

My Beautiful Belize

TRAVEL PUBLICATION

Keeping Traditions Alive

November - January 2027 FREE Vol. 12 #04

From the Editor: Tamara Sniffin

Beyond What We See



One of the greatest pleasures of exploring Belize is discovering just how much there is still to learn about the country we call home. Even after years of sharing its stories, I continue to encounter traditions, celebrations, and cultural practices that leave me curious and eager to understand more.

Recently, while attending a traditional Maya celebration, I found myself fascinated by the symbolism behind the costumes and characters. It reminded me of other cultural performances I have witnessed in Belize and how, although they may share certain visual similarities, their histories and meanings can be remarkably different.

It also reminded me how easy it can be to admire a beautiful performance without fully understanding the significance behind it.

Belize's cultural diversity is one of our greatest treasures. Our Maya, Garifuna, Creole, Mestizo, East Indian, Mennonite, and other communities contribute their own histories, languages, customs, and traditions to the rich identity of our nation. Some traditions have endured for centuries, while others have evolved, reflecting generations of change, resilience, and adaptation.

What they share is the dedication of the people who continue to practice them, teach them, and pass them on.

As visitors, whether traveling from abroad or exploring our own country, we have a wonderful opportunity to experience these traditions firsthand. But with that opportunity comes a responsibility to approach them with curiosity, humility, and respect. To appreciate not only what we see, but to recognize that there may be layers of meaning we have yet to understand.

At My Beautiful Belize, we celebrate the many cultures that make our country so extraordinary. Our goal is not simply to showcase colorful festivals, traditional dances, or beautiful craftsmanship, but to share the stories of the people behind them.

The more we learn about one another, the more we appreciate the remarkable cultural heritage we share as Belizeans.

And perhaps the greatest gift of cultural discovery is realizing that no matter how familiar we think we are with a place, there is always another story waiting to be told.

Calendar of Events

Scan the QR code to explore our full event calendar and ensure you're part of every unforgettable moment.

Don't Miss a Thing!



It is my pleasure to welcome you to another edition of *My Beautiful Belize*, a publication that celebrates the beauty, culture, people, and experiences that make Belize such a special place to call home and visit.

San Pedro Town, on the beautiful island of Ambergris Caye, continues to grow as a destination offering far more than breathtaking beaches and turquoise waters. We are immensely proud of our vibrant community, rich cultural heritage, talented artisans, and hardworking entrepreneurs who contribute every day to our island's unique character and spirit.

As Mayor, I remain fully committed to creating meaningful opportunities that support our local economy, encourage entrepreneurship, and enhance the overall experiences of both our residents and visitors. One of our most exciting recent initiatives is the San Pedro Artisan Market, which gives local creators, small businesses, and entrepreneurs a dedicated platform to showcase their handcrafted products, share their unique talents, and connect with the wider community.

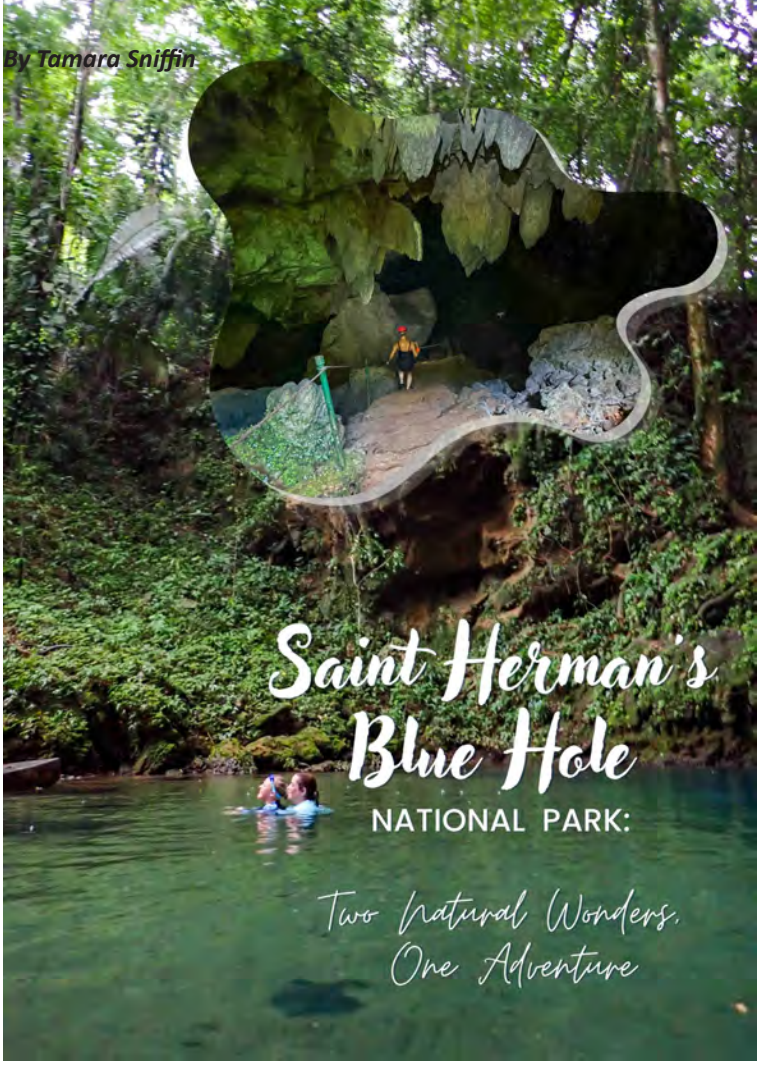
We are especially excited to introduce the Night Market, a fresh and vibrant experience for San Pedro Town that adds a new dimension to our growing Artisan Market. Located along Nurse Shark Street, the market offers a picture-perfect setting with stunning sunset views and a peaceful outlook over the lagoon, creating the perfect backdrop for an enjoyable evening of shopping, live entertainment, and community connection.

Our Night Market is envisioned as a regular monthly attraction where residents and visitors alike can enjoy live music, discover unique local products, and support our small businesses in a welcoming outdoor setting. We are proud to welcome our first participating vendors: La Grecia, offering delicious pastries; The Matcha Bar, serving refreshing matcha smoothies; Virgold, showcasing handmade jewelry; Turtle Ecologic, featuring embroidered tote bags; Minellie's Snacks; J & L Tropical Treats, offering fresh fruit cups; and Wishes.BZ, bringing party items and costumes.

