

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

[San Ignacio Open Market](#)



[Xunantunich Mayan Ruins](#)



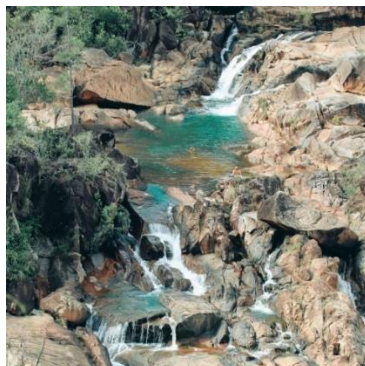
[ATM Caves](#)



[Belize Botanic Garden](#)



[Rio on Pools](#)



[Reef Snorkeling](#)



Whole Life Rhythm's

Belize Immersion and Drum Retreat

Rumble in the Jungle

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Whole Life Rhythm Mission

By providing a safe, non-judgmental environment, we encourage individuals to explore and express their creativity, reconnect to themselves and connect with others, which in turn strengthens and cultivates our community. We love to see you have fun!

Belize Immersion Program

Inception and Creation

The beautiful country of Belize features outstanding natural wonders, the world's 2nd-largest barrier reef, multiple ethnic cultures, and a fascinating archaeological history. Although greatly impacted by the Covid Pandemic, there are many tourist operations throughout the country, however these mostly cater to the fun-loving, casual, and well-heeled tourist. For those seeking a more in-depth experience, Whole Life Rhythm has paired with Belize Botanic Garden to design an enriching, educational, charitable, and adventurous option for the intelligent traveler, with substantial savings to boot!

The Belize Immersion Program is designed as a small-scale, retreat-style group program with low environmental impact and economical cost. It includes full room and board in a beautiful communal setting, with programs tailored to your needs which also allow for plenty of free time and adventure. Most suitable for groups of 6 – 20 person groups, we can arrange for overflow capacity if needed. Student groups, church groups, service groups, birding, wildlife, botanical and other special interest groups can all be accommodated. The program can be designed to fit your group's needs, and is guaranteed to give you the best of Belize from a cultural and educational standpoint. Several colleges and universities have conducted credit programs for students here during both formal semester periods and during break periods. You can bring your own program content to add to our basic program, or let us provide the whole program based on your interests. Rest, relaxation, and as much adventure as you could ask for come along with the territory.

Belize Botanic Gardens lies along the Macal River in the heart of the jungle of western Belize, in the Cayo District. It is "off grid" and an excellent example of "green" development, being fully solar-powered and self-sufficient, with 45 acres of cultivated trees, flowers, and fruits in the jungle setting. The Garden is in a sparsely populated and somewhat upscale area featuring rivers, caves, mountains, jungle, archaeological sites, monkeys, toucans, tapirs, and coati-mundi. The retreat facilities are located entirely within the Garden grounds, and you will experience Belize like a native.

The Program

Rumble in the Jungle

We fell in love instantly with the quiet, peacefulness, slower pace and of course the awesome food of the area and have created an affordable program that would allow people to relax, experience the area in greater depth and learn about the culture while we help sustain the Belize Botanical Garden. Rhythm was a logical place to start. Wrapping an immersion program with a rhythmic event-based program in the jungle could be an event of a lifetime. Rumble in the Jungle!

Available Retreat Dates

The 2024 retreats will be Sunday January 28th through February 4th. If we have enough guests, we will run a second retreat Sunday February 11th through February 18th. The retreat will start with dinner and orientation at the Belize Botanic Garden on Sunday night. We will pick you up at the airport on Sunday afternoon and drop you off the following Sunday morning.

Airline costs can be a little expensive during the winter months but the weather is stunning. We can also offer dates in June, July or August when the airline costs are lower, but the heat is hotter.

We can create team building or service orientated programs for you. If you have a date in mind for your group, let us know and we can check with the Garden for availability.

