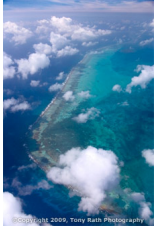


Diving, snorkeling, fishing, kayaking, wind and water sports are offered the length of the 185-mile long Belize Barrier Reef extending from the northern tip of Ambergris Caye to the Sapodilla Cayes in Belize's southernmost region.



Belize's Barrier Reef Reserve system covers a total area of 237,962 acres and illustrates classic reef examples including fringing, barrier, spur and groove and atoll reef formations. Then there is the unique phenomena of the Blue Hole, visible from outer space.

Notable Features

UNESCO's World Heritage program makes significant contributions to the protection of: the environment, cultural and natural diversity and the positive interactions between the people and the environment, all of which are fundamental to ecologically sustainable development. The seven World Heritage sites on the Belize Barrier Reef are:

- The Bacalar Chico Marine and Wildlife Reserve
- Blue Hole National Park
- Glover's Reef Marine Reserve
- Half Moon Caye Natural Monument
- Laughing Bird Caye National Park
- South Water Caye Marine Reserve
- Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve

Within these reserves and in the visitor locations outside of them, the marine species which call the Belize Barrier reef home, come in all shapes, colors and sizes from the common to the exotic. Creatures like the nurse and reef sharks, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles as well as elegant drum fish, grouper, jacks, snapper and white-spotted toadfish - a species only found in Belize - are just a few of the friendly natives divers will encounter. Fluorescent barrel sponges and coral heads the size of small houses are home to emerald moray eels, butterfly angelfish and delicate purple/yellow damselfish.

To see where many of these life forms got their start, try a snorkeling or diving near a mangrove islands, "the nursery of the sea", for glimpses of juvenile versions of barracuda, snapper and other fish species.

Visitor Experience

Throughout the length of the Belize Barrier Reef there are countless opportunities for divers and snorkelers to explore reef formations. A variety of dive sites begin at only 45 feet, and drop

to 90 feet or more and contain deep coral canyons as well as the fascinating “drop off.”

Scuba certification is required by the licensed tour and dive operators but many offer a “Resort” course which allows visitors to try the sport in a carefully monitored environment and at shallow water depths.

For the first time snorkeler – there is no need to be hesitant – once you get the hang of using a mask and snorkel you can start off in waist deep water until your are comfortable to try deeper water.