCOMMODATIONS IN SAN PEDRO

A Contingency Planning workshop for small accommodations in San Pedro was hosted by the BTB from August 14th – 15th, 2017 at the Lion's Den facilities in San Pedro. The Contingency Planning workshop was intended to equip stakeholders with ideas and strategies to successfully implement contingency plans for their respective accommodations. The workshop also covered Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change adaptation and guided and assisted hoteliers with creating effective and personalized emergency plans. It was facilitated by Dr. Minerva Pinelo of Right Insights and the BTB. The accommodations that participated included Amelia's Guest House, Banyan Bay Suites, Belize Sotheby's Reservations, Belizean Reef Suites, Cocotal Inn & Cabanas, Grand Colony Island Villas, Hummingbird Suites, Sun Breeze Hotel, Sun Breeze Suites, Wataview, Villa Incomunicada, Indigo Beach Homes, La Perla Del Caribe, Playa Blanca Island Villas, Pristine Cove, Ambergis Lake Villas, La Casa Pura Vida, Casa Tulipan, Changes in Latitude, Watercolor V/H, Casita Tres Cocos, and Los Encantos Villas. The BTB thanks all participating accommodation stakeholders who took advantage of the free workshop.

Accommodations that participated received certificates of completion. A Contingency Planning Workshop is scheduled for Orange Walk Town on December 4th-5th, 2017. Additional workshops are scheduled to take place during 2018 and accommodation stakeholders are encouraged to sign up and participate.



** For more information on Contingency Planning Workshops conducted by the BTB, please contact Ms. Memory Castro at memory.castro@belizetourismboard.org*

BTB SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

The Hon. Manuel Heredia, Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation, presented scholarship awards to four full-time Belizean students during a brief ceremony on August 23rd, 2017 at the BTB's headquarters in Belize City.

Those receiving the scholarships are Kody Roaches, who will pursue an Associate's Degree in Tourism at St. John's Junior College; Rayeli Ake, who will pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management at the University of Belize and Norberto Alvarado, who will pursue Culinary Studies at Conalip El Pantel Temixco/Bakery Program at Ambrosia Centro Culinario in Mexico.

This year's Jean Shaw Scholarship Award went to Emilse Marin, who will pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management at the University of Belize. The Jean Shaw Tourism Scholarship was established in memory of the late Jean Ursilla Shaw, a renowned female tourism pioneer who played an integral part in the development of Belize's tourism industry in her lifetime. The Fund was established by the BTB, in collaboration with its private sector counterparts, to support the development of qualified Belizean females pursuing a career in tourism. This scholarship covers tuition, books, and fees. In congratulating the scholarship recipients, Minister Heredia noted: "there are many technological advances in the world today and so we have to advance in tourism as well. The BTB is, therefore, honored to assist these students because having qualified Belizeans in the industry is a move in the right direction."

The BTB Scholarship Program aims to provide financial assistance to students interested in pursuing studies in the areas of tourism and hospitality. As part of the program, the BTB selects individuals who

demonstrate high levels of achievement and leadership and who express a strong interest in making a positive contribution to Belize's tourism industry.

The total value of the scholarships presented is approximately \$31,000.00

* For more information on the Scholarship Program managed by the BTB, please contact Ms. Memory Castro at memory.castro@belizetourismboard.org



Hon. Manuel Heredia delivering brief remarks during the Scholarship Award Ceremony.



From right to left: Scholarship recipients, Norberto Alvarado, Emilse Marin, Rayeli Ake and Kody Roaches pose for the camera along with Hon. Manuel Heredia (centre).

Beach Clean Up at Punta Negra Village, Toledo

The Belize Tourism Board partnered with the Punta Negra Village Council, Harvest Caye Cruise Port, Oceana and Garbutt's Marine and Fishing Lodge to conduct beach cleaning efforts at Punta Negra Village to ensure a clean and safe experience for locals and guests. The community welcomed the volunteers as they worked thoroughly throughout the day and combed the beach picking up garbage that had been washed ashore.



Banquitas House of Culture Upgrade

The Belize Tourism Board partnered with the National Institute of Culture and History to upgrade the Banquitas House of Culture in Orange Walk Town. These upgrades include the redesign and curation of the display panels and information which highlight Orange Walk's history along with significant landmarks throughout Orange Walk. The Institute of Social and Cultural Research along with the Museum of Belize department, worked arduously to ensure accuracy of the information being presented. The upgrades not only included the curation of the museum but also upgrades to Banquitas House of Culture building.



Completion of Works at the San Antonio Waterfall:

The Belize Tourism Board partnered with the San Antonio Village Council in the Toledo District, for works at the San Antonio Waterfall which includes four (4) picnic tables and two (2) garbage bins within the swimming pool area. The single waterfall and swimming pond is perfect for family vacationers with small children and non-swimmers, who are looking to cool off while travelling within the Toledo District. These improvements along with improvements made at the Rio Blanco National Park help develop and improve the tourism offerings in the Toledo District along the Jalacte Corridor.