Payment and Reservations

Cost, Payment and Cancellation

The cost for the 7-day retreat is \$1299. 25% of the total is due when you reserve with the balance due in 60 days. All deposits and payments are nonrefundable but may be transferable to future visits. A minimum number of 6 participants is needed to run the program. If we do not reach the minimum number, we can move you to a different retreat week, or your money can be refunded.

Optional tours can be paid for during the retreat. You can save by encouraging some of your friends to join you on the tour of your choice. If you plan to head to the coast to snorkel, that should be booked earlier. Please let us know and we can help you arrange the remainder of your trip.

Group Leader

If you organize a group of 5 or more, we discount your retreat price and upgrade your accommodations (if available).

Immersion & Learning Programs

Cultural Immersion

We want you to fall in love with Belize the same way we have. The best way to do that is to meet the people, learn about the culture, sit and relax and of course taste the food!

Drumming and Musical Improvisation

Get turned on with hand drumming and improv music making. Whether you are an experienced drummer or haven't ever touched a drum, we will help you find a rhythm. Making music with other people is one of the most profound things we can do as a human being! The drum is the easiest way to accomplish just that. Whole Life Rhythm creates a judgement free safe zone to experiment, learn and play. Musical improv is just an extension of that, in the moment music making is so cool because you can't do anything wrong... We feel there are No Wrong Notes. The healing effects that music-making and rhythm have on your soul is amazing.

Belize Botanical Garden (BBG)

A gem in Belize, the gardens grow some of the finest specimens of orchids, flowers and trees. The BBG's 45 acres and several miles of trails and pathways are open for visitors to explore. Learn how the Maya made use of the healing properties of medicinal plants found along the medicine trail; meander through a tropical fruit orchard as you make your way towards the orchid house to view a collection of native plants and orchids. You can hike the rainforest trail and see mahogany, the water vine, vanilla, allspice and the "Bullet Tree", a hard-wood fashioned into shields by the Maya to defend against Spanish bullets. Featuring nearly 100 unique palms species from Belize and around the world, the palm area has its own exhibit displaying some of the palms many uses. Nearby cycad circle showcases an ancient and endangered plant species, while Zingiber Alley hosts a colorful array of gingers and heliconias, just waiting to be admired.

- There are several courses offered by BBG
 - Sustainable Gardening
 - Creatures of the Night
 - Medicinal Plants
 - Tamale Making
 - Tours of the Garden

Mayan Ruins

Belize has several sites of Mayan community ruins from the 400 to 800 AD timeframe where one can learn how advanced the Maya were for their time. Xunantunich is great for day trips and to spend several hours learning and understanding the culture of the Maya.

Birding

There are many species of birds in the area that are beautiful and exotic. Hiking through the area with a guide can prove to be a fantastic way to see everything from Toucans to Chachalacas.

Howler Monkey Research

Dr. Robin Brockett has been studying the native Howler monkeys that make BBG their home, along with several native species in the area.

Garifuna Culture and Drumming

Garifuna, also known as Garinagu, are the descendants of an Afro-indigenous population from the Caribbean island of St Vincent who were exiled to the Honduran coast in the eighteenth century and subsequently moved to Belize. Garifuna are great drummers, dancers and story-tellers and will be joining us during the retreat.

Drumming on the banks of the Macal River

A camp fire and drum circle on the banks of the river as the river helps to make a beautiful rhythmic backdrop for the music being made. There is something magical being near a fire and making music!

Late Night

After the day's events are complete and dinner has been served, music will be made! Drumming and improvisational music will be made by the group and recorded. The recordings will be delivered to each member of the group to help them relive the experience of Belize.

Cultural Outings

There are many ways to feel the culture of Belize

- San Ignacio Market
- Clarissa Falls
- Local Restaurants

Successful Women in a Third World Country

- If the group is interested, there are many women who are key contributors in a male dominated culture. Listen and learn how they themselves have supported their dreams, became invested and involved in their communities and have become success stories.

What to Bring and Accommodations

You need a passport to enter Belize. The process can take up to several months to acquire a US passport, so planning on your part is critical. If you have a passport, ensure that it is still valid and you have 2 blank pages as some countries check to make sure you have room in the book.