This is only the beginning of what we hope to accomplish. We look forward to expanding the Night Market each month by welcoming additional vendors, creating more opportunities for local entrepreneurs, and offering visitors another memorable way to experience San Pedro's charm. To find out when our next monthly Night Market will take place, follow the San Pedro Town Council Facebook page for dates and details.

As we move into the festive season, San Pedro comes alive with a wonderful island warmth and festive cheer. Whether you join us for Christmas celebrations, admire our famous lighted boat parades, or ring in the New Year under the stars, there's no better place to create cherished holiday memories with family and friends.

Every purchase made from a local entrepreneur helps strengthen our community, sustain livelihoods, and build opportunities for future generations. On behalf of the San Pedro Town Council, I wish you a joyful holiday season and thank *My Beautiful Belize* for sharing our stories.



By Tamara Sniffin

Explore an ancient cave, discover a jungle swimming hole, and experience the natural beauty of Belize's Maya Mountains.

The journey along Belize's spectacular Hummingbird Highway is an experience in itself. Winding through lush tropical forests and the foothills of the Maya Mountains, this scenic route showcases some of the Cayo District's most beautiful landscapes. Just 12 miles southeast of Belmopan, Saint Herman's Blue Hole National Park offers two remarkable attractions: Saint Herman's Cave and a refreshing freshwater sinkhole known as the Blue Hole.

Managed by the Belize Audubon Society, the 575-acre park protects limestone formations, underground waterways, tropical forests, and abundant wildlife. Its visitor center introduces guests to the area's geology, ecology, and birdlife, including resident raptors and migratory species that winter in Belize.

Into the Depths of Saint Herman's Cave

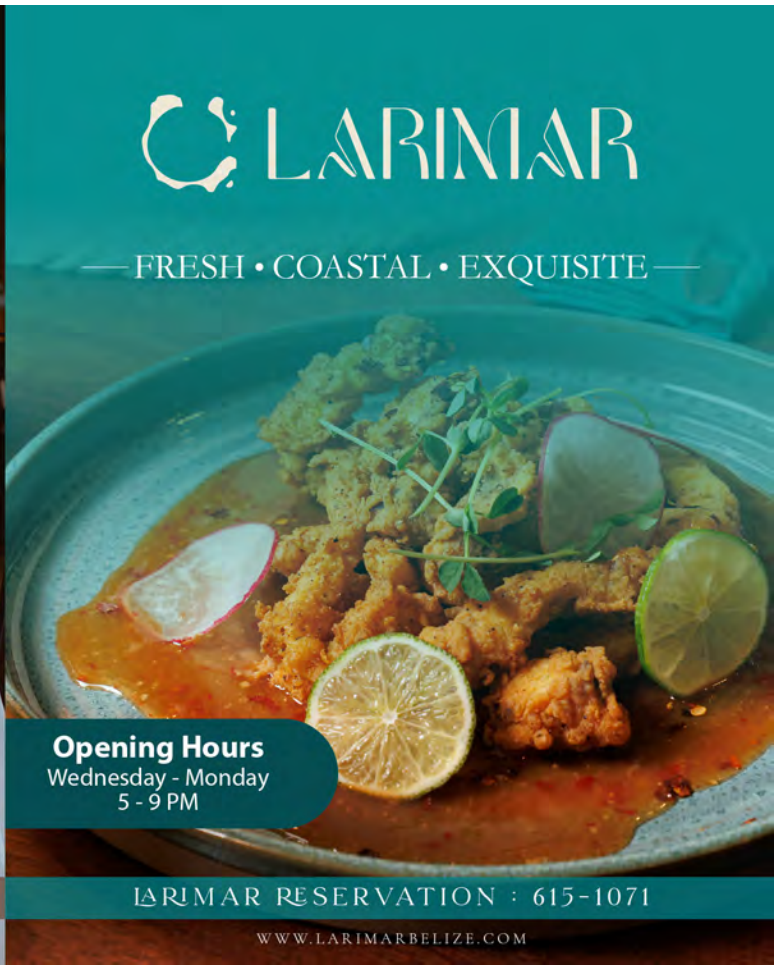
After paying our modest entrance fee, we pick up the helmets and headlamps required for self-guided cave exploration. Sturdy walking shoes are essential! Two trails lead to the cave entrance, and we choose the lower route. Beneath a thick jungle canopy, the well-maintained pathway winds through the forest, with interpretive signage highlighting points of interest while birdsong fills the air as we approach the cavern.

Soon, steep stone steps descend beneath massive limestone formations hanging like ancient stone curtains. A handrail provides support along the sometimes slippery path as we venture into the darkness.

The warm jungle air gives way to cooler temperatures, while forest sounds fade into the gentle trickle of water. Our headlamps illuminate dramatic stalactites, stalagmites, and rugged limestone walls sculpted over thousands of years. The sheer scale of the cavern is impressive!

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The Bamboo Artist

GALLERY

- Original Bamboo Art Creations -

49 BARRIER REEF DRIVE, SAN PEDRO BELIZE

"Bamboo Art Class"






- Explore Your Creativity -

Join us for creativity, refreshing mock tails, tasty bites, & great company as you create your own one-of-a-kind bamboo art piece.

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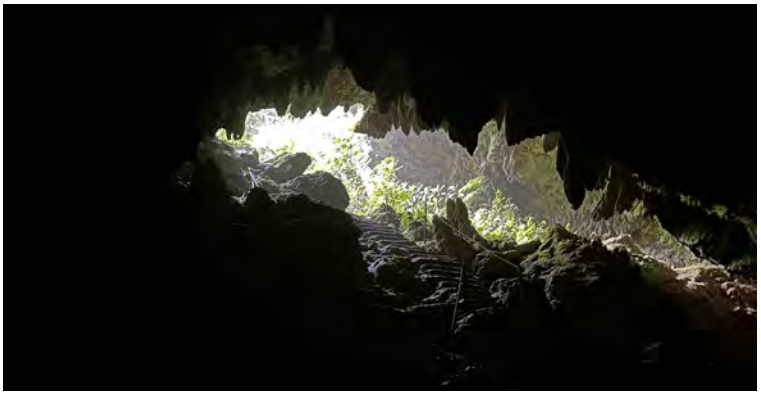
+501-637-4767

omo@bambooartist.com | www.bambooartist.com



You can explore about 200 yards of the cave on your own, while guided excursions venture farther underground. The cave also holds archaeological significance, as the ancient Maya used it and considered caves sacred entrances to the underworld.

For another adventure, guided cave tubing excursions let visitors float along underground waterways on inflatable tubes, passing beneath limestone formations and through shadowy chambers lit by headlamps. These tours offer a different perspective of the cave system and should be arranged in advance.



