

Where are the best places for hiking in Belize?

Marty Casado Thu, Oct 13, 2016 [Camping](#), [Parks, Reserves, Monuments](#), [Tours](#) 0 10580

With more than 30% of its territory set aside for nature reserves and national parks, it's no wonder that Belize is a popular hiking destination.

Why You Have to Go Hiking On Your Belize Vacation

Whether you prefer to wend your way up steep inclines to marvel at mountain panoramas, make your way through lush jungles, see ocean birds and spectacular ocean vistas, or witness colorful tropical birds and exotic animals like jaguars, monkeys, and tapirs, there is a trail suitable for every hiker in Belize.

Where Can You Hike in Belize?

Some of the top hiking destinations in Belize include:

Shipstern Wildlife Nature Reserve – Measuring more than 32 square miles in size, the reserve is a mix of pristine forest, wetlands, and savanna. The reserve has several marked trails, a special botanical trail, a butterfly aviary to visit, and a natural history museum.

Rio Bravo Conservation Area – This lovely area is home to a lush tropical rainforest that is the natural habitat of more than 200 species of trees. Other denizens of the rainforest include jaguars, howler monkeys, deer, and more than 400 species of birds.

Half Moon Caye Natural Monument – In Belize, islands are known as “cayes”, and this protected natural area has hiking trail that combine spectacular views of the Caribbean and more than 90 species of birds, including species like the frigate bird and the Red-footed Booby.

Hokeb Ha Cave and Tiger Cave: This cave is a 20-minute hike from the village of Blue Creek, and is accessed by swimming into the opening through a pool of cool water. Inside, visitors find stalactites and stalagmites, leading from one chamber to the next. Archaeologists have found many Late Classic ceramics, as well as an altar inside the cave, leading them to theorize that the Hokeb Ha Cave was used specifically for ceremonial purposes. The calm water at the main entrance is perfect for a leisure swim, and the one-of-a-kind view inside makes this a must-see for any hiker.

Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary: Southwest of Dangriga is the admired Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, consisting of 128,000 acres of extensive tropical trails, featuring the largest concentration of wild cats in the world. Known as one of the best areas in Belize for experiencing authentic jungle life, the Cockscomb Basin, situated at the base of the peaking Maya Mountains, was established in 1984 to protect its large population of wildlife that call it home. Lucky visitors will catch a glimpse of a jaguar, while most will encounter just their paw prints, along with numerous species of medicinal plants, mammals and birds that populate more than 20 miles of trails. Visitors to the Cockscomb Basin can also enjoy scenic views of the towering waterfalls and explore its beauty in the surrounding rivers and creeks via canoe, tube or kayak.

Five Blues Lake National Park: This 10-acre park is surrounded by more than 4,000 acres of limestone hills and tropical forests, and is home to 217 different species of birds. Forest trails crisscross the park, leading to the caves and sinkholes that dot the landscape. The first national park to be managed by a community-based organization, here the locals have set up camping sites and small bed & breakfasts for travelers wishing to fully experience the amazing park.

Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve: Known as the only true pine forest in all of Central America, the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve is one of Belize's greatest hiking destinations. Its sweeping views cover nearly 300 square miles and provide endless opportunities for adventure seekers. The enchanting forest features remarkable changes in wildlife and landscapes, from distinctive Belizean birds and butterflies, to pristine rivers and plummeting thousand-foot waterfalls. The waterfalls, occasionally referred to as the Hidden Valley Falls, are considered to be one of the 100 best waterfalls in the world. With a total height of 1,500 feet, the brilliant falls literally must be seen to be believed. And, the terrain within the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve is not only ideal for hiking, but biking and horseback riding as well.

The Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve: Covering approximately 78 square miles of clear blue water and sandy cayes along the southernmost tip of the Belize Barrier Reef, this reserve is one of the most scenic spots for hikers along Belize's coastline. Situated at the southern point of the reserve, Huntington Caye is known to have one of the most beautiful beaches in Belize, and offers spectacular scenery and perfect conditions required for a peaceful rest after hiking.

Mayflower Bocawina National Park: Offering a truly unique hiking destination for travelers, the Mayflower Bocawina National Park contains 7,000 acres of beautiful jungle, tranquil streams and roaring waterfalls set amongst the unexcavated Maya sites of

Maintznun and T'au Witz. This destination was declared a National Park in 2001, and is located just off the Southern Highway, close to the town of Dangriga.

Blue Hole National Park: This beautiful park offers much more than the rare Keel-Billed Toucan, Red-Legged Honey Creepers and White Hawks that make their homes here. It also houses magnificent geological wonders, such as a sinkhole formed by a collapsed underground river channel. The steps of the Blue Hole lead into a 25-foot deep pool of cool turquoise water, surrounded by dense forest and hanging vines, making this hiking destination a splendid surprise at every turn.

When Is the Best Time to Go Hiking in Belize

With warm temperatures and lots of sun year-round, just about any time of year is the right time to enjoy a hike in Belize.

Best Way to Get to Hiking Trails/Destinations in Belize

Shipstern Wildlife Nature Reserve is located in Corozal District a few miles from the local capital of Corozal Town.

The Rio Bravo Conservation Area is easily accessible from the Mennonite village of Blue Creek in Belize's southern Toledo District.

The Half Moon Caye Natural Monument is located on the southeast corner of Lighthouse Reef Atoll. It is relatively easy to find a private boat service connecting the atoll to the bigger towns along the coast.

The Hokeb Ha Cave and Tiger Cave is a 20-minute hike from the village of Blue Creek in the Toledo District.

Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is located southwest of Dangriga. There are many tour operators in the area that offer this tour. Contact us and we will be glad to book this tour for you.

The Five Blues Lake National Park is located a few miles out of Belmopan, the capital city.

The Mountain Pine Ridge is located in the Cayo District of Belize.

The Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve is 40 miles east of Punta Gorda, Toledo.

Mayflower Bocawina National Park is located off the Southern Highway and is close to the town of Dangriga. There are many tour companies in the area that offer tours to this national park.

The Blue Hole National Park is located a few miles outside of Belmopan, the capital of Belize.

Best Way to Experience Hiking in Belize

Be sure to bring sturdy footwear, sun protection, plenty of water, and insect repellent in order to make the most of your hiking experience in Belize. In order to preserve the natural beauty in Belize, always follow the maxim to take nothing but photographs and leave nothing behind but your footprints.

For more information on the parks listed here, [see this link](#) on the National Parks and Reserves of Belize

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