Guests will be staying at the BBG Guest House. BBG is off the grid and is powered by solar energy which charges a bank of batteries. Potable drinking water comes from wells on the property and has been tested for purity.

The Guest House:

Within the boundaries of BBG is a cute grouping of dorm style rooms. The structure is built around a magnificent tree. The structure is comprised:

- 8 dorm style rooms with 2 single beds and bed stands in each which can hold up to 16 guests
- 4 bathrooms
 - Each bathroom is shared between 2 of the bedrooms
 - Each bathroom also has hot water and showers
- Wi-Fi is available but has limited capacity (difficult to watch movies at night, so play with us)
- The price of the package includes double occupancy. Reservations are first come, first served. If a single room is requested, the cost will be calculated accordingly.

The Blue House:

A little more private with several bedrooms, a kitchen and a great view of the garden from the porch. This is usually reserved for the leader(s) of the group, but if this is not a group program, it can be reserved for an upcharge.

Resort Accommodations:

The [Sweet Songs Resort](#) is within walking distance of BBG. Visitors looking for more private accommodations can stay at the resort depending on their availability. We have worked out a discount with the resort, so if this option interests you, please let us know and we can ensure you receive the discount. Payment to the resort will need to be made by you the guest per their policy.

Attire:

- It does get a little warm in the jungle during the day and cooler at night. A basic outline follows but you can get away with less.
 - 2 pairs of shorts
 - 1 light pair of pants
 - 7 T-shirts
 - 7 pair of underwear
 - 1 long sleeve shirt
 - 1 light jacket or hoodie
 - 1 pair of good hiking sneakers, socks if you wear them, maybe a pair of sandals
 - Bathing suit
 - Sturdy water shoes if you are going to sacred Mayan (ATM) Caves
 - A small flashlight

Laundry Services:

- There are no laundry facilities on site so planning is important. If needed, there is a laundry-mat in San Ignacio which is the nearest town or one of the employees at BBG will clean your laundry at a small charge.

Food:

- Meals will be served daily in the BBG Visitor Center and Classroom.
- BBG staff will be preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, but there will be several days where the guests will be shuttled down to local restaurants to sample the local fare. Guests will be responsible for the cost.
- Guests need to inform the administration of any food allergies before booking so proper precautions can be taken before the guest arrives.

Transportation

Air transportation:

Each person is responsible for making their own air reservations. All the major airlines and Frontier fly to Belize and most arrive between 11 am and 2pm. We will be at the airport for that block of time to pick you up. Try to schedule your flights at that time. If your flight looks like it will fall outside those times, please let us know. It would also be advisable to get the fare that can be changed or cancelled.

We will do our best to keep you informed of what you will need to do before heading into Belize. COVID restrictions are always changing and we will keep you up to date.

Tropic Air:

There is a small airline in Belize called [Tropic Air](#) that operates from Belize City to several locations that may include San Ignacio where BBG is located. If they are flying to San Ignacio (CAYO), you can hop a small plane to get to BBG. Also, if your plans are to venture further around Belize, this may also be an option.

Getting to BBG:

BBG is approximately 2.5 hours from the Belize International Airport. BBG staff will do their best to accommodate everyone and pick you up in the shuttle. We realize that there may be folks arriving in Belize at different times, but we will try to be as efficient as possible and ensure that everyone is taken care of.

Belize is mainly an English-speaking country and is very friendly, so travel around the country is safe. There are several other modes of transportation available:

Taxi:

The cost in USD is \$120 and may be split with other participants of the program. As the date gets closer, we will try and coordinate the transportation needs of our guests.

Belize Bus:

This is a no frill way to travel Belize. The buses are older, have no bathroom, no AC but they do come with a driver! The cost is 10 Belizean dollars (\$5 USD) and you would definitely get a chance to see the countryside and get a flavor for the people. The buses run approximately every 30 minutes. BBG is located between San Ignacio and Benque Viejo.

