

Archaeologists working in Belize joke that just about anywhere you scoop up a trowel of dirt you are likely to discover evidence of ancient civilization!



Wherever your vacation plans take you within Belize you are sure to encounter archaeology sites of significance as well as the remains of smaller, lesser known fishing, pottery, chert and salt production centers of Maya origin.

The ancient Maya network in Belize is an exciting adventure whether for a day or for a week-long tour. Near to most major towns you will find towering Maya temples with vacant ball courts still whispering excitedly of century-old competitions. Managed by the Institute of Archaeology settlements and ceremonial sites have been reclaimed from the forest, unique architecture and stelae exposed and restored and, interpretive centers with trained guides installed.

And, still within a day tour is the extensive architecture of Caracol deep in the heart of the Chiquibul Forest and the riverside city of Lamanai on the New River.

The Maya settled in Belize as early as 1500 BC with the estimated population exceeding one million during the Classic Period (250 AD to 900 AD). Although the civilization went into a political decline around 900 AD and many large Maya centers abandoned, several cultural centers, such as Lamanai on the New River, were still thriving at the time of contact with the Spanish in the late 1500's. Today a significant Maya population still resides in rural villages primarily in southern Belize.