As we emerge from the dark abyss into daylight, a lively chorus of Melodious Blackbirds greets us from the treetops. After returning our equipment, we are ready for a swim!



A Refreshing Jungle Escape

Just a two-minute drive away, the Blue Hole welcomes visitors with picnic tables, changing facilities, and a short trail descending to its turquoise waters.

Along the way, we spot a perfectly camouflaged Gulf Coast Toad among the leaf litter. Moments later, a magnificent White Hawk glides through the treetops. What a treat!

Formed by collapsed limestone above an underground waterway, the Blue Hole reaches depths of approximately 25 feet. Its clear water remains refreshingly cool, with deeper areas noticeably colder than the shallows.

As we swim, rain begins to fall, showering us with cool, fresh water, adding to the jungle's magic.

Nature Within Easy Reach

Conveniently located along the Hummingbird Highway, the park is ideal for a day trip or scenic stop. With forest trails, birdwatching, cave exploration, tubing, and swimming, it offers outdoor discovery for varying fitness levels, although steep steps and uneven terrain require caution.

Saint Herman's Blue Hole National Park is a memorable reminder of Belize's remarkable natural diversity.









Located in northern Belize, about 55 miles from Belize City, Orange Walk Town is a welcoming destination rich in culture, history, and local flavor. Affectionately known as “Sugar City,” the town earned its sweet name from the sugarcane industry that has shaped the region's economy and way of life for generations. Nestled along the scenic New River, Orange Walk offers visitors a blend of small-town charm and unexpected discoveries. One hidden gem is the lovely Riverwalk, where a leisurely stroll offers chances to spot birds and enjoy the area's natural beauty. Explore the Banquitas House of Culture to learn about the region's Maya and Mestizo heritage, browse the bustling local market, or admire the historic La Inmaculada Church. Beyond its attractions, Orange Walk is especially memorable for its people. Warm, friendly, and genuinely welcoming, they make exploring this northern Belizean town even more authentic.

If you plan to stay a night or two, El Gran Mestizo Resort is a delightful surprise! Resting along the New River, this peaceful retreat features charming cabins, beautifully landscaped grounds, and a riverside pool with a fountain. Its new North Wing, with 18 modern guest rooms, brings the resort’s total to 30 units. At the waterfront bar, guests can sip handcrafted cocktails while watching birds and turtles glide along the river dotted with blooming lily pads. The on-site Maracas Bar & Grill offers delicious dining with scenic views. Quiet, serene, and full of character, El Gran Mestizo is one of Orange Walk’s unexpected gems.