MULTI LINGUAL TRAINING:

In an effort to provide an enhanced guest experience to our growing multilingual market, the BTB engaged in offering tour guides basic language courses in German, French and Italian. Earlier this year the BTB provided translations of scripts and audio in three languages for Cruise Tour Operators servicing European ships as a first step.

The three trainers conducting the training are Peter Wolf (German), Erwin Lazzeri (Italian) and Genevieve Fournaise (French). The training was held at the Samuel Haynes Institute of Excellence's computer lab over a period of nine (9) weeks. The trainers came once a week for two (2) four (4) hour sessions with (15 trainees) and the participants were required to finish the online module for practice.

All guides were excited to engage on this venture as it would reap economic benefits as well.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The Belize Tourism Board partnered with Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to train Tour Operators on business management to improve understanding of vital components of small-business and increase their company's success. This translates into improved services, operations and ultimately increase employment for Belizeans.

The training covered the components and benefits of Business Management such as:

- Marketing and Sales
- Costing and Pricing
- Financial Planning and budgeting
- Cash flow management
- Customer Service
- Introduction to Financial Statements
- Basic Bookkeeping

Two training sessions were offered in Belize City and Placencia, where participants from all over the country had a full three day workshop.



SEATRADE- EUROPE CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW:

Seatrade Europe Cruise & River Cruise Convention was held in Hamburg, Germany from Wed. 6 - Fri. 8 September 2017, bringing together senior buyers, planners and key decision makers from Europe's ocean and river cruise lines with suppliers from all sectors of these industries. This extremely popular biennial event facilitates business interaction between all participants, incorporating high-level conference sessions, a showcase exhibition and workshops alongside a packed social program.

The two and a half day conference program provide a unique opportunity to hear from a wealth of key industry figures over a range of relevant and current trends and topics affecting the European cruise market.

Seatrade Europe provided a comprehensive program that tackled current trends and topics in a series of innovating, engaging open sessions. IT was a partnership with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association that allowed for one on one negotiations with European Lines to continue to diversify the market for the cruise industry.



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A Plan For Tourism

posted (August 3, 2017)

Today the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation hosted a consultation for stakeholders to discuss updates made to their National Tourism Policy. The Ministry has been working with various organizations both within and outside the government to form a plan that will facilitate positive tourism growth. We spoke to the Ministry's CEO, and the main consultant about the policy...

Yashin Dujon, CEO - Ministry of Tourism

"The national tourism police is an exercise to actually formulate a national policy and updated national tourism policy for the country that will govern the growth and development the tourism moving forward. The policy is based on sustainable tourism principles, so focusing on the social economic and environmental values that we use in the tourism industry on a daily basis and also integrating culture and management into the way forward for us."

"To date we've been working on a document such as the Blackstone report which dates back to 2005 and several other white papers that have been drafted, that have been pushing tourism forward. You would be aware that in 2008-2009 we launched the sustainable tourism master plan which engage and identified need for a policy to be drafted. So we are actually executing upon the finding of the master plan now and realizing the policy for the country."

"The police has been done on a consultancy basis, we've travelled countrywide and met with a broad spectrum of people to cover different basis. As you know tourism overlaps into areas of agriculture, medical tourism, production of food, employment, transportation and other things that need to be considered as well. So we are really happy to see the broad representation that's in the room today."

Richard Denman, Director - The Tourism Country

"The key thinkers are thinkers really been emphasize that this country here has an absolutely fantastic and natural heritage in small area both marine and also terrestrial. So you are in a very special position and the thing which is being most underlined I think throughout all of my work is the importance of conserving that fantastic heritage and using tourism as a positive force. Tourism benefits from that, but can also pay back to that. That's really being the fundamental component. Alongside that I think we have to place the wellbeing of local Belizeans and what's being stress to me fundamentally is that we need to make sure that we got the right policies in place to get young people more enthusiastic about their country, more enthusiastic about the opportunities that tourism can bring to them, in terms

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WestJet Announces Another Service to Belize from Canada

CARIBBEAN360 | JULY 29, 2017



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Ancient Mayans playing ball pictured on remarkable 1,300-year-old stone panels

Foreign and local rulers played the game.



By Martha Henriques

September 21, 2017 09:35 BST



IBT VIDEO



Indonesian officials map potential damage of Agung volcano

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LIFESTYLE

My Journey into the Mayan Underworld in Belize's Actun Tunichil Muknal (ATM) Cave



BY PAULA BOLVARD SEPTEMBER 9, 2017

0 COMMENTS



Image Credit Peter Andersen (via Wikimedia)

EDITOR'S CHOICE



10 Hotel Chains With the Worst Bed Bug Infestations
354 COMMENTS



Hypocrite Matt Damon Sends His Kids to Private School
433 COMMENTS



Chargers QB Spent \$200k to Be with His Kids
18 COMMENTS

twitchy

- 'Whoville is SO white!' Librarian who refused free books from Melania MOCKED on #RacistSeuss

- 'DOH! ThinkProgress justice editor just 'gave up the entire liberal agenda' in 1 tweet

- BUSTED! Flashback: Michelle Obama caught 'pushing racist literature on children' [pics]

- 'Peak irony!' If a woman runs for prez in 2020, Hillary 'WILL support her' ('conditions apply)

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