Car Rental:

Cost to rent a car is approximately USD \$50-\$75/Day. Check with your insurance company and your credit card company to see if they cover the insurance on the vehicle. American Express does normally, but you should verify if you decide to rent. The roads are a little rough, so you may want to get the windshield coverage for USD \$4/day in case you get whacked with a stone. Keep in mind that gas is about double the price of the US.

Transportation to and from offsite events and attractions:

BBG will get us to where we are going and have arranged for tour guides. They are knowledgeable, friendly and fun. Many of the tour guides depend on the money they raise from the tours to feed their families. During the COVID Pandemic, many of the guides sat without work struggling to feed their families. Please remember to tip them.

Attractions

We want you to relax while you are with us, but we realize that sometimes we all need a lil excitement. There are many options for our guests to pick while visiting Belize. Some of the mentioned activities are optional and are at an additional cost. Here are a few of our favorites.

Barton Creek Cave:

Included - Barton Creek Cave is a natural cave in Belize, known as both an archaeological site and as a tourist destination. It is located in the Barton Creek area near San Ignacio in the Cayo District.

Rio on Pools:

Included - Rio on Pools is a fantastic area set with rocks, waterfalls and natural pools. A great place to relax and listen to the water or cool down in one of the many pools.

Tubing down the Macal River:

Included - Leisurely ride the pristine waters of the Macal River and land back on the shore of BBG. [Follow the link](#) for more information.

San Ignacio Outdoor Market:

Included - What better way to enjoy Saturday morning than to head to San Ignacio for the largest farmer's market in Belize. There will be a chance to pick up souvenirs and eat at one (or two) of the many of the food vendors or restaurants. The market is in a charming town square and the hustle and bustle is fun to watch.

Mayan Ruins:

Included - The Xunantunich ruins are just down the road from BBG and the site is a great place to visit and explore. The tour guides are fantastic and very knowledgeable on the history of the ruins. This is a great way to explore some of the history of Central America. For more info, [click here!](#)

ATM Cave:

Optional for the physically fit and adventurous – This attraction includes swimming, and moderately strenuous hiking -- Actun Tunichil Muknal, also known locally as ATM, is a cave in Belize, near San Ignacio, Cayo District, notable as a Maya archaeological site that includes skeletons, ceramics, and stoneware. There are several areas with skeletal remains in the main chamber. Good water shoes would be an awesome thing to have as you need them to wade through the water. The cost is \$125 USD, but the trek is worth the effort! Check out the [link here!](#)

Costal Add-on to Hopkins or Placencia:

Optional trip to extend your visit. Hopkins is a town on the Caribbean that has some nice seaside resorts and some fine restaurants. Snorkeling on the reef is worth its weight in gold. There is also Garifuna drumming with a Master Drummer at the Lebeha Drumming Center. Placencia is also a great place to enjoy the seaside, but has more tourists. There are several great locations to stay at and great snorkeling trips available. Just ask us for more information on this

Programs

Corporate Programs:

Have a meeting or a seminar coming up and want to do some team building or shake up the team? What better way than to have a real off-site retreat. We will work with you to help design a program. Whether it is for team building, product roll out, or you want to deliver a specific message to your people, let us help.

Derm understands the workings of large corporations after working more than 3 decades in large business and running several businesses of his own. Getting your message out in an effective way that people will remember is paramount. Whole Life Rhythm can get you on a roll and help you build the vehicle to deliver that message. Let us know your goal.

College Programs:

Faculty-led student groups – The staff at BBG can assist with classes, activities and special events at the gardens. These include Ethnobotany, Maya Medicinal Plants, Tropical Biology, Plant ID, Horticulture and more. What a great way to spend a school break, learning and relaxing at the same time. There are many chances for students to learn how life in a third world country is a bit different than the one they may be used too. We can help arrange many activities and even build some to fit your needs.

Church Programs:

Does your church or religious group need to brainstorm how to rebuild, grow or just survive? Changing church populations, COVID and many other issues have challenged churches. A retreat to relax, revive and plan to rebuild can be just what you need. Team-building is one of the great things that happens when folks sit down together, drum, laugh and share.