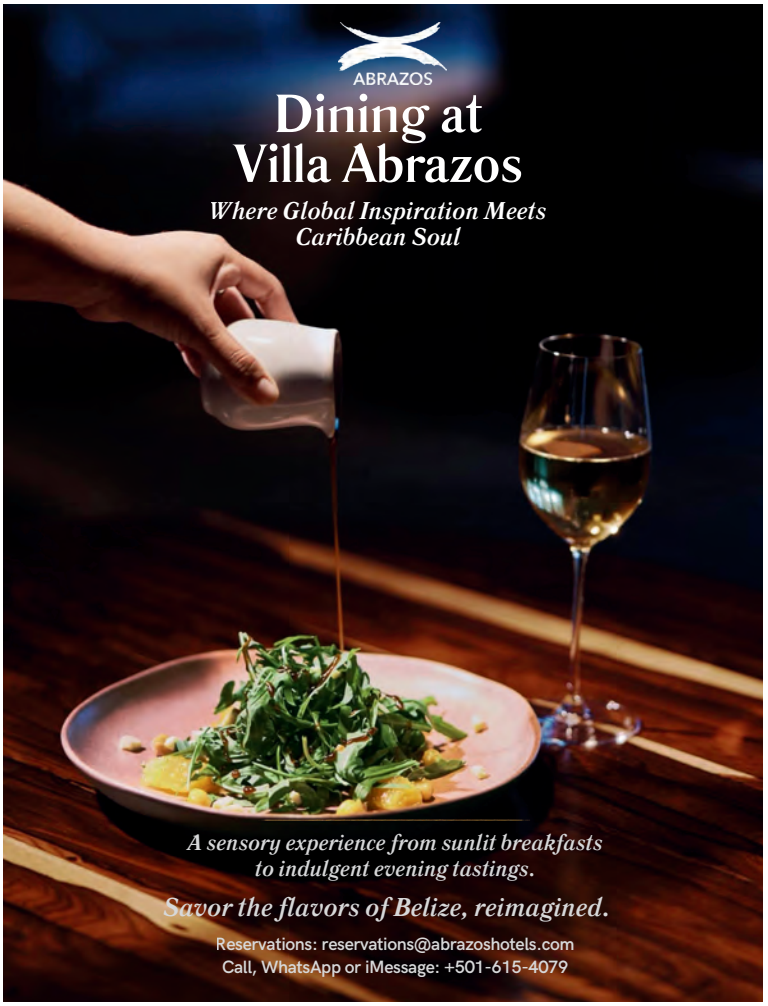








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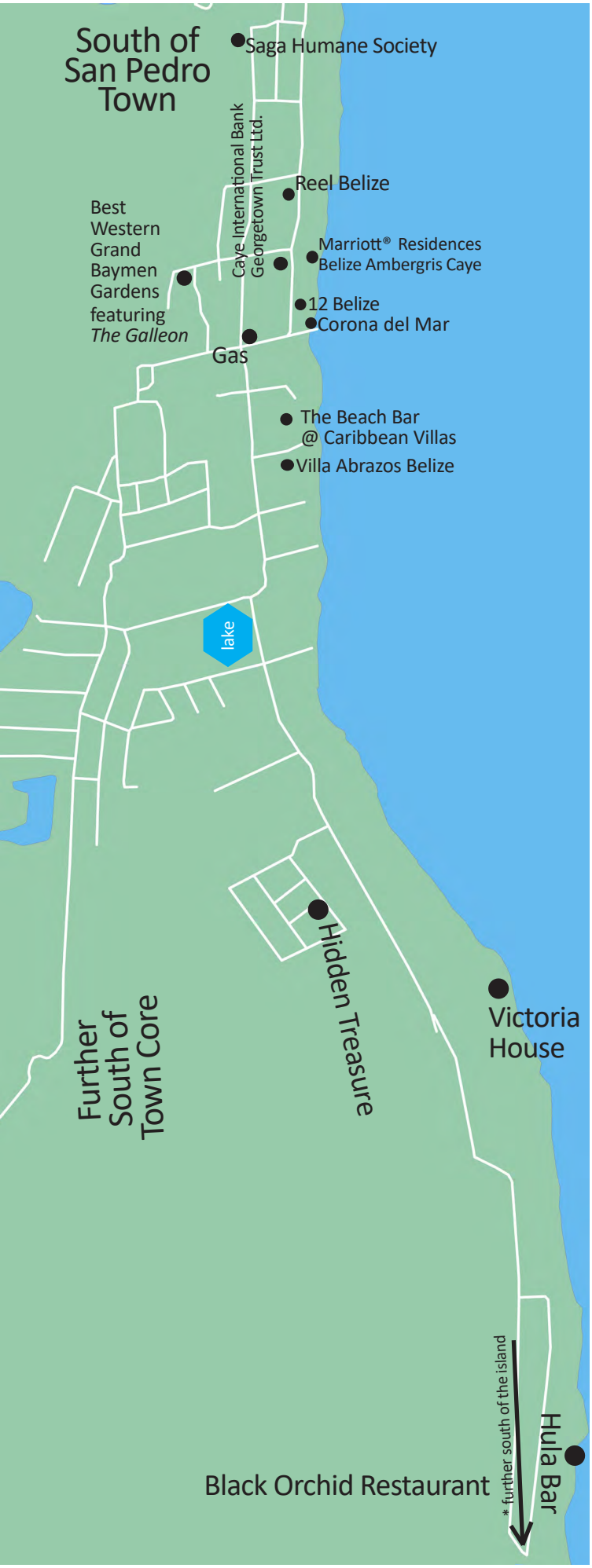
Orange Walk's reputation as Belize's taco capital is well deserved. Rooted in the region's rich Maya and Mestizo culinary traditions, these delicious little bundles typically feature seasoned chicken wrapped in soft corn tortillas, often rolled and served with flavorful sauces and a little heat. Local vendors have perfected their recipes over generations, and everyone seems to have a favorite taco stand! The town's enthusiasm for this beloved street food has even inspired taco festivals, where vendors showcase their specialties alongside music, entertainment, and plenty of friendly competition. Come hungry; you will be surprised at how many of these tasty rolls of happiness you can eat!



Orange Walk makes an excellent base for exploring northern Belize. Cruise the New River to the magnificent Lamanai Maya archaeological site, enjoy birdwatching at Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, explore Cuello's ancient Maya heritage, or cool off at nearby Honey Camp Lagoon. With its welcoming people, delicious food, riverside charm, and unexpected discoveries, Orange Walk proves that some of Belize's sweetest experiences are found beyond the usual tourist trail.







South Ambergris Caye

Caye Bank International - Easy access to your private – personal or corporate bank accounts with no taxes applied within the leading international jurisdiction for banking in Central America. Offering a full range of traditional and non-traditional banking services as well as accounts in multiple currencies. Email services@cayebank.bz

Georgetown Trust Ltd. - One-stop financial services offering the best in customized international structures. Asset protection and management, international corporations, and other international investment opportunities. Contact 226-3569.

The Galleon Building - at the Best Western Grand Baymen Gardens is the 6th building in queue featuring 5-stories, and stunning garden views of the compound. The Galleon building will feature a rooftop bar with stunning 360-degree views of the beautiful island of Ambergris Caye.

12 Belize - Lifestyle boutique featuring Belizean-made products. Mention this ad and receive a gift! Located at Corona del Mar on Coconut Drive, San Pedro Town. Open Monday through Friday, 10AM – 3PM TEL: 501-670-5272 Find us on Facebook @12Belize

Corona Del Mar – Beachfront hotel in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize, just a short 5-minute drive or 15-minute walk from the town center. Enjoy convenient access to shops, dining, and island attractions. Follow on Facebook @coronadelmarhotel for updates, special offers, and guest experiences.

The Beach Bar @ Caribbean Villas – Full restaurant and bar. Enjoy our beachside location! Serving island favorites and cool libations. Open daily 7am – 10pm. 622-1857

Villa Abrazos Belize is a private luxury beachfront retreat on Ambergris Caye featuring six elegant suites, world-class dining, a spa, gym, and personalized concierge service. Perfect for romantic escapes, family vacations, or exclusive group retreats. Reservations: +501 615-4079 | reservations@abrazoshotels.com

Hidden Treasure – Tucked away on a back street in the Escalante residential neighborhood south of San Pedro Town, discover fine dining in a rustic yet elegant and romantic setting. Specializing in Latin American and Caribbean Cuisine. Opening Wednesday through Monday from 5pm – 9pm; TEL: 501-226-4111

The Palmilla Restaurant at Victoria House - Romantic and comfortable ambiance, serving a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Admiral Nelson Bar is beachside-casual, offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner with magnificent views. Reservations recommended: 226-2067

Black Orchid Restaurant and Lounge - Serving outstanding meals, offering private dining booths and cocktails. Open Tuesday through Saturday, Happy hour & appetizers 3 – 5pm Dinner 5:30pm – 9pm TEL: 501-206-2441

REEL Belize - Discover unparalleled fly-fishing experiences at REEL BELIZE Fly Shop in San Pedro. Expert guides, top-notch gear, and breathtaking Belizean water await. Located at The Commons, Coconut Drive, San Pedro Town, find us online at www.reelbelize.com or call/WhatsApp: +501-610-5182

The Hula Bar - A Tiki Bar over the water serving authentic tiki cocktails and tapas in a tropical atmosphere. Happy hour daily from 2-4PM. Check out our new in-the-water seating! Located just south of San Pedro Town at Mosquito Coast. For hours and more information, find us on Facebook and Instagram @thehulabar, or call (501) 633-4600



Elvi's Kitchen – The most famous kitchen in San Pedro! This award-winning restaurant serves Belizean, International, Mexican, Caribbean and seafood cuisine with vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options. Mayan Buffett on Fridays (seasonally) Open Monday – Saturday, 11am – 9:30pm. WhatsApp 610-3584 or 610(ELVI) E-mails: reservations@ elviskitchen.com | info@elviskitchen.com

Tiburon Rum - Tiburon rum is a hand-crafted, aged, premium rum. Our family-owned distillery is near the shores of the Caribbean Sea in Belize. Visit our tasting room in San Pedro! Web: http://WWW.TIBURONRUM.COM/. E-mail: basil@sharkbaitco.com

Nestled in the heart of San Pedro Town, **Havana Cigars Bar** offers a selection of fine handmade cigars. Walk-in humidor stocks some of the finest premium cigars from Cuba, Central America, and the Caribbean. Open Tuesday thru Saturday noon to midnight; Tel: 501-632-2538



The Bamboo Artist – Original bamboo art creations, custom picture framing, bamboo art classes, gift shop, and more. Located at 49 Barrier Reef Drive in the center of San Pedro Town. Phone/WhatsApp (501) 637-4767. Open 9AM-6PM – Monday through Saturday. Find us on Facebook @thebambooartist

El Fogon Restaurant - "The Firehearth," located in the heart of downtown, specializing in authentic Belizean cuisine. Our menu consists of a diverse selection of dishes that represent our Belizean culture. Air conditioning. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at @elfogonbelize. Tel +501-673-2121.

