

# Rumble FAQs

## *What is trip all about?*

This adventure is designed as a small-scale, retreat-style group program with low environmental impact and economical cost. It includes full room and all most all board in a beautiful communal setting, with programs tailored to your needs which also allow for plenty of free time and adventure. Rest, relaxation, and as much adventure as you could ask for come along with the territory.

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 and 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!

## *How big are the retreat groups?*

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.

## *Can the retreats be tailored to my needs?*

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. From "Birding" to "Team Building", we can work with you to design and deliver a program to your expectations.

## *What part of Belize will I be staying?*

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.

## *What is the cost and Cancellation policy?*

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.

## *What are the available retreat dates?*

The 2024 retreats will be Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup> through February 4<sup>th</sup>. If we have enough guests we will run a second retreat Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> through February 18<sup>th</sup>.

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. If you have a date in mind for your group, let us know and we can check with the Garden on availability.

### *What is the 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 ginger 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

### *Are there Mayan Ruins to visit?*

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.

### *Are there tours for Birding?*

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

### *Are there Monkeys in the jungle?*

There are howler monkeys that are living in the Garden now. Dr. Robin Brockett has been studying the native Howler monkeys that make BBG their home, along with several native species in the area and will be giving us a talk one night.

### *Is there drumming in Belize?*

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.

### *How can I immerse myself in Belize?*

There are many ways to feel the culture of Belize

- San Ignacio Market
- Clarissa Falls
- Local Restaurants

### *Do I need a passport?*

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.

### *What is an Eco-Lodge?*

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.

### *Where am I sleeping?*

Within the boundaries of BBG is a cute grouping of dorm style rooms called the Guest House. 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.

### *Are there more private sleeping arrangements?*

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.

### *Are there fancier places to sleep with air conditioning?*

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.

### *Can I get my clothes washed?*

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.

### *What kind of things and clothes should I pack?*

- 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

### *What do we eat?*

- 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.

### *Which airlines fly to Belize?*

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.

### *Covid?*

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

### *Is there a local airline?*

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

### *How do I get to the Garden from the airport?*

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.

### *Is Belize safe?*

Belize is mainly an English-speaking country and is very friendly, so travel around the country is safe. There are a few areas that may be important to remember to be mindful of your surroundings though.

### *Can I ride a taxi from the airport?*

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.

### *Is there a bus line in Belize?*

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.

### *Can I rent a car?*

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.

### *Is there transportation to and from offsite events and attractions?*

BBG will get us to where we are going and have arranged for tour guides.

## 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.

### *What attractions are included with the basic package?*

**Included** - The Xunantunich Mayan ruin site is 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.

**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.

**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.

**Included** – Tube leisurely down the pristine waters of the Macal River and land back on the shore of BBG.

**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.

### *Is there anything else to do on our free time?*

**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!](#)

**Optional** trip to extend your visit and is truly worth every penny. 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 Garafuna 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

### *Can I have a team building retreat for my company?*

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.

### *Is there a program for college students?*

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.

### *Do you want to extend your stay and snorkel n the reef?*

With the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest reef in the world, Belize is a great place to dive or snorkel. Let us help you extend your stay for several days so you can fully experience the reefs!

### *What will my week look like?*

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 10am 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 tamales making and after lunch join a staff member to forage for edible plants, and fruits to enhance your dinner. We like 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

### *Are there medical services available?*

- 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.