BELIZE TO TIKAL: REEFS, RIVERS & RUINS OF THE MAYA WORLD
9 Days | Nat Geo Quest | 100 Guests | Expeditions in: Feb/Mar | From $6,480 to $9,240

Board the new, 100-guest National Geographic Quest to explore some of the 65 species of stony coral and 500 species of fish on the Belize Barrier Reef. Snorkel or dive on colorful reefs, and kayak or paddleboard over turquoise lagoons. Then venture to the ancient Maya ruins of Tikal. See temples overgrown with tropical rain forest and explore the stories and archaeological sites of these stone ruins swathed in forest and teeming with wildlife.

DAY 1: Guatemala City, Guatemala/Puerto Barrios
Arrive in Guatemala City and connect with our charter flight to Puerto Barrios. Upon arrival, transfer to Puerto Santo Tomás, where we’ll embark the National Geographic Quest. (D)

DAY 2: Belize Barrier Reef
Awake anchored in the northern cayes of the Mesoamerican Reef System, second only to Australia’s Great Barrier Reef in terms of biodiversity. Enjoy a full day to further explore this dynamic ecosystem. Take to the water by kayak, or stand-up paddleboard, or don a mask and fins and dive into turquoise waters to encounter sea turtles, swirling schools of tropical fish, and harmless nurse sharks. For scuba divers, incredible dive opportunities abound (additional cost). (B,L,D)

DAY 3: Belize Barrier Reef
Today, we explore more of the Belize Barrier Reef in the central cayes, with an opportunity to visit the Smithsonian-operated research station at Carrie Bow Caye. Here, we learn about the comprehensive studies being conducted on the reef ecosystem, including the biodiversity, evolution, and ecology of its organisms and communities, effectively ‘taking a pulse’ of the reef. The surrounding area offers outstanding snorkeling and diving, with vibrant corals and an incredible undersea diversity—a tropical paradise both above and below the surface of the Caribbean. (B,L,D)

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DAY 4: Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary
Spend the morning discovering the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, the world’s first jaguar reserve. Join our naturalists for a hike along one of the reserve’s many nature trails to photograph tropical plants, scan the treetops for winged wonders, and spot the tracks of tapirs and jungle cats. Learn about ongoing research into the behaviors of Belize’s jaguars, then visit a Maya handicraft center. Tonight, an internationally acclaimed drumming group, The Garifuna Collective, joins us on board for a festive music performance. (B,L,D)

DAY 5: Monkey River/Belize Barrier Reef
Early this morning, we board local boats to cruise inland through this coastal river system. Along the river, lined with cecropia and kapok trees, the throaty roars of mantled howler monkeys echo through the canopy, green and spiny-tailed iguanas languidly laze on overhanging branches and little blue herons, males adorned in their exquisite blue and purple plumage, work the shallows watching for small fish, frogs and crustaceans. This afternoon we are back to the reef, this time in the southern cayes, where we go snorkeling, paddleboarding, or kayaking inside its fringing reef dotted with hundreds of coral patches that harbor parrotfish, butterflyfish, octopus, and other marine species. Enjoy the last rays of light as the sun sets on our Belizean adventure. (B,L,D)

DAY 6: Puerto Santo Tomás, Guatemala
Disembark in Puerto Santo Tomás and catch our charter flight to Flores, gateway to Tikal—one of the largest cities in the classic Maya world. Enjoy lunch on the shores of picturesque Lake Petén Itzá before transferring to our lakefront hotel. Later, set out on an optional birding walk with our naturalists, or take a sunset boat cruise on the lake. (B,L,D)

DAY 7: Tikal
Spend a full day exploring Tikal, where ancient pyramids tower more than 200 feet, and thousands of temples, shrines, and plazas are scattered beneath the rain forest canopy. Discover the site’s archaeological treasures, including the Temple of the Great Jaguar and the North and South Acropolis. Encounter ancient Maya art and hieroglyphs, and examine carved stone inscriptions that illuminate the history and spiritual significance of Tikal. (B,L,D)

DAY 8: Yaxhá
Explore Yaxhá, a former Maya ceremonial center situated on a ridge overlooking Yaxhá Lake. The world’s third largest known Maya site, Yaxhá spreads across nine plazas and contains multiple pyramids, ball courts, and stelae. Examine its features with your local guides and, if you wish, climb a temple for panoramic views. Later, enjoy lunch at a traditional Guatemalan restaurant, followed by an evening at leisure. (B,L,D)

DAY 9: Flores/Guatemala City/U.S.
Transfer to the airport for your flight home. (B)
We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or lost of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. and Canadian residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non-refundable once plan is purchased.

Learn more about our Travel Protection “Plus” Plan: [https://www.expeditions.com/TravelProtection/](https://www.expeditions.com/TravelProtection/)

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