Paradice Cream - Paradice Cream Parlor offers its customers a variety of over 30 flavors of homemade ice cream. Open Daily, 11am - 9:30pm; TEL: 501-226-5959

SP BTIA Tourism Information Center – Hosted by the Belize Tourism Industry Association San Pedro Chapter, providing information on all things tourism on Ambergris Caye and beyond. On Almond Street, next to the Artisan Market. https://www.facebook.com/spbtiatic/ for hours.

The Cork & Cooperage - The only Wine and Bourbon Bar in San Pedro focusing on premium, current vintage, New World Wines and Spirits. On Pescador Drive across from Caramba in the center of town. Open 10am-10pm daily. Facebook. com/corkandcooperage

Palapa Bar and Grill - Belize's original over-the-water beach bar. Float in our innertubes, enjoy the sundeck, and savor delicious food and cocktails. Live music daily. Open daily from 10 am - 11 pm; TEL: 501-615-8811

Avis Cart Rentals - Offering a top-notch rental experience from online booking to the newest golf carts on the island. Customize features and some of the lowest pricing together to provide you with great rentals for that special vacation in Belize. Contact +501-226-4422 or +501-627-5257

Cool Beans Café - Sunlight dances on turquoise waters as you step onto Dreamcatcher Pier. Enjoy vibrant, homemade island dishes, fresh seafood, and our famous Wednesday sushi. Sip 2-for-1 margaritas Saturdays and Sundays. Open daily 5:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Call 621-6945 and savor authentic island flavor right over the water.

Belizean Breezes - Natural soap, bath, facial, and body care company. Located at 41 Barrier Reef Drive (Front Street).



Coconut Carts Belize – Explore San Pedro in style with customized golf carts featuring all-terrain tires, built-in coolers, and LED headlights. Bridge pass, insurance, and roadside assistance included. No hidden fees! Convenient airport, ferry, and hotel delivery. coconutcartsbelize.com | +501-637-2416.

Belize Wellness – Rehydrate, recover, rejuvenate! Replenish fluids and electrolytes with IV vitamin hydration infusions after long flights, sun-soaked adventures, or nights out. Administered by U.S.-trained registered nurses. Mobile appointments available in San Pedro! belizewellness.com | +501-601-6653.

Secret Beach Boat Shuttle – Skip the long, bumpy golf cart ride! Cruise through mangroves and across the Caribbean Sea, spotting wildlife along the way. Enjoy 10% off at Secret Beach Bar & Grill and free water park access with food and drink purchase. Private dock pickup available! secretbeachboat.com | +501-611-4133

Time-out Cart Company - Explore San Pedro with affordable and reliable carts! Enjoy clean, easy pickup and drop-off, and great rates. Discover and cruise around Ambergris Caye at your own pace. Sunday - Sunday 24-hour customer service. Contact +501-615-8598

Crystal Auto Rentals – #1 auto rental in Belize! Offices conveniently located at 5 Miles Philip Goldson Highway, Belize City, and at the Phillip Goldson International Airport. Open seven days a week. www.crystalautorentalsbelize.com – US Line: (936)-307-1325, Belize Line: (501)-223-1600, Belize Phone/WhatsApp: (501)-670-7617

Table Rock Jungle Lodge – An award-winning ecolodge on a 105-acre jungle reserve along the Macal River, offering eco-friendly cabanas and farm-to-table cuisine. Located Mile 5 Cristo Rey Road, San Ignacio Town. WhatsApp at +501-672-4040.

Best Western Grand Baymen Gardens Resort, Ambergris Caye, - Offering a serene, tropical escape. This rare find boasts lush gardens, scenic views, and is an ideal location for vacation or a rental property. https://www.grandbaymen.com

Where do you Read

My Beautiful Belize TRAVEL PUBLICATION

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia



Greetings from nearly the other side of the world! Here I am with my copy of *My Beautiful Belize* atop Mount Wellington, overlooking **Hobart, Tasmania, Australia**. I brought a little piece of Belize along on my travels after spending the final three months of 2025 pet-sitting at Earthship Chaos Oasis, near the ancient Maya ruins of Lubaantun, just outside Punta Gorda, Belize! - **Mark Peacock**

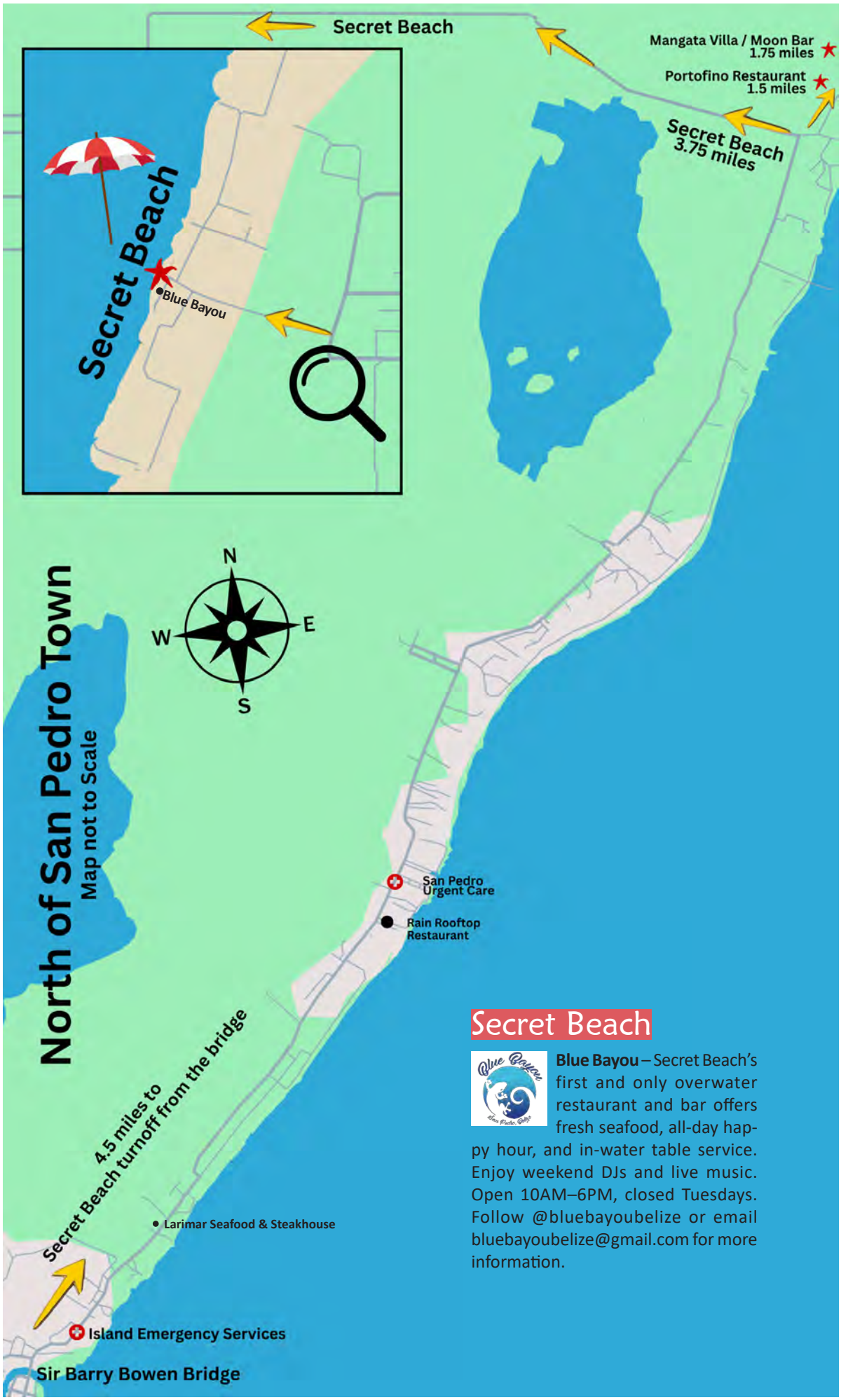
Yellowstone National Park



Jeremiah Sniffin, from Utah, USA, reads *My Beautiful Belize* with **Old Faithful**, erupting behind him. It earned its name in 1870 because this spectacular geyser erupts about every 60 to 110 minutes, shooting thousands of gallons of boiling water up to 180 feet into the air.

One of Yellowstone National Park's most famous natural wonders, Old Faithful is located in Wyoming's Upper Geyser Basin

Have a great picture reading this publication?
Send it to us at hello@mybeautifulbelize.com to be featured!



Secret Beach

Blue Bayou – Secret Beach's first and only overwater restaurant and bar offers fresh seafood, all-day happy hour, and in-water table service. Enjoy weekend DJs and live music. Open 10AM–6PM, closed Tuesdays. Follow @bluebayoubelize or email bluebayoubelize@gmail.com for more information.

North AC

Larimar Seafood & Steakhouse offers elevated dining in San Pedro with fresh seafood, premium steaks, crafted cocktails, and warm island hospitality. Located in the Tres Cocos area, just north of town. Open Wednesday through Sunday, 5PM–9PM. Reservations: +501 615-1071.

Rain Restaurant and Rooftop Terrace - Escape to elevated dining. For over a decade, we've fused Mediterranean sophistication with Belizean soul, creating unforgettable cuisine set against endless Caribbean horizons and sunsets that linger long after the last course. Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For reservations, call 226-4000.

Portofino Restaurant - Portofino Restaurant at Portofino Beach Resort offers globally inspired cuisine, crafted with the finest ingredients. Enjoy freshly made pasta, steak au poivre, or succulent stone crab. Set in an elevated seaside setting, enjoy breathtaking Caribbean views, impeccable service and a memorable atmosphere. Open for lunch and dinner. Reservations Recommended. Tel: +501 226 5096 or Whatsapp: +501673 5096.

Moon Bar at Mangata Villas - Your ultimate beach bar destination! Adults-only (18+), strong drinks, gourmet pizza, and excellent service! Relax on the beach in complimentary lounge chairs and hammocks. Free use of kayaks, SUPs, and swimming pool. Golf cart drive-in movie every Friday. Open daily 12PM to 9PM at Mangata Villas. 501-610-8953.

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE

Maya Deer Dance

An unforgettable afternoon in Maya Mopan, Belmopan, celebrating the enduring heritage of Belize's Q'eqchi' Maya people.

By Tamara Sniffin



Some cultural experiences leave a lasting impression, not only because of what we witness, but because of the generosity of those who welcome us. Such was our experience when we attended the traditional Q'eqchi' Maya Deer Dance at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Maya Mopan, Belmopan. As visitors from outside the community, we felt privileged to witness a celebration deeply rooted in Maya heritage, faith, and tradition.

Held on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the gathering also served as a church fundraiser. Families and community members came together to celebrate, support their parish, and honor a tradition passed down through generations. We were among the few unfamiliar faces, yet the welcome was warm and genuine.