Recovery Programs:

The drum can be a simple way to express emotions that may get stuck when trying to use the right words to define. The use of rhythm to aide folks in recovery has been shown to be very beneficial. Helping people find success in something as simple as learning how to and then playing a drum is a boost to their self-esteem. Feeling success can be a key ingredient in a successful recovery. The “No Judgement Zone” we create is a safe environment which allows emotions a chance to release.

Looking for a safe, non-judgmental place to come and feel some respite from your addiction? Learn how to use rhythm and improv music to stimulate feeling of euphoria. Learn to feel success in your sobriety. There is research available at <https://www.rhythmresearchresources.net> on the positive effects that rhythm has on addition. Daily 12 step meeting can be woven into any program.

Service Programs:

- Belize schools were closed for over a year due to COVID, helping students is great service work
- There are several volunteer opportunities in San Ignacio
- BBG requires a lot of maintenance
 - The Orchid House
 - Trail grooming and general cleanup in the garden

There are so many ways that we can give back and experience the gift we get from doing service work.

Safety & Medical Concerns

Medical Services:

- Please remember the garden is in a jungle setting and there are critters that can bite and sting.
- In case there are any medical emergencies, the garden does carry First Aid supplies, and there is a hospital within twenty-five minutes. Guests should check with their medical insurance companies to insure they will be covered. Out of country insurance can be purchased by guests if needed. The insurance is less than \$70 and an example of a company that sells insurance is [Geo Blue Travel Insurance](#), but there a bunch of them.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent:

We will provide 30 SPF or above sunscreen and chemical and nonchemical insect repellent. If you have a special need above those provided, you should bring your own supply.

COVID-19:

The country's rules can be checked at their [website](#).

Belize locked down at the onset of the COVID pandemic, that along with the mask mandate and social distancing rules have kept the COVID related numbers extremely low. They are serious about enforcement.

Sample Itinerary

We have the flexibility to shift sessions and visits around due to weather and will try to make sure you have the best weather for outdoor activities. This is a basic day by day outline of the program.

| | |
|-------|---|
| Day 1 | Transfer from Belize International Airport, stop at the Belize Zoo if time permits, lunch at Cheers Restaurant (lunch not included), settle in, dinner and orientation and drumming |
| Day 2 | After breakfast, have a guided tour of Belize Botanic Gardens, around 10 am depart for Xunantunich Maya site. After a guided tour of the site, get dropped off in San Ignacio where you are free to eat at your choice of restaurant (lunch not included), go to Cahal Pech Maya site or the Iguana conservation project at the San Ignacio Hotel. Transportation provided and pickup time to be arranged |
| Day 3 | Stay "at home" and just wander around or head upstream to Negroman to tube down the Macal River to BBG, Or choose an optional tour (cost not included). During dinner our resident Howler Monkey researcher Robin Brockett will talk to you about the whereabouts, habitats and habits of our local Monkeys then some drumming |
| Day 4 | After breakfast head for Belize's Mountain Pine Ridge and explore the Rio Frio Cave before enjoying a picnic lunch and swimming in the cascading pools of the Rio On. Later, local Garifuna drummers and dancers will show you how to Punta and drum with us |
| Day 5 | Located within the boundaries of a local Mennonite Community is Barton Creek Cave. Suitable for all ages with easy canoeing through the cave where there are stunning encounters with ancient limestone formations. After exploring the cave, head for Calico Jack's for lunch and ziplining experience or just hang out by the pool while your friends go ziplining. |
| Day 6 | If you have not yet "seen it all" choose a tour or stay home to explore some of the trails, just chill, etc. If you stay home, you can join us for tamale making and after lunch join a staff member to forage for edible plants, and fruits to enhance your dinner. Optional tours we recommend are cave tubing, ATM, Caracol. There's also the option of volunteering at the gardens for a day. |
| Day 7 | Head to San Ignacio early and experience our colorful local market. This is a good place to pick up some souvenirs for the folks back home. Enjoy breakfast at your own cost from the local stalls where there is a wide variety of local offerings |
| Day 8 | After breakfast depart for the Belize International Airport or to your beach location |