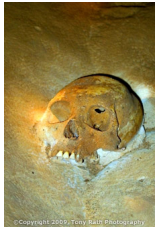


To appreciate the Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave, you'll need to devote a full day to its exploration. Deep within the forests lays a wonder of both ancient and natural beauty.



Following a 45-minute drive from San Ignacio and a 45-minute hike through the beautiful Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve, with numerous jungle stream crossings, visitors find a crystal-clear stream flowing from the cave opening. A short swim into the cave and a guided hike through the underground realm is rewarded by one of the most impressive Maya sites in Belize, including massive pots, ceremonial chambers and human skeletal remains cemented in limestone.

Amazingly, while valuable artifacts are always in danger of being taken from inside any cave, at Actun Tunichil Muknal, nearly all of the culturally significant artifacts remain in place just as they were when they were discovered in 1989. Belize's Department of Archaeology has granted permission for only a handful of approved guides to lead tourists through the terrain in order to control the loss of valuable artifacts while giving the public access to this superb piece of Belize's culture and heritage.

Exploring this cave requires strenuous activity and confident swimming skills.