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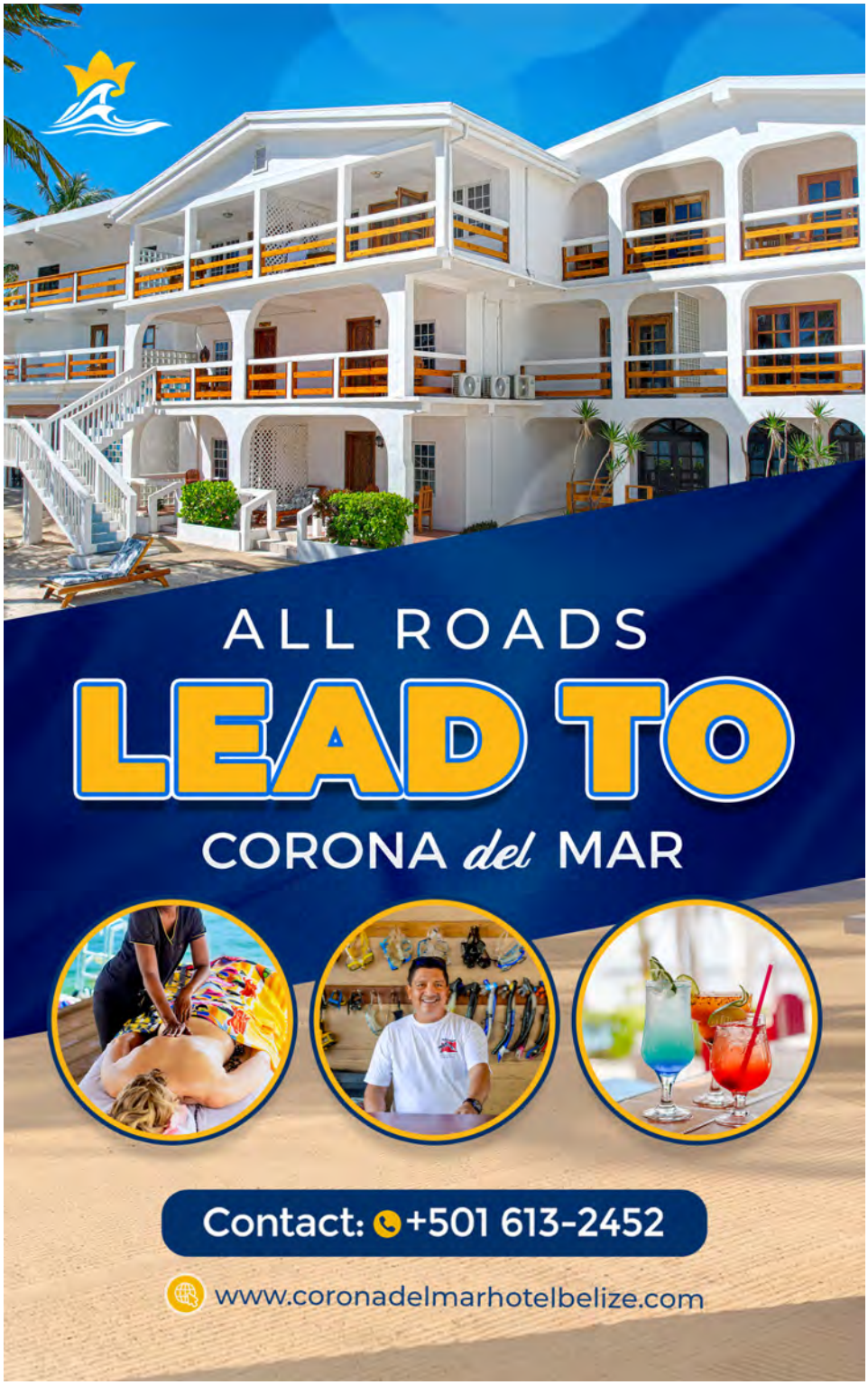
Maya Deer Dance

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The Deer Dance, or Baile del Venado, is a traditional Maya ceremonial performance combining music, elaborate costumes, masked characters, and storytelling. Practiced in various forms among Belize's Q'eqchi' and Mopan Maya, it reflects the relationship between humans, animals, nature, and the spiritual world. Traditionally depicting a deer hunt, performers represent deer, jaguars, monkeys, hunters, and other characters. Accompanied by marimba music, the dance preserves cultural knowledge and spiritual traditions. Over centuries, European influences have also become part of the storytelling, reflecting the complex history of the Maya people.

When we arrived in the early afternoon, lively marimba melodies filled the church grounds as the first dance began. The costumes were magnificent! Brilliant fabrics, intricate embroidery, mirrored decorations, feathers, and bells transformed the dancers into captivating characters. Each movement brought the costumes to life, their decorations shimmering and swaying to the rhythmic music.









Particularly intriguing were performers wearing brightly painted masks depicting European-looking faces, complete with prominent noses, mustaches, and beards. Their elaborate clothing reflected Spanish colonial influences, showing how the Deer Dance has evolved over generations, incorporating historical elements while preserving its Maya cultural identity.

By the conclusion of the first dance, the performers were visibly hot and tired beneath their elaborate costumes. We told one dancer it looked like a lot of work! His response surprised us; they had only just begun and would continue dancing until midnight!

It was an extraordinary reminder of the dedication and endurance required to preserve this tradition. What we had witnessed was just the beginning of a day devoted to celebrating cultural heritage, faith, and community.

Belize's Yucatec, Mopan, and Q'eqchi' Maya each maintain distinct cultural traditions, reminding us that Maya heritage is not simply ancient history but a vibrant part of Belize today.

For us, attending the Deer Dance was an honor. We came as visitors, were welcomed with kindness, and left with a deeper appreciation for the people who continue to preserve and share their remarkable heritage.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the Maya Mopan community for allowing us to experience this meaningful celebration.





Beyond the Beach

by Tamara Sniffin

There's more to Ambergris Caye than meets the eye, and sometimes the best way to appreciate a destination is to discover the stories behind it. In this edition of our Beyond the Beach series, we visit the Eco-Museum, where local historian Mito Paz has created a unique experience celebrating the island's history and cultural heritage. With fascinating exhibits, intriguing artifacts, and stories that connect the past to the present, it offers a chance to see Ambergris Caye in a whole new light.



Did you know Ambergris Caye once had more Maya inhabitants than it does today? Long before golf carts, beachfront resorts, and tourism, the island thrived as a center of trade, salt production, and fishing. Today, visitors can step back more than 2,000 years at the Eco-Museum, one of the island's most unique cultural attractions.

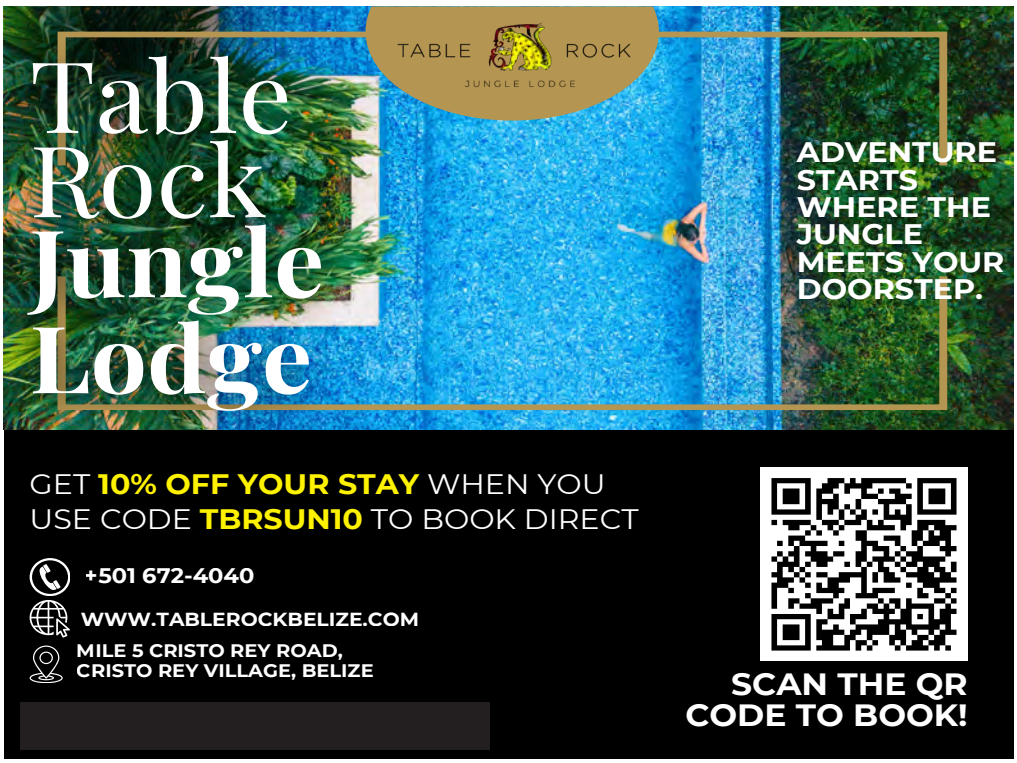
Founded by local historian Mito Paz, the Eco-Museum invites guests to explore landscaped trails where history unfolds through artifacts, interpretive displays, and storytelling. The journey begins with the ancient Maya, whose settlements once flourished here. Exhibits reveal their lives as fishermen, traders, salt makers, hunters, and farmers, and introduce deities including Chaac Uayab Xoc, the Maya god of fishing, and Ek Chuaj, the god of commerce and cocoa.

Continuing along the trail, exhibits trace the island's evolution through Spanish exploration, pirates and Baymen, early settlers, logging, chicle harvesting, coconut plantations, commercial fishing, and tourism. Visitors also discover the origins of the island's name, the Talking Cross (La Cruz Parlante), the Maya Cross (Maaya Katab Che'), and the endangered littoral forest, home to native wildlife.

The Eco-Museum brings history to life through traditional Maya cooking demonstrations, coconut husking and oil-making, herbal medicine, and local crafts. Its annual Pok Ta Pok Festival celebrates the ancient Maya ballgame with live demonstrations, traditional cuisine, music, and cultural performances.

Another annual celebration is Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), observed on November 1st. This meaningful tradition invites visitors and residents to honor departed loved ones by placing photographs on a traditional altar.









Both celebrations feature artisan markets showcasing locally made products and creative workshops, including painting and scrapbooking. These hands-on activities give visitors of all ages a chance to connect with local artisans and experience Belize's cultural traditions firsthand.

Whether visiting Ambergris Caye for the first time or returning to explore beyond the beach, the Eco-Museum offers a fascinating look into the island's heritage. More than a collection of exhibits, it's a place where history, culture, and living traditions come together, keeping Belize's past alive for future generations.

For further information and admission rates, visit www.ecomuseumbelize.org, email info@ecomuseumbelize.org, or call +501 650-6601.





TASTE YOUR WAY ACROSS BELIZE.

Stop by our Tiburon Tasting Rooms in San Pedro, Placencia Village, Cayo, and Caye Caulker.

Four Towns. One Toast.

Join us for exclusive rum & tequila tastings with our friendly crew—or pop in for a tee and a to-go bottle.

We're open everyday from 10am-8pm

Placencia Village
Located right on Placencia road

Cayo
Located in The San Ignacio Welcome Center in the Cayo District.

San Pedro
Located on Barrier Reef Drive next the Belize Bank

Caye Caulker
Location on Chapoose & Avenida Hicaceno Street

Tiburonrum.com | basil@sharkbaitco.com | 847-309-7700



In Belize, Christmas comes with the scent of fruitcake, the sound of music drifting through neighborhoods, and the welcome company of family and friends. There may be no snow, but there's plenty of holiday magic to be found—from the villages of the mainland to the shores of Ambergris Caye.

Across the country, preparations begin weeks in advance. Homes are cleaned and decorated, and kitchens fill with the aromas of holiday baking. Rich black fruitcake, often made with fruit soaked in rum or wine, is a seasonal favorite. A glass of creamy rum popo, Belize's answer to eggnog, is another welcome treat.

On Christmas Day, many families gather around a generous meal of ham or turkey, rice and beans, potato salad and all the trimmings. Every household has its own favorite dishes and traditions, but there's always room for good food and another visitor at the table.

Belize's cultural diversity brings even more meaning to the season. In northern communities, Las Posadas brings people together for processions, prayers, and songs recalling Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. In Gales Point Manatee, the Kriol Christmas Bram and Sambai fill the season with music, dance, and community celebration. And in Garifuna



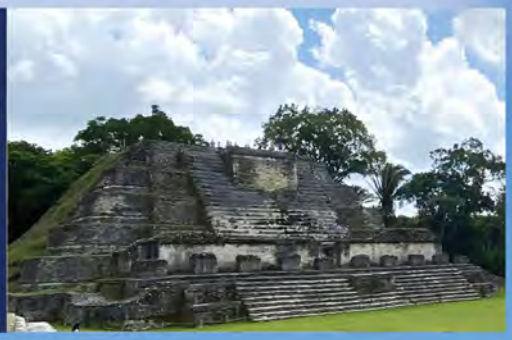


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communities, masked Jankunu dancers are a striking part of the holidays, their performances accompanied by the rhythm of drums.

On Ambergris Caye, San Pedro adds its own island sparkle. The Christmas Lighted Boat Parade brings decorated vessels gliding along the waterfront, their colorful lights reflecting on the Caribbean Sea. Holiday markets, community celebrations, and festive restaurant dinners offer more ways to enjoy the season. Check local announcements for event dates and details.

Of course, a Belizean Christmas can also include adventures that don't require a winter coat. Spend the morning snorkeling along the reef, take a boat trip to Caye Caulker, or head to the mainland for a day exploring Maya sites, cave tubing, or zip-lining. Then return to the island for a sunset, a delicious meal, and perhaps a little dancing.

Whether you're discovering a cherished tradition, tasting your first slice of black cake or watching holiday lights shimmer across the water, Christmas in Belize is an invitation to slow down, celebrate and share in the warmth of the season.

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