

# Do you have information regarding the number of visitors that go to Placencia, Caye Caulker, and Ambergris Caye?

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The best information I have on this is from a 2003 Belize Tourism Board Visitor Expenditure and Motivation study, released in 2004. It was a survey of 2,381 visitors at the international airport. It's possible that the BTB has a more recent version of this VEM study. I haven't asked.

This study showed where these visitors stayed in Belize. They may have visited an area but didn't overnight there. Some visitors stayed in two or more areas.

Ambergris Caye ... 31.9%  
Caye Caulker ... 26.3%  
Belize City/District ... 26.1%  
Cayo ... 24.1%  
Placencia ... 12.3%  
Other Stann Creek ... 8.4%  
Orange Walk ... 7.4%  
Corozal ... 6.3%  
Other Cayes ... 6.3%  
Belmopan ... 4.7%  
Toledo ... 4.0%  
Other Areas ... 1.3%

Now, if you look take the total overnight arrivals of 251,655 (2007), you get these numbers of overnight visitors (those who stay at least

one night) in the three areas Candace Leong is interested in:

Ambergris Caye ... 80,278

Caye Caulker ... 65,682

Placencia ... 30,954

Of course there are four big limitations to this data: 1) It's five years old, 2) It extrapolates from total overnight arrivals including those coming in by land, whereas in fact only about 73% of overnight tourists arrive by air 3) It excludes cruise ship day visitors 4) It excludes overnight tourists who may visit one of these areas only for a day visit.

There was a detailed study done in late 2006 of cruise ship arrivals (roughly 600,000 in 2008), but it does not specifically state how many of these passengers visited San Pedro and Caulker (I would assume essentially none visited Placencia). Of course there are large numbers of cruise passengers who come to Hol Chan.

Also, in 2008 Michael Fox did a report on visitors to Ambergris Caye.

Fox' study concludes that as of 2007 there were 1443 hotel rooms on Ambergris Caye, with an average annual occupancy of 49.5%. If you figure an average of 2 persons per room, that means there would be an average of 1429 overnight tourists on the island on the average night year round. Of course most visitors stay longer than one night. If you use an average 6-night stay, then the total of around 86,000 annually is pretty close to the 2003 VEM study.

--Lan Sluder

www.belizefirst.com

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