

What are the best things to do with children?

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Belize is best for kids old enough to appreciate nature and to entertain themselves outdoors. There are no fast-food restaurants, malls or video game parlors in Belize, but many hotels in Belize City, San Pedro and a few other places do offer cable TV with all the U.S. channels. Situated in Central America, the beautiful country of Belize is the perfect choice when looking for a family-friendly destination, as there are a plethora of things to do with your kids in Belize. Here's a list of the top things for kids to do in Belize:

1. Visit a Maya Ruin Like Lamanai, Xunantunich or Altun Ha

No vacation to Belize is complete without a visit to the Maya ruins of Belize. These delightful archeological sites contain museums and tourist shops that your kids are sure to enjoy. Young'uns go where adults are too tired to tread - they love running up and down the temples and other structures at Altun Ha, Xunantunich, Lamanai and elsewhere. Kids may not think much of the history, but they'll enjoy the exercise.

2. Hike the Belizean Rainforest, take a guided nature hike

For an experience your kids will never forget, hike the Belizean rainforest, where you will spot different jungle animals and birds. Most Belize guides are highly knowledgeable about wildlife and flora. They'll open the eyes of your kids to all kinds of natural wonders. Tarantulas, crocs, snakes, wee-wee ants and monkeys seem to hold more appeal for kids than birds. Kids seem to especially enjoy seeing the howler monkeys - there are troops at Community Baboon Sanctuary, at Lamanai, in Cayo, around Monkey River and elsewhere.

3. Go on a Cave Tubing Expedition

Going on an exhilarating cave tubing expedition down the rivers of the Belizean rainforest is one of the most unique and exciting things to do.

4. Go Snorkeling

When snorkeling through the crystal clear waters of Belize, you'll spot nurse sharks, dolphins, morays and many other colorful fish. Kids as young as 5 or 6 can enjoy the wonders of undersea life, but don't push them too fast. If you're with a guide, ask for water wings or a life jacket for the little ones, as some currents through the reef are strong.

5. Go Sailing

Belize is the perfect destination for going sailing, with oceans as far as the eye can see.

6. Go Fishing

Take one of a myriad of charters out and go fishing for anything from bonefish to tarpon.

7. Go Bird Watching

With over 600 types of birds in Belize, there's no better way to experience the serene and peaceful atmosphere of Belize than by bird watching.

8. Go Horseback Riding

Take your kids on a horseback riding adventure through the fields and forests of Belize.

9. Go Mountain Biking

Belize is home to trails that are perfect for mountain biking and will take you by riverbeds and ancient ruins.

10. Go Canoeing

Paddle through the waters of the pristine Macal River in San Ignacio Town and experience the exotic flora and fauna of the area.

11. Explore Barton Creek Cave

Barton Creek Cave provides stunning glimpses of the old Maya civilization when traveling in by canoe.

12. Explore the Mountain Pine Ridge Rainforest Reserve

The Mountain Pine Ridge rainforest reserve makes way for some of the best scenery in Belize, the waterfalls and native pine trees providing a fascinating backdrop.

13. Relax on the Beach

Belize is home to amazing tropical beaches that provide sun and relaxation in spades. All over Belize, you'll see local kids swimming off piers and beaches. Belize's beaches may not be as wide and sandy as some, but kids don't mind. They'll have a ton of fun.

14. Go Zip Lining

When not spending time on the water, zip lining through the rainforests of Belize will provide you with spectacular top down views of the area.

15. Visit the Great Blue

Explore and scuba dive the Great Blue, a massive sinkhole along the coast of Belize where you can spot Caribbean Reef Sharks and Midnight Parrotfish.

16. Explore Ambergris Caye

Ambergris Caye, the largest island in Belize, contains a myriad of fun things to do, such as skydiving, fishing and snorkeling along the shallow waters.

17. Explore Caye Caulker Island

Caye Caulker is a small island in Belize that is rife with tons of places to explore, including the spacious underwater caves.

18. Explore Placencia

The small town of Placencia is home to exceedingly comfortable sandy beaches for you and your kids to relax on. If you go, Chabil Mar is an ideal family vacation resort in the area to stay in.

19. Explore San Ignacio Belize

San Ignacio is a great town for tourists, with a plethora of shopping centers, food stands and restaurants to take your kids to.

20. Go Scuba Diving

To get the best views of the reefs and underwater caves in Belize, take your kids scuba diving.

21. Check Out the Belize Zoo

Hands down, this is Belize's favorite place for kids of all ages. Your kids will love it at the Belize Zoo, where they can walk among pumas, jaguars, ocelots and monkeys.

22. Check Out the Iguana Conservation Project in San Ignacio

Check out the Iguana Conservation Project at the San Ignacio Hotel which contains over 80 separate iguanas.

23. Go on a Kayaking Trip to a Nearby Island like Laughing Bird Caye

Take your family on a wondrous kayaking trip throughout the reefs of local islands such as Laughing Bird Caye

24. Hang out with Belizean kids

About two-thirds of Belizeans are under age 21, so kids are everywhere.

25. Hit the river

Most kids will get a kick out of swimming or tubing in one of Belize's many rivers. Resorts, lodges and tour operators offer river trips on the Mopan, Macal and other rivers by tube, raft and canoe.

26. Visit a butterfly farm

Belize now has six butterfly farms and centers. Kids will enjoy seeing one, though after that their interest may wane. For kids, we especially recommend Tropical Wings near San Ignacio.

27. Splash in a pool

A swimming pool makes any day more fun for kids. Increasingly, as part of the upscaling of Belize tourism, Belize hotels offer swimming pools.

28. Make friends with a quash

It may not be 100% EC² (Ecologically Correct) but a number of Belize lodges have once-wild animals as pets. Often, these are animals that have been injured, and the managers are nursing them back to health. In other cases, such as with iguanas, the lodge may be raising these in a controlled program. In any event, the opportunity to see monkeys, small cats, coatimundis, iguanas, parrots and other animals up close and personal is a treat for kids. Among the hotels with animals around are Lamanai Outpost, Jaguar Paw, Banana Bank, Pook's Hill and Hotel San Ignacio.

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