

Understanding the Port

Belize is an excursion port, plain and simple. Ships anchor miles offshore, tenders run you into Belize City, and the experiences that make this stop famous — cave tubing, Maya ruins, the barrier reef — are all a ride away. Book your plan before you sail, then enjoy the payoff.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Ships anchor offshore; tenders take about 15–20 min into the Fort Street Tourism Village, a secure area of shops and restaurants. Explore beyond it with a guide, not on foot.

Cash & Currency

The Belize dollar is pegged 2-to-1 to the USD, and US dollars are accepted everywhere. Confirm which dollar a quoted price is in before you pay.

Getting Around

This is a book-ahead port. Use ship excursions or licensed operators who meet you at the Tourism Village. The big sights are 45 min to an hour away.

GOOD

Tourism Village & City Sights

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ Shops, restaurants, and local crafts at the landing
- ✓ Museum of Belize and city highlights by guided tour
- ✓ No long drives, no tight timing

Low effort, low risk.

BETTER

Goff's Caye Beach Day

Best for: Couples, families, beach lovers

- ✓ A tiny palm island right on the barrier reef
- ✓ Snorkeling straight off the sand
- ✓ Boat ride out instead of a bus ride inland

Book ahead. Space on the caye is limited.

BEST

Cave Tubing or Maya Ruins

Best for: First timers, adventure seekers, history lovers

- ✓ A slow river float through jungle caves
- ✓ The climbable temples of Altun Ha
- ✓ The experiences Belize is famous for

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Stay Close & Keep It Simple

Browse the Tourism Village, try local food, and consider a short guided city tour. Belize City itself is not a walking-around port, so keep independent wandering minimal.

BETTER

Goff's Caye

A postcard-sized island on the reef, about 20–30 minutes by boat. Beach, snorkeling, and grilled lobster in season. A beach day and a reef day in one.

BEST

Cave Tubing or Altun Ha

Cave tubing on the Caves Branch River is the consensus favorite: a gentle float through massive caves the Maya held sacred. Prefer dry land? Altun Ha, where the famous Maya jade head was unearthed, is about an hour away.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

Cave Tubing

The excursion cruisers rave about most in Belize. Book through the ship or a long-established licensed operator with port pickup and ship-time guarantees.

Goff's Caye

The easy alternative for beach lovers: reef snorkeling and soft sand without the long inland drive.



Temple of the Masonry Altars, Altun Ha, Belize



Cave tubing on the Caves Branch River, Belize

Key Considerations

The tender ride and the drives are long, so this port rewards booking ahead and punishes winging it. Use the ship's excursions or licensed operators who guarantee your return to the tender in time. Protect your all aboard time above everything.

One more note: if your itinerary says Harvest Caye, that is NCL's private island in southern Belize — a different stop entirely, with its own beach and no tendering. This guide covers the Belize City anchorage.



Goff's Caye, on the Belize Barrier Reef



The Great Blue Hole, Lighthouse Reef, Belize



Keel-billed toucan, Belize's national bird

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Port Orientation

FROM THE TENDER LANDING (BELIZE CITY)

● Fort Street Tourism Village	At the landing
● Museum of Belize	Short guided hop
~ 20–30 min by boat	
● Goff's Caye	Reef island beach
~ 45 min by van	
● Belize Zoo	All rescued native animals
~ 1 hour by van	
● Altun Ha ruins	Maya temples
● Nohoch Che'en cave tubing	Caves Branch River

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time and the last tender back before you leave the ship. Ships here often run on ship's time, not Belize time. Confirm every meet-up time. Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Belize is a destination you ride to, not a port you stroll. The right excursion makes it a trip highlight.

Book before you sail, use licensed operators, and give yourself buffer on the tender.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

The Hemisphere's Biggest Reef. The Belize Barrier Reef is the largest in the Northern Hemisphere and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Jacques Cousteau made its Great Blue Hole famous.

English Spoken Here. Belize is the only country in Central America where English is the official language.

More Maya at Its Peak Than Belizeans Today. At the height of Maya civilization, more people lived in what is now Belize than the country's entire population today.

A Zoo of Rescues. Every animal at the Belize Zoo is a rescued, orphaned, or rehabilitated native. None were captured just to be exhibited.

First Jaguar Preserve. Belize's Cockscomb Basin became the world's first jaguar preserve